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Obama deplores lack of shame after Trump racist monkey clip

Detailed News On Page-08

Ukraine wants to become EU member by 27

Detailed News On Page-08


Sindh Chief Minister opens city flyover

Detailed News On Page-02



T20 WORLD CUP

Green Shirts easily concede match to India

Shaheen Afridi's dismal bowling performance led to team downfall; top order flopped; Indians outclass Pakistan in all fields

SPORTS DESK

COLOMBO: Pakistan suffered a 61-run defeat against India in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 group-stage clash at R Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, on Sunday. Ishaan Kishan's blistering half-century, followed by a collective bowling effort, led India to victory. Set to chase a daunting 176-run target, Pakistan's batting unit could accumulate 114 before getting bowled out in 18 overs. Pakistan had a disastrous start to the pursuit as India's pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya ran through their top order – Sahibzada Farhan (zero), Saim Ayub (six) and captain Salman Ali Agha (four) – inside two overs with just 13 runs on the board. Following the early debacle, wicketkeeper batter Usman Khan walked out to bat at No.5 and soon took the reins of Pakistan's pursuit. Usman shared a one-sided 21-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Babar Azam (five), who was cleaned up by Anwar Patel in the fifth over. The 30-year-old was then involved in a cautious 39-run partnership for the fifth wicket with all-rounder Shadab Khan until Axar struck again to draw curtains on his grit. Usman remained the top-scorer with a valiant 44 off 34 deliveries, featuring six fours and a six. His dismissal was followed by two more setbacks as Pakistan lost Mohammad Nawaz (four) and set-batter Shadab (14) in successive overs and were thus reduced to 78/7 in 12.1 overs. All-rounder Faheem Ashraf (10) and lower-order batter Shaheen Shah Afridi then raised 19 runs for the eighth wicket before falling prey to

Continued on Page 06

West Indies qualify for super eight state

SPORTS DESK

COLOMBO: The West Indies became the first team to qualify for the Super Eights phase of the T20 World Cup when they cruised to victory against Nepal by nine wickets on Sunday. After restricting Nepal to 133-8 in their 20 overs, captain Shai Hope's 61 not out helped his team romp to 134-1 in 15.2 overs in the Group C clash at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium. Hope reached his fifty off 38 balls and scored three sixes and five fours in all. He put on an unbroken 91 with Shimron Hetmyer to reach the 134 target with 28 balls to spare. Hetmyer was 46 not out at the end from 32 balls, with two sixes and four fours. After Haque won the toss and chose to field, Matthew Forde bowled a magnificent spell of 1-10 from his four overs and removed Nepal captain Rohit Paudel for five. Nepal were in all sorts of trouble at 22-3 at the end of the six-over power play, then 23-4 and 46-5 in the 11th over as Jason Holder also got among the wickets. It was only Dipendra Singh Airee's 58 that pushed Nepal past the 100 mark as he shared in a partnership of 54 for the seventh wicket with Sompal Kami, who was there at the end on 26 not out.

Continued on Page 06



NEW YORK: Pakistan Senate delegation led by Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani meeting with the President of the Inter-parliamentary union, on Sunday. – DNA

PM Shehbaz reaches Austria

DNA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif departed for Vienna, Austria on Sunday morning, on a two-day official visit at the invitation of Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi were accompanying the Prime Minister as part of the Pakistani delegation. During his stay in Vienna, the Prime Minister will hold bilateral as well as delegation-level talks with Chancellor Stocker at the Federal Chancellery. Both leaders are expected to discuss matters of mutual interest and avenues for strengthening

Continued on Page 06

US threatens to block Canada bridge

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The White House has demanded that Canada "share authority" and ownership of a new bridge connecting the two countries after a "clear and direct" call between Donald Trump and Prime Minister Mark Carney. The Gordie Howe International Bridge, connecting the Canadian province of Ontario to the US state of Michigan, will not open until Ottawa "treats the United States with the Fairness and Respect that we deserve", Trump wrote on social media earlier. The bridge is funded by the Canadian government but will be publicly owned by both Canada and Michigan.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Norway former PM charged with corruption

DNA

OSLO: Former Norwegian Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland has been charged with "gross corruption" over his ties with the US sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, police have said. The charge was brought after the Council of Europe lifted Jagland's immunity, which he enjoyed because of his past diplomatic role. He denies criminal liability and is willing to cooperate, his lawyer says. Emails released by the US government are thought to show that Jagland planned solo and family visits to Epstein's homes in Paris, New York and Palm Beach after the billionaire was convicted of a child sex offence. Three of Jagland's properties were searched by Norwegian crime unit Økokrim and he is now expected to be questioned.

Russian orders block on WhatsApp

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia has ordered a block on WhatsApp after the Kremlin continues to tighten restrictions on messaging apps. Meta-owned WhatsApp said the move aimed to push more than 100 million of its app users in Russia to a "state-owned surveillance app". Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the BBC that the decision had been made "due to [Meta's] unwillingness to comply with the norms and the letter of Russian law". He has said Meta could resume operations if it "complies with [the law] and enters into dialogue". Asked whether authorities were trying to force Russians to use the state-developed Max app, Peskov said the "national messenger [is an] available alternative" for Russians.

Police officer gunned down in Bajaur Agency

According to a police statement, a group of terrorists attacked the police station using both light and heavy weapons. They added that personnel deployed at the station quickly acted and repelled the assault

BUREAU REPORT

BAJAUR: An additional station house officer was martyred after terrorists attacked a police station in the War Mamund tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district on Saturday night, officials said. According to a police statement, a group of terrorists attacked the police station using both light and heavy weapons. They added that personnel deployed at the station quickly acted and repelled the assault. "The police personnel successfully foiled the overnight attack of militants at the War Mamund station, but Additional SHO Gul Mahmood Din was martyred after fighting bravely," said a senior police official who visited the area on Sunday morning with his team. The official told Dawn that all the other station personnel were safe and secure following the attack. Attacks on police personnel, law enforcement agencies, and security forces have escalated across KP and Balochistan,

Continued on Page 06

People of Panjgur, Balochistan hold rally

DNA

BAJAUR: The participants of the Baqaa-e-Pakistan rally outrightly rejected the scourge of terrorism and expressed solidarity with the Pakistan Army. They paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the nefarious intentions of Fitna-al-Hindustan through Operation Rad-ul-Fitna-1. They said their city, Panjgur remained safe from any major terrorist incident due to timely action of Pakistan Army and other security forces. The participants expressed solidarity with the Frontier Corps and reaffirmed that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the security forces against terrorism and for establishing peace.

Trump says Iran regime change is 'best thing that could happen'

Trump declined to specify who he wanted to lead Iran, but noted "there are people" who could take over. Iran's Islamic ruler Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has not yet responded to Trump's latest remarks

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump says regime change in Iran is "the best thing that could happen", signifying one of his clearest endorsements for replacing the clerical establishment. "For 47 years, they've been talking and talking and talking. In the meantime, we've lost a lot of lives," he said on Friday. Trump declined to specify who he wanted to lead Iran, but noted "there are people" who could take over. Iran's Islamic ruler Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has not yet responded to Trump's latest remarks. Meanwhile, the US sent a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East to add pressure on Tehran to secure a deal to limit its nuclear programme. The USS Gerald R Ford, the world's largest warship and the newest US aircraft carrier, is set to relocate "very soon" from the Caribbean to the Middle East, Trump said. On his Truth Social platform, Trump shared an aerial photograph of the carrier, which appears in transit on its way to join a second US vessel – the USS Abraham Lincoln – already stationed in the Middle East. The Pentagon sent the aircraft carrier in January after the US threatened to

Continued on Page 06

Trump will be gone in 3 years

DNA

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was the centre of attention at the Munich Security Summit, as European leaders wondered apprehensively what tone he would strike in his remarks on Saturday. While his speech did not fully allay their concerns, it has been viewed as a reassurance to allies that while US relations may have frayed under Donald Trump, they will not break. Rubio's was not the only American political voice at the security summit, however. And even if the secretary of state's remarks had not been so well-received – if he had sharply criticised Europeans the way Vice-President JD Vance did at the conference last year – there were other American politicians doing their

Continued on Page 06

Imran Khan's medical examination at Adiala prison; may be shifted

Specialist doctors conduct examination for around one hour, say sources

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: A five-member team of doctors conducted an eye examination of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan at Adiala prison facility, sources told. Imran's medical examination continued for around one hour, the sources said, adding that Dr Razaq, Dr Sikandar and Dr Arif were among the members of the five-member team. The sources privy to the matter said the doctors began examining Imran after waiting for the PTI leadership for two and a half hours. No PTI leader was present during the medical checkup, the sources added. The doctors' team arrived with various medical instruments and medicines, the jail superintendent said earlier, adding that their report is expected to be compiled soon. Imran, who has said that he has lost 85% of his vision in his right eye due to a medical condition, has been granted access to the doctors on the Supreme Court's orders. His lawyer, Salman Safdar, visited Imran in jail this week and later submitted a

Continued on Page 06

Opposition sit-in enters fourth day

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The sit-in staged by law-makers from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the opposition alliance Tehreek Tahaffuz-e-Aiyen Pakistan (TTAP) entered its third consecutive day on Sunday, despite the government's decision to shift jailed former prime minister Imran Khan to a hospital over his health, particularly his reduced right-eye vision. The former ruling party has rejected any move to transfer its jailed founder to a hospital without prior approval from his family. A day earlier, the federal government decided to shift Imran – who is reportedly suffering from an eye ailment which, according to the party, has reduced his right-eye vision to 15% – to a hospital. Taking to X, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said:

Continued on Page 06

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NIPA trainee officers visit safe city

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of officers under training at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Islamabad, visited Safe City Islamabad to gain insight into the capital's modern policing and surveillance systems.

An official told APP on Sunday that Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Safe City Awais Khan, Director Systems Faraz Memon, and Assistant Director Safe City Abbas Mehdi received the delegation and briefed them on the Safe City's operational framework. He said the visiting officers were given a detailed tour of the Command and Control Centre, central monitoring system, advanced surveillance cameras, and the Police Operations Centre Hall. The delegation was informed about the working mechanisms, technological features, and practical utility of the systems. The official said the delegation was also briefed on the role of various Safe City components, including the Police Operations Centre, Emergency Control Centre, Dispatch Control Centre, and the Pucar-15 Emergency Helpline.—APP

RDA demolishes encroachments

RAWALPIND:On the directions of the Commissioner Rawalpindi and Director General (DG) Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Engineer Aamer Khattak, the RDA Enforcement Squad conducted an operation on Double Road / Stadium Road Rawalpindi jointly with support of Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR) and PERA Force.

During the operation, encroachments, illegal and unauthorized sheds, and boards on the above-mentioned area were demolished. The action was taken under the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 and the RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2021. The property owners had violated the law by constructing buildings without obtaining the required approvals and No Objection Certificates (NOCs). Heavy machinery was deployed to facilitate the removal of the illegal structures. RDA spokesperson stated that DG RDA has directed RDA to take strict actions against all encroachments and illegal residential-cum-commercial activities without any fear or favor. It was also directed to conduct a comprehensive survey regarding fees for approval of illegal buildings, commercialization, complementary maps, and plans of structures, and to regularize all illegal residential-cum-commercial buildings within RDA's controlled areas. The DG RDA emphasized that RDA is fully committed to ensuring proper urban development and effective regulation of the city. He urged the public to take moral responsibility, cooperate with the Authority, and voluntarily remove encroachments to avoid future losses. The operation was conducted under the supervision of Additional DG RDA Muhammad Anwar Baran. The Director Land / Incharge Enforcement Ghazanfar Ali Awan, Building Surveyor Aamir Mahmood Malik, Asim Nawaz Khokhar, along with the RDA enforcement staff.—APP



RAHIM YAR KHAN: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting party's local leadership and former ticket holders at the residence of former Governor Punjab, Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood.

Media freedom, journalist welfare govt topmost priorities: Rathore

MIRPUR:Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister (PM) Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that his government was committed to media freedom, promotion of independent journalism, and the welfare of working journalist fraternity. Faisal expresses these views while speaking to journalists during his visit to Central Press Club in the State metropolis where he was warmly received by the newly elected office-bearers.

The PM, while stressing the need for responsible journalism, said that the government not only values constructive criticism but views healthy

criticism as a cornerstone for good governance. He said that practical steps would be taken in collaboration with stakeholders to address the issues faced by journalist community. Rathore also hailed the media's significant role in achieving sustainable development and building a prosperous state. "The Central Press Club Muzaffarabad has always played a prominent role in strengthening democracy, democratic institutions, and press freedom", he added. "The government will provide all possible facilities to local and foreign investors",

he said, adding that foreign investment was imperative for achieving development goals, and reducing growing unemployment in the state. He further said that the government was taking serious measures to resolve public issues while practical steps are being taken to ensure the provision of basic necessities to the people. On this occasion, the PM congratulated the newly elected President of the CPC Sohail Mughal, Secretary General Shehzad Lollabi, and other office-bearers and members of the executive body on their success.—APP

Ashrafi urges ulema to promote unity

LAHORE :Prime Minister Coordinator for Religious Harmony and Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Sunday called upon all religious scholars and khatibs to focus on uniting the Muslim Ummah and strictly adhere to a code of conduct during the holy month of Ramadan. He expressed these views while addressing a joint meeting on "Ramazan and the Responsibilities of the Mimbar" held at Jamia Masjid Nimra, Johar Town. The meeting was attended by scholars, religious leaders and representatives of various schools of thought. Addressing the gathering, Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said that at a time when the Muslim Ummah was facing multiple internal and external challenges, unity and harmony were the most pressing needs. He urged ulema and religious speakers to use the platform of the Mimbar and Mehrab to promote peace, tolerance and brotherhood. He said the implementation of a code of conduct during the holy month was essential to maintain sectarian harmony and

national cohesion. The PUC chairman, highlighting the objectives of the National Peace Committee, said its mission was to promote the message of "Paigham-e-Pakistan" at the grassroots level and counter extremist narratives through peaceful and constitutional means. Referring to a past incident in Islamabad in which a suicide attack took place at a mosque, he said that scholars belonging to different schools of thought had demonstrated remarkable unity by visiting an imambargah and donating blood for the injured. "Such examples of solidarity send a powerful message that the Muslim Ummah stands united against terrorism and violence," he added. Ashrafi said Ramadan was the most precious month of the Islamic calendar, during which Muslims from all sects engage in worship and spiritual reflection. He stressed that efforts must be made to strengthen unity during this month in a way that its positive impact continues throughout the year. He added that

Islam does not permit violence or extremism, and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) are based on love, compassion and unity. On the occasion, PUC Secretary General Allama Aslam Siddiqui, said that promoting peace and inter-sect harmony was the need of the hour. He described Ramadan as a month of forgiveness and self-discipline, adding that fasting instills piety and fear of Allah in believers. Maulana Nauman Hamid said extremist forces were attempting to spread intolerance and violence, and stressed the collective responsibility of scholars to safeguard national peace and stability. Mufti Falak Sher, Prof Dr Liaqat Ali and other speakers also addressed the meeting and underlined the importance of unity, patience and responsible conduct during Ramadan. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to promote harmony, reject sectarianism and ensure that the holy month was observed in an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect across the country.—APP

Sindh CM opens Rs1.5b Bhains Colony flyover

KARACHI:Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday inaugurated the Bhains Colony Flyover, also known as the Khalid Bin Waleed Flyover, announcing a series of major infrastructure initiatives aimed at easing traffic congestion and accelerating development across Karachi. The flyover is expected to significantly reduce traffic bottlenecks in District Malir, particularly around Bhains Colony and the Mehran Highway, while eliminating frequent accidents at the railway crossing. It will improve connectivity for residents of Malir and Ibrahim Hyderi, the Export Processing Zone, and commuters travelling between the National Highway (N-5) and Mehran Highway. The Bhains Colony Flyover and associated road works were executed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation under the Competitive & Livable City of Karachi (CLICK) initiative, with support from the World Bank. The project was completed in a record five months for Rs1.865 billion. Although approved on July 21, 2025, physical construction began on September 21, 2025, and was fast-tracked to completion. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, the chief minister's special assistant Saleem Baloch, MPAs Raja Razaq and Sadia Javed, and members of the national and provincial assemblies. Addressing the gathering amid slogans in support of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the chief minister said the new flyover would provide long-term relief to commuters and support economic activity by ensuring uninterrupted traffic flow between key industrial and commercial zones. Outlining upcoming projects, CM Murad Ali Shah said Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab had been tasked with completing a flyover at Azimpora within 100 days. He added that Shahrah-e-Bhutto would be completed from Qayyumabad to Kathore within the next four to six weeks, with plans underway to extend it up to the port, where the foundation stone would be laid soon. He also noted that the Murghi Khana Bridge was in its final stages of construction. The CM announced that development projects worth Rs300 billion would be included for Karachi in the upcoming provincial budget, adding that Rs8 billion to Rs13 billion had already been approved for KMC schemes to accelerate civic works across the city. Commenting on the separate province issue, Murad Ali Shah rejected calls to make Karachi a separate province, saying such demands were unconstitutional and impractical. He reiterated that Karachi's people were deeply connected with Sindh and called for federal funds to be directly allocated to local councils to strengthen grassroots service delivery.—APP

Faiz Festival concludes at Alhamra

LAHORE: The 10th Faiz Festival concluded at the Lahore Arts Council (Alhamra) with a vibrant final day celebrating the poetry, vision and legacy of Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The last day of the three-day festival brought together writers, poets, artists, intellectuals and citizens in large numbers. Various sessions, book launches, discussions and performances were held across different halls of Alhamra, highlighting Faiz's message of hope, justice, democracy and humanity. The day began with a dance performance by Lahore Grammar School students in Hall 1. Later, multiple sessions were held simultaneously. Prominent speakers at different sessions included

Harris Khaliq, Salima Hashmi, Samina Rehman, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Sohail Warraich, Wajahat Masood, Fawad Hassan Fawad, Asad Gillani, Mehtab Akbar Rashdi, Kabir Altaf, Ijaz ul Hassan, Prof Shaista Sonnu Sirajuddin, Asghar Nadeem Syed, Zehra Nigah and Nasir Abbas Nayyar. An engaging conversation between Mahira Khan and Samina Peerzada, moderated by Adeel Hashmi, attracted a large audience. Literary discussions also focused on Faiz's journalism, cultural policy, and his influence on global poetry. A special comparative session examined the works of Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmet and Mahmoud Darwish alongside Faiz, highlighting shared themes of resistance and human dignity. Other sessions

explored Lahore's cultural heritage, pre-partition cinema, contemporary literature and poetry readings. Dance performances and a puppetry workshop also added artistic diversity to the event. Alhamra Executive Director Muhammad Nawaz Gondal said the overwhelming participation and rich discussions during the festival showed that Faiz's vision remains relevant today. He said the Alhamra is committed to promoting inclusivity, dialogue, artistic freedom and national harmony. The 10th Faiz Festival ended with a renewed commitment to carry forward Faiz Ahmed Faiz's message of hope, justice and humanity. —APP

WAPDA chief reviews progress on Diamer-Basha, Dasu dams

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt-Gen (ret'd) Muhammad Saad Sunday visited under-construction Diamer-Basha Dam and Dasu Hydropower Project to review construction progress on the projects. He was briefed by the authorities that roller-compacted-concrete (RCC) works on main dams of both projects will commence this year, as pre-requisites are now heading towards completion at a faster pace. WAPDA spokesman told media here that during the visit, the Chairman directed the GMs, the Consultants and the Contractors of both the projects to adhere to the implementation plans in letter and spirit by accelerating construction work for completion of the Projects as per their schedules. In the first leg, the Chairman had a detailed visit of Diamer-Basha Dam Project, being constructed on River Indus, 40 Km downstream of Chilas

town. He reviewed construction activities on major sites including power intake, dam pit, downstream coffer dam, left abutment, flushing tunnel, guide wall, RCC batching plant and laboratory. The GM/PD along with the Consultants and the Contractors briefed the Chairman on site-wise achievements versus targets. At present, construction is being carried out on 20 work sites of the Project. Excavation work at the left abutment and dam pit (foundation) is substantially completed. RCC trials for the Main Dam have also been conducted successfully. With completion of the right abutment's excavation, placing of RCC for Main Dam will start during the current year. Completion of the Dam is scheduled in 2030. Later, Chairman had a meeting with local Ulema. Progress on CBMs for uplift of the people in the Project area was reviewed during the meeting. It was briefed that a hefty amount is being

spent on development schemes under the CBMs. Cadet College Chilas has been completed. Progress on Harpan Das Model Village stands at about 61 percent, while levelling of plots and additional works of roads, water supply and sewerage system is in progress. Besides, contract has also been awarded for water supply scheme in Chilas town, while bidding is in process for construction of Rural Health Centre at Shatial in Upper Kohistan. Diamer Basha Dam is a vital project for water, food and energy security of Pakistan. It will store 8.1 MAF to irrigate 1.2 million acres of additional land in the country. With installed generation capacity of 4500 MW, Diamer-Basha Dam will provide 18 billion units of low-cost and environment-friendly electricity to the National Grid every year. In the second leg, the Chairman reached Dasu Hydropower Project, being constructed across River Indus in Upper Kohistan District of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa. He visited in detail all key sites, which included Dam Pit, underground Power House and underground Transformer Cavern. The GM/PD, giving a run down of the progress, briefed the Chairman that construction work continued on 23 work fronts of the Project. Crushing and batching plants have been completed and are now in operation. Pouring of RCC for the Main Dam will start during the current year. The 132 KV Transmission Line, meant for providing stable supply of electricity during construction of the Main Dam, is in the final phase of testing and commissioning, which will be energized within days. Electricity generation from the Project will start in 2028. It was further briefed that 20.4 Km-Relocated Karakoram Highway (RKKH) 01 will also be completed this year with CPEC standards, as major structures including the tunnels are at advanced stage of completion.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

Feb 04/Sri Lanka National Day

Feb 06/N. Zealand National Day

Feb 06/Uganda Army Day

Feb 11/Iran Revolution day

Feb 16/DPR Korea National Day

Feb 16/Lithuania National Day

Feb 18/Gambia National Day

Feb 19/Nepal Democracy Day

Feb 23/Uzbekistan National Day

Feb 23/Brunei National Day

Feb 23/Guyana National Day

Feb 23/Russia National Army Day

Feb 23/Tajikistan Armed Forces Day

Feb 25/Kuwait National Day



Emergency

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

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	5611116
Cantt Hospital.....	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666

Departments

CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
Met Office.....	9250360-6
RDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board.....	9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Motorway Police sets example of integrity

IG NHMP, Addl. IG announce reward for concerned officers

ISLAMABAD: National Highways and Highways Police recovered a valuable bag with Rs 5.3 Million cash inside from the Kallar Kahar Service Area and safely returned it to the owner. According to the details, a passenger plying in a bus from Peshawar to Faisalabad, Shafaqatullah, told the Motorway Police patrol vehicle that he had left a valuable bag worth Rs 53 lakh in Kallar Kahar Service Area. The police officers informed the concerned beat administration and patrol officers immediately through wireless. Motorway Police contacted the complainant and immediately reached the service area while keeping the complainant on video call, and after a tiring search operation, the said bag was recovered from a fast food restaurant. The owner of the bag was then reached and after thorough inspection and legal formalities, the bag was safely handed over to him with all the valuables inside. The bag owner praised and thanked the Motorway Police for their speedy response. Meanwhile, National Highways and Motorway Police Inspector General; Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry and Additional IG Muhammad Wisal Fakhra Sultan praised the officers, Inspector Saeed Nasir and Inspector M Bilal, who put efforts for bag recovery and announced a reward for them.



300 cyclists join CDA championship

ISLAMABAD :Around 300 cyclists participated in a cycling championship organised in Islamabad on Sunday by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) as part of efforts to promote green mobility and healthy recreational activities in the federal capital. The event, held at D-Chowk and along the adjacent Jinnah Avenue area, was organised in collaboration with Allied Bank Limited. It attracted cycling enthusiasts and citizens from across the city, reflecting growing public interest in environmentally friendly transport and fitness activities.

Competitions were held in multiple categories, including Open Men, Open Women, Senior Men, Senior Women, Under-16 and Under-9, ensuring participation across different age groups and genders under established standard operating procedures. Several officials and dignitaries attended the championship as special guests, including CDA Member Finance Tahir Naeem, the district magistrate of Islamabad, senior police officials, sports authorities and representatives of the business community. Members of the national women's cricket team also participated in the activity.

Participants appreciated the initiative and urged authorities to continue organising similar events regularly to encourage healthy lifestyles and sustainable urban mobility.

Speaking on the occasion, MCI Chief Officer Dr Anam Fatima said the championship reflected CDA and MCI's commitment to promoting green mobility awareness in urban areas. She added that providing healthy recreational opportunities for Islamabad's residents remained a priority, and similar activities would continue in the future.—DNA

FGEHA accelerates F-14/15 development works

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), operating under the Ministry of Housing and Works, has significantly intensified construction activities in Sector F-14/15, marking a decisive phase in one of the capital's most anticipated housing developments. In a major push to fast-track progress, heavy machinery and workforce deployments have been scaled up, signaling the Authority's renewed determination to meet development targets within the stipulated timeframe. Officials said that the project has now entered a "high-gear execution phase," with visible on-ground activity expected to accelerate in the coming weeks. An official spokesperson of FGEHA told APP that the development of basic infrastructure – including roads, sewerage systems, and electricity networks – is planned for completion within three years under the existing contract framework. However, he clarified that the timeline may be adjusted depending on operational factors, with extensions permissible under contractual provisions if required.

In a significant development, the National Logistics Cell (NLC) has formally mobilized at the site, bringing additional technical capacity and execution strength to the project. Authorities anticipate that development momentum will further intensify by the end of January, transforming the pace and scale of operations across the sector. Addressing technical preparations, the spokesperson revealed that a comprehensive joint survey will be conducted during the first quarter to record natural surface levels. This will pave the way for extensive earthwork operations, including large-scale leveling and grading – a critical step toward laying the groundwork for modern urban infrastructure. Responding to concerns regarding rising construction material costs, the official assured allottees that FGEHA had proactively incorporated an escalation factor into the project's PC-1 planning document. "The financial framework already accounts for anticipated market fluctuations," he said, underscoring the Authority's

foresight in financial planning. On the issue of installment payments, the spokesperson disclosed that approximately 55 percent of allottees have cleared their third installment to date. Regarding the possibility of an extension, he clarified that no formal decision has been made. "At present, the deadline has expired. Whether to grant further time or impose a penalty rests entirely with the Board," he explained. He added that, so far, no penalties have been imposed, but the matter remains under consideration. FGEHA reiterated that sustained cooperation from members remains essential to ensure the timely achievement of project milestones. The Authority expressed appreciation for the continued trust of its allottees and reaffirmed its commitment to delivering a well-planned, fully serviced residential sector. For further information or assistance, members may contact FGEHA's UAN at 051-111-134-342 during official working hours.—APP

Islamabad to host Kyrgyz Cultural Day:Khichi

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is preparing to welcome a vibrant celebration of Central Asian culture as Kyrgyz Cultural Days are set to unfold in the capital during the last week of March 2026. Planned on the directives of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the one-to-two-day festival will showcase the rich tapestry of Kyrgyz heritage through handicrafts, traditional cuisine, costumes, art and photography exhibitions, film screenings, and music and dance performances as Pakistan arranges full hospitality for the visiting delegation from Kyrgyzstan. The cultural exchange marks just one element of an ambitious vision outlined by Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, in an exclusive interview with Speaking about Pakistan's evolving cultural diplomacy, the minister detailed a comprehensive agenda that spans from international partnerships to heritage

preservation and institutional reform, painting a picture of a nation ready to leverage its ancient civilizational legacy on the global stage. Beyond the Kyrgyz celebrations, Pakistan is also preparing to host Nowruz festivities, extending invitations to several countries with whom it maintains diplomatic relations, including Kyrgyzstan. These events reflect a broader strategy of cultural engagement that the minister sees as essential to projecting Pakistan's peaceful image and fostering people-to-people connections across borders. Highlighting a major milestone, the minister said the country will launch its National Culture Policy soon on the prime minister's directives. Crafted with input from all provinces to ensure true inclusivity, the policy aims to preserve Pakistan's cultural identity while empowering the country's artists and writers. The minister describes it as a national mission designed to project Pakistan's peaceful

and ancient civilizational image to a world audience. As Khichi stated, with the launch of the National Culture Policy, Pakistan is opening a new chapter in cultural diplomacy, heritage preservation, and soft image promotion. The scale of Pakistan's cultural ambitions becomes clearer when examining the expanding network of international partnerships. The ministry plans to expand the number of cultural agreements, from around 86 nations, upto 125 soon, creating an unprecedented web of artistic and educational exchange. By year's end, Pakistan's first degree-awarding fine arts institution will open its doors, complementing art classes already launched at Lok Virsa. Meanwhile, digitization initiatives are modernizing the National Library, the Pakistan Academy of Letters, and the National Language Promotion Department, ensuring that Pakistan's literary and linguistic treasures are preserved.—APP

Work on Akram Wah Canal project

ISLAMABAD: The rehabilitation and improvement of the Akram Wah Canal under the World Bank-financed Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation (SWAT) Project is expected to begin in March 2026 According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the SWAT project supported through International Development Association (IDA) Credits 7254-PK and 7255-PK amounting to \$292 million has a total cost of \$320 million, including the government of Sindh's contribution. The project is being implemented by the irrigation and agriculture departments with the objective of improving agricultural water productivity, strengthening irrigation services, and supporting small and medium farmers. The districts where project is being implemented include Badin, Dadu, Ghotki, Hyderabad, Jacobabad, Jamshoro, Kashmore, Khairpur Mirs, Larkana, Matiari, Mirpur Khas, Naushahro Feroze, Qambar Shahdadkot, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazir Abad, Shikarpur, Sujawal, Sukkur, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tharparkar, Thatta and Umerkot. Institutional and agricultural components of the project have already shown progress, including the launch of the hydro-agro informatics program, preparation of area development plans for farmer organizations, and field demonstrations on climate-smart agriculture. The project financing includes a \$98 million concessional credit with a 30-year repayment period and a \$192 million non-concessional credit based on the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) plus spread. The project was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) in 2022 following recommendations by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP), and later cleared by the World Bank Board. The project is considered a flagship initiative to improve water governance, irrigation efficiency, and agricultural resilience in Sindh.—APP

Motorbikes sale increases 32 pc in 7 months

ISLAMABAD: The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country has witnessed an increase of 32.04 per cent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2025-26) as compared to sales of the corresponding months of the last year. During July-January (2025-26), as many as 1103,356 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold against the sale of 835,616 units in July-January (2024-25), according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). The sale of Honda motorcycles surged by 34.49 per cent from 703,226 units to 945,801 units, whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also rose by 45.80 per cent from 13,910 units to 20,282 units during the period under review. The sales of United Auto motorcycles witnessed an increase of 26.54 per cent from 80,370 units to 101,703 units, while the sales of Yamaha motorbikes came down to 1,333 units from 3,132 units, witnessing a decrease of 57.43 per cent. Meanwhile, the sale of United Auto three-wheelers increased from 581 units to 844 units during the period under review, while the sale of Qingqi three-wheelers also increased by 5.30 percent from 6,203 units to 6,532 units. However, Sazgar three-wheelers sales slipped by 2.21 per cent to 14,574 units from 14,904 units last year.—APP

PNCA Live Series-1 concludes successfully

ISLAMABAD:The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) successfully concluded the inaugural edition of its landmark initiative, PNCA Live Series-1, marking a vibrant revival of live music and youth engagement at the national cultural institution. The evening featured an electrifying performance by the acclaimed band Khumariyan, whose powerful fusion of traditional Pashto folk melodies and contemporary rhythms captivated a packed auditorium. The event witnessed an overwhelming response from youngsters, music enthusiasts, and families, creating an atmosphere filled with energy, applause, and celebration. The PNCA Live Series, produced and initiated by Mr Inayat Ur Rahman, Supervisor of Performing Arts, PNCA, aims to provide a dynamic and inclusive platform for artists from across Pakistan. The initiative is designed to promote cultural diversity, encourage youth participation in the arts, and strengthen national integration through live performance. Speaking on the occasion, the Director General, PNCA, Ayoub Jamali appreciated the overwhelming public response and stated, "The successful launch of PNCA Live Series reflects the growing demand for quality live performances and youth-centered cultural programming. PNCA remains committed to providing sustainable platforms for artists from all regions of Pakistan and fostering a vibrant cultural environment." Following the remarkable success of Series 1, PNCA is pleased to announce that PNCA Live Series 2 will be launched soon, continuing the momentum of celebrating Pakistan's rich and diverse musical landscape. Details regarding the upcoming edition will be announced shortly. Through this initiative, PNCA reaffirms its commitment to nurturing artistic talent, revitalizing live music culture, and engaging the younger generation in meaningful cultural experiences.—APP

Pakistan, China launch 75th anniversary celebrations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China formally marked the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with a vibrant award ceremony held in Karachi, Gwadar Pro reported. It underscored the enduring strength of a partnership widely described as an "all-weather strategic cooperative relationship." The event, centered around the awards ceremony of a logo design competition commemorating the milestone, was organized by the Directorate General of the Liaison Office of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Karachi. The ceremony celebrated creative expressions symbolizing the historic and multifaceted bond between Islamabad and Beijing. The Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi, Yang Yundong, attended as chief guest and distributed prizes to competition winners, including third-prize recipient Nayab Zahra, whose design reflected the depth and cultural richness of China-Pakistan friendship. Diplomats from Malaysia and Indonesia were also present, along with senior Pakistani officials.—APP

SUPARCO launches advanced 'Pak-SBAS' navigation system

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's national space agency, Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), has achieved a major milestone in navigation technology with the successful launch of its state-of-the-art Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) device, branded as Pak-SBAS, during the Cholistan Rally 2026. The cutting-edge navigation system was rigorously tested in the extreme desert conditions of Cholistan, where high speeds, unpredictable routes, and the absence of visual landmarks demand exceptional positioning accuracy and signal reliability. Throughout the rally, Pak-SBAS demonstrated remarkable performance by delivering highly precise location data, stable signal continuity, and integrated route tracking. By applying SBAS corrections, the system significantly reduced positioning errors compared to conventional GNSS technologies, offering rally drivers and navigation teams a new level of confidence essential for competitive desert racing. According to a SUPARCO spokesperson, the Pak-SBAS technology holds vast potential beyond motorsports. It is expected to enhance disaster response operations through accurate tracking of rescue teams and affected areas, improve transport efficiency via real-time vehicle positioning, and strengthen aviation safety with more reliable navigation support. Additionally, the system will benefit the surveying and mapping sectors by minimizing positional inaccuracies and reducing project costs. The launch of Pak-SBAS marks a major step toward strengthening public safety, operational efficiency, and technological self-reliance in Pakistan, positioning the country among emerging leaders in advanced satellite-based navigation solutions.—APP

Briefs

RCCI
delegation
explores
bilateral trade

RAWALPINDI: A trade delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), led by President Usman Shaukat, held an interactive meeting with President of the Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey (CIANJ) Anthony Russo and executive members to explore avenues for bilateral business collaboration. The meeting was also attended by Shama Haider, the first-ever Pakistani State Representative in the New Jersey Legislature, and Adnan Awan, Trade Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan. Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi and RCCI members representing diverse sectors were present. The discussions focused on fostering a conducive business environment to facilitate joint ventures and investment opportunities between businesses based in Pakistan and New Jersey. Both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening institutional linkages, promoting sector-specific partnerships and encouraging private-sector engagement to advance mutually beneficial economic cooperation. The engagement reflects RCCI's continued commitment to expanding international trade ties and creating new avenues for investment and sustainable business growth.—DNA

Police holds
consultative
meeting
with TPL

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Safe City Command and Control team held an important consultative meeting with TPL Maps Company to explore the development of modern, technology-driven software aimed at strengthening patrol operations in the federal capital. An official told on Sunday that Director IT Atif Abbas, Deputy Director NOC Intiaz Ahmed, and Assistant Director Abbas Mehdi participated in the meeting along with Digital Control Room officers and the Safe City technical team. He said the meeting focused on developing advanced software integrated with digital mapping systems to improve the efficiency of patrol vehicles and motorcycles. The proposed technology is intended to enhance response time, situational awareness, and overall crime prevention capabilities. The official said the performance of the Digital Control Room and existing police software systems was also reviewed, while further technological improvements were discussed.—APP

IGP reviews
Red Zone
security,
orders tighter
surveillance

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi visited the Red Zone to review security arrangements and operational preparedness in the high-security area. An official told on Sunday that SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza and other senior police officers accompanied the IGP Rizvi during the visit. He said the IGP Rizvi inspected security measures at key government and private institutions and reviewed the checking process at entry and exit checkpoints. The IGP directed officers to further strengthen security and ensure that all protective measures are implemented without exception. The official said the IGP Rizvi also emphasized effective monitoring through Safe City cameras to maintain constant vigilance and enable immediate response to any suspicious activity. Later, the IGP Rizvi chaired a meeting at the Security Division, which was attended by DIG Headquarters Malik Jameel Zafar, SSP Security Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider, AIG Special Branch Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, SSP Investigations Muhammad Usman Tariq Butt, and SSP CTD Muhammad Arsalan Shahzeb. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on security of the Red Zone and other sensitive locations, intelligence sharing, inter-district coordination.—APP



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassadors of the Member States of the Organization of Turkic States came together in Islamabad with H.E. Askhat Kessikbayev, Vice President of the Turkic Academy. During the meeting views were exchanged on shared values and avenues for cooperation across the Turkic world.=DNA

Chinese Industrial group prepares feasibility for Sea-to-steel corridor

According to an official statement, Anwar Chaudhry chaired a high-level review meeting on Friday focused on advancing the Integrated Maritime Industrial Complex (IMIC), a major project designed to modernize industrial operations through port infrastructure upgrades, shipbuilding and recycling facilities, and an integrated steel mill

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese industrial group will submit a comprehensive feasibility study for Pakistan's proposed Sea-to-Steel Green Maritime Industrial Corridor at Port Qasim, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said, as the government reviewed plans to accelerate the flagship initiative aimed at boosting domestic steel production. According to an official statement, Anwar Chaudhry chaired a high-level review meeting on Friday focused on advancing the Integrated Maritime Industrial Complex (IMIC), a major project designed to modernize industrial operations through port infrastructure

upgrades, shipbuilding and recycling facilities, and an integrated steel mill. Representatives from China's Shandong Xinxu Group attended the meeting, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. Port Qasim Authority Chairman Rear Admiral (Ret.) Syed Moazzam Ilyas joined via video link from Karachi, Gwadar Pro reported. The Chinese group, which has shown keen interest in the initiative, will submit an unsolicited feasibility study covering financial impact assessments, structural and hydrographic analyses, and quantitative risk evaluations. The IMIC includes three core components, including the revival and

upgrading of the Iron Ore and Coal Berth (IOCB) jetty. The facility will support ship recycling and repair, with recycled scrap feeding an integrated steel mill to revive domestic production capacity. Branded as the "Sea-to-Steel Green Maritime Industrial Corridor," the project aims to connect ship recycling with steel manufacturing, reducing reliance on imported raw materials while leveraging recyclable scrap generated locally. Minister Chaudhry positioned IMIC as a key driver of Pakistan's blue economy by creating industrial value through maritime assets. "Once submitted, the proposal will undergo thorough review before any decision," Chaudhry said.

"If approved, IMIC would rank among Pakistan's largest recent maritime and industrial investments, cementing Port Qasim as a regional hub for heavy industry and logistics." Pakistan continues to seek foreign investment in ports and industrial infrastructure to boost exports, create jobs, and ease pressure on foreign exchange reserves. Chaudhry noted that integrated recycling, manufacturing, and logistics projects could reduce steel imports and strengthen domestic production. The minister emphasized that any approval would depend on alignment with national priorities, including job creation, value addition, and adherence to sustainable development standards.

Jam announces laptops for BRC Othal students

The meeting concluded with students thanking the Minister for his time, guidance, and the laptop initiative, describing it as a meaningful step toward equipping them for the digital future

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Saturday announced the provision of laptops to all second-year students of the final batch of Balochistan Residential College Othal, underscoring the government's commitment to equipping youth with digital tools essential for competing in a rapidly evolving technological world. The announcement came during an interactive meeting, where students and faculty members of BRC Othal called on the Minister as part of their All Pakistan study tour, said a news release. "Access to technology is essential for youth to compete in the modern world driven by innovation and artificial intelligence," Jam Kamal emphasized. The minister recalled that BRC Othal was established as a gift to the people of Lasbela by his late father, former Chief Minister of Balochistan Jam Mir Muhammad Yousaf, reflecting the Jam family's long-standing commitment to education and knowledge. He described the institution as a symbol of empowerment for the youth of Balochistan. Addressing the students, Jam Kamal spoke about the rapidly evolving global technological landscape, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence. He noted that technologies available today through mobile phones can perform tasks that once required multiple offices and professionals, and that within months, these capabilities will grow exponentially. He cautioned that many traditional jobs may disappear in the coming years and advised students to pursue future-oriented fields. He highlighted agriculture and livestock, engineering, computer science, data centers, battery technology, the power sector, and mining as key areas of opportunity. Referring to Balochistan's mineral wealth, the minister said the province is rich in copper, gold, chromite, manganese, iron, and antimony—critical resources for semiconductors, advanced electronics, and modern industries. "Proper exploration and utilization of these resources could significantly transform the region's economy", he added. Jam kamal stressed the importance of uninterrupted education, reminding students that lost academic opportunities are difficult to recover. Emerging disciplines such as biomedical sciences, neuroscience, and research were cited as promising pathways beyond traditional career options. Highlighting the need for modern facilities, he underscored the importance of fiber optic connectivity, high-tech laboratories, and innovation-driven universities. He encouraged students to aim for institutions such as the National University of Sciences and Technology, which integrate industry, research, and advanced technology. The meeting concluded with students thanking the Minister for his time, guidance, and the laptop initiative, describing it as a meaningful step toward equipping them for the digital future.=DNA

International Group TANG signs MoU

The partnership with TANG is expected to further strengthen these efforts by expanding access to digital education and opening new pathways for employment and entrepreneurship for women across Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major step toward expanding employment opportunities for women in Pakistan, TANG has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with She Means Work (SMW), a Pakistani organization dedicated to empowering women through jobs, skills development, and entrepreneurship. In a statement issued late Friday, TANG said, "The partnership aims to expand access to quality digital education, especially in rural and underserved areas while placing special focus on women empowerment."

"It will equip women with in-demand digital skills, improve access to employment opportunities, and support entrepreneurship," it added. Song Jianying, the head of TANG in Pakistan and Ms. Lubna Bhayat, founder of SMW signed the agreement. Under the agreement, SMW will collaborate with TANG to expand access to digital learning programs nationwide. The initiative is expected to enhance skills, support career advancement, and help individuals, especially women, participate more actively in Pakistan's growing digital economy. SMW is a Pakistan-based organization focused on empowering women by connecting them with employment, skills training, and entrepreneurial opportunities. The organization has built a dedicated community aimed at assisting women, especially mothers returning to work, fresh graduates, and persons with disabilities, to overcome barriers to employment. SMW provides a comprehensive ecosystem designed to support women's professional growth. Through its job portal, it connects women with verified employment opportunities across Pakistan, helping them secure reliable and

meaningful work. The organization also runs several initiatives to promote economic empowerment. Its Ventureher program supports women entrepreneurs by providing training, business development support, and access to financing opportunities, helping women scale their businesses and achieve financial independence. The partnership with TANG is expected to further strengthen these efforts by expanding access to digital education and opening new pathways for employment and entrepreneurship for women across Pakistan.

Special
children get
customised
wheelchairs

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Attock Rao Atif Raza on Saturday said concrete steps were being taken to ensure rehabilitation and social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the district.

He was addressing a ceremony held at the Government Asfand Yar Bukhari District Hospital where customised wheelchairs were distributed among special children, reported by APP correspondent.

During the ceremony, 50 customised wheelchairs were distributed among special children. Officials said this marked the second phase of the initiative, adding that 350 wheelchairs had already been distributed in the first phase.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC reaffirmed the administration's commitment to supporting special children and enabling them to become active members of society. He said caring for and facilitating persons with disabilities was a collective responsibility, and the district administration would continue to extend full support to welfare-oriented initiatives.—DNA

Pak's fodder
export sector
eyes China
markets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's rapidly expanding fodder export industry is targeting annual exports of up to US \$1 billion within five years, with industry leaders identifying China along with Saudi Arabia as decisive markets for achieving that goal, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. According to Pakistani official trade data, Pakistan exported over 930,000 tons of animal feed worth US \$112.2 million during the last fiscal year. However, exporters remain heavily dependent on a single market, the United Arab Emirates, which accounted for the largest share of purchases. At the center of Pakistan's export push is Rhodes grass, a high-protein tropical fodder widely used to feed dairy cattle, camels, horses, and other livestock in water-scarce Gulf countries. As desert climates and water shortages limit domestic cultivation in Gulf states, reliance on imported fodder has grown steadily. Industry representatives have called on Pakistan's trade authorities to secure government-to-government agreements that would facilitate product registration and market access in China. Exporters believe that once approved, fodder shipments to China could potentially move via land routes.

FUUAST to commence
Spring semester on Feb 16

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Urdu University Islamabad (FUUAST) will commence its Spring Semester 2026 from Monday, February 16 Orientation sessions and classes for newly admitted students will begin next week, while regular classes for students enrolled in the second through eighth semesters will start from February 16 as scheduled. Vice Chancellor Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari stated that a comprehensive strategy has been devised to further strengthen academic and research activities at the university. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to transforming the institution into a strong and exemplary center of higher learning through close collaboration between faculty and students.—APP

Jordan's growing role in Turkish foreign policy

DR. SINEM CENGİZ

TURKIYE and Jordan were significantly affected by the Syrian civil war that lasted more than a decade. Now, with the collapse of the Bashar Assad regime in December 2024, a new dynamic has emerged along Türkiye's southern and Jordan's northern borders — one that calls for closer coordination between the two states. Jordan, a relatively small state known for its neutral regional policy, has not traditionally occupied a prominent place in Turkish foreign policy. But its geopolitical importance is far too significant to neglect. It has crucial potential when it comes to countering shared regional security challenges. Recent high-level meetings between Ankara and Amman, therefore, merit a closer look to better understand the possibility for Turkish-Jordanian cooperation. Jordan's King Abdullah paid an official visit to Türkiye last week at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who received him at the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. King Abdullah's last visit to Türkiye took place in February 2019. Back then, the regional picture looked very different. Now, the region has been reshaped by a series of major events — from the Oct. 7 attacks to the Iran-Israel war and the fall of the Assad regime — that have fundamentally shifted the political and security dynamics surrounding these two countries. With the fall of the Assad regime, Jordan has emerged as a key partner in Türkiye's regional policy, particularly regarding Syria and Gaza. For Türkiye, Jordan represents both a stabilizing actor on its southern periphery and a practical partner in managing the post-Assad regional order. Amman and Ankara have found themselves on the same page in regard to regional crises. Jordan therefore became part of a regional cooperation mechanism established between Türkiye, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, which is aimed at coordinating responses to shared security challenges. Amman has hosted high-level regional security meetings led by Türkiye, bringing together foreign ministers, defense ministers and intelligence chiefs to discuss counterterrorism efforts and broader regional threats. It was through Jordanian-Turkish cooperation that a joint mission to support Syria's fight against terrorist organizations, particularly Daesh, was established. At the request of the new leadership in Syria, this joint mission was set up to operate in Damascus, marking a concrete step toward institutionalized regional security cooperation. Jordan and Türkiye are also part of US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace, further highlighting their shared role in the Gaza peace process. In their joint statement, King Abdullah and Erdogan underscored the importance of preserving the territorial integrity,

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sovereignty and national unity of all regional states. This emphasis reflects a shared outlook. Jordan has long pursued a status quo-oriented foreign policy, prioritizing stability along its borders. Türkiye's support for a centralized and territorially unified Syria closely aligns with Jordanian interests in this regard. Both countries view fragmentation and instability in Syria as a direct threat to their security, making their policy convergence not only strategic but also necessary. Amman not only occupies a key position in terms of security cooperation, but also in economic coordination. Jordan was also chosen to host NATO's first liaison office in the Middle East. This opened last September, underscoring the country's geopolitical importance. Jordan has been a member of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue since 1995. As a NATO partner, Türkiye views the alliance's cooperation with Amman as increasingly significant, as its presence in the country will help strengthen the regional security architecture. Amman not only occupies a key position in terms of security cooperation, but also in economic coordination. Jordan and Türkiye, along with Syria, are working on a joint initiative to restore the historic Hejaz railway, focusing on the segment linking the three countries as part of efforts to rebuild regional transport and trade networks disrupted by years of conflict and border closures. Officials from the three countries have agreed on preliminary terms to draft a memorandum of understanding covering the restoration of damaged railway lines. At one time, the railway was referred to as the "Iron Silk Road" due to its economic, social and political importance. The railway is "a relic of the bygone dream of regional unity before wars, borders and more advanced modes of transportation rendered its services obsolete." Today, the three nations see its revival as both symbolic and strategic to restore regional connectivity, boost trade and contribute to postwar reconstruction. Another key cooperation between Ankara and Amman involves boosting the overland freight route from Jordan's Aqaba Port to Türkiye and onward to Eastern Europe through trilateral cooperation agreements. Turkish Trade Minister Omer Bolat noted that Turkish contractors were invited to participate in Jordan's \$15 billion development and infrastructure projects. Moreover, in 2011, Jordan signed an agreement with Türkiye on cooperating to develop nuclear energy, paving the way for closer ties between the two countries. This week, the Saudi Cabinet was authorized to negotiate and sign draft agreements on peaceful nuclear and atomic energy cooperation with the governments of Jordan and Türkiye. Türkiye and Jordan are also collaborating on a road corridor that will allow Turkish trucks to reach Jordan and the Gulf countries via Syria. The corridor is expected to become fully operational next year, once remaining issues in Syria are resolved, and it is projected to significantly boost regional trade. Bolat emphasized the importance of this route, stating: "Once we revive these roads and railways as they existed before 2010, trade and people's prosperity will rapidly increase." His reference to the pre-2010 period is particularly significant. Ankara views coordination with regional states as a crucial element of its regional policy and, within this context, Jordan appears to be a key potential partner in Türkiye's regional outlook.

Trump Defies Israel on Iran Strategy

Qamar Bashir



First, domestic opinion is shifting. The Gaza war has deeply polarized American society. Estimates from humanitarian agencies suggest total Palestinian fatalities — direct and indirect — have surpassed 80,000 since the conflict's escalation. The scale of destruction has fueled sustained protests across American universities and major cities. Younger voters increasingly question unconditional military assistance and open-ended strategic alignment. Organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee remain influential, but the environment has changed. Campaign contributions and policy alignments...

BENJAMIN Netanyahu's recent rush to Washington was not routine diplomacy. It was a geopolitical stress test. Since President Donald Trump resumed office, the Israeli prime minister has maintained close coordination with Washington. Yet this visit carried an urgency that signaled concern — perhaps even anxiety. The core question hovering over the meeting was unmistakable: Would the United States once again expand confrontation with Iran under Israeli pressure, or was Washington beginning to assert strategic independence? The regional environment is tense. The United States has reinforced its military posture across the Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean, citing deterrence and stability. Iran's nuclear enrichment levels — reportedly reaching up to 60% purity according to the International Atomic Energy Agency — remain the focal point of Western concern. Tehran insists its program is peaceful and reversible, while Israel views it as an existential threshold. Netanyahu arrived seeking expansion of the negotiation framework. Israel has long argued that any agreement must go beyond uranium enrichment to include limits on Iran's ballistic missile program and restrictions on its regional alliances. In Israeli strategic doctrine, Iran's missile range and regional deterrence network form a unified threat architecture. Yet post-meeting signals from Washington were restrained. President Trump indicated that nuclear talks would continue — but remain confined to the nuclear file. No immediate commitment was made to incorporate missile restrictions or regional dismantlement demands. That silence spoke volumes. For decades, Washington's Middle East posture closely mirrored Israeli security framing. This time, the United States appeared to draw a boundary. Why now? First, domestic opinion is shifting. The Gaza war has deeply polarized American society. Estimates from humanitarian agencies suggest total Palestinian fatalities — direct and indirect — have surpassed 80,000 since the conflict's escalation. The scale of destruction has fueled sustained protests across American universities and major cities. Younger voters increasingly question unconditional military assistance and open-ended strategic alignment. Organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Com-

mittee remain influential, but the environment has changed. Campaign contributions and policy alignments are scrutinized in real time through digital media ecosystems. Lawmakers now face direct public questioning regarding foreign aid allocations and lobbying relationships. Second, the economic calculus is sobering. A full-scale war with Iran would dwarf previous Middle Eastern interventions. The Iraq War cost the United States an estimated \$2-3 trillion over two decades. Iran is geographically larger, militarily more advanced, and strategically integrated into regional networks. Disruption of the Strait of Hormuz — through which roughly 20% of global oil supply flows — could send crude prices above \$150 per barrel. Inflationary shocks would ripple through American households already burdened by high interest rates and federal debt exceeding \$34 trillion. Third, the geopolitical landscape is no longer unipolar. China and Russia maintain strategic partnerships with Tehran. Europe has little appetite for another Middle Eastern war. The Global South increasingly resists Western military adventurism. Any unilateral escalation risks diplomatic isolation rather than coalition-building. In this context, "America First" takes on new meaning. Strategic restraint becomes not weakness, but prudence. Netanyahu's urgency reflects Israel's own vulnerability calculations. From Jerusalem's perspective, Iran's missile program and regional alliances create encirclement risk. Israel's security doctrine prioritizes preemption and dominance. But Washington's calculus is broader: preserving global stability, economic balance, and strategic bandwidth across multiple theaters — including Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific. Nuclear containment through verifiable inspection may be imperfect, but it is far less costly than war. The International Atomic Energy Agency remains central to any enforceable framework. If Iran restores comprehensive inspection access and caps enrichment levels, escalation logic weakens. Tehran frequently references a religious decree prohibiting nuclear weapons, though Western governments demand technical verification over theological assurances. Washington increasingly recognizes that unqualified alignment with Israel carries reputational costs. In a world where emerging powers challenge U.S. moral authority, strategic over-

reach erodes influence. There is also the question of sustainability. Continuous regional fragmentation — Iraq, Syria, Libya — has not produced durable stability. Military decapitation strategies have often created power vacuums rather than order. Iran, unlike those states, possesses cohesive national institutions and deep historical identity. Attempting regime destabilization would carry unpredictable consequences. The emerging signal from Washington is not abandonment of Israel. It is recalibration. Conditional partnership rather than automatic escalation. In geopolitical terms, this is subtle but profound. For the first time in decades, the United States appears willing to define its own negotiation parameters, even when they do not fully align with Israeli maximalist positions. If diplomacy holds, several outcomes become possible. Nuclear transparency reduces immediate escalation risk. Multilateral engagement on Gaza diffuses regional tension. Economic stabilization limits energy shocks. Strategic focus remains distributed rather than concentrated in one volatile theater. But if negotiations collapse, pressure will return — from hawkish factions in Washington and from Israeli leadership advocating preemption. The durability of this recalibration will then face its true test. History rarely pivots on dramatic declarations. It turns on measured refusals — on lines quietly drawn. Netanyahu's urgent visit may ultimately be remembered not for what was demanded, but for what was declined. If Washington sustains its current posture, it signals a new doctrine: partnership without submission, deterrence without recklessness, and diplomacy before dominance. In a region long defined by escalation cycles, even strategic restraint can reshape history. The question is no longer whether America supports Israel. The question is whether America will define its Middle East policy by Israeli urgency — or by American interest. The answer to that question may determine the next decade of regional stability.

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

Vigilance Under the Banner of Peace

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Pakistan, in particular, does not approach international commitments with historical amnesia. Its leadership—civil and military alike—remains acutely conscious of past tragedies in which lofty assurances of international protection dissolved into silence at the decisive hour. The present global attention upon Pakistan, and upon the leadership...

WHEN Pakistan, alongside several Islamic nations, affixed its signature to the agreement at Davos to join the Peace Board for the reconstruction of Gaza, in the presence of the President of the United States, a wave of criticism arose from various quarters. Some questioned the necessity of such a forum, arguing that the United Nations already exists for purposes of peacekeeping and reconstruction. Others suspected hidden motives or feared diplomatic entanglements. Yet those who study history with sobriety rather than sentiment understood that participation in such a platform is neither naïve compliance nor symbolic alignment; it is a calculated engagement shaped by memory, experience, and vigilance. Pakistan, in particular, does not approach international commitments with historical amnesia. Its leadership—civil and military alike—remains acutely conscious of past tragedies in which lofty assurances of international protection dissolved into silence at the decisive hour. The present global attention upon Pakistan, and upon the leadership of its armed forces is not without reason. Pakistan has long contributed to United Nations peacekeeping missions across continents. It knows both the nobility of peacekeeping and the perils of misplaced reliance. This balanced awareness shapes its current stance; engaging without being misled, working together while staying alert. The memory of Bosnia stands as a solemn testament to why caution must accompany every promise of protection. In July 1995, in the town of Srebrenica—declared a "safe area" by the United Nations—the world witnessed one of the darkest chapters of post-Second World War Europe. The enclave had been placed under the protection of Dutch peacekeepers, operating as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). This Force, was established in 1992 to ensure peace and security during the Yugoslav Wars, particularly in Bosnia and Croatia. Its responsibilities included monitoring zones of separation and weapons control points, as well as overseeing weapons exclusion zones. The mandate

was clear in language, yet ambiguous in execution. The Dutch battalion was tasked with safeguarding tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslim civilians who had sought refuge from advancing Serb forces. On the evening before the catastrophe, a photograph was taken that would later become emblematic of tragic irony; the Dutch UN commander, Lieutenant Colonel Thom Karremans, raising a glass in conversation with General Ratko Mladić, the Serb military commander. Diplomacy, in that fleeting moment, seemed to prevail over hostility. Assurances were exchanged. Confidence was projected. Yet beneath the veneer of negotiation lay a calculated design. Earlier, Bosnian Muslim defenders within Srebrenica had managed, despite limited resources, to resist repeated assaults. But under international pressure and in deference to the promise of UN protection, they were urged to surrender their weapons. Commander Karremans assured them that the United Nations would ensure their safety. Trusting in the credibility of the international community, many complied. Arms were laid down. Defensive positions were relinquished. The population believed that the blue helmets symbolized an inviolable shield. At dawn, the illusion shattered. Serb forces entered Srebrenica with methodical precision. Appeals for NATO air support were delayed and diluted. Limited airstrikes, when finally authorized, proved insufficient and were soon halted under threat to UN personnel. At the moment, the Dutch peacekeepers chose not to resist with force. Instead, they supervised the separation of men and boys from women and children under the guise of "screening." In heartbreaking scenes, families were split apart right before the eyes of those meant to protect them. Over the next four days, more than eight thousand Bosnian Muslim men and boys were systematically executed. Mass graves were filled in secrecy and later exhumed in sorrow. The massacre of Srebrenica was not a sudden frenzy but a calculated campaign of extermination carried out in the presence of an international

force that neither intervened decisively nor prevented the unfolding atrocity. Subsequent investigations and judicial proceedings would recognize it as genocide. Years later, Dutch courts acknowledged partial responsibility of the Netherlands for failing to protect certain victims who had sought refuge within the UN compound. The tragedy wasn't just about the attackers' brutality; it was also the devastating failure of a system that had promised to protect their lives but ultimately didn't. The disarming of a vulnerable population under assurances of protection remains one of the most haunting lessons of that episode. It echoes the Qur'anic warning: "The disbelievers wish that you would neglect your arms and your baggage so they could descend upon you in one attack" (Surah An-Nisa 4:102). The verse is not an incitement to aggression; it is a call to vigilance. It counsels preparedness even in moments that appear secure. To recall Srebrenica is not to imprison ourselves in grievance, but to remain aware. Real protection resides not in signatures alone, nor in ceremonial gatherings, but in preparedness, unity, and unshaken trust in Allah. International cooperation has its place; diplomacy is indispensable; reconstruction efforts must proceed. Yet no nation, particularly one conscious of the vulnerabilities of the Muslim world, can afford complacency. Pakistan's engagement with the Peace Board for Gaza must therefore be understood through this prism. It seeks a seat at the table where decisions are shaped, not as a passive recipient of outcomes but as an active guardian of its principles. Islamic countries, having witnessed how the language of peace was once manipulated while a massacre unfolded, cannot allow the market of bloodshed to be reheated under the banner of humanitarian concern. History does not demand perpetual suspicion, but it does command informed vigilance. The lesson of Bosnia is neither isolation nor surrender; it is balanced strength. A nation that remembers Srebrenica signs agreements with open eyes, keeps its defences intact, and places its ultimate reliance not on fragile guarantees, but on preparedness guided by faith.

Briefs

Green Shirts easily concede...

FROM PAGE 01

Varun Chakravarthy, who struck again in the 16th over to send back Abrar Ahmed for a golden duck and brought the total down to 97/9. Pandya then inflicted the decisive blow on Pakistan by cleaning up No.11 Usman Tariq. For India, Bumrah, Patel, Pandya and Chakravarthy led the way with two wickets each, while Kuldeep Yadav and Tilak Varma. Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha's decision to field first did not prove beneficial for the Green Shirts as the Men in Blue accumulated 175/7 in their 20 overs. India got off to a dismal start to their innings as Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha's decision to open the attack gave them a massive breakthrough in the form of top-ranked T20I batter Abhishek Sharma, who fell for a four-ball duck. Following the early stutter, opener Kishan forced an astounding recovery by putting together a one-sided second-wicket partnership with Tilak Varma. The partnership frustrated Pakistan's bowling unit and yielded 87 runs off 45 deliveries before Saim Ayub gave the Green Shirts a much-needed breakthrough by getting rid of set batter Kishan, who remained the top-scorer with a 40-ball 77, comprising 10 fours and three sixes. Kishan's dismissal forced the new pair of Varma and Suryakumar Yadav to rework the innings as they batted cautiously to add 38 runs for the third-wicket stand before Saim pulled things back by dismissing the left-handed batter and Hardik Pandya (zero) in successive deliveries.

Trump says Iran regime change is...

FROM PAGE 01

strike Iran to stop a government crackdown on mass protests in which thousands of people were killed. The wave of demonstrations marked one of the most dramatic upheavals in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, which installed the current Islamic regime. While Trump has threatened strikes on Iran if no nuclear agreement can be reached, he insisted after talking to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Wednesday that discussions with Tehran would continue. Speaking at Fort Bragg on Friday evening, Trump said Iran should "give us a deal that they should have given us the first time" when asked what the Middle East country should do to avoid an attack. The US has pushed for Iran to halt its uranium enrichment, while Netanyahu's government has insisted Tehran should cut its ballistic missiles programme and support for proxy groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Police officer gunned down in...

FROM PAGE 01

especially after the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) broke a ceasefire agreement with the government in November 2022. Earlier this week, at least four policemen, including an SHO, were martyred as armed terrorists attacked a police party in Pania's Wanda Budh area in Dera Ismail Khan, police said. According to a police statement, the incident occurred as the police party was returning after a search operation. Militants hiding in nearby forests opened fire on them, prompting the officers to return fire. Four policemen were martyred in the attack, and there were reports of as many militants being killed in the exchange of fire. Separately, in the Kardok area of Bajaur's Salazarai tehsil, an unexploded mortar shell detonated on Sunday afternoon, killing a child and injuring eight other people, including a woman. According to initial reports and rescue sources, eight children and one woman were injured in the incident and were moved to Khar Hospital for medical treatment. Preliminary information suggested that the children found an unexploded mortar shell and brought it home.

India A clinch victory over Pakistan A in Asia Cup

India A complete 94-run chase with 59 balls to spare

DNA

ISLAMABAD: India A dominated Pakistan A in a one-sided contest at the Tardhai Cricket Ground, winning by eight wickets in the ACC Asia Cup Rising Stars Women's 2026 on Sunday. Chasing a modest target of 94 runs, India A overcame early jitters after losing opener Humaira Kazi on the very first delivery. Another opener, Dinesh Vrinda, was joined by Anushka Sharma, and the pair quickly stabilised the innings while maintaining an aggressive approach. They added 79 runs for the second partnership. Vrinda remained unbeaten on 55 off just 29 balls, smashing 12 boundaries, while Anushka contributed a crucial 24 runs before being removed. For Pakistan, Waheeda Akhtar and Momin Riasat picked up a wicket each. Batting first after winning the toss, Pakistan A were bundled out for just 93 after having a disastrous start, losing four wickets for just 21 runs inside the powerplay. The Green Shirts never recovered, with wickets falling at regular intervals, leaving them all out for a meager total. Shawaal Zulfiqar top-scored with 23 runs, while



Gull Rukh added 21 and Anosha Nasir contributed 17. Apart from these three, no other batter managed to reach double figures. India A's bowlers dominated from start to finish. Saima Thakor, Radha

Yadav, and Prema Rawat each claimed two wickets, effectively dismantling Pakistan A's lineup. Pakistan A and India A have been placed in Group A alongside Nepal and the United Arab Emir-

ates, and are playing their second match of the tournament. Pakistan opened their campaign with a victory over Nepal, while India suffered a surprise defeat to the UAE in their first game.

Top seed Fritz to face Shelton for ATP Dallas Open title

WASHINGTON: Taylor Fritz blasted 22 aces in advancing to the ATP Dallas Open final on Saturday by defeating Croatian Marin Cilic 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/3). Top seed Fritz, ranked seventh in the world, reached his 20th career ATP final and first since last September's Japan Open. "I did a really good job just holding serve, getting through a lot of those games," said Fritz, who never faced a break point. "I think I generated good opportunities to grab a break on him but he played really well, served really well on all the break points." Fritz will play for the crown on Sunday in an all-American final against ninth-ranked Ben Shelton, the second seed who ousted

defending champion Denis Shapovalov of Canada 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to reach his sixth career ATP final. "He's one of the most competitive guys I've ever met in my life," Shelton said. "When we go on the court tomorrow it's going to be absolute war and then we're going to be back to friends after." Fritz seeks an 11th career title and first since collecting his fourth Eastbourne crown last June. Shelton, a 23-year-old left-hander, seeks his fourth ATP title after winning the 2023 Japan Open, 2024 US Clay Court Championships and last year's Canadian Open. Cilic, the 37-year-old from Croatia who won the 2014 US Open, fired 16 aces but also had eight double faults. Fritz, the

2024 US Open runner-up, seized a 3-0 lead in the first tie-breaker, served back-to-back aces for a 6-3 edge and closed out the opening set with a blast up the middle for his 14th ace. In the second tie-breaker, Fritz captured the match on his first opportunity when Cilic smacked a service return forehand long. "Had to get it done in tie-breakers," Fritz said. "I did a good job of just playing solid points, making a ton of first serves and making him work." In the other semi-final, Shelton rescued a break point in the 11th game when Shapovalov missed a forehand long as they battled into a deciding tie-breaker. Shelton smashed a forehand winner to seize a 4-3

lead on Shapovalov then took two points on his serve and won two points later with another sizzling forehand, improving to 4-0 in ATP play against the Canadian. "There wasn't a big difference," Shelton said. "I played clutch in the big points. He had a lot of chances to break serve and I came up with the goods. "He served extremely well, played tough at the baseline. It felt like a freight train coming at you. "Happy to get out of that one. I'm not quite sure how I did it." Fritz and Shelton are 1-1 in their ATP rivalry, Fritz winning at Indian Wells in 2023 but losing in last year's Canada semi-finals. "It's going to come down to serving," Fritz said. - Agencies

Larry the cat marks 15 years at 10 Downing Street

LONDON: Larry the cat, the UK's most famous feline, marks 15 years on Sunday as the country's chief mouser patrolling the corridors of power around number 10 Downing Street. Here are four things to know about the purr-fect puss who over the years has charmed his way into the hearts of some of the world's top politicians. Recruited to deal with a rodent problem, Larry arrived at the prime minister's official residence on February 15, 2011. He was adopted from the renowned London animal shelter, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, when he was believed to be about four years old. David Cameron was prime minister at the time. Since then, the white and tabby cat, officially introduced on Downing Street's website as the "Chief Mouser to the Cabinet Office", has reigned supreme from the country's most photographed doorstep. His official biography on the Downing Street website says apart from rodent control: "Larry spends his days greeting guests to the house, inspecting security defences and testing antique furniture for napping quality." He has lived through six prime ministers, from Cameron to Keir Starmer, weathered the storms of Brexit, Covid-19, the chaos of "partygate," Liz Truss's 49-day whirlwind occupation, and the more orderly months under Rishi Sunak. Nothing seems to ruffle his fur as this political veteran glides from crisis to crisis with feline calm, and the lick of a paw. A media darling, Larry, who is now believed to be around 19, often steals the spotlight from visiting foreign leaders. - Agencies

Int'l crew arrives at space station

WASHINGTON: Four astronauts docked at the International Space Station on Saturday for a months-long research mission, replacing a crew forced to return to Earth early over a medical issue. The US space agency's Crew-12 arrived at the orbiting laboratory after a journey of about 34 hours that started with blastoff from Cape Canaveral, Florida aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. "We have bridged the legacy of humankind's continuous presence in space spanning more than 25 years at this very site," American astronaut Jessica Meir said after docking at the ISS. "As we look back at Earth from these windows, we are reminded that co-operation is not just possible, it is essential. Up here, there are no borders and hope is universal." - APP

'Imposter' Nef shooting for double Olympic gold

BORMIO: Team combined gold medalist Tanguy Nef will aim to put a dose of "imposter syndrome" behind him to lead Swiss hopes in the men's slalom on Monday, the final event of the alpine skiing programme in Bormio. Nef laid down an incredible slalom run to win gold for him and partner Franjo von Allmen in the combined event after the latter, the Olympic downhill champion at these Games, had managed only fourth fastest in the opening descent. "On a scale from one to 10 the course was a level three of diffi-

culty, so not very hard in terms of line track," Nef said of the combined slalom course. "I felt I was going fast and I had to keep that speed." Nef said his goal had not necessarily been to medal in the combined, "but mostly in the individual slalom, so I'm between two worlds." "I have to continue with this momentum I've built the whole season and concentrate on this race. "On the other hand, I feel over the moon to be an Olympic champion." Switzerland have dominated the

men's skiing events in Bormio. Von Allmen won the downhill and also the super-G, his combined gold helping him to a rare record-equaling treble gold in the same Winter Olympics. He is one of just two other men - Austria's Toni Sailer at the 1956 Winter Games and France's Jean-Claude Killy in 1968 - to achieve that feat. Marco Odermatt and Loic Meillard claimed silver in the team combined, the former also bagging silver in the giant slalom and bronze in the super-G. Meillard took bronze in the giant slalom. "I had a bit of impostor syndrome!" Nef said of sharing the combined podium with Von Allmen, Odermatt and Meillard. "I'm with these three stars and I'm also a bit of a fan of the three of them." - APP

China wants 'new level' in Germany ties

MUNICH: China's top diplomat Wang Yi told German Chancellor Friedrich Merz that Beijing hoped to bring bilateral ties to a "new level", as they met on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on Saturday. Wang has been trying to present Beijing as a more reliable and stable partner of the European Union, as the bloc seeks to reduce its dependence on both China and an unpredictable United States. He told Merz that China hoped to work with Germany to bring the "all-round strategic partnership to a new level", according to a readout from Beijing's foreign ministry. With Berlin's support, Beijing also wanted to "prepare for the next stage of high-level exchanges", Wang added. Deep economic ties between the two countries have frayed in recent years over issues ranging from claims of unfair trade practices to protectionism. Merz is reportedly preparing to make his inaugural visit to China this month, with a pressing issue being how to navigate evolving commercial ties. Wang on Saturday affirmed support for Germany to play a greater role in retaining its "strategic autonomy and self-reliance" and to be a "driving force" for cooperation between China and Europe. "China also expects Germany to become a... stabilising anchor for strategic relations," he told Merz. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Members of civil society taking part in a cycling event held in Islamabad. - DNA

Braathen wins unique Winter Olympic gold for Brazil

American speed skater Jordan Stolz achieved the 500m and 1000m double on Saturday, a feat not seen in men's speed skating for 46 years

MILAN: Brazilian Lucas Pinheiro Braathen won the men's giant slalom in Bormio on Saturday to take South America's first ever gold at a Winter Olympics, while Chinese freeski superstar Eileen Gu survived a scare to stay on track for her first title of these Games. The snow fell in Bormio, Norwegian-born Braathen was fastest in the first leg and kept his cool in the second to win with an aggregate time of 2min 25.00sec. Only Switzerland's Marco Odermatt came anywhere near him in the first run, claiming his second silver medal of the Milan-Cortina Games by finishing 0.58sec behind overall. Odermatt's Swiss teammate Loic Meillard rounded out the podium. Braathen, 25, had switched allegiance to his mother's homeland after falling out with the Norwegian ski federation.

His victory broke the mould in more ways than one - in the testosterone-filled world of alpine skiing, he is a regular at fashion weeks in Paris and Milan and has launched his own skincare range. "I just wanted to ski as the person I am. I know I can be the best in the world, if I do that to the greatest extent," he said after clinching gold, the first ever Winter Olympic medal of any colour for an athlete representing Latin America. China's freeski superstar Eileen Gu stayed on course to defend her Olympic big air crown despite a crash that left her with an apparently sore wrist. Gu was cruising after scoring 86.00 points in her first run of three but fell on her second attempt. After her tumble she spent about 10 minutes talking to her mother at Livigno Snow Park and icing her left wrist

before returning to the top of the course. But she produced a smooth final run and punched the air in delight after scoring 84.75 for a combined total of 170.75, which meant she finished second. Gu will resume her battle with Switzerland's Gresmard on Monday's final after the Swiss beat her into second place in the slope-style event earlier in the Games. The Chinese star admitted she is out of practice in big air. "Not only have I not competed in this event in four years, I also haven't trained for it," she said. "I'm just happy to be here." American speed skater Jordan Stolz achieved the 500m and 1000m double on Saturday, a feat not seen in men's speed skating for 46 years. Three days after his Olympic title in the 1000m, 21-year-old Stolz claimed the 500m gold medal, with Dutchman Jenning de Bo

taking the silver medal behind him just as he had in the longer race. The USA men's ice hockey team had to fight before overcoming Denmark 6-3 as they kept their bid for a first Olympic gold since 1980 on track. The Americans, who are able to line up stars from the National Hockey League at an Olympics for the first time since 2014, recorded a second win of the tournament after beating Latvia 5-1 in their opening game. Meanwhile Olympics organisers made a Valentine's Day revelation that athletes have snapped up 10,000 of the free condoms available at the various Olympic accommodation 'clusters' in these Games. "10,000 have been used, for 2,800 athletes. Go figure, as they say," International Olympic Committee spokesperson Mark Adams said with a smile. - APP

West Indies qualify for super eight state

FROM PAGE 01

Holder took 4-27 from his four overs. The result eliminates Nepal, which cannot progress further in this year's T20 World Cup.

Opposition sit-in enters fourth day

FROM PAGE 01

"Considering his health, it has been decided to shift him to a hospital and form a medical board."

Trump will be gone in 3 years

FROM PAGE 01

best impression of the Persian poet, counselling: "This too shall pass". "If there's nothing else I can communicate today," California Governor Gavin Newsom said at a conference event on Friday, "Donald Trump is temporary. He'll be gone in three years." Newsom was just one of dozens of American legislators and governors in attendance - including some Democrats, like the Californian, who may contend for their party's 2028 presidential nomination.

PM Shehbaz reaches Austria

FROM PAGE 01

cooperation between the two countries. The Prime Minister and the Austrian Chancellor will also jointly co-chair a meeting of leading business figures aimed at enhancing trade and investment ties between Pakistan and Austria. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will participate in and address the Austria Business Forum, where he is expected to highlight Pakistan's economic potential and investment opportunities. The Prime Minister will also attend and speak at a special event in Vienna organized under the United Nations on the theme "Sustainable Development: The Path to Global Peace and Prosperity."

US threatens to block Canada...

FROM PAGE 01

Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Tuesday he had a "positive" conversation with Trump, reminding him Canada paid for the bridge. The Gordie Howe International Bridge will connect southern Detroit, Michigan, USA, and Windsor, Ontario, Canada when completed. Carney said he also reminded the president that it was built by US and Canadian workers and with steel from both countries. "This is a great example of cooperation between our countries and I look forward to it opening," he told reporters in Ottawa on Tuesday. He said that Trump asked that the US ambassador to Canada, Pete Hoekstra, who is from Michigan, "play a role in smoothing the conversation in and around the bridge".

Imran Khan's medical...

FROM PAGE 01

report to the Chief Justice Yahya Afridi-led bench at the Supreme Court, detailing his concerns and requesting treatment for his client. The sources, meanwhile, said that an ambulance is also inside the prison premises, which has eye check-up-related equipment. An initial medical report regarding the PTI founder's treatment in jail has been sent to the Punjab Home Department, jail sources said. According to sources, the report includes a complete chart detailing blood pressure, blood sugar levels, cholesterol and other vital signs. A separate report concerning the PTI founder's eye condition has also been forwarded from Rawalpindi. Consultancy reports and details of the medical staff involved in his care have likewise been submitted. The document records when and by which doctors the PTI founder was examined, with all relevant particulars included.

Briefs

Haroon opens
artificial
intelligence
center at PITAC

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Industries Haroon Akhtar Khan inaugurated the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center here at Pakistan Industrial and Technical Assistance Centre (PITAC) on Sunday.

Talking to media on this occasion, the SAPM said that it is the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to equip the youth with emerging technologies and skills such as Artificial Intelligence. He emphasized that acquiring AI expertise has become need of the hour. He said, "The world is progressing at a very rapid pace, and we must prepare our coming generations accordingly." In line with Prime Minister's directions, he said, the PITAC has established an Artificial Intelligence Center, an Electric Vehicle (EV) facility, and a Podcast Center to promote modern technical skills. Haroon Akhtar Khan highlighted that learning these skills is now essential, as economic growth is not possible without technological advancement. He appreciated the outstanding performance of PITAC and reaffirmed that this is the era of Artificial Intelligence, and Pakistan must move forward to remain competitive globally. He further announced that qualified trainers from abroad will be invited to ensure high-quality training at the AI Center. "The real strength of Pakistan lies in its youth," he said, adding that young people build businesses and achieve progress through startups and innovation. "Innovation is always driven by youth, keeping the future in view," he remarked.

Haroon Akhtar Khan expressed his determination to elevate the institution to international standards. He congratulated the management and staff on the successful inauguration of the Artificial Intelligence Center, Electric Vehicle bikes facility, and Podcast Center, and extended his best wishes for their continued success.—DNA

Iranian,
Iraqi foreign
ministers
discuss bilateral
ties

TEHRAN: In continuation of his consultations with foreign ministers of the region, Abbas Araghchi, the minister of foreign affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, held a telephone conversation with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, on Saturday evening.

During the phone call, the two sides reviewed Iran-Iraq bilateral ties and emphasized the importance of continuing consultations at various levels to further expand ties in all areas of mutual interest. The two foreign ministers reviewed the latest regional developments.—APP

Belarus' Smol-
skaya, Sola
finish in top 5
of mass start

MINSK: Belarusians Dzinara Smolenskaya and Hanna Sola took fourth and fifth places in the mass start at the fifth leg of the Commonwealth Biathlon Cup in Sochi, BElTA has learned.

Thirty of the season's best biathletes participated in the race, including six Belarusian women. Heading into the final shooting stage, Dzinara Smolenskaya and Hanna Sola were among the top five, having each recorded one miss at the previous ranges.

At the standing shoot, both Belarusians missed once but maintained their positions in the top five. Our athletes covered the final lap slower than their rivals and ultimately finished outside the medal places: Smolenskaya came fourth, Sola fifth. The mass start victory was claimed by Viktoriya Slivko, silver went to Kristina Reztsova, and Natalia Shevchenko took third place, finishing nine seconds ahead of Dzinara. As for the other Belarusians, Irina Shkaleina posted the 12th time, Kseniya Varabei finished 17th, Alena Kulak was 23rd, and Viktoriya Shashkova placed 29th. Earlier on 14 February in the men's mass start, Belarus' Maksim Varabei finished just outside the podium, with gold going to Russia's Kirill Bazhin. The program of the fifth leg of the Commonwealth Biathlon Cup in Sochi will conclude on 15 February with team sprints. The men's race starts at 11 a.m., followed by the women's event at 1 p.m.—APP

Business community vows
unity to boost economy

Sardar Tahir Mahmood said that the Chamber would continue to act as a strong bridge between traders and the government

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sardar Tahir Mahmood, said that the business community of Islamabad plays the role of a backbone in the national economy, and unity and harmony among all markets of Islamabad are the need of the hour. He said that the newly elected presidents of Islamabad's markets and centers will receive full patronage from the Chamber, and a joint struggle will continue for the resolution of issues faced by traders. He expressed these views while addressing a dinner held at a local hotel in honor of the newly elected business leadership. The dinner was hosted by ICCI Executive Member Roheel Anwar Butt in honor of the elected office-bearers of four markets of Islamabad, including President of Blue Area Yousaf Rajput, Chairman Blue Area Haji Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, President of G-11 Markaz Naeem Akhtar Awan, President of E-11 Markaz Zahir Abbasi, and President of G-8 Markaz Ajab Khan. The ceremony was attended by ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mahmood and Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari as chief guests. In his address, Sardar Tahir Mahmood said that the Chamber would continue to act as a strong bridge between traders and the government. He reaffirmed that the issues of all markets of Islamabad would be taken up with the relevant authorities on a priority basis and that every possible step would be taken to create a business-friendly environment. Addressing the gathering, UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said that unity among the business community is its real strength. He said that bringing the leadership of different markets onto a single platform is a positive development and will further strengthen mutual coordi-



nation. He congratulated the newly elected presidents and expressed hope that they would play an effective role in resolving the issues of traders in their respective markets. Former ICCI President Khalid Iqbal Malik also congratulated the newly elected presidents and assured them of his full cooperation. He said that the newly elected leadership would have to strengthen coordination to resolve the issues of traders. Roheel Anwar Butt said that the purpose

of the dinner was to encourage the newly elected leadership and to unite all the markets of Islamabad on one platform. Haji Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem said that strong coordination between leadership and traders is essential for resolving the issues faced by the business community of Islamabad. Naeem Akhtar Awan said that the confidence shown by traders is both an honor and a responsibility for him. Yousaf Rajput said that Blue Area is the

central commercial hub of Islamabad and that its traders face many challenges. With the patronage of the Chamber, all issues will be resolved in an organized manner. Zahir Abbasi said that the development of markets is possible through mutual consultation and a joint strategy, while Ajab Khan said that he would bring the issues of traders to the Chamber's platform in a coordinated manner so that effective and lasting solutions could be achieved.

AGP for boosting
legislative oversight
thru auditing

ISLAMABAD: Auditor-General of Pakistan (AGP) Maqbool Ahmed Gondal on Sunday reaffirmed the commitment of the Department of the Auditor-General of Pakistan to strengthening legislative oversight through modern performance auditing practices. He was addressed as chief guest at the valedictory ceremony of a three-week international training program in Lahore, said a news release. He urged auditors to apply newly learned techniques in their professional work and said the training should mark "the beginning of a new chapter" in their careers. Maqbool said that the participation of foreign audit institutions reflected growing international trust and highlighted the importance of global knowledge-sharing within the audit community. The program, organized by the Performance Audit Wing, was attended by 20 participants from audit institutions and government organizations of Oman, the Gambia, Nepal, and Pakistan, along with representatives from federal and provincial departments. Director General Performance Audit Wing Aamir Fayyaz said the course covered the "5Es" of performance auditing across all stages of the audit cycle, with emphasis on practical learning and presentation skills. Participants prepared Preliminary Survey Reports, reviewed performance audit reports, and were evaluated by audit and management experts. They also visited field organizations to observe project planning and monitoring mechanisms and took part in cultural visits around the city. Officials said the training reflects ongoing efforts to improve transparency and accountability in the public sector. They said continuous professional development in performance auditing is essential to meet increasing expectations for efficiency, equity and effectiveness in government institutions. At the end of the ceremony, certificates were awarded to the participants on successful completion of the course. All officers from Lahore chapter, including Director General to AGP Hashim Raza Khatak, also attended the ceremony.—DNA

Fledgling radio station
aims to be voice of people

DEIR EL-BALAH: From a small studio in the central city of Deir El-Balah, Sylvia Hassan's voice echoes across the Gaza Strip, broadcast on one of the Palestinian territory's first radio stations to hit the airwaves after two years of war. Hassan, a radio host on fledgling station "Here Gaza," delivers her broadcast from a well-lit room, as members of the technical team check levels and mix backing tracks on a sound deck. "This radio station was a dream we worked to achieve for many long months and sometimes without sleep," Hassan said. "It was a challenge for us, and a story of resilience." Hassan said the station would focus on social issues and the humanitarian situation in Gaza, which remains grave in the territory despite a US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas since October. "The radio station's goal is to be the voice

of the people in the Gaza Strip and to express their problems and suffering, especially after the war," said Shereen Khalifa, part of the broadcasting team. "There are many issues that people need to voice." Most of Gaza's population of more than 2 million people were displaced at least once during the grueling war. Many still live in tents with little or no sanitation. The war also decimated Gaza's telecommunications and electricity infrastructure, compounding the challenges in reviving the territory's local media landscape. "The electricity problem is one of the most serious and difficult problems in the Gaza Strip," said Khalifa. "We have solar power, but sometimes it doesn't work well, so we have to rely on an external generator," she added. The station's launch is funded by the EU and overseen by Filastiniyat, an organization that supports Palestinian women journalists, and

the media center at the An-Najah National University in Nablus, in the occupied West Bank. The station plans to broadcast for two hours per day from Gaza and for longer from Nablus. It is available on FM and online. Khalifa said that stable internet access had been one of the biggest obstacles in setting up the station, but that it was now broadcasting uninterrupted audio. The Gaza Strip, a tiny territory surrounded by Israel, Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea, has been under Israeli blockade ever before the attack on Oct. 7, 2023, which sparked the war. Despite the ceasefire, Israel continues to strictly control the entry of all goods and people to the territory. "Under the siege, it is natural that modern equipment necessary for radio broadcasting cannot enter, so we have made the most of what is available," she said.—Agencies

FPCCI stresses
modernising warehousing
to preserve crops

LAHORE: Convener of FPCCI Regional Committee on Food Shahid Imran has urged the government to modernise warehousing, introduce cold chain systems and promote food processing industries to convert surplus crops into exportable and value-added products. Talking to a farmer delegation, led by Chaudhry Nazir Ahmad Arain here on Sunday, he said surplus essential crops should never be wasted at any cost, because such losses amount to squandering precious natural resources and hard-earned national wealth. He asserted that Pakistan, being an agrarian economy, produces significant quantities of wheat, rice, sugarcane, maize, fruit and vegetables. However, due to inadequate storage facilities, poor supply chain management and lack of value-addition, a considerable portion of surplus produce goes to waste every year. This, he noted, not only causes financial losses to farmers but also exerts unnecessary pressure on water, energy and land resources used in cultivation. Shahid Imran said efficient post-harvest management and agro-processing zones can help stabilise prices, ensure food security and enhance farmers' incomes. He suggested public-private partnerships to invest in silos, dehydration plants and packaging facilities. He added that by preventing wastage and utilizing surplus effectively, Pakistan can strengthen its food security, boost exports and protect its natural resources for future generations.—DNA



LAHORE: Australian High Commissioner Tim Kane enjoying traditional Lahore breakfast during his recent visit to Lahore. DNA

Lebanese show strong trust in military,
little confidence in parliament

BEIRUT: Lebanese place strong trust in their military and security forces, a recent opinion poll conducted by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, as part of the ninth Arab Index, has found. However, the survey, which included Lebanon and 14 other Arab countries, found that confidence in the state's judicial, executive and legislative authorities remains low, peaking at just 41 percent. Parliament emerged as the least trusted institution, garnering only 36 percent of respondents' support. Nasser Yassin, the center's director, told Arab News that the survey is the largest in the Arab region by sample size, participating countries and range of topics. Conducted from 2011 to last year, it enables analysis of shifts in Arab public opinion across 15 countries, including Lebanon. At a press conference in Beirut, Mohammed Al-Masri, the center's executive director and coordinator of the Arab Index program, presented Lebanon-specific survey results to academics and researchers. The survey included 2,400 participants, he said. Lebanese participants identified Israel as the primary threat to Lebanon's security (56 percent), followed by the US (20 percent) and Iran (17 percent). Regarding Lebanese citizens' engagement in civil organizations and political parties, the survey found that "Lebanese involvement in these organizations is low, not exceeding 2 percent." Only 10 percent of participants reported political party membership. Additionally, 62 percent do not trust political parties, while 36 percent do. Fifty-one percent of Lebanese citizens plan to take part in the forthcoming

parliamentary elections, tentatively scheduled for May, while 40 percent do not intend to take part. A general view of Lebanon's Parliament building, (AFP) The Arab Index asked about perceptions of the Lebanese army after the last Israeli war in Lebanon. Fifty-six percent reported a more positive view, while 40 percent said their opinion remained unchanged. Sixty-six percent of Lebanese respondents said their view of Hezbollah had not changed, while 13 percent viewed it more positively and 19 percent more negatively. A majority of Lebanese considered the war a defeat (59 percent), while 38 percent viewed it as a victory. Eighty-nine percent of respondents opposed Lebanon recognizing Israel, while 9 percent supported it. Half of those in favor conditioned recognition on the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Most opponents cited Israel's colonial, racist and expansionist policies, with few referencing cultural or religious reasons. Ninety-one percent of Lebanese viewed US policy on Palestine unfavorably. Additionally, 58 percent perceived Iranian policies, and 40 percent perceived Russian policies, as threats to regional security and stability. Thirty-six percent cited media outlets as their main source of information about the US, while 21 percent relied on the internet, particularly social media. The index shows that public opinion has become more negative over the past decade. More than 70 percent of Lebanese believe the US seeks to impose its policies globally, control Arab countries, exacerbate divisions and favor non-democratic governments. Fifty-six percent

of respondents disagreed that the US protects human rights. Thirty-seven percent said that changes in US policy toward Palestine, such as protecting Palestinians and ending support to Israel, would improve their perception of the US. Fifty-eight percent of Lebanese citizens believe the country is heading in the wrong direction, while 39 percent disagree. Most who believe Lebanon is on the wrong track attribute this to economic issues, political turmoil and the political system's failure to meet its responsibilities. They also cite "poor governance, flawed public policies and the lack of stability in general." Ninety-seven percent of those who believe Lebanon is on the right track attribute this to "the end of war, the election of a new president and the formation of a new government." Only 14 percent of respondents rated Lebanon's security as "good" or "very good," while 85 percent rated it as "bad" or "very bad." Additionally, 86 percent rated the economic situation as "bad" or "very bad." Eighty-five percent of respondents provided a meaningful definition of "democracy," which the Arab Opinion Index said is notably high. However, only 51 percent support a political system in which the military holds power. The percentage of respondents who support a political party's accession to power through elections, even if they disagree with its principles, dropped from 50 percent before 2018 to 38 percent afterward. The survey also revealed "near-unanimous agreement among Lebanese citizens that financial and administrative corruption is widespread.—DNA

KSrelief
distributes
3,000
cartons of
dates

GUARULHOS: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KS-relief) distributed 3,000 cartons of dates in the city of Guarulhos in the Federative Republic of Brazil.

The aid benefited 375 families from host communities, refugees, and migrants of various nationalities, including Syria, Egypt, Mozambique, Haiti, Morocco, Lebanon, Côte d'Ivoire, Algeria, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Burundi, Angola, South Africa, Togo, Nigeria, Somalia, Gambia, and Kenya, as part of the project to distribute 200 tons of dates in Brazil.

The initiative forms part of the Kingdom's humanitarian and relief efforts, carried out through its humanitarian arm KS-relief, to support food security in brotherly and friendly countries worldwide.—APP

Syria says
has taken
over another
base from
US forces

DAMASCUS: Syria's defense ministry said on Sunday it had taken over the Al-Shadadi base in the northeast from US forces, days after assuming control of a facility near the Jordan-Iraq borders. "The forces of the Syrian Arab Army have taken over the Al-Shadadi military base in the Hasakah countryside following coordination with the American side," a ministry statement said. US forces operating as part of the international coalition against the Daesh group had been stationed at the base outside the town of the same name. The town housed a prison where Kurdish forces detained members of the extremist jihadist organization, before government forces advanced into the area last month. Sunday's announcement follows US confirmation on Thursday that its forces had vacated Al-Tanf base near Syria's borders with Jordan and Iraq. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were a major partner of the US-led international coalition against Daesh, and were instrumental in the group's territorial defeat in Syria in 2019. But following the fall in December 2024 of longtime ruler Bashar Assad, the United States has drawn closer to the new government in Damascus, recently declaring that the need for its alliance with the Kurds had largely passed.—APP

China
confirms
visa-free
access for
Canada, UK
visitors

BEIJING: China confirmed that Canadian and British citizens will be able to visit the country visa-free from Tuesday, after the two countries' leaders had announced such agreements following official trips to Beijing, British and Canadian prime ministers Keir Starmer and Mark Carney both visited Beijing in January, seeking to bolster relations with China and pivot from the increasingly mercurial United States. Both leaders had hailed progress following meetings with top Chinese leaders such as President Xi Jinping, including on issues like visa-free access for their citizens to China. Beijing's foreign ministry confirmed these agreements on Sunday, saying Canadian and British citizens will be able to travel to China visa-free from Tuesday, with the policy in effect until December 31. "Holders of ordinary passports from these countries can enter China without a visa for business, tourism, visiting relatives and friends, exchanges, or transit for a period not exceeding 30 days," it said in a statement. This was to "further facilitate people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries," it added.—APP

Briefs

Dower must
be paid
immediately:
LHC

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has ordered a man to pay Rs1 million as deferred dower and monthly maintenance to his wife after holding that contracting another marriage without prior permission makes the entire dower immediately payable under the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961. Justice Abid Hussain Chattha issued the judgement, deciding two cross writ petitions filed by Mehnaz Saleem and her husband Kashif Iqbal, challenging concurrent and appellate findings of a family court and additional district judge (the appellate court), Sialkot. Ms Saleem had filed a suit seeking recovery of deferred dower (Rs1m), maintenance allowance, and dowry articles. The family court had partially decreed her suit, awarding Rs15,000 per month as maintenance for the Iddat period, Rs1m as deferred dower, and dowry articles or their alternate value of Rs1,000,500. Both parties filed appeals against the decision. The appellate court dismissed the wife's appeal and partially allowed the husband's appeal, setting aside the maintenance and dower awards and reducing the alternate value of dowry articles to Rs400,000. The matter was subsequently brought before the LHC. On the issue of deferred dower, the LHC judge ruled that Section 6(5) of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance created a statutory exception to the general rule that deferred dower became payable only upon dissolution of marriage.

PTI's ironic
protest
continues

PESHAWAR: PTI, the ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has launched an ironic and unusual protest by blocking major entry and exit routes leading to Punjab and other provinces, causing serious difficulties and nuisance for the public of its own province. According to details received on Sunday, PTI protestors have blocked important internal and external roads in the province. The move has reportedly created severe inconvenience for citizens, including those who had supported the party in elections. A PTI Deputy Provincial Secretary for Information stated that party workers, along with the Insaaf Youth Wing and Insaaf Students Federation, have blocked major highways and interchanges across KP. Meanwhile, PTI's central leadership is staging sit-ins at three different locations in Islamabad. Among the blocked routes are Swabi Anbar Interchange, Dera Ismail Khan-Bhakkar Road, Lakki Marwat-Mianwali Road, Hazara Motorway, Abbottabad-Havelian Interchange, and Kohat-Pindi Road near Khushal Bridge.

Israeli
airstrikes
kill 11
in Gaza

DNA

RAMALLAH: Israel fired airstrikes across the Gaza Strip on Sunday, killing at least 11 Palestinians, Palestinian officials said, in what the military called a response to ceasefire violations by Palestinian resistance group Hamas. Gaza medics said an Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment housing displaced families killed at least four people, while health officials said another strike killed five in Khan Younis in the south and another person was shot dead in the north. Airstrikes also targeted what was thought to be a commander of the Islamic Jihad group, an ally of Hamas, in the Tel Al-Hawa neighbourhood in Gaza City.

'Open to compromises to reach nuclear deal with US'

US delegation, including envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, to meet with Iranians on Tuesday

MONITORING DESK

TEHRAN: Iran is ready to consider compromises to reach a nuclear deal with the United States if Washington is willing to discuss lifting sanctions, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC in an interview published on Sunday. Iran has said it is prepared to discuss curbs on its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of sanctions, but has repeatedly ruled out linking

the issue to other questions, including missiles. Takht-Ravanchi confirmed that a second round of nuclear talks would take place on Tuesday in Geneva, after Tehran and Washington resumed discussions in Oman earlier this month.

"[Initial talks went] more or less in a positive direction, but it is too early to judge," Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC. A US delegation, including envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, will meet with the Iranians on Tuesday morning, a source had told Reuters

on Friday, with Omani representatives mediating the US-Iran contacts.

Iran's atomic chief said on Monday the country could agree to dilute its most highly enriched uranium in exchange for all financial sanctions being lifted. Takht-Ravanchi used this example in the BBC interview to highlight Iran's flexibility.

The senior diplomat reiterated Tehran's stance that it would not accept zero uranium enrichment, which had been a key impediment to reaching a deal last year, with

the US viewing enrichment inside Iran as a pathway to nuclear weapons.

Iran denies seeking such nuclear weapons. During his first term in office, Trump pulled the US out of a 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the signature foreign policy achievement of former Democratic President Barack Obama. The deal eased sanctions on Iran in exchange for Tehran limiting its nuclear programme to prevent it from being able to make an atomic bomb.

Thunderstorm,
rain expected in
parts of country

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted rain and thunderstorm in southern parts of the country. The Met Office said a shallow westerly wave is likely to approach the western parts of the country on Feb 16. Under the influence of this weather system, light to moderate rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Quetta, Ziarat, Chaman, Pishin, Qilla Abdullah, Qilla Saifullah, Chaghi, Nokundi, Dalbandin, Noushki, Harnai, Zhob, Kalat, Mustung, Bar Khan, Sibbi, Loralai, Khuzdar, Kech, Turbat, Panjgur, Gawadar, Awaran, Kharan, Pasni, Ormara and Lasbela of Balochistan from Feb 16 (evening/night) to Feb 17 with occasional gaps. Rain-wind/thunderstorm is also expected in Dadu, Hyderabad, Karachi, Thatta, Badin, Jamshoro, Sukkur, Larkana, Jacobabad and Khairpur of Sindh from Feb 17. Gusty and dust-raising winds are also likely during the period. Light to moderate rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Waziristan, Bannu, D.I. Khan and Kurram areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the night of Feb 16 and Feb 17. Light rain accompanied by gusty and dust-raising winds is also expected at isolated places in D.G. Khan, Multan, Bhakkar, Layyah, Bahawalpur and adjoining areas of Punjab on Feb 17. — APP

Field Marshal Munir discusses
global, regional security with Marco

Army chief visits Germany from February 12 to 14 to attend meetings alongside 62nd Munich Security Conference

DNA

BERLIN: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), on Saturday held talks with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on regional and global security and counterterrorism cooperation on the sidelines of the 62nd Munich Security Conference. During the engagement, the two sides discussed matters of mutual interest, including evolving security dynamics and anti-terrorism measures, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The army chief visited Germany from February 12 to 14 to attend meetings alongside the annual security forum.

The Field Marshal also interacted with German authorities and military leaders from Brazil and Lebanon, focusing on contemporary security issues, bilateral defence cooperation and the need for promoting global peace and security through bilateral and multilateral dialogue. As part of his engagement with German authorities, "COAS and CDF called on Mr Alexander Dobrindt, Federal Minister of the Interior, Federal Republic of Germany, Mr Günter Sautter, Foreign Policy & Security Policy Advisor to Federal Chancellor of Germany and General Carsten Breuer, Chief of Defence, Federal Armed Forces."

"The meetings focused on contemporary security issues, bilateral defence cooperation and the need for promoting global peace and security through bilateral and multilateral dialogue," the statement added. "Besides, COAS & CDF held a productive engagement with Admiral Renato Rodrigues de Aguiar



Freire, Chief of the Joint Staff, Brazilian Armed Forces and discussed bilateral military cooperation." General Rodolph Haykal, Commander of the Armed Forces, Lebanese Republic, also called on the COAS, the military's media wing said.

Obama deplores lack of shame
after Trump's racist monkey clip

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Former US president Barack Obama criticised a lack of shame and decorum in the country's political discourse, responding on Saturday for the first time to a post on Donald Trump's social media account that depicted him and first lady Michelle as monkeys. In a wide-ranging podcast interview with left-wing political commentator Brian Tyler Cohen released on Saturday, Obama also compared the actions of agents enforcing the president's immigration crackdown in Minnesota to dictatorships. The video, shared on Trump's Truth Social account on February 5, sparked censure across the US political spectrum, with the White House initially rejecting "fake outrage" only to then blame the post on an error

by a staff member and taking it down. Near the end of a one-minute-long video promoting conspiracies about Trump's 2020 election loss to Joe Biden, the Obamas — the first Black president and first lady in US history — were shown with their faces on the bodies of monkeys for about one second.

"The discourse has devolved into a level of cruelty that we haven't seen before... Just days ago, Donald Trump put a picture of you, your face on an ape's body," Cohen said in the interview. "And so again, we've seen the devolution of the discourse. How do we come back from a place that we have fallen into?" Without naming Trump, Obama responded by saying the majority of Americans "find this behaviour deeply troubling". "There's this sort of clown show that's happening in social media and on television, and what is true is that there doesn't seem to be any shame about this among people who used to feel like you had to have some sort of decorum and a sense of propriety and respect for the office, right? That's been lost."

Obama predicted that such messaging would hurt Trump's Republicans in midterm elections, saying, "ultimately, the answer is going to come from the American people".

Trump has told reporters he stood by the thrust of the video's claims about election fraud, but that he had not seen the offensive clip at the end. Turning to Trump's policies, Obama criticised his immigration crackdown in Minnesota and blasted the conduct of agents during the controversial weeks-long operation that was brought to an end this week. Obama called the behaviour of federal officers, which included two fatal shootings that sparked mounting pressure on Trump's mass crackdown, as the sort that "in the past we've seen in authoritarian countries and we've seen in dictatorships". Thousands of federal agents — including those with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) — carried out weeks of sweeping raids and arrests in what the Trump administration claims were targeted missions against criminals. "The rogue behaviour of agents of the federal government is deeply concerning and dangerous," Obama said.

Don't get sense EU ready to give
Ukraine date for membership

"My feeling is that the member states are not ready to give a concrete date," says EU foreign policy chief

DNA

MUNICH: European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on Sunday she felt that EU governments were not ready to give Ukraine a date for membership despite a demand to do so from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Zelenskyy repeated on Saturday that he needed a date as part of security guarantees for a final peace package with Russia. "My feeling is that the member states are not ready to give a concrete date," Kallas told a panel at the Munich Security Conference. "There's a lot of work to be done." Ukrainian EU membership in 2027 was pencilled into a 20-point peace plan discussed between the United States, Ukraine and the European Union, diplomats have said, as a measure to ensure Ukraine's economic prosperity after the war ends. But many EU governments believe that date, or any other fixed date, is completely unrealistic because EU accession is a merit-based process, moving forward only when there is progress



in adjusting a country's laws to EU standards. Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics echoed the Kallas comments but held out little hope of an imminent peace deal.

"Yes, we understand that we need Ukraine in the European Union and, yes, when talking with many heads of state I get the feeling there is no readiness to accept a date," he said. Rinkevics said that the EU had always been creative when there was a real need and could probably find a formula

that suited the bloc, but it would also need to assuage Western Balkan states and Moldova, which have long been vying for membership. "Like it or not it is very much tied to the peace deal. Will there be a peace deal or not? I don't see that Russia is going to move, and if Russia is not moving, then we are not going to have a deal," he said.

Ukraine applied to join the EU days after Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, seeking to anchor itself politically and economically to the West. It has been pushing to make progress on its bid, despite the challenges of the war and opposition from EU member Hungary, which is blocking the start of detailed membership talks.

Arif Habib-led group
to gain full
control of PIA

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The consortium led by the Arif Habib Group has announced plans to acquire the remaining 25 per cent government stake in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), thereby securing full control of the national flag carrier.

In December 2025, the group acquired a 75pc stake for Rs135 billion, with the goal of transforming the loss-making airline through operational restructuring, fleet expansion, and improved customer service. To ensure the success of its revival plan, the consortium now seeks to take full control of decision-making. The acquisition will allow the consortium to implement management changes by the end of April. Shahid Ali Habib, CEO of Arif Habib Ltd, told Dawn that this will enable them to operate as a private entity, free from government-appointed board members. "The change of sponsors is scheduled for late April or early May," he added.

Consortium to acquire remaining 25pc stake for Rs45bn. The government has given the consortium a 90-day window to purchase the remaining shares, valued at approximately Rs45bn, with the deadline set for the end of April. The agreement, signed in January, allows a 12-month period to transfer funds, making the acquisition a viable option.

The winning consortium includes Fatima Fertiliser (34.1pc), Fauji Fertiliser (33.9pc), Lake City (16pc), and the City School with AKD (Aqeel Karim Dhe-dhi) Group (16pc). The new management, supported by Rs125bn, will have the financial flexibility to implement reforms, with the new board tasked with raising capital for PIA's rebranding.

At least 11 killed in bus crash

KARACHI: At least 11 people — nine passengers, the driver, and the conductor — were killed when a passenger coach collided with a trailer carrying heavy concrete girders near Tando Masti in Khairpur District on the National Highway, rescue sources said early Sunday. The bus was travelling from Punjab to Karachi at the time of the accident. According to the Edhi Foundation, the bodies were taken to Khairpur Civil Hospital, while the injured, reportedly ten, were receiving treatment. Following the incident, the Sindh Inspector General of Police directed the SSP Khairpur to immediately reach the accident site and supervise rescue operations. He also ordered authorities to ensure relief activities in the surrounding areas and keep routes clear to facilitate the smooth transfer of the injured to hospitals. Meanwhile,

a tragic multi-vehicle road accident near Kathore on the M9 Motorway on Friday left at least 14 people dead and several others injured. The mishap occurred after an oil tanker, a bus, and many other vehicles collided. Rescue officials confirmed that the deceased included women and children, and that the impact of the crash caused several passengers to fall from a bridge.

Police said the coach involved in the accident was travelling on the wrong side of the road at the time. A first information report (FIR) has been lodged at Gadap police station on behalf of the state, covering culpable homicide, negligent and reckless driving, and other relevant sections. According to the FIR, the accident occurred around 3:40pm when an oil tanker lost control and collided with a trailer and another vehicle. — DNA



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