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January 5, 2019: National Current Affairs

1. Army inducts locally produced rocket launch system

- The army said on January 4, 2019 it had inducted indigenously produced A-100 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) into its Corps of Artillery.
- A-100 Rocket has been indigenously developed by Pakistani scientists and engineers.
- With over 100km range, the rocket is highly effective and potent for interdiction that can effectively disrupt enemy's mobilisation and assembly, the ISPR said in a statement.
- Pakistan had originally imported a battalion of A100E systems comprising 36 launchers from China in 2009-10 in response to Indian acquisition of Russian 9A52-2T Smerch, a variant of the original Smerch.
- This long-range artillery system, Military Today writes, is capable of attacking important area targets, such as airfields, command centres, radar stations, artillery or missile batteries, concentrations of troops and vehicles.

2. Pakistan, UAE finalise \$6.2bn support package

- Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have finalised the terms and conditions of a support package of about \$6.2 billion expected to be announced by Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during his visit to the country starting on Sunday (Jan 6) to help Islamabad address its balance of payments challenge.
- The package involves \$3.2bn worth of oil supplies on deferred payment, besides a \$3bn cash deposit
- UAE's package was exactly of the same size and terms and conditions as given by Saudi Arabia. The UAE package was finalised on January 3, 2019 evening.
- With this, Pakistan would get a total saving of about \$7.9bn on oil and gas imports from the two friendly countries accounting for more than 60 per cent of annual oil import bill of about \$1213bn, he said. This includes about \$3.2bn each of oil supplies on deferred payments from the UAE and Saudi Arabia and about

\$1.5bn trade finance from the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC).

3. Pakistan delegation departs for FATF meeting with action plan

- Pakistan on January 4, 2019 dispatched a Terror Financing Risk Assessment Report electronically to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) followed by a 12-member team to explain the action plan that the government intends to follow to come into compliance with international obligations and secure an exit from the grey list of the Paris-based watch dog.
- The high-level delegation led by Secretary Finance Arif Ahmed Khan left for Sydney, Australia to attend a three-day meeting of the FATF. The delegation comprised representatives of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Financial Monitoring Unit.
- The delegation will address questions and observations of the FATF on the basis of risk assessment report already transmitted to the global anti-terror financing watchdog. The report highlights the implementation status of plans for various agencies of the government on the FATF`s recommendations.

4. Rear Admiral Fayyaz takes over Navy's coastal command

- Rear Admiral Muhammad Fayyaz Gilani has taken over the command as Commander Coast in an impressive change of command ceremony held at PNS QASIM, and Rear Admiral Moazzam Ilyas handed over the command.
- On assumption of command, he is now Commander of all units and establishments of Pakistan Navy along the Coastal belt and Creeks Areas. Admiral would also head Special Services Group (Navy) and Pak Marines.
- Rear Admiral Muhammad Fayyaz Gilani was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1984. During his illustrious career, Rear Admiral Muhammad Fayyaz Gilani served on various Command and Staff appointments.
- His Command appointments include Commanding officer PNS PISHIN and PNS MOAWIN. His Staff appointments include Chief Staff Officer to Commander Pakistan Fleet, Naval Secretary, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Projects), Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel), Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Training & Evaluation). The Admiral has also served as Naval Attaché of Pakistan in Washington.
- Admiral is graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, National Defence University Islamabad and also holds Masters Degree in Military Operational Research from Cranfield University UK. Rear Admiral Muhammad Fayyaz Gilani is recipient of Hilal e Imtiaz (Military).

5. former provincial minister Hakmeen Khan dies

- Senior PPP leader and former provincial minister from Attock Malik Hakmeen Khan died in Islamabad on January 4, 2018.
- He was one of the founding members of the PPP and served as a provincial minister during Bhutto`s government.
- He contested the provincial assembly elections in the 70s from PP-12 Attock, which is now PP-15 Attock.
- He retained his seats in the 1977 and 1988 elections.
- During 1972-77, he held the portfolios of Housing and Physical Planning, Auqaf, Food, Cooperatives and Prisons in the provincial cabinet.
- He was elected as senator in 1994 and was also a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet, Establishment, Management Services, Labour and Manpower.

January 5, 2019: International Current Affairs

6. First Muslim women elected to US Congress

- The first two Muslim-American women have taken an oath on the holy Quran as they were sworn into the United States Congress in a televised ceremony.
- Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, who are of Palestinian and Somali origins respectively, made history on January 3, 2019 as they were sworn into the 116th Congress, becoming the first Muslim women in the 435-member US House of Representatives.
- Public Radio International (PRI) and other media outlets reported that Ms. Tlaib, in traditional Palestinian dress, used the 1734 English translation of the holy Quran that belonged to Thomas Jefferson, an American founding father who later served as US president.
- A resident of Detroit, Michigan, Ms. Tlaib`s family hails from a small Palestinian village in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Ms Omar, 37, used the holy Quran that once belonged to her late grandfather, who helped raise her.

7. Turkey to host Afghan peace summit: Erdogan

- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on January 4, 2019 that his country would host the leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan for a meeting aimed at bringing peace to the war torn country.
- He was speaking at a joint news conference with Prime Minister Imran Khan after their meeting at the Presidential Palace. PM Khan is on his first official visit to Turkey after coming to power in August.
- Mr Erdogan said the trilateral meeting would take place in Istanbul after Turkey`s March local elections.
- Pakistan and Turkey vowed to further cement bilateral economic, social and strategic ties and jointly fight terrorist organisations, including the militant Islamic State (IS) group and Fethullah Gülen`s

organisation.

8. Britain warns Russia over US marine

- Britain cautioned Russia on January 4, 2019 that individuals should not be used as diplomatic pawns, after a former US marine who also holds a British passport was detained in Moscow on espionage charges.
- Paul Whelan was arrested by the FSB state security service December 28, 2018. His family have said he is innocent and was in Moscow to attend a wedding.
- The FSB has opened a criminal case against Whelan but has not given any details of his alleged activities. In Russia, an espionage conviction carries a sentence of between 10 and 20 years in prison. Whelan's family have said that he was visiting Moscow for the wedding of a retired marine.

9. China names new moon rover "Yutu-2"

- China has chosen the name "Yutu-2", or Jade Rabbit-2, for its new moon rover, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) announced late January 3, 2019.
- The CNSA made the announcement after China's Chang'e-4 probe, comprised of a lander and a rover, landed on the far side of the moon earlier in the day.
- In Chinese folklore, Yutu is the white pet rabbit of Chang'e, the moon goddess who lent her name to the Chinese lunar mission. Legend has it that Chang'e, after swallowing a magic pill, took her pet and flew toward the moon where she became a goddess and has lived with the white jade rabbit ever since.
- Last August, China launched a worldwide poll to name the rover. According to the CNSA, a total of 42,945 proposed names were submitted from Aug. 15 to Sept. 5, among which 3,192 names were submitted by more than two participants.

10. US, Chinese scientists develop potential therapy for breast cancer

- American and Chinese researchers developed an experimental therapy that can reduce the spread of a kind of hard-to-treat breast cancer in a mice study.
- The study, published in the journal Cancer Cell, reported the therapeutic agent that blocks two of the main pathways by which breast cancer cells grow and migrate out of the primary tumor to spread to other organs in the body.
- The spread of triple-negative breast cancer is difficult to block, because "if you try one approach, the cancer cells compensate by finding a way to escape," according to the paper's senior author Kang Yibin, professor of molecular biology at Princeton University.
- This kind of breast cancer is highly aggressive and it occurs in 12 to 17 percent of all breast cancer cases. It gets the name from the lack of three major biological targets that are used to find and kill cancer

cells.

- Patients with triple-negative breast cancer have high rates of recurrence and fewer treatment options, according to the researchers.

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