



# Islamabad POST

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**CM Maryam to issue Ramazan cards to poor**

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## Suicide attack in Bajaur

# Twelve terrorists killed, 11 soldiers embrace martyrdom

The sacrifices of these brave soldiers and the innocent civilian underscore Pakistan's unyielding commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty, peace, and the lives of its citizens at all costs. Official sources emphasized that such cowardly acts, often backed by external elements, will not deter the nation's resolve to root out terrorism

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's security forces successfully thwarted a deadly suicide attack on a joint check post in Bajaur District on February 16, 2026, eliminating 12 terrorists linked to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), referred to in official statements as "Fitna al-Khawarij" and described as Indian proxies. The assault, however, resulted in the martyrdom of 11 brave security personnel and the tragic death of one innocent civilian girl, with seven others—including women and children—injured.

According to an official statement from military sources, the attackers attempted to breach the security perimeter of the joint check post manned by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies. Displaying exceptional vigilance and resolve, troops engaged the assailants, foiling their plan and pursuing the fleeing militants with precision firepower that neutralized 12 of them.

In a desperate bid, the terrorists rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the check post's perimeter wall, causing a massive blast. The explosion led to the partial collapse of infrastructure at the site, claiming the lives of 11 valiant soldiers who embraced martyrdom in defense of the nation. The blast's impact also severely damaged nearby civilian residential buildings, claiming the life of a young girl and injuring seven civilians, including women and children. Sanitization and search operations are underway in the area to eliminate any remaining threats and ensure no other elements escape justice. Authorities have vowed to intensify the ongoing

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## CTD claims 4 suspected terrorists dead

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) said on Tuesday it conducted a raid in the city's Shah Latif Town, as a result of which four suspected terrorists died while two cops sustained injuries. According to information provided by CTD Deputy Inspector General Ghulam Azfar Maheesar, the encounter began when CTD personnel surrounded a house in Shah Latif Town based on the identification of previously arrested suspects. The men inside opened fire, leading to an exchange of gunfire, the CTD said. Additional police contingents were then called to the scene. The four alleged terrorists were injured by firing "from their own accomplices" during the crossfire and later died at a hospital, CTD claimed. Three of the suspects were identified as Jaleel alias Farid, Niaz alias King and Hamdan alias Farid, while efforts were underway to determine the identity of the fourth. A Kalashnikov and a hand grenade were recovered from the possession of one of the suspected terrorists.

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## Iran, United States hold new talks in Geneva

GENEVA: Iran and the United States began fresh talks in Geneva on Tuesday, as President Donald Trump warned of consequences should Tehran fail to strike a deal. Mediated by Oman, the discussions are aimed at averting the possibility of US military action, with Tehran expressing cautious optimism at Washington's "more realistic" position on its nuclear programme. Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene militarily against Iran, first over a deadly crackdown on protesters last month and then more recently over its nuclear programme. — APP

## Dar to visit New York

FAISAL SHIEKH

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar will visit New York on 18 February to participate in the high-level United Nations Security Council briefing on the situation in Palestine. The meeting will be chaired by United Kingdom Foreign Secretary, in her capacity as President of the Security Council. During the briefing, the DPM/FM will reaffirm Pakistan's principled and consistent position on Palestine. He will reiterate Pakistan's strong opposition of Israel's recent illegal decisions to expand its control over the West Bank, emphasize the need for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, full implementation of Security Council resolution 2803,

Continued on Page 06

## Ramadan moon sighted in Saudi Arabia, other Gulf countries

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: The Ramadan crescent was sighted in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states on Tuesday evening, confirming that the holy month will begin with the first day of fasting on February 18. The Supreme Court of Saudi Arabia made the official confirmation regarding the beginning of the holy month for the year 1447 AH. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Kuwait also announced that Ramadan

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VIENNA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnessing the signing ceremony of Collaborating Centre Agreement between the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Oncology (INMOL), Lahore, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). — DNA

## Nuclear Technology

# PM reaffirms Pak support for IAEA

He was talking to Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Mariano Grossi at Vienna International Centre (VIC), the seat of the UN offices in Vienna

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support for the role of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the promotion of responsible use of nuclear technology in areas such as cancer diagnosis and treatment, agriculture, nuclear power generation and industrial applications. He was talking to Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Mariano Grossi at Vienna International Centre (VIC), the seat of the UN offices in Vienna, a press release issued by the PM House Media Wing on Tuesday. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting

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## Shehbaz surprises Austrian chancellor

DNA

VIENNA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has surprised the Austrian Federal Chancellor Christian Stocker with his command of the German language which he spoke during the delegation-level talks between the two leaders. During his two-day official visit to Austria—the first by a Pakistani Prime Minister in over three decades—the prime minister addressed the Chancellor in German to express gratitude for the warm hospitality and optimism for deeper bilateral cooperation in

Continued on Page 06

## PM orders probe into Hockey team's 'shameful' Australian treatment

The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) received Rs 10 million from the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) specifically to arrange five-star hotel accommodations and other facilities for the squad

ASNAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken serious notice of the alleged mismanagement and substandard services provided to the national hockey team during their recent FIH Pro League campaign in Australia, ordering a thorough inquiry into financial irregularities and administrative lapses. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) received Rs 10

million from the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) specifically to arrange five-star hotel accommodations and other facilities for the squad. However, players and officials faced severe hardships upon arrival, including hotel bookings being cancelled due to non-payment, forcing them to spend hours stranded on the streets of Canberra and Hobart. Reports indicate the team was ultimately housed in

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## Briefs

**Former cricket captains for fair treatment to Imran Khan**

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Indian cricket greats Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev joined a dozen other former international captains on Tuesday in demanding better prison treatment for "one of the finest all-rounders" of the game, Imran Khan, the former prime minister of Pakistan. Cricketer-turned-politician Khan, 73, has been in jail since August 2023, convicted in a string of cases that he says were politically driven following his ouster in a 2022 parliamentary vote. Khan's lawyer told the Supreme Court last week that the ex-cricketer had lost a significant amount of vision in his right eye while in custody. A medical board said on Monday that the swelling had reduced after treatment and his vision had improved.

**T20 WC: Australia eliminated**

SPORTS DESK

COLOMBO: Zimbabwe have advanced to the Super Eight stage of the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 after their Group D match against Ireland was abandoned due to persistent rain at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. Continuous downpours left the outfield waterlogged, and the fixture was called off before the toss could take place. The washout confirmed Zimbabwe's progression to the next round while ending the Super Eight hopes of both Australia and Ireland. Despite having one remaining group match against Oman, Australia are now out of contention for a place in the next stage. Ireland were also eliminated following the abandoned fixture, bringing their campaign to a premature end.

## Minister Tarar rules out deal with PTI, rejects leniency claims

Minister asserts Khan's eye problem was sensationalised, says govt did its job by providing healthcare

DNA

LONGON: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has flatly rejected all reports suggesting any deal or special concessions with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), calling such claims entirely unfounded and speculative. Speaking to the media in London, Tarar said all the talk around offering any concessions to the Imran Khan-founded party was just rumours. He also addressed reports about Khan's health issues, asserting that the PTI founder's eye problem was sensationalised.

"We had a responsibility to provide proper healthcare, and that was done. His health is fine now; the issue that existed has been resolved," Tarar said. He added that medical experts had examined Khan and briefed party leaders about his condition, strongly emphasising that the PTI should refrain from politicising its founder's health issues. Tarar, who had been on a two-day official visit to Austria with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's

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## Adilala jail report submitted to SC

APP

ISLAMABAD: A detailed report, submitted by the Superintendent of Adilala Jail regarding the facilities provided to the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was, presented before the Supreme Court of Pakistan for the first time. According to the report, the PTI founder has been housed in a separate compound within the jail comprising seven cells. In front of the compound, there is a corridor measuring 57 feet in length and 14 feet in width. An adjoining lawn, measuring 35 by 37 feet, is also available where he spends time, reading books and newspapers and sitting in the sun. The report stated that the seven-cell compound has the capacity

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## Eight Muslim nations slam West Bank grab

They further highlighted that the decision contradicts the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's policies in the occupied territories

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a unified display of regional solidarity, the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar have issued a scathing joint statement denouncing Israel's recent decision to designate vast swathes of the occupied West Bank as "state land." The move, approved by Israel's cabinet on February 15, marks the first such land registration process since the 1967 occupation, sparking accusations of de facto annexation and escalating tensions in the region. The statement, released today, describes the Israeli action as a "grave escalation" intended to accelerate illegal settlement activity, confiscate Palestinian land, and impose unlawful sovereignty over the Occupied Palestinian Territory. "This illegal step constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, foremost among them Resolution 2334," the ministers affirmed. They further highlighted that the decision contradicts the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's policies in the occupied territories, which emphasized the illegality of altering the legal, historical, and demographic status quo, the obligation to end

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### 35 Afghans deported in operation against criminals

PESHAWAR: During ongoing search operations against proclaimed offenders and criminal elements in Peshawar, police have completed the inspection of more than 1,000 houses and have detained 35 Afghan refugees, who were later deported after legal procedures. According to police on Tuesday, hundreds of suspicious individuals were also arrested during the operation, and around 150 cases were registered. The search-and-strike operations are being carried out under the supervision of CCPO Peshawar Dr. Mian Saad. During the raids, illegal weapons were recovered and a total of 41 operations were conducted in different areas of the city. Police also inspected 35 hotels as part of the operation. Afghan nationals residing illegally in the city were taken into custody and sent back to their country following legal action. Police officials stated that these operations are being conducted to maintain law and order and to prevent criminal activities. The operations are continuing under the monitoring of SPs and SDPOs.—APP

### Tree plantation drive launched

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema on Tuesday met workers of the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) at Chak Beli Khan Morr on GT Road and formally launched a tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling. The deputy commissioner stopped at the site while returning from Gujjar Khan after attending the inaugural ceremony of the electric bus service. Praising the sanitation staff for their services, Dr Cheema said tree plantation was vital to combating environmental pollution and achieving the vision of a Green Punjab, adding that active participation from all government institutions and the public was essential for the success of the campaign. He paid tribute to the dedication and hard work of RWMC workers and said cleanliness and environmentally friendly initiatives were among the Punjab Government's top priorities.—APP

### RDA clears encroachments on Saidpur Road

RAWALPINDI: The Enforcement Squad of the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on Tuesday carried out a major anti-encroachment operation along Saidpur Road, dismantling unauthorised structures to improve traffic flow and pedestrian movement, officials said. According to an RDA spokesman, the drive from Siddiqui Chowk to Pindora was conducted on the directions of the Commissioner Rawalpindi and the Director General RDA, Engineer Aamer Khattak, with assistance from the Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR) and the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA).—APP

# KSRelief launches Ramzan food basket project

KSrelief project reflects the Centre's broader humanitarian mandate to alleviate suffering, enhance resilience, and support vulnerable communities during critical periods, particularly during the blessed month of Ramazan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), in coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), has commenced the distribution of food assistance across 30 districts of Pakistan in observance of the holy month of Ramazan.

The initiative is being implemented under the Food Security Support Project Pakistan 2026 (Phase-5) and aims to support 192,500 vulnerable individuals facing food insecurity.

The project provides comprehensive food baskets designed to meet the nutritional needs of beneficiary families during Ramadan. Each package weighs 97 kilograms and includes 80 kilograms of wheat flour, 5 liters of cooking oil, 5 kilograms of sugar, 2 kilograms of dates, and 5 kilograms of gram pulse (Daal Chana). The contents are calculated to sustain an average household for the entire month of Ramazan.

The distribution process is being conducted in a transparent and coordinated manner in collaboration with Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), district administrations, and KSrelief's implementing part-



ners—the Hayat Foundation and the Peace & Development Organization.

Through this initiative, KSrelief reaffirms its continued commitment to addressing food security

challenges in Pakistan. The project reflects the Centre's broader humanitarian mandate

to alleviate suffering, enhance resilience, and support vulnerable communities during critical

periods, particularly during the blessed month of Ramazan.

## Customs destroys smuggled goods in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The Pakistan Customs on Tuesday destroyed smuggled and prohibited goods worth Rs 812 million. The destroyed items included betel nuts, cigarettes, liquor, china salt, medicines and other prohibited goods. Addressing the ceremony, held here at Ratta Kulachi Stadium, Assistant Collector Customs Muhammad Omer Jan said the goods had been seized during

various anti-smuggling operations and were being disposed of strictly in accordance with the law. He stated that the initiative reflects Pakistan Customs' firm resolve to curb smuggling and eliminate goods that pose a serious threat to public health and social values. "This action is not only a reaffirmation of our commitment against smuggling but also a practical step toward protecting society from harmful and illegal products," he said. Omer Jan added that the operation aims to prevent smuggling, safeguard legitimate trade, and protect national revenue. The destroyed items included 60,597 kilograms of betel nut (chhalia) worth Rs 121 million, 129,472 sleeves of cigarettes valued at Rs 534.44 million, and 30,670 kilograms of Chinese salt worth Rs 50.78 million.—APP

Through this initiative, KSrelief reaffirms its continued commitment to addressing food security challenges in Pakistan. The project reflects the Centre's broader humanitarian mandate to alleviate suffering, enhance resilience, and support vulnerable communities during critical periods, particularly during the blessed month of Ramazan.

## Integrated climate, food security action urged

ISLAMABAD: A high-level stakeholder dialogue in Islamabad has called for stronger coordination between climate action, nutrition and food security policies to address growing environmental and public health challenges in Pakistan. The dialogue, titled "From Policy to Practice - Advancing Integrated Climate, Nutrition and Food Security Action in Pakistan," was organised by the Pakistan Food System Transformation Secretariat (PFSTS), housed at the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). The event brought together representatives from government ministries, development partners, academia and

technical experts. Participants noted that Pakistan remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, facing recurring floods, droughts and extreme weather events that disrupt food systems and worsen malnutrition. Annual disaster-related losses are estimated at around \$2 billion, with floods accounting for the majority. Opening the session, PFSTS Secretary Dr Ghulam Sadiq Afridi stressed the need to move beyond policy silos toward coordinated implementation mechanisms, adding that national food systems transformation efforts must align with climate resilience and improved nutrition outcomes. GAIN Pakistan Country Director Farrah Naz high-

lighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration and evidence-based dialogue to ensure climate initiatives deliver tangible gains in nutrition and food security. Additional remarks were delivered by representatives of development partners, including the Asian Development Bank, while experts provided a global overview of the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (ICAN), emphasising the need to align climate commitments with nutrition goals. Policy specialists noted that while national frameworks addressing climate change, nutrition and food security exist, stronger coordination, financing mechanisms and accountability structures are needed for effective implementation.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Dr. Oumer H. Oba called on Mr. Sajid Manzoor Asadi, Joint Secretary for Economic Affairs Division, at his office in Islamabad. The two sides explored various areas of cooperation to strengthen their collaboration across diverse sectors such as science and technology, public health and agriculture.—DNA

## Sindh's nutrition sets stage for scaled-up school meals

KARACHI: The Benazir Nashonuma Programme, a flagship conditional cash transfer initiative aimed at preventing stunting during the first 1,000 days of a child's life, has demonstrated a 6.4 percentage point reduction in stunting among children aged 6-23 months, along with significant improvements in maternal dietary diversity and reductions in low birth weight. This was revealed in a meeting between Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and the Country Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) Pakistan, Ms Coco Ushiyama, at the CM House on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Minister Education Sardar Shah, Minister Labour & Social Protection Saeed Ghani, Secretary School Education Zahid Abbasi, Secretary Health Tahir Sangi, Secretary Social Protection Khandim Channa and Secretary to the CM Asif Jameel. The WFP delegation, including Ms Hilde Bergsma, Head of Provincial Office, Sindh, Ms Salma Yaqub, Programme Policy Officer, Sindh, and Mr Rustam Khan, Programme Policy Officer WFP. The meeting focused on the launch of the School Meals Programme and discussed the findings of the Aga Khan University midline evaluation of the Benazir Nashonuma

Programme (BNP). The meeting also reviewed the progress of the Benazir Nashonuma Programme, a flagship conditional cash transfer initiative aimed at preventing stunting during the first 1,000 days of a child's life. According to the midline evaluation conducted by Aga Khan University, the programme has demonstrated a 6.4 percentage point reduction in stunting among children aged 6-23 months, along with significant improvements in maternal dietary diversity and reductions in low birth weight.

Termining the results "highly encouraging", the Chief Minister said the reduction in stunting and low birth weight "proves that targeted nutrition interventions combined with social protection can deliver measurable human capital gains". He reiterated Sindh's commitment to strengthening coordination between the health, education, and planning departments to scale up evidence-based nutrition interventions.

Country Director of WFP Pakistan, Ms Coco Ushiyama, appreciated the provincial government's efforts and commitments in making the stunting reduction programme a success. The WFP Country Director briefed the Chief Minister

on the five-years \$ 40 million School Meals Programme. The initiative, titled "Kal Ki Bunyad - Foundation for the Future," will target 100,000 students in 614 government schools in Malir and Keamari districts of Karachi.

The programme aims to improve children's nutritional status through daily school meals, strengthen literacy outcomes using the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach, rehabilitate WASH facilities, and institutionalise a sustainable provincial school meals model.

While appreciating WFP's continued support to Sindh, the Chief Minister said, "Our objective is not just to feed children, but to nourish them with the most efficient and sustainable model possible." Shah said that the provincial education department is working rigorously to ensure the student and teachers' presence in the schools while using the digitalised solutions and monitoring the learning process of the students. School Meals Programme, funded by McGovern Dole - United States Department of Agriculture, provided an opportunity to work closely with key stakeholders to take the agenda further to other regions of the province.—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
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Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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RGH.....9290301-7
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Shifa International 4603666



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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
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# Ambassador of Portugal visits Pir Khara Sharif

he visit concluded with a tour of the scenic Pir Khara Sharif valley and the Salt Range, highlighting the region's cultural and natural beauty

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Frederico Silva and Embassy team joined fellow ambassadors and senior diplomats from Malaysia, Brunei, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Nepal, and Turkmenistan on a visit to the Shrine of Hazrat Pir Muhammad Karam Shah (RA) at Pir Khara Sharif. The delegation was warmly received by Mr. Tariq Pirzada, Custodian of the shrine and learned about the rich Sufi heritage of South Asia, rooted in the values of peace, tolerance, compassion, and service to humanity. The ambassadors also witnessed the tradition of Langar, reflecting the spirit of inclusivity and equality for all. The visit concluded



with a tour of the scenic Pir Khara Sharif valley and the Salt Range, highlighting the region's cultural and natural beauty.

## Experts call for 'One-Stop' crisis centers to combat VAW

ISLAMABAD: Experts and digital rights advocates have stressed the need for an urgent overhaul of Pakistan's cyber-governance, suggesting the establishment of "One-Stop Crisis Centers" to combat a staggering rise in technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (TFVAW). The call was made during a high-level seminar hosted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here wherein participants highlighted that cybercrime complaints in Pakistan reached a record high of 171,000 in 2025, marking a sharp escalation from 102,000 just five years ago, said a press release. Dr Razia Safdar, SDPI's Senior Policy Advisor, emphasized that though the government is promoting digital transformation, the lack of safety is creating a "new frontier of violence." She cited global data showing that 67% of women are affected by online misinformation and 66% experience cyber harassment. "Online harassment is no longer confined to the digital space; it translates into real-life threats," Dr Safdar warned, noting that AI-driven threats like deep-fakes and manipulated content are causing irreversible emotional and reputational harm. Fahmida Khan, Deputy Country Representative for UN Women Pakistan, shared a harrowing personal experience where her own photograph was

misused on an online platform. "If individuals in professional positions can be exploited so easily, the risk for women in rural areas is catastrophic," she stated. Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, the SDPI Visiting Fellow and former IG Police, criticized the existing infrastructure, noting that while Islamabad has introduced modern "facilitation centers," much of the country lacks specialized units for gender-sensitive interviewing. He debunked the myth that cybercrime is untraceable, stating that "every digital act leaves a forensic footprint," but admitted that law-enforcement needs better training in trauma-informed approaches. Muhammad Akram Mughal, the Deputy Director of National Cyber Crime Investigation (NCCI), revealed the immense pressure on state resources. While complaints have surged, the conviction rate for cybercrime in Pakistan remains a low 3.7 per cent. "Our investigators are overwhelmed. Under international standards, one officer should handle 10 cases; in Pakistan, they are managing over 400 each," Mughal explained. Despite these hurdles, he noted that over 250 awareness seminars in universities have helped reduce certain incidents by 30 per cent. Discussing the economic repercussions of digital insecurity Naghmana Hashmi, Advisor for Federal Ombud-

person Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAH), and the former ambassador said that nearly 15 per cent of professional women are compelled to leave their jobs due to online harassment. "Pakistan loses billions annually in productivity due to workplace harassment. We cannot achieve economic growth if half of our population is scared to be harassed online," she argued. Usman Zafar, a digital resilience specialist at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted the "gendered propaganda" used to silence women in public life. He distinguished between misinformation and mal information, the sharing of private, real content with harmful intent, which is increasingly used to target activists and journalists. The panel concluded with a multi-level strategy for a safer digital Pakistan, i.e. i) Developing a comprehensive legal framework specifically for TFVAW, ii) One-Stop Crisis Centers: Adopting the Thailand model to provide legal, medical, and psychological support without the immediate requirement of an FIR, iii) Integrating digital citizenship and privacy management into the national school curriculum, iv) Enforcing human rights standards for tech companies operating within Pakistan.—APP

## Huawei committed to empower Pakistan's digital future

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan enters a critical phase of digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is positioned as a key enabler for economic growth, governance efficiency, and ICT innovation. Huawei is uniquely positioned to support this transition with its full-stack, end-to-end solutions. Artificial Intelligence is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of Pakistan's digital future. The government has emphasized AI adoption across governance, industry, and education, with initiatives to establish Centers of Excellence, expand AI curricula in universities, and train profession-

als in advanced digital skills. AI is expected to transform public services and all industries like smarter healthcare, predictive analytics in agriculture, intelligent transport systems etc. These national priorities align closely with Huawei's vision, as the company continues to deliver technologies that empower societies and accelerate digital progress. Building on this momentum, Huawei is not just a hardware provider - it is a facilitator of comprehensive solutions that integrate infrastructure, services, and platforms. Unlike fragmented offerings from other market play-

ers, Huawei ensures supply chain reliability, availability, and assured delivery. The company has already shared a clear AI and ICT road-map, demonstrating long-term dedication to Pakistan's future. Addressing the media, Ahmed Bilal Masood, CEO of AI and Cloud Business, said: "Huawei is committed to empower Pakistan's digital future. By bringing full-stack AI and ICT solutions, we aim, not only to provide technology but also build capacity to handle capability, strengthen local ecosystems, and ensure that Pakistan is ready to compete globally in the era of intelligent transformation.—APP

## Health Minister opens Telemedicine Centre

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, inaugurated a state-of-the-art Telemedicine Centre in Tumair, marking a major step toward the digitization of Basic Health Units (BHUs) to strengthen Pakistan's primary healthcare system. Addressing the ceremony, the Federal Health Minister termed telemedicine a "revolution in the health sector," stating that modern technology has made quality healthcare more accessible for people living in remote areas. He noted that under the telemedicine system, both patients and doctors will be monitored to ensure transparency, quality, and efficiency in service delivery. The Minister emphasized that the government aims to make treatment easier and more affordable for underprivileged populations through telemedicine initiatives. He added that strengthening Basic Health Units would significantly reduce the burden on major hospitals and improve overall health service delivery. Highlighting ongoing reforms,

Syed Mustafa Kamal said the government is committed to overhauling the health system with a strong focus on primary healthcare. He pointed out that Pakistan's rapidly growing population is putting increasing pressure on available resources, remarking that the country is adding a population equivalent to New Zealand every year. He stressed the importance of birth spacing for sustainable healthcare planning. The Minister acknowledged that the unavailability of doctors in remote areas had long been a major challenge and that the primary healthcare system had not been functioning effectively. However, he noted that modern technology is now bridging this gap and making healthcare more accessible to the public. He stated that the telemedicine initiative was launched keeping in view the large underserved and low-income population. Residents of Tumair will now benefit from modern digital health services, with doctors—even those based abroad, including in London—able to consult and treat patients remotely.

Medicines will also be delivered to patients at their doorsteps. The Minister further observed that the number of new doctors entering the healthcare workforce is increasing, and the telemedicine platform is creating new professional opportunities for young medical practitioners. He described telemedicine as a "silent revolution" in the health sector. Reaffirming the government's commitment, Syed Mustafa Kamal said that authorities first thoroughly assessed the health system and its requirements before designing an integrated and effective telemedicine framework. He announced that the government plans to further expand telemedicine services across the country to ensure that every citizen has access to quality healthcare. He concluded by noting that a large population in remote areas cannot afford frequent hospital visits, and telemedicine will play a critical role in bringing healthcare services closer to the people.—DNA

## Condolence reference for former SCP judge held

ISLAMABAD: A formal condolence session was held at the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday to mourn the passing away of former judge Justice Khalil ur Rehman Khan. The condolence reference was led by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, and attended by other judges of the apex court at the Supreme Court building in Islamabad. During the session, the judges offered Fateha for the departed soul and expressed profound grief and heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family. They paid tribute to Justice Khalil ur Rehman Khan's distinguished services to the judiciary and acknowledged his valuable contributions to the administration of justice in the country. The Chief Justice and fellow judges prayed that Almighty Allah grant eternal peace to the departed soul and bless the family with patience, strength and fortitude to bear the irreparable loss. The condolence session concluded with collective prayers for the late judge and for fortitude to his family.—APP

## Mohsin salutes security forces for foiling Bajaur terror attack

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has paid glowing tribute to Pakistan's security forces for successfully thwarting a major terrorist assault on a check post in Bajaur, praising their courage, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to national security. In a statement issued on Monday, Naqvi honored the 11 personnel who embraced martyrdom while repelling the attack by militants described as "Kharjite terrorists." He expressed deep sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the families of the fallen heroes. "Our brave sons laid down their lives but eliminated 12 terrorists, sending them to their deserved fate," the Interior Minister said. He saluted the fearlessness and resolve of the forces that foiled the militants' malicious designs. Naqvi emphasized that the sacrifices of the martyrs are "unforgettable and eternal," affirming that the nation will always remember their devotion and bravery.—APP

## Kite flyers, sellers held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police launched a large-scale crackdown against kite flyers and kite sellers across the federal capital, arresting 39 individuals during the past 24 hours. An official told APP on Monday that police teams conducted raids in various areas and apprehended 39 kite flyers and kite sellers. A large number of kites and kite strings were also recovered from their possession. He said cases have been registered against the arrested accused at the relevant police stations, while further investigation is underway. SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza said that kite flying is a dangerous.—APP

## AIOU extends enrollment, admission deadline

The entry tests for these programs will be conducted from 23 to 26 February

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended the enrollment deadline for continuing students for the Spring Semester 2026 until 25 February without any late fee. Under this extension, new admissions are also open until 25 February (without late fee) in Matric, FA, Associate Degree (BA/BCom/BBA), BS, B.Ed programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs and various certificate courses. According to the university administration the admission deadlines for MS, MPhil, and PhD programs could not be extended because the entry test schedule has already been announced. The entry tests for these programs will be conducted from 23 to 26 February. The purpose of extending the enrollment and admission deadlines is to provide greater convenience to students and to enable as many students as possible to benefit from educational opportunities.—DNA

Government of Pakistan  
Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Islamabad

**Corrigendum Notice No.04/2025-26/PIMS**

Reference to this Institute **Tender Notice No. 07/2025-2026/PIMS**, published in the newspapers (Express Tribune Islamabad, Daily Dunya Islamabad, 92 News Islamabad and Islamabad Post Islamabad) on **04-02-2026**, the following amendment/ change has been made as under:-

<p>Tender for the purchase of Floor Mounted Digital X-Ray mentioned in Tender Sr. # 04, due on 21-02-2026.</p> <p><b>Specifications:-</b> Motorized Multi-Leaf Collimator:- Ceiling-mounted tube assembly support with tube assembly multi-leaf collimator for vertical, oblique, horizontal, lateral acquisitions Rotation up to +/-40 degrees or more.</p>	<p><b>May be read as:-</b> <b>Motorized Multi-Leaf Collimator:-</b> <b>Floor-mounted tube assembly support with tube assembly multi-leaf collimator for acquisitions.</b></p>
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The Corrigendum Notice is also available at PPRa website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk) as well as at PIMS Website [www.pims.gov.pk](http://www.pims.gov.pk).

**PID(I)6703/25**

**Project Director**  
**Ph. 051-9260490**

## Briefs

CAPES,  
University  
of Sindh ink  
MoU

ISLAMABAD: The Consortium of Asia-Pacific and Eurasian Studies (CAPES), Islamabad, and the Area Study Centre of Far East and Southeast Asia (FESEA) at the University of Sindh have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance high-impact research and policy engagement on Asia Pacific. This collaboration will empower intellectual activity and national research potentials in Pakistan on East and Southeast Asia through FESEA statutory requirement of advanced interdisciplinary research and policy reach and strategic studies expertise of CAPES, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Under the MoU, both institutions will collaborate on co-authored research papers, policy briefs and analytical reports focusing on key regional themes including security dynamics, the evolving Indo-Pacific construct, and the Belt and Road Initiative. One of the pillars of the agreement is the journal that is recognized by the HEC, the journal is the Asia Pacific, the CAPES President, Dr. Khuram Iqbal, is offered to join the Editorial Advisory Board, whereas the Director of FESEA will be offered to join the CAPES Board of Directors. —APP

CDNS attain  
Rs765b savings  
inflows

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved Rs765 billion in savings inflows from July 1st to February 15th of the current fiscal year 2025-26, achieving over half of its annual target and reflecting steady progress in promoting a savings culture in the country. According to officials, the CDNS has set an overall savings inflows target of Rs1.3 trillion for FY 2025-26. The inflows recorded so far indicate encouraging public participation in national savings schemes during the first half of the fiscal year. Similarly, the CDNS has fixed a target of Rs50 billion for investments in Islamic savings instruments during the current fiscal year to support the growth of the Islamic economy, a senior CDNS official told APP here Tuesday. Sharing details of previous performance, the official said National Savings had set an annual target of Rs1.65 trillion for FY 2024-25, alongside a Rs170 billion target for Islamic finance investments, both aimed at strengthening the savings culture and expanding Shariah-compliant financial options. —APP

ITP's 'Uraan'  
gives wings  
to women

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has inaugurated the "ITP Uraan Scooty and Motor Riding School," a dedicated initiative aimed at promoting safe and independent mobility for women. A public relations officer told on Tuesday that Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi formally inaugurated the facility. The ceremony was attended by senior police officers, women enrolled in the training programme, and other participants. IGP Rizvi told APP that the Uraan initiative would play a vital role in enhancing women's confidence, driving skills, and overall safety on roads. He said the programme reflects Islamabad Police's commitment to empowering women by enabling safe, independent, and dignified mobility. The officer said the Uraan initiative is designed to provide structured training to women in car driving, motorcycle riding, and scooty handling, helping promote self-reliance. He said the programme represents an important step towards ensuring women's safe movement in the federal capital. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Hamza Humayun stated that the riding school has been equipped with modern training arrangements aligned with international standards. —APP

Dress show competition  
attracts huge audience

The event culminated in a cheerful photoshoot followed by refreshments, allowing participants, guests, and faculty to celebrate the memorable occasion together

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An atmosphere of colour, creativity, and youthful enthusiasm filled the premises of the Institute of Home Economics Art and Design as the institute hosted a vibrant intercollegiate competition. The graceful ceremony commenced with the national anthem, setting a dignified and patriotic tone for the day's festivities. The event unfolded as a delightful tapestry of artistic expression, featuring an array of engaging contests including the Dress Show Competition, Videography Competition, and Culinary Art Competition. The Dress Show Competition was held in two captivating categories: Frosty Elegance and Celebrations Couture, each reflecting a unique blend of imagination, craftsmanship, and style. In Frosty Elegance, participants presented winter-inspired designs reflecting grace, sophistication, and elegance. In the second category, Celebrations Couture, participants showcased vibrant, culturally rich outfits inspired by global festivals and traditional celebrations. The Videography Competition revolved around the theme The Ad-Makers Contest, challenging participants to showcase their storytelling and promotional skills through creative visuals. The Culinary Art Competition was organized under the theme Seed Power Delight, encouraging students to craft innovative and nutritious dishes using seeds as the central ingredient. Gracing the occasion as the chief guest was Ms. Nosheen Sharaf, the creative spirit behind the celebrated brands Hunar by Nosheen and Designer Jewellery by Nosheen. Her presence added charm and inspiration to the event, motivating participants to shine with confidence and creativity. The Dress Show Competition was eval-



uated by the distinguished panel of judges comprising Ms. Nadia, Ms. Rubina Anjum, and Mr. Rameez Jabbar. The Culinary Art Competition was judged by Ms. Zahra Mustafa and Ms. Sadia Khan, while the Videography Competition was assessed by Mr. Afnan Karim and Ms. Sumaira Zakir. The competitions witnessed remarkable talent and creativity. In the Frosty Elegance category, the first position was bagged by Ms. Laraib from IMCG F-6/2, followed by Ms. Aleeza of IMCG F-7/2 in second place, while the third position was awarded to Ms. Zobia from IMCG I-14/3. In the Celebrations Couture category, the first position was shared by Ms. Fatima Kareem and Ms. Areeba of IHEAD F-11/1 along with Sadia and her group from IMCG HUMAK. The second position was secured by Abeeha and her group from IMCG I-14/3, and the third posi-

tion went to Natasha Zaheer and her group from IMCG F-7/2. In the Videography Competition, the first position was bagged by Ms. Maham Asif representing IMCG F-7/4. The second position was awarded to Ms. Aiman Javed from IMCG I-14/3. The third position was shared by Zymal and her group from IHEAD F-11/1 along with Malaika and her group from IMCG (PG) F-7/4 Margalla. The Culinary Art Competition witnessed a tie for the top prize, with Ms. Laiba Mughal of IHEAD F-11/1 and Ms. Fatima Tariq of IMCG F-10/2 both bagging the first position. The second position was secured by Ms. Anum Altaf of IMCG F-7/4 (Street 52), while the third position was awarded to Ms. Mahnoor Ali of IMCG I-10/4. At the conclusion of the competitions, IMCG I-14/3 was declared the winning college, celebrating overall excellence across all events. In

her address, Prof. Rozina Faheem, Principal of the Institute of Home Economics Art and Design F-11/1, highlighted the growing importance of entrepreneurship in the modern era and shed light on the institute's role in nurturing creativity, innovation, and confidence among students. The chief guest, Ms. Nosheen Sharaf, lauded the efforts of the participants and faculty in making the event a grand success. She congratulated the winners and encouraged all participants to continue pursuing their passions with dedication and grace. As a gesture of gratitude and hospitality, Prof. Rozina Faheem presented tokens of appreciation to the chief guest and the honourable judges. The event culminated in a cheerful photoshoot followed by refreshments, allowing participants, guests, and faculty to celebrate the memorable occasion together.

Police arrest  
Kabari gang  
leader,  
recover loot

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Anti-Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) achieved a major success by arresting three members of an organized Kabari gang, including its leader, involved in multiple incidents of house theft. An official told APP on Tuesday that the gang, comprising previously recorded offenders, used to conduct reconnaissance of houses during the day and commit thefts at night. He said the arrested accused were wanted by Lohi Bher and Bani Gala police stations in several cases. The gang members were identified as Sudhir, Abdul Rehman, and Waheed Ullah. Police also recovered looted valuables worth more than Rs 11.5 million, including Pakistani and foreign currency, expensive watches, mobile phones, tablet devices, and gold ornaments. Weapons used in the crimes were also recovered. DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq said the Islamabad Police is conducting large-scale operations against organized and active gangs. He said the protection of citizens' lives and property remains the foremost priority of Islamabad Police. —APP

NUST  
organises  
NCC '26 to  
facilitate career  
exploration

ISLAMABAD: National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Placement Office (NPO) organised its flagship career fair, NUST Career Connect 2026 (NCC '26), at the NUST main campus, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening industry engagement and preparing graduates for impactful careers. The event brought together graduating students and leading employers from across diverse fields, providing a dynamic platform for networking, career exploration and recruitment. NUST Pro-Rector Research, Innovation & Commercialisation (RIC), Dr. Rizwan Riaz, inaugurated the career fair. Emphasising the importance of strong academia-industry collaboration in developing future-ready graduates, he said that initiatives like NCC'26 are instrumental in providing students with practical exposure and enabling a smooth transition from academia to the professional world. NUST Career Connect 2026 (NCC '26) witnessed participation from over 130 multi-sector organizations, representing a diverse range of industries. Students from across NUST actively engaged with recruiters, with more than 4,000 students attending the event. —APP

No relief given to HSA  
VC, says President office

According to the Spokesperson to the President, a representation was duly received in the President's Secretariat under the relevant legal provisions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The President's Secretariat has issued a formal clarification debunking social media rumors claiming that the Vice Chancellor of the Health Services Academy (HSA) has been granted relief or reinstated following a representation against a harassment-related order. The statement comes in response to widespread speculation on social platforms suggesting that the President had cleared or provided final relief to the accused official in a case decided by the Federal Ombudsman for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace. According to the Spokesperson to the President, a representation was duly received in the President's Secretariat under the relevant legal provisions. As per Section 14(2) of the Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Act, 2013, the filing of such a representation

automatically suspends the operation of the impugned order for a period of sixty days. This suspension is a mandatory statutory requirement and does not imply that the individual has been exonerated of the charges, finally reinstated, or granted any substantive relief. The President's office has called for the complete official record from the concerned forum for thorough examination. The matter will be placed before the competent authority for a decision strictly in accordance with the law. The clarification emphasized that no final relief or clearance has been granted by the President. Any assertions to the contrary circulating on social media are incorrect and misleading. The statement further reiterated that the President of Pakistan is constitutionally bound to act in strict compliance with the laws of the land. The public and media have been urged to refrain from

speculation and rely only on verified official information. This development follows the Federal Ombudsman's recent landmark order (issued around February 13-14, 2026) removing Prof. Dr. Shehzad Ali Khan from his position as HSA Vice Chancellor after finding him guilty of quid pro quo harassment, abuse of authority, and related misconduct under the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010. The order stemmed from cross-complaints involving a junior female colleague, where the Ombudsman rejected claims of "honey-trapping" and upheld the harassment allegations against the VC. The case underscores ongoing efforts to ensure accountability in public institutions, particularly in matters of workplace harassment and gender-based misconduct. The President's Secretariat has stressed that the review process will proceed transparently and lawfully.

132 kV grid station  
commissioned

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), Lt. General Muhammad Saeed (Retd.) inaugurated the Grid Station of the 132 kV Transmission Line at the Dasu Hydropower Project (HPP) on February 15, marking a major milestone in strengthening the project's power evacuation system. The inauguration ceremony was held during the Chairman's official visit to the project site, where he reviewed ongoing construction activities and assessed overall progress, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. The newly inaugurated grid station is a key component of the transmission infrastructure, designed to facilitate efficient transmission of electricity from the Dasu Hydropower Project to the national grid. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman termed the completion of the grid station "an important step toward the timely operationalization of the project" and he emphasized that the development reflects WAPDA's commitment to accelerating work on critical infrastructure to ensure reliable and sustainable energy supply for the country. The grid station will play a crucial role in supporting construction power requirements and strengthening the overall transmission network associated with the project. Its completion demonstrates continued progress on essential infrastructure needed for future power generation at Dasu Hydropower Project. Senior officials from WAPDA, project management, consultants, and representatives of China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) attended the inauguration ceremony. The Dasu Hydropower Project, located in Upper Kohistan district, is one of Pakistan's most significant hydropower initiatives aimed at enhancing the country's energy security through clean and renewable electricity generation. —DNA

Work on all seven KKH-01  
relocation tunnels completed

ISLAMABAD: The Dasu Hydropower Project (DHPP) marked a key construction milestone last week with the successful breakthrough of the Uchar B tunnels, completing all seven tunnels under the Karakoram Highway (KKH-01) relocation package, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. The Uchar B tunnel extends 953 meters and its breakthroughs was confirmed during an on-site ceremony attended by engineers, technical staff and project representatives, who gathered at the tunnel portal holding a banner commemorating the excavation breakthrough. Besides it, Uchar A tunnel measures 673 meters has also been completed, Gwadar Pro added. Located in the mountainous Upper Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the tunnels form part of essential relocation works for sections of KKH that will be affected by the reservoir created under the Dasu HPP. The tunnels are designed to ensure continued connectivity and safe transportation in the region once the project becomes operational. Photos from the site show engineers and workers wearing protective helmets and safety gear standing at the entrance of the newly excavated tunnel, surrounded by rocky terrain and

reinforced slopes. The tunnel portal is lined with concrete support structures, highlighting the engineering measures taken to ensure stability and safety in complex geological conditions. China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) is responsible for executing the construction works in coordination with Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). Moreover, on Friday WAPDA through Dasu HPP released about Rs200 million to accelerate electrification efforts in Kohistan Upper. The funds have been provided to the Hazara Electric Supply Company (HAZECO), formerly known as the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), for the electrification of four tehsils of Dasu. As per WAPDA, the electrification project includes the extension of transmission lines, installation of transformers, and development of distribution networks aimed at delivering electricity to remote and underserved communities in the region. The transmission network is nearing completion. Electrification will commence soon after HAZECO completes the distribution infrastructure. —APP

Commerce minister  
chairs high-level meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan chaired a high-level meeting to review the situation arising from surplus potato production in the country and to devise a coordinated strategy for enhancing exports while protecting the interests of farmers. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Federal Government and the Government of Punjab. Rama Ishaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister, and Secretary of Commerce Jawad Paul also participated in the discussions, said a release issued here on Tuesday. Participants examined updated production estimates, domestic market conditions, ex-

port performance, and logistical challenges. It was noted that an expansion in cultivation area, along with carryover stocks from the previous season, has led to surplus availability, placing pressure on farm-gate prices amid challenging global market conditions. During the meeting, the Minister emphasized that the primary impact of the surplus is being felt by farmers due to depressed prices, and therefore, any support mechanism should prioritize direct assistance to farmers rather than artificial price interventions that may distort the market. He observed that sus-

tainable solutions must be market-aligned and fiscally responsible. The discussion also focused on improving export competitiveness, particularly in Central Asian and other emerging markets. It was agreed that a targeted and time-bound freight facilitation mechanism could be evaluated, subject to fiscal feasibility and clearly defined benchmarks, to help exporters manage rising logistics costs without creating long-term distortions. The Minister further directed that business-to-business engagements with key destinations, including Central Asia, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific markets, be intensified to expand

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## Politics over players: PHF scandal boils over

As reported by Daily Islamabad POST in its February 16, 2026 edition, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) is again at the center of an uproar after the national team's dismal FIH Pro League campaign in Australia collided with serious allegations of mismanagement. The controversy intensified when reports emerged that the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) had issued a cheque of Rs 10 million to the PHF for five-star hotel accommodations, yet the players found themselves in budget guest houses, cramped shared rooms, and last-minute low-cost Airbnbs. Photographs of the team's modest lodging quickly made the rounds on social media, inflaming public sentiment and deepening anxieties about the sport's deteriorating governance. The optics were brutal: a proud hockey nation, once synonymous with excellence, watching its players struggle on and off the field while questions swirl over where the money went and who, if anyone, is truly accountable. The timing could not have been worse. On the pitch, Pakistan failed to secure a single win in the Australian leg, and insiders cited exhaustion, morale issues, and inadequate recovery conditions as compounding factors. Off the pitch, the revelations fed into a broader narrative of drift and dysfunction within the PHF. For months, the PSB has repeatedly written to the federation about suspected financial irregularities and the need for transparent accounting, but multiple letters have reportedly yielded little more than promises and partial responses. Those familiar with the exchanges describe a pattern of delays, incomplete documentation, and procedural stonewalling that erodes trust and invites speculation. In this climate, the accommodations scandal felt less like an isolated lapse and more like a symptom of a deeper malaise. The PHF has firmly denied misuse of funds, insisting that all arrangements were made in good faith and that any downgrades in lodging stemmed from logistical hurdles, payment timing issues, and tight availability during a busy travel window. Officials point to last-minute venue adjustments and currency constraints as reasons bookings shifted or fell through. Yet sources close to the team recount a more worrying experience: assurances of premium facilities that failed to materialize, players squeezed into shared spaces with limited privacy, inconsistent meal arrangements that undercut nutrition plans, and transportation that did not meet professional standards. While these accounts remain to be formally verified, the disparity between official explanations and the lived reality of the touring party has widened a credibility gap that has long haunted the federation. In response to mounting pressure, the PSB has initiated an inquiry to establish a clear trail for the Rs 10 million allocation. Investigators are expected to examine disbursement records, vendor invoices, and correspondence with

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accommodation providers in Australia, as well as take testimony from players and staff. The stated aim is not only to confirm whether the funds were used as intended but also to assess whether basic welfare thresholds were met for a national side competing at the sport's elite level. Such an inquiry, if conducted with independence and urgency, could set a new standard for financial stewardship in Pakistan's sports bodies, where governance often hinges on personalities rather than systems.

The political dimensions are impossible to ignore. Hockey insiders describe a federation mired in factional infighting, abrupt staffing changes, and a culture of shifting allegiances that prioritizes survival over strategy. The sense that "nobody knows who is truly in charge" is more than a caustic quip; it is a structural reality in which authority is diffuse, patronage is rife, and continuity is sacrificed to short-term calculations. The Prime Minister, the PHF's chief patron, has been urged by former captains and administrators to intervene, but the demands of national governance and a crowded political agenda have left hockey low on the priority list. That vacuum of high-level attention has, in practice, licensed inertia. The result is a vicious cycle: controversies erupt, letters are written, committees form, and then little changes until the next crisis. For the players, the cost is immediate and personal. Elite performance is a delicate compound of training, rest, nutrition, and confidence. When accommodations are subpar and routines are disrupted, the margins tilt swiftly against success. Former greats have not held back, calling the episode shameful and painful, and emphasizing that those who wear the green shirt should not bear the consequences of failed administration. Their calls have grown louder for enforceable standards: minimum grades for lodging, clearly defined per diems, reliable transport, medical coverage, and a protected channel for reporting grievances without fear of reprisal. Such measures would recognize, at last, that player welfare is not an indulgence but an essential performance variable. The path forward will require more than a postmortem. If the inquiry confirms discrepancies, accountability must be visible and meaningful, including recoveries where appropriate and sanctions that deter repetition. If, conversely, the paper trail shows that the funds were properly allocated yet failed to translate into suitable arrangements, then the federation must overhaul its operational competence: earlier bookings, vetted vendors, contingency planning, and financial controls that withstand the chaos of international touring. Either way, a new compact is needed between funders, administrators, and athletes—one that trades opacity for transparency, expedience for professionalism, and rhetoric for measurable outcomes. Pakistan's hockey heritage is towering, but heritage does not win matches or shield institutions from decay. Restoring credibility will require a governance reset with independent oversight, term limits that curb entrenchment, and routine disclosures that allow supporters and sponsors to see where the money goes. It will also demand a performance pathway grounded in modern methods, consistent leadership, and a domestic calendar that prepares players for the speed and rigor of the international game. Above all, it calls for moral clarity: the recognition that when a national team travels, it represents not only a federation but a nation's dignity.

## The Epstein Files Set Imran Khan Apart

Qamar Bashir



Khan's foreign policy posture had consistently emphasized strategic independence. He refused to grant U.S. military basing rights after America's withdrawal from Afghanistan, publicly declaring "Absolutely not" when asked about hosting foreign forces. He defended Pakistan's abstention at the United Nations on Ukraine and rejected public pressure from European diplomats, asking pointedly at a rally whether Pakistan was expected to behave as a subordinate state. He argued that engagement with Russia was necessary to secure affordable energy and food for Pakistan's struggling population

WHEN the latest waves of documents connected to the Jeffrey Epstein investigation began surfacing, most of the names that appeared followed a familiar and uncomfortable pattern. The references revolved around social proximity, elite networks, reputational damage, and questions of judgment. Against that backdrop, one name stood apart — not because of scandal, but because of how it was framed. Imran Khan's reported mention was different. According to summaries that emerged from the broader document releases, he was not linked to misconduct or impropriety. Instead, he was described in private correspondence as "really bad news" and a "greater threat." The tone was political rather than personal, strategic rather than social. In a collection of files that cast shadows over many reputations, his distinction appeared to lie in geopolitical discomfort rather than scandal. That difference matters because it shifts the conversation from morality to strategy. A leader described as a threat is not being accused of vice but of independence. The question then becomes: dangerous to whom, and for what reason? To understand why that framing resonates so strongly in Pakistan, one must revisit a moment that altered the country's political trajectory. That moment arrived in early March 2022.

On August 9, 2023, The Intercept published a classified Pakistani diplomatic cable documenting a March 7, 2022 meeting between Pakistan's ambassador to Washington and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu. The document, labeled "Secret," recorded Washington's displeasure with Khan's visit to Moscow on February 24, 2022 — the very day Russia invaded Ukraine. According to the cable, Lu stated that if a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Khan succeeded, "all will be forgiven in Washington." Otherwise, he warned, it would be "tough going ahead," and the prime minister could face "isolation" from Europe and the United States. The language recorded in the cable is unmistakably conditional, tying bilateral warmth to a specific political outcome. Forgiveness if he is removed; difficulty if he remains. The sequence that followed intensified scrutiny. The meeting took place on March 7, procedural steps toward a no-confidence vote began on March 8, and by April 10, Khan had been removed from office. Correlation does not prove orchestration, and political transitions are rarely explained by a single document. Nevertheless, the cable demonstrates that diplomatic pressure was applied at a

sensitive moment. It also reveals that Washington viewed Khan's neutrality on Ukraine as a personal policy choice rather than institutional consensus. Khan's foreign policy posture had consistently emphasized strategic independence. He refused to grant U.S. military basing rights after America's withdrawal from Afghanistan, publicly declaring "Absolutely not" when asked about hosting foreign forces. He defended Pakistan's abstention at the United Nations on Ukraine and rejected public pressure from European diplomats, asking pointedly at a rally whether Pakistan was expected to behave as a subordinate state. He argued that engagement with Russia was necessary to secure affordable energy and food for Pakistan's struggling population.

Beyond Ukraine, Khan elevated the issue of Islamophobia on the global stage, pressing the United Nations to recognize anti-Muslim discrimination and urging respect for religious dignity. He framed Pakistan as a country that would engage with all powers without entering rigid alliances. Supporters viewed this as sovereignty in action, while critics considered it diplomatic miscalculation. What cannot be denied is that his posture disrupted established expectations about alignment in a polarized global environment. Following his removal, Pakistan's external positioning shifted noticeably. Military-to-military engagement with the United States regained momentum, and reports surfaced of Pakistani-manufactured ammunition appearing in Ukraine. Diplomatic warmth between Islamabad and Western capitals returned, and new defense cooperation frameworks were discussed. These developments do not conclusively prove that pressure determined political outcomes, but they align with the cable's suggestion that a change in leadership would ease tensions and remove the "dent" in relations.

It is within this broader context that the contrast with the Epstein-related references acquires symbolic weight. Many powerful men whose names appeared in those documents faced reputational questions because of association with a disgraced financier. Imran Khan's distinction, by contrast, was reportedly rooted in strategic apprehension rather than personal scandal. He was not depicted as compromised; he was characterized as disruptive. The cable published by The Intercept reinforces that interpretation. Its "assessment" section records the Pakistani ambassador's view that Lu could not have delivered such a strong message without approval from higher authorities.

Whether or not that assessment was accurate, it underscores how the exchange was perceived inside Pakistan's diplomatic apparatus. The document captures a moment when international expectations and domestic politics collided.

Since Khan's removal, Pakistan has experienced deep polarization, economic strain, and intensified debate over the balance of civilian and military authority. His critics argue that his governance record warranted parliamentary removal and that institutional checks functioned as designed. His supporters argue that his defiance of geopolitical alignment invited external pressure that altered the course of domestic politics. The truth may reside in the interplay of both internal and external forces.

What the documentary record shows is not a signed directive of regime change, but evidence of diplomatic leverage. In international politics, leverage often operates through incentives and signals rather than commands. The phrase "all will be forgiven" is not an order; it is a conditional promise. Such language does not prove conspiracy, but it does demonstrate expectation. That is why the distinction matters. The Epstein files, as publicly discussed, did not place Imran Khan among scandal-tainted elites. Instead, they appear to reflect concern about his independent trajectory. The March 7 cable then provides context for why that concern may have existed, showing that his policies generated friction at the highest levels of diplomacy. In a world structured around predictable alignments, independence can be unsettling. Imran Khan's story, therefore, is not merely about allegations or denial. It is about how sovereignty interacts with global power. He was not framed in those documents as morally compromised; he was framed as politically inconvenient. Whether that inconvenience contributed to his removal remains debated, but the documentary evidence confirms that it was noticed. In the end, what set him apart was not scandal but stance. In a system accustomed to compliance, saying no can carry consequences. The documents do not resolve the debate over his ouster, but they illuminate the pressures surrounding it. And in doing so, they explain why, among many powerful names, one stood apart.

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

## Ramadan and the Reformation of Character

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Allah's mercy in this month is beyond measure. The Prophet, Peace be upon him, informed us that when Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained (Bukhari and Muslim). Furthermore, good deeds are multiplied manifold and scholars have explained that in Ramadan this multiplication...

AS the blessed month of Ramadan approaches, one is naturally inclined to reflection. I am reminded of a charming yet profound incident recorded in the diary of Ashfaq Ahmed sahib. He narrates that a Japanese colleague in his office, a young woman named Miwa, once asked him at the commencement of Ramadan; "What do you gain by remaining hungry and thirsty from dawn to dusk for an entire month?" He replied that fasting is an act of worship; it is not confined to abstaining from food and drink, but demands abstinence from falsehood, dishonesty, injustice, and every unworthy deed. It requires one to perform one's duties with integrity, to weigh fairly, to speak truthfully, and to guard the tongue and the heart from evil. The young woman responded with remarkable seriousness: "You have the advantage. We must avoid these wrongs throughout the year, while you do so only for one month."

Her observation, though simple, contains a mirror for the Muslim conscience. Ramadan is not meant to be a seasonal display of virtue; it is a disciplined return to the moral order that Islam demands at all times. The Holy Qur'an declares: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain piety" (2:183). The objective is not hunger, but Taqwa — that inward consciousness of Almighty Allah which restrains a person from wrongdoing even in solitude. In this sacred month, the mosques assume a new splendour. Rows of worshippers fill the houses of Allah; the cap adorns the head, the rosary passes through attentive fingers, and the tongue is softened by remembrance. Yet these outward symbols must correspond to inward transformation. Ramadan is a school of humility, a season of submission, and a reminder of human frailty before Divine Majesty.

Allah Almighty says: "The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and criterion" (2:185). It is thus not merely a month of ritual, but of guidance and moral awakening.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, warned with striking clarity: "Whoever does not abandon false speech and acting upon it, Allah has no need of his leaving his food and drink" (Sahih al-Bukhari). In another narration, he said: "Fasting is a shield" (Bukhari and Muslim). A shield protects from external harm; fasting protects the soul from its own lower inclinations. If the tongue continues to wound, if the hand continues to oppress, and if the scales remain unjust, then hunger alone is but a physical exercise devoid of spiritual merit. One recalls a disturbing scene in the market last year. Three days before Ramadan, a customer asked a fruit vendor, "Your father hasn't been seen lately—Is he well?" The reply was revealing; his father, he said, had departed for Umrah. Yet it was common knowledge in the market that once Ramadan commenced, he would raise the prices of fruit without hesitation, justifying the increase by asserting that wholesale rates had surged. Such conduct betrays a misunderstanding of the month's essence. Ramadan demands that we create ease, not hardship; relief, not exploitation. The Prophet, Peace be upon him, said: "He who gives food for a fasting person to break his fast will have a reward like his, without diminishing the reward of the fasting person in the slightest" (Tirmidhi). The spirit of Ramadan is generosity, fairness, and compassion, especially towards the poor and needy.

Allah's mercy in this month is beyond measure. The Prophet, Peace be upon him, informed us that when Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils

are chained (Bukhari and Muslim). Furthermore, good deeds are multiplied manifold and scholars have explained that in Ramadan this multiplication is even greater. It is as though the Divine Mercy is displayed in abundance, so that the path of righteousness becomes unmistakably clear.

Allah loves His servants with a love surpassing the tenderness of seventy mothers. He desires not their hardship, but their guidance. Ramadan is therefore a refresher course in moral discipline — a training period in which habits are reformed and character refined. Human nature teaches us that repetition engrains practice into habit. If for thirty consecutive days one restrains anger, guards the tongue, fulfils trusts, and performs prayers with punctuality, these virtues begin to root themselves in the personality. How fortunate are those who are granted another Ramadan in their lifetime. Many who fasted with us last year now lie beneath the earth, awaiting the Day of Reckoning. To witness Ramadan again is a sign of Divine favour and an opportunity for renewal. The Qur'an calls upon us: "So flee to Allah" (51:50). Ramadan is precisely that flight — a turning away from heedlessness towards obedience.

Let us, therefore, resolve that this sacred month shall not be a temporary ornament but a permanent transformation. Let the honesty practised in Ramadan continue in trade and profession. Let the restraint shown in fasting persist in speech and conduct. Let the compassion awakened for the hungry endure throughout the year. If Ramadan reforms our character for eleven months beyond it, then we shall have truly understood its purpose. Otherwise, we risk confirming the gentle rebuke of Miwa — that we confined virtue to a single month, when it was meant to illuminate the whole year.

## Briefs

## Twelve terrorists killed, 11 soldiers...

FROM PAGE 01  
counter-terrorism campaign under the national vision of Azm-e-Istehkam (Resolve for Stability), approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan. This comprehensive effort, involving Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies, aims to eradicate foreign-sponsored terrorism from Pakistani soil once and for all. The sacrifices of these brave soldiers and the innocent civilian underscore Pakistan's unyielding commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty, peace, and the lives of its citizens at all costs. Official sources emphasized that such cowardly acts, often backed by external elements, will not deter the nation's resolve to root out terrorism.

## CTD claims 4 suspected terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01  
Two CTD officials – Head Constable Muhammad Yousuf and Constable Raja Junaid – were also wounded in the exchange and taken to a hospital for treatment. According to CTD, three already arrested suspects brought to the scene for pointation were injured during the crossfire as well. In a statement, the CTD said the suspects belonged to Fitna al-Hindustan's Bashir Zeb network. The term 'Fitna al-Hindustan' is a phrase coined by the state, aimed at framing India's alleged role in terrorism as a deliberate destabilisation strategy.

## Eight Muslim nations slam West Bank...

FROM PAGE 01  
the occupation, and the prohibition on acquiring territory by force. The ministers reiterated their "categorical rejection of all unilateral measures aimed at altering the legal, demographic, and historical status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory," warning that such policies represent a "dangerous escalation" that could heighten instability across the region. They called on the international community to take "clear and decisive steps" to halt these violations, enforce international law, and protect the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the establishment of an independent state on the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

## Minister Tarar rules out deal...

FROM PAGE 01  
delegation, arrived in the UK with other Pakistani officials late Monday night. Replying to a question, Tarar said the prime minister hosted a forum in Austria with business top leaders from both countries' companies attending. "There are investment opportunities in textiles, mines and minerals. This visit has been successful and will open new doors for trade and investment," he said. According to Tarar, the visit is set to further strengthen relations between Pakistan and Austria.

## Adilala jail report submitted...

FROM PAGE 01  
to accommodate 30 to 35 prisoners; however, the PTI founder has been provided improved-class facilities in a secure environment. Detailing the amenities, the report noted that a cycling machine and other gym equipment have been provided for exercise. Breakfast includes dates, walnuts, honey, coffee, porridge, Lassi, hot milk and chia seeds, along with seasonal juice and pomegranate juice. Lunch consists of Desi chicken, mutton, mixed lentils, fried egg, salad, pickles and potato chips. In the evening, he is provided a shake made of almonds, raisins, coconut powder, milk, dates, banana and apple.

## PFF, Lahore Qalandars Join Hands for Football Development

The PFF, under the leadership of Syed Mohsen Gilani, is dedicated to the growth and development of football in the country

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has entered into a strategic partnership with three-time Pakistan Super League champions Lahore Qalandars to promote and develop football in Pakistan. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani and Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday to formalise the agreement. Under the MoU, both organisations will collaborate on joint initiatives, events, and public engagement campaigns aimed at expanding football's reach and popularity among youth and communities across the country. Speaking on the occasion, Atif Rana said Lahore Qalandars are committed to supporting and promoting football in Pakistan. "The PFF, under the leadership of Syed Mohsen Gilani, is dedicated to the growth and development of football in the country. Our aim is to replicate in football the professional and competitive environment we have built in cricket. We will focus on grassroots development and support the PFF's mission to empower the youth of Pakistan," he said.



PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani said the partnership had been carefully designed in line with a shared vision to promote sports and project a positive image of Pakistan globally. "We will utilise Lahore Qalandars' vast experience in organising nationwide talent hunt programmes, which will help us identify and nurture future football stars," he added.

## Barca suffer title defence blow in Girona derby defeat

Barcelona Stunned By Girona Comeback Defeat As Real Madrid Go Two Points Clear In La Liga Title Race After Controversial Late Winner At Montilivi

GIRONA: Spanish champions Barcelona fell to a damaging 2-1 defeat at Girona on Monday to leave them trailing Real Madrid by two points at the top of La Liga. Los Blancos beat Real Sociedad on Saturday to overtake the Catalans and Hansi Flick's side could not defeat Girona in a gripping derby clash to reclaim the lead. Teenage star Lamine Yamal missed a penalty for Barcelona, who took the lead through defender Pau Cubarsi just before the hour mark. However goals from Thomas Lemar and Fran Beltran helped Girona, 12th, mount an impressive comeback. "In the end Girona deserved it, they had a lot of chances, we defended very badly," admitted Flick.

"We are not in a good mood, not in a good moment, I gave the team two days off because I think it's important they rest. "There's a long way (to go), we're now in second, now we have to fight for first place in the table." Barca were still licking their wounds after a heavy 4-0 defeat by Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey first-leg semi-final last week, and this defeat made things even worse. "We have to improve because they can't score these two goals against us," Cubarsi told DAZN. "We have to be self-critical, we didn't play a great game, we have to improve, but now we have to rest and charge our batteries." Both sides were attacking with abandon in a very open

first half and it was remarkable they went in goalless at the break. Raphinha whipped a shot narrowly wide and Yamal fired straight at Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga when through on goal. At the other end Ukrainian striker Vladyslav Vanat missed a slew of presentable opportunities. Ferran Torres fired a good chance wide for Barca and Raphinha drove against the upright as Flick's side pushed for the opener. They should have got it when Dani Olmo was clumsily felled in the box by Daley Blind, but Yamal hit the post from the spot. Barcelona eventually took the lead through Pau Cubarsi's header from Jules Kounde's cross after 59

minutes, but Girona swiftly pulled level. Thomas Lemar slipped away from Eric Garcia and turned home Vanat's pass from close range. It shifted the momentum in Girona's favour and Barca were left relying on some stunning saves from goalkeeper Joan Garcia to keep them afloat. The stopper denied Ivan Martin and Vanat with a remarkable double save, and then thwarted Joel Roca with his leg. - Controversial winner - Barca could not stem the tide and Girona forced their way in front after 87 minutes, with Fran Beltran stroking home from the edge of the area. The visitors, who last week made an official complaint to the Spanish football federation over perceived refereeing inconsistencies, were left fuming after Kounde was fouled by Claudio Echeverri in the build-up and it went unpunished. - APP

## USA bobsleigh veteran Meyers Taylor wins elusive gold

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO: American bobsleighter Elana Meyers Taylor finally struck Olympic gold at the age of 41 in the Milan-Cortina Games on Monday. She took the monobob title ahead of Germany's Laura Nolte and her fellow American Kailie Armbruster Humphries. Meyers Taylor was overjoyed after ending her long wait for gold, having until now accumulated three silvers and two bronze medals collectively in monobob and two-woman bobsleigh over four previous Olympics, starting at the 2010 Vancouver Games. Armbruster Humphries, who competed for Canada until the 2018 Olympics, boasts the most impressive record in her sport with three Olympic golds and five world titles but had to settle for gold. With Monday's gold, she's also tied speed skater Bonnie Blair for the most medals by a female US Winter Olympian. Speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno, who earned eight medals across three Winter Olympics, holds the overall top spot for US Winter Olympians. Meyers Taylor is also now the oldest American woman to ever win gold at the Winter Games. "I'm feeling great. I'm a little tired, the adrenaline's wearing off a little bit, but I'm super excited to finally have a gold medal and to have worked so hard all these years," Meyers Taylor said. "At the end of the day, I have great support behind me, starting with my husband." Her husband Nic Taylor is a former Olympic bobsledder. "My husband's been there every step of the way telling me I could do this." "I love going fast and I love being able to control this thing that should be out of control, that should be uncontrollable," she told CBS News before the race. "It's just so much fun to me and when you hit the curves right and when you're gliding, it feels like being a superhero." - APP

## Del Toro wins shortened UAE Tour first stage

Italian Jonathan Milan was expected to be in the frame for the stage win but crashed heavily at a roundabout 1,500m from the end. Del Toro, who rides for UAE Team Emirates, is hoping to follow in the footsteps of his teammate Tadej Pogacar who won the race last year. - APP

LIWA OASIS: Mexican youngster Isaac Del Toro powered to victory in a sprint finish in a shortened opening stage of the UAE Tour on Monday. The 22-year-old, who finished second in last year's Giro d'Italia, made a perfect start to his race by beating Dutchman Cees Bol and Italy's Antonio Tiberi to the finish line of a stage reduced from 144km to 118km due to high winds. It was an impressive display of strength from Del Toro, getting the better of the pure sprinters. "It's unbelievable, it's crazy," Del Toro said. "I don't know exactly (how it happened) but I just see the chance and I don't want to regret it." Italian Jonathan Milan was expected to be in the frame for the stage win but crashed heavily at a roundabout 1,500m from the end. Del Toro, who rides for UAE Team Emirates, is hoping to follow in the footsteps of his teammate Tadej Pogacar who won the race last year. - APP

## Women Athletes of Multan Division Shine

Ata-ur-Rehman Khan emphasized that the young women athletes had demonstrated their full potential, setting a new benchmark for Multan Division in provincial competitions

MULTAN: The women athletes of Multan Division delivered a stellar performance at the Khalita Punjab Pink Games, held in Lahore under the auspices of the Punjab Sports and Youth Affairs Department, following directives from Punjab Chief Minister, Hon. Maryam Nawaz. Their remarkable achievements secured third place overall in the provincial rankings, sparking pride and excitement across Multan's sporting community. Led by Ata-ur-Rehman Khan, Divisional Sports Officer Multan, a 170-member Under-21 women's contingent from Multan Division showcased exceptional talent, winning a total of nine gold and six silver medals. This achievement marks a historic improvement for the division, which had previously finished in eighth place. The breakdown of Multan's medal-winning performance included:

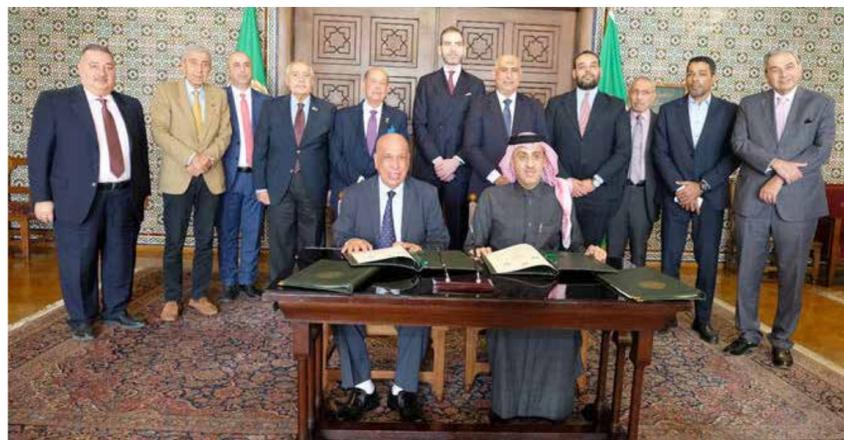
- Archery: 1 Gold
- Boxing: 2 Gold, 1 Silver
- Karate: 1 Gold, 1 Silver
- Mass Wrestling: 4 Gold
- Taekwondo: 1 Gold
- Volleyball: 1 Silver
- Wushu: 3 Silver

Commissioner Multan Division, Aamir Karim Khan, expressed his joy and congratulated the athletes, coaches, and Divisional Sports Officer Ata-ur-Rehman Khan for their outstanding efforts. Speaking on the occasion, Ata-ur-Rehman Khan emphasized that the young women athletes had demonstrated their full potential, setting a new benchmark for Multan Division in provincial competitions. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz awarded cash prizes to the successful athletes and announced that they would also receive scholarships to further support their development. She highlighted the importance of events like the Khalita Punjab Games in identifying new talent from across the province, providing training, and preparing athletes to represent Pakistan on the international stage. The Chief Minister reiterated that, in line with her vision, future competitions will continue to be organized, enabling women athletes to showcase their skills and bring pride to the province and the nation. - Agencies

## FIA signs cooperation agreement with Arab League

FIA Signs Landmark Agreement With Arab League To Boost Regional Transport, Tourism, Cross-Border Mobility Cooperation And Strengthen International Driving And Vehicle Documentation Systems Across Arab World

DUBAI: The FIA, the global governing body for motor sport and the federation for mobility organizations worldwide, has signed an agreement with the Arab League to strengthen cooperation across transport, tourism, sport, and regional policy. The aim of the pact is to improve cross-border movement through internationally recognized travel and transport documents, including the Carnet de Passages en Douane system for the temporary admission of vehicles, and the International Driving Permit. Both play an important role in facilitating travel, trade, and tourism, supporting greater regional integration, according to a recent press release from the organization. FIA Member Clubs are trusted issuers of CPDs and International Driving Permits, working closely with national au-



thorities and international frameworks. Mohammed Ben Sulayem, the FIA's president, said: "This memorandum reflects the FIA's commitment to working in partnership to deliver practical solutions that support mobility, tourism and regional cooperation. "By strengthening collaboration with the League of Arab

States, we are reinforcing the role of our FIA Member Clubs as trusted partners in facilitating cross-border movement and contributing to economic integration across the region." Dr. Ali bin Ibrahim Al-Maliki, assistant secretary-general and head of the economic affairs sector of the Arab League, said: "The

LAS General Secretariat places great importance on building partnerships with international and regional organizations in this vital sector in all its forms. "The FIA is a leading international organization active in transport, tourism, road safety and motorsport for development, and includes national clubs from a number of Arab countries among its members." Essa Hamza, chair of the FIA MENA Council, added: "This partnership delivers a platform to advance regional connectivity. Together we are strengthening tourism and cross-border travel, creating a real impact for people and institutions across the Arab world." Signed at the league's general secretariat in Cairo, the agreement builds a framework for practical collaboration and knowledge sharing, the press release stated. - APP

## Dar to visit New York

FROM PAGE 01  
scaled-up humanitarian assistance, and the early commencement of Gaza's recovery and reconstruction. The DPM/FM will also underscore Pakistan's continued engagement with international and regional partners, including the Group of Eight Arab and Islamic countries and the United States, in support of a just and lasting peace, anchored in international law, leading to the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. On the margins of the visit, the DPM/FM will hold bilateral meetings with counterparts to discuss matters of mutual interest.

## Shehbaz surprises Austrian...

FROM PAGE 01  
the years ahead. "Mr. Chancellor, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your very warm welcome today and I look forward to continuing cooperation in the coming years," the prime minister said in the German - the national language of Austria. German Chancellor also shared the video clip highlighting the moment with the caption, "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif surprised everyone with his German language proficiency." This is not the first time Prime Minister Shehbaz has demonstrated his multilingual abilities on the international stage. He has previously spoken German, Persian, Russian, and Arabic during various engagements.

## PM orders probe into Hockey...

FROM PAGE 01  
standard guest houses, budget Airbnbs, and cramped shared rooms—far below the promised standards—despite the allocated funds. The ordeal compounded the team's poor on-field performance. Expressing deep concern over the mistreatment of national athletes, the Prime Minister directed authorities to investigate the misuse of funds, fix responsibility, and ensure strict action against those involved in the negligence and irregularities. "Our players represent the nation with dedication and deserve dignity, proper support, and world-class facilities—no excuses for such failures will be tolerated," sources close to the PM quoted him as saying.

## PM reaffirms Pak support..

FROM PAGE 01  
Attaulah Tarar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Syed Tariq Patemi and Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch were also present during the meeting. During the meeting, the prime minister praised the strong partnership between Pakistan and the IAEA, while observing that Pakistan was not only a beneficiary of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme but was also contributing to the work of the IAEA through provision of its experts and conducting international trainings for IAEA Member States. Director General Grossi acknowledged Pakistan's experience and expertise in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and the high quality of its engineers, scientists and technicians.

## Ramadan moon..

FROM PAGE 01  
will begin on Wednesday, February 18, following confirmed sightings of the crescent moon. The UAE's Presidential Court stated that February 18 marks the first day of fasting, after verification by the official moon-sighting committee, Gulf News reported. However, several countries that looked for the Ramadan crescent today reported that it was not sighted. The countries reporting no sighting include Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Philippines, Japan, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Brunei.

## Briefs

Kazakhstan,  
U.S sign major  
\$1.1b deal  
on critical  
minerals

ASTANA: Tau-Ken Samruk, a portfolio company of the Samruk-Kazyna Fund, and Cove Kaz Capital Group LLC (Cove Capital) have signed a package of transaction documents, Qazinform News Agency reports.

The documents include a Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) and a Shareholders' Agreement (FA) for a strategic investment project in the critical minerals sector, according to the press service of Samruk-Kazyna. The signing ceremony was attended by Nurlan Zhakupov, CEO of Samruk-Kazyna.

The project envisions the establishment of a high-tech tungsten deep-processing facility in Kazakhstan, based on the Northern Katpar and Upper Kairakty deposits. It is expected to create around 2,000 jobs. Cove Capital has pledged to invest at least USD 1.1 billion in the project's development. The Northern Katpar project focuses on producing ammonium paratungstate – a high value-added metallurgical product in strong demand globally. Beyond financing, the strategic partner will bring advanced mining, processing, and beneficiation technologies, and support the promotion of finished products in international markets, including through offtake agreements with the U.S. Government. The implementation of this project marks an important step in strengthening Kazakhstan's role in the global critical minerals supply chain, advancing deep processing of raw materials, and attracting foreign direct investment into the country's industrial sector.—APP

PSX sheds  
1,303 points  
to close at  
173,150 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday witnessed bearish trend, losing 1,303.52 points, a negative change of 0.75 percent, to close at 173,150.42 points compared to 174,453.94 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 716.035 million shares with a traded value of Rs 40.471 billion, against 773.291 million shares valuing Rs 46.242 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization declined to Rs 19.666 trillion from Rs 19.781 trillion a day earlier. Out of 477 active companies in the ready market, 128 advanced, 293 declined, and 56 remained unchanged. K-Electric Limited topped the volume chart with 122.541 million shares, followed by The Bank of Punjab with 79.835 million shares and WorldCall Telecom with 35.505 million shares. The top gainers included S.S. Oil Mills Limited, which rose by Rs 52.08 to close at Rs 572.85, and Khyber Textile Mills Limited, which gained Rs 42.82 to settle at Rs 1,659.98. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited declined by Rs 187.00 to close at Rs 18,152.00, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs 170.17 to close at Rs 26,505.00.—APP

Rupee gains 01  
paise against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.60 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs 279.61. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 280.25 and Rs 282.20, respectively. The price of the Euro against Rupee decreased by Rs 1.03 to close at Rs 330.81 from the previous day's close of Rs 331.84, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.82, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 2.41 and closed at Rs 379.36 compared to the previous day's Rs 381.77. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged at Rs 76.12 and Rs 74.55, respectively.—APP

OGDC partners with France's  
SNF for water injection systems

Project Estimated to Generate USD 460 Million in Revenue Through Enhanced Oil and Gas Production

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDC), Pakistan's leading exploration and production company, on Tuesday signed a landmark contract with SNF S.A., a French specialty chemical company and world leader in polyacrylamide production, for the installation and operation of advanced Water Injection Systems (WIS) at its Kunnar and Pasakhi oil fields located in Hyderabad district, Sindh. The signing ceremony was held at the OGDC Head Office in Islamabad, marking a significant milestone in the company's efforts to enhance production performance and promote sustainable energy development. The signing ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Energy (Petroleum Division) Ali Perwaiz Malik, MD/CEO OGDC Ahmed Hayat Lak, French Ambassador to Pakistan Nicolas Galey, along with senior officials from OGDC and SNF. The project aims to enhance reservoir pressure, optimise oil recovery, and ensure sustainable production performance through the world's latest water injection technology and global expertise from SNF. The project will be completed in three phases. The first phase will cover installation and commissioning over a period of nine months, including mobilisation, installation, commissioning and testing of the facilities. This will be followed by a two-year operations and maintenance phase, during which O&M services will be provided along with structured training for OGDC professionals. After the completion of the O&M period, the



technology and operational control will be transferred to OGDC, allowing the company to independently operate the facilities using the expertise developed during the collaboration. The designed operational life of the installed facilities is approximately 20 years. The project is projected to enhance oil production by approximately 9 million barrels and increase gas production by 3 billion cu-

feet. It is also projected to improve the recovery factor of the fields by 8 to 10 percent. The recovery factor refers to the percentage of oil that can be extracted from a reservoir compared to the total volume originally present. With an estimated additional revenue generation of USD 460 million over the life of the fields, the project offers strong economic returns. The initiative also

carries significant environmental benefits. By reinjecting treated produced water into reservoir zones, the project ensures safe disposal and reduces environmental risks. It also aligns with sustainable operating practices and international environmental standards. The collaboration underscores OGDC's commitment to operational excellence, technological advance-

ment, and long-term value creation in Pakistan's energy sector through partnerships with world-leading service providers. The partnership reflects OGDC's continued focus on strengthening domestic hydrocarbon production while adopting the latest, efficient, and environmentally responsible technological solutions for Pakistan's energy sector.

'Made in Europe' or  
'Made with Europe'? Buy  
European push splits bloc

BRUSSELS: Everyone in Europe agrees the EU needs to rescue its industry but the bloc is split over how far it should push a 'Buy European' approach in order to do so. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will next week propose new rules that are expected to include a requirement for companies in strategic sectors to produce in Europe if they want to receive public money. But the definition of "European preference" has triggered debate, with calls especially from France for more "Made in Europe," while other EU states such as Germany call for "Made with Europe." French President Emmanuel Macron insisted the new rules would be about "protecting our industry" without "being protectionist," by defending "certain strategic sectors, such as cleantech, chemicals, steel, cars or defense." Otherwise, he warned, "Europeans will be swept aside." But other EU countries, which are proponents of free trade, oppose the plans. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said Europe should compete based on quality and innovation, not because it wanted to protect European markets. "We do not want to protect European businesses that are basically not competitive," Kristersson told the Financial Times newspaper last week. But EU leaders during talks Thursday appeared to reach a consensus on the issue, pushing for the measure in certain specific sectors since they say Europe faces unfair competition from China and other countries. "We are in favor of open markets," German Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil said Monday. "But I also want to be very clear: if China changes the rules of the game, if we are confronted with overcapacity, subsidies, and the fact that markets in Europe are flooded, then Europe must defend itself." Supporters want "Made in Europe" to be strictly defined, and only for industrial goods made from components manufactured in the European Economic Area, made of the EU's 27 states as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Critics say this definition would be too restrictive and instead call for a more flexible measure, like Germany's Merz, who calls for "Made with Europe" not "Made in Europe." They also argue it would be difficult to apply in practice and risks destabilising European supply chains.

Themed cultural  
exhibitions open  
across China

BEIJING: As the Year of the Horse draws near, museums across China are bringing horse-themed artifacts out of their collections, offering a rare and timely chance to experience the rich tapestry of the country's time-honored equine culture through a diverse array of relics. At the Shanghai Museum, the exhibition, titled "Gallop into Spring – A Celebration of the Year of the Horse," is showcasing 16 horse-themed cultural relics and artworks from Feb. 4 to March 17. Among the treasured exhibits is an exquisite white jade sculpture of an immortal riding a galloping horse, dating back over 2,000 years. Motion is depicted vividly in the horse's posture and the billowing robes of the immortal, who holds a Lingzhi mushroom – a Taoist symbol of immortality and the pursuit of spiritual transcendence. "This celestial horse from more than 2,000 years ago embodies romance, optimism and confidence," said Chu Xin, director of exhibitions at the Shanghai Museum. Close by, a painted pottery figurine from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) depicts a drummer in white robes on horseback, a vivid representation of the musical performances that accompanied cultural exchanges along the ancient Silk Road. One visitor, surnamed Qin, told Xinhua that she had taken many photos of a group of miniature pottery horses. "They are so vivid and lovely. These would make wonderful cultural and creative souvenirs," she said. Further north, the Tianjin Museum launched its own horse-themed exhibition on Feb. 6, displaying nearly 130 cultural relics from its collections. The exhibition sheds light on the unique value and spiritual significance of horses in Chinese civilization, according to the museum's official website. Among its star exhibits are a Tang Dynasty tri-colored glazed horse and an oracle bone. "When talking about Tang ceramics, tri-colored glazed ware immediately comes to mind. It not only represents the pinnacle of Tang ceramics but also, with its brilliant colors and vivid forms, stands as an icon of the thriving Tang culture," curator Li Wenjing said. "The Tang tri-colored glazed horse is the most representative of all Tang tri-colored artifacts, and this exhibited treasure is the fullest expression of the postural beauty of Tang horses," Li said. The Tianjin Museum houses one of China's most significant oracle bone collections, famed for its large quantity, exceptional quality and rare early examples. Oracle bone inscriptions are regarded as the origin of written Chinese, being the oldest-known evidence of a fully developed writing system, dating back 3,000 years. "On this oracle bone, we can see four different forms of the Chinese character for 'horse'," Li said, pointing to the ancient inscriptions. "They show that horses had become an integral part of human life 3,000 years ago." In north China's Shanxi Province, another exhibition has assembled nearly 200 precious horse-themed artifacts unearthed locally, over 140 of which are rarely displayed treasures. The show, which will run through May 10, features a wide array of objects, including jade, bronze, pottery and porcelain equine figurines, as well as paintings and murals of horses. Together, they chart the animal's elevation from companion to cultural symbol. According to Wang Rui, the exhibition's content curator, horses have been cherished and admired throughout Chinese history for their strength, gentle temperament, remarkable endurance, courage and intelligence.—DNA

Halal  
Academy  
launched,  
'Golden Halal'  
seal unveiled

MAKKAH: The third edition of the Makkah Halal Forum 2026 witnessed the launch of the "Halal Academy" and the unveiling of the "Golden Halal" logo, a unified mark of excellence aimed at strengthening consumer confidence and elevating standards across the global halal industry. The two initiatives represent a strategic step toward institutionalizing the sector, enhancing professional competencies, and establishing clear regulatory and quality benchmarks that reinforce the credibility and competitiveness of halal products in domestic and international markets. Minister of Commerce Majid bin Abdullah Al-Kassabi inaugurated the forum, organized by the Manafe'a initiative under the theme "Halal: A Professional Industry." The event took place at the Makkah Chamber of Commerce and Industry Exhibition and Events Center, drawing senior officials, industry leaders, regulatory authorities, and representatives of economic institutions from around the world. In his address, Al-Kassabi stated that the forum reflects the qualitative transformation of the halal sector from a rapidly expanding market into an integrated, governance-driven industry founded on transparency and internationally recognized quality standards. He noted that the Kingdom adopts a comprehensive strategic approach to consolidate its position as a global hub for halal industries through advanced legislative frameworks and regulatory modernization. He added that the Ministry of Commerce continues to foster a competitive ecosystem that supports innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable growth within this vital sector.—APP

Gold price  
plunges by Rs  
9,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a sharp decrease of Rs 9,000 and was sold at Rs 514,762 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 523,762 the previous trading day, the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 7,716 to Rs 441,325 from Rs 449,041 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 7,073 to Rs 404,562 from Rs 411,635.—APP



Islamabad: Ambassador of Austria, CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, and others witnessing photo exhibitions held under the angels of Satrang Art Gallery.

## Briefs

**Gandapur says Mohsin Naqvi made most 'serious efforts' for Imran release**

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur said Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had made more serious and sustained efforts than anyone else to secure the release of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan. "I have said this before within the party, and now I am saying it on air: Mohsin Naqvi made vigorous efforts to resolve the issue. He made more efforts than anyone else to ensure his [Khan] release," the former provincial chief executive said while speaking to a private news channel. His remarks come amid heightened political tension after a medical report submitted to the Supreme Court of Pakistan by Khan's counsel and the court's amicus curiae, Salman Safdar, confirmed that the former prime minister was diagnosed with a serious eye condition - central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO).

## Alleged serial killer shot dead

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: A suspected serial killer, accused of kidnapping and murdering at least four people, was reportedly killed by gunfire from his own accomplices during an alleged encounter with the Gujranwala police on Tuesday. A spokesperson for the Gujranwala police said that the suspect, who was caught while attempting to flee from Lahore to Karachi via train, had been in the custody of the Gujranwala police on physical remand. He claimed that the police team was taking the suspect to an area he had identified to recover the murder weapon, when unidentified armed accomplices of the suspect intercepted the police party. The police spokesperson further claimed that four armed accomplices opened fire on the police in an attempt to free the suspect from custody. "However, the suspect was killed by gunfire from his own accomplices while trying to flee," the spokesperson added.

## At least two killed in US shooting

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: At least two people were killed and three wounded in a shooting at an ice rink in the northeastern US town of Pawtucket on Monday, authorities said, with social media footage showing frightened teenagers fleeing the sound of gunshots. "We have three deceased. The suspect, and then we have two victims, and then we have three at the hospital," said Tina Gonçalves, police chief in the Rhode Island community. She added that initial investigations suggested the shooting was targeted and "may be a family dispute." No details were immediately shared on the identities of the victims, but Gonçalves said the wounded were in "critical condition." Mass shootings are common in the United States, where lax gun control laws mean that access to weapons is relatively easy. In 2025, there were more than 400 mass shootings in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive, which counts incidents where four or more people are shot or killed, not including the shooter. Gun violence as a whole claimed at least 14,703 lives last year, not including suicides. Monday's shooting, which occurred at a high school ice hockey game, came two months after a mass shooting at Brown University, located just 3.5 miles (5.6 kilometres) away.

# Macron eyes Rafale fighter jet deal in India

The visit follows New Delhi's confirmation last week that it intends to place a major order for Rafale jets, as well as the signing of a landmark free trade agreement between India and the European Union in January

DNA

NEW DELHI: French President Emmanuel Macron began a three-day visit to India on Tuesday, with talks focused on artificial intelligence cooperation and a potential multibillion-dollar Dassault Rafale fighter jet deal. France is seeking to expand its military partnership with New Delhi, with discussions expected on a potential contract for 114 additional French fighter jets. Macron and his wife Brigitte arrived around midnight on Monday in Mumbai, India's financial capital, for his fourth visit to India since taking office in 2017. He is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi later on Tuesday. Macron will then travel to New Delhi for an artificial intelligence summit on Wednesday and Thursday. The visit follows New Delhi's confirmation last week that it intends to place a major order for Rafale jets, as well as the signing of a landmark free trade agreement between India and the European Union in January. 'Contract of the century' New Delhi has sought over the past decade to reduce its dependence on Russia, its traditional



main supplier of military equipment, turning to other countries while also pushing for more domestic production. An Indian defence ministry statement last week said the proposed purchase of Rafale jets had been cleared, with "the majority" of them to be manufactured in India. The statement did not specify the exact number of jets New Delhi would purchase, but a New Delhi defence ministry source said that 114 was likely. Christophe Jaffrelot, an India specialist at Sciences Po Center for International Studies in Paris, described the potential \$35 billion deal for 114 Rafales as the "contract of the century" and a potential "crowning achievement" for bilateral ties. If finalised, the jets would add to the 36 Rafales India purchased for its air force in 2016 and 26 it has ordered for its navy. Negotiations over the additional aircraft still need to be concluded with manufacturer Dassault Aviation, but the French presidency has voiced optimism that what it calls a "historic" agreement could be reached. Modi and Macron will also inaugurate on Tuesday India's first helicopter final assembly line via videoconference from Mumbai, a joint venture between India's Tata Group and Airbus.

## Pak secures dual honors at IFN deals of the Year Awards 2025

Welcoming the achievement, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb stated that the awards reflect international confidence in Pakistan's economic management and its ability to structure innovative and Shariah-compliant financing solutions in challenging global market conditions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance has warmly welcomed the announcement of the IFN Deals of the Year Awards 2025, in which the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's landmark US\$1 billion syndicated financing has been honoured with two major international accolades. Pakistan has received the IFN Pakistan Deal of the Year 2025 and the IFN Syndicated Finance Deal of the Year 2025, recognizing the successful execution of this significant transaction on the global Islamic finance stage. Welcoming the achievement, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb stated that the awards reflect international confidence in Pakistan's economic management and its ability to structure innovative and Shariah-compliant financing solutions in challenging global market conditions. He termed the recognition a strong endorsement of the Government's efforts to diversify funding sources, strengthen external buffers, and deepen Pakistan's footprint in global Islamic capital markets. The Minister observed that the US\$1 billion syndicated financing represents not only a financial milestone but also a demonstration of Pakistan's renewed credibility and disciplined approach to macroeconomic management. He emphasized that the success of the transaction was made possible

through close collaboration with development partners and financial institutions, and specifically appreciated the role and support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for its valued partnership in facilitating the transaction. He further acknowledged the contribution of participating banks, legal advisers, and all stakeholders whose expertise and coordination ensured the successful closure of the deal. Senator Aurangzeb noted that the recognition by Islamic Finance News (IFN), a leading global Islamic finance publication, underscores Pakistan's commitment to advancing Shariah-compliant financial instruments and strengthening the domestic Islamic finance ecosystem. He added that such international accolades reinforce investor confidence and contribute positively to Pakistan's standing in global financial markets. The IFN Deals of the Year Awards are among the most respected distinctions in the Islamic finance industry, recognizing landmark and ground-breaking transactions across jurisdictions and sectors. The awards are determined through an independent evaluation process and highlight excellence in structuring, innovation, and market impact. The IFN Awards Ceremonies, where the honours will be formally presented, are scheduled to take place on Monday, 13 April 2026 at the Palazzo Versace Dubai, and Wednesday, 22 April 2026 at EQ Kuala Lumpur.

## PHC orders reopening of KP roads blocked by PTI supporters

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday ordered the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and police to ensure the reopening of roads blocked by PTI supporters and protesters in recent days. The protesting PTI workers have blocked KP's entry and exit points for the last four days, demanding that the federal government move incarcerated party founder Imran Khan from jail to a hospital for medical treatment. A two-member bench headed by Justice Ijaz Anwar and including Justice Farah Jamsheed took up the set of petitions filed by MPA Sobia Shahid, lawyer Tariq Afghan, Swabi resident Yousaf Ali and Shaoor Khan. Upon the bench summoning them, KP Inspector General Zulfiqar Hameed, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah and Advocate General Faisal Utmankhel appeared in court. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Anwar inquired about how many days it had been since the roads were blocked. "The roads have been shut for the past three days. Initially, 14 points were blocked, and now protests are underway at six points," the KP IG replied. Justice Anwar wondered whether shutting roads was not a violation of the law, pointing out that lawyers for six cases were unable to reach the PHC from Islamabad. He remarked, "Such is the security situation in the province that even today, 14 have been martyred. These are the conditions, but despite this, there are protests and roads are closed." The judge highlighted that the laws guaranteed citizens the right to freedom of movement, but they were still "facing difficulties". He inquired about the number of first information reports (FIR) registered

over the road blockades. "The traffic situation in Peshawar is the worst in the entire country. In fact, there is no traffic system in this province," Justice Anwar observed, at which IG Hameed expressed his strong agreement. "We are now trying to streamline this, and are initiating e-challans," the police chief assured the court. Justice Anwar quipped, "When the police want to take action against someone, they do. When they do not want to, then this happens." At one point during the hearing, Justice Anwar said it was "unfortunate that the ruling party here is protesting [and] hurting the province's people."

Utmankhel assured the bench that "no one would defend any wrong act." IG Hameed sought two days for the police to "fix the situation", but Justice Anwar declined the request, ordering that the roads be opened today. "Begin today, and do not let anyone block the roads," he stressed. "The entire country is open, but Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is shut. This is against our own people." "The motorway should not be closed off under any circumstances," he added, noting that people could not leave their houses due to the blocked routes. Protesters had blocked the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway (M-1) at Swabi's Anbar Interchange, GT Road at Khairabad Bridge, Dera Ismail Khan-Bhakkar Road, Lakki Marwat-Mianwali Road, Hazara Motorway at Abbottabad-Havelian Interchange, Kohat-Pindi Road near Khushal Garh and Upper Kohistan-Gilgit Karakoram Highway. "Reopen the roads and ensure the same," Justice Anwar ordered, telling the KP IG and the chief secretary to submit their reports regarding the matter by tomorrow. Subsequently, the bench adjourned the hearing till Wednesday.

## CM Maryam to Provide Ramzan Nigehban Cards

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif announced to provide Ramzan Nigehban Card to 04 million families in the province, while chairing an important meeting on Ramzan Nigehban Program. She directed PERA (Price Control Authority) to prevent inflation, and take strict action against profiteers and hoarders during Ramzan-ul-Mubarak. She announced to remove timing restrictions for markets and shopping centers during Ramzan-ul-Mubarak, and directed all Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to perform their duties diligently during the holy month of Ramzan-ul-Mubarak. She lamented that the demon of inflation rears its head during Ramzan-ul-Mubarak, which is a month of blessings. She noted that special arrangements have been made to control inflation during Ramzan-ul-Mubarak, as special measures are taken worldwide during the holy month. Chief Minister Punjab said that a wide majority of our population cannot bear the burden of inflation. She noted that special stalls for Ramzan-ul-Mubarak are also set up in Europe and other non-Muslim countries.

## Azam Nazeer meets German Ambassador

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Human Rights, Azam Nazeer Tarar, held a meeting with German Ambassador to Pakistan, Anna Lepel, to discuss matters of mutual interest. During the meeting, both sides held a detailed exchange of views on bilateral cooperation in advancing and protecting human rights. Special emphasis was placed on the protection and promotion of minority rights, as well as ongoing efforts toward prison reforms and related legal measures. Ambassador Lepel appreciated Pakistan's significant legal reforms, particularly the recent amendments to the Pakistan Penal Code that replace the death penalty with life imprisonment for certain offenses. She also welcomed the establishment of a National Commission for the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals, describing it as a positive step toward safeguarding freedom of expression and ensuring the safety of media practitioners. - APP

## Quick-fix

# Sri Lankan President swift removal of visa hurdles for Pakistanis

The Sri Lankan President further announced that he would soon send Sri Lanka's Prime Minister on an official visit to Pakistan to strengthen bilateral ties



DNA

COLOMBO: Pakistan's Federal Interior Minister and PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi held a significant meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo, with Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain also in attendance. Pakistani High Commissioner Major General (Retd) Fahim-ul-Azeez was present as well. During the discussions, Minister Naqvi highlight-

ed the visa-related challenges faced by Pakistani nationals traveling to Sri Lanka. President Dissanayake took immediate notice of the matter and directed authorities to remove Pakistan from all relevant restriction lists without delay, signaling a swift resolution to ease travel for Pakistanis. The Sri Lankan President further announced that he would soon send Sri Lanka's Prime Minister on an official visit to Pakistan to strengthen bilateral ties. The meeting covered a range of cooperative areas, including counter-terrorism efforts, anti-narcotics operations, and joint training programs for security forces. Minister Naqvi commended President Dissanayake's personal role in advancing Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations and conveyed a formal invitation from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for the Sri Lankan President to undertake an official visit to Pakistan. Naqvi also expressed gratitude for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to the Pakistani delegation and cricket team during the T20 World Cup. He specifically thanked the Sri Lankan leadership for their timely intervention that enabled the India-Pakistan match to proceed in Colombo, describing it as a reflection of Pakistan's goodwill. President Dissanayake reiterated his commitment to further consolidating relations between the two nations and appreciated Pakistan's consistent support for Sri Lanka during challenging periods. The visit underscores deepening bilateral cooperation in security, diplomacy, and people-to-people contacts, building on the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

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