

### President Zardari offers Fateha, lays wreath at Benazir Bhutto's mausoleum

President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday visited the mausoleum of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh to commemorate the 17th anniversary of her martyrdom. The president offered Fateha and laid a wreath at Benazir Bhutto's grave.



### Iranian foreign minister to visit China

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi will visit China from Dec. 27 to 28, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning announced on Friday. Addressing a regular briefing held at the International Press Center here, she said that the Iranian Foreign Minister will visit China at the invitation of the Chinese side.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Friday on steps taken on availability of Gas to general public in winters.



Photo: PID

## PM retells Afghan govt to act against TTP; calls it a red line

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday asked the Afghan government once again to act against the TTP carrying out terror activities inside Pakistan from across the Afghan border, calling it unacceptable and a red line for his country.

"Unfortunately, TTP is operating from Afghanistan and carrying out terror attacks and killing innocent people inside Pakistan.

This cannot go on. We have conveyed to the Afghan government that we desire good ties with them but TTP should be stopped from killing our innocent people. This is a red line.

TTP operating from there against Pakistan is unacceptable," the prime minister said in his opening remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him.

He said that Afghanistan was a neighboring country with a thousands of kilometers-long shared border. We desire cordial ties with each other and cooperation in trade, economy and other sectors, he added.

The prime minister asked the Afghan government to formulate a solid strategy as Pakistan was ready to talk with them on the issue. But the policy of talks and allowing TTP to operate against Pakistan can't go simultaneously, he remarked.

## US express concern over civilian sentences by military courts in Pakistan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United States Department has expressed concern regarding the sentences imposed on civilians by military courts in Pakistan.

In a post on X by USA Urdu, the State Department spokesperson urged the authorities to respect the right to fair legal proceedings and due process.

The statement comes a day after the Inter-Services Public Relations announced that the military courts have handed

down jail terms to at least 25 people who were involved in the May 9 events.

According to the military's media wing, the punishments to the 25 accused were sentenced after examining all evidence, affording all legal rights to the accused and completing "due process".

While issuing names of the suspects, it added that the promulgation of the sentences of the remaining accused would be announced "shortly" as and when the due process is complete.

## DG ISPR says no change in military's stance on May 9 violence

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Friday said the stance of the Pakistan Armed Force on May 9 violence is clear.

Addressing a press conference in Rawalpindi, DG ISPR said that the events of May 9 are not just a case for the armed forces but represent the sentiments of the entire nation.

"If armed groups impose their will without lawful intervention, it endangers the fabric of society," he warned.

The Pakistan Army spokesperson said in 2023, following directives from the judiciary, specific cases from May 9 were transferred to military courts.

Individuals involved in the May 9 attacks were sentenced under the law by military courts.

"Operations against terrorists" DG ISPR Lieutenant General



Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said Pakistan armed forces killed 925 terrorists in 2024. "Pakistan has waged a long and arduous war against terrorism, with the armed forces making significant sacrifices in this fight."

He said as many as 59,775

successful operations were conducted nationwide this year, during which 925 terrorists were neutralized, including 73 high-profile targets, and hundreds were apprehended.

Security forces also seized a large cache of weapons and

ammunition from terrorist groups.

The DG ISPR vowed the unwavering commitment of Pakistan's forces to uproot terrorism and ensure national security.

"Terrorists operating from

Afghan soil'

Director General of ISPR, Lt. General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said terrorist factions operating from Afghan soil, including 'Fitna al-Khawarij,' are involved in activities against Pakistan."

Networks from Afghanistan are actively working against Pakistan, but the armed forces are relentlessly defending the nation and its borders, he added.

Lt. General Ahmed Sharif said under the government's directive, efforts are ongoing to combat smuggling and electricity theft.

He said Pakistan, with honesty, tried hard for peace in Afghanistan, but the situation did not improve.

'Who allowed 'Fitna al-Khawarij' to settle in 2021

Recalling the 2021 success against extremist groups, the DG ISPR remarked, "We broke the back of Khawarij elements in 2021."

Continued on Page 7

### 12,00 more FC troops reach Parachinar on Interior Minister's directives

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the directives of Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, 1200 more FC troops reach Parachinar on Friday to maintain law and order in the region, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

On the special instructions of Interior Minister, the civil armed forces reach Kurram areas. 29 FC platoons, which were deployed on security duties in Islamabad, were sent from Islamabad to Parachinar.

Law and order situation was aggravating in the area as a result of clashes between warring tribes in the region.

## PM Sharif orders to ensure uninterrupted gas supply for domestic consumers

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed authorities to ensure a continuous gas supply for domestic consumers throughout the winter months on Friday. This directive came during a review meeting on the country's gas supply, where the Prime Minister addressed concerns about the decreasing gas availability for households.

He emphasized that maintaining gas supply to domestic users is the government's highest priority and highlighted that structural reforms in the energy sector are essential for a long-term solution to the gas supply challenges.

During the meeting, participants reported that there is surplus regasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) in the system, leading to better gas load management compared to the previous year. The Prime Minister was informed that the duration of gas load-shedding has decreased this year.

Gas is currently supplied to domestic



consumers from 5am to 10pm, and the power sector also receives gas according to its demand.

It was noted that the online dashboards of SNGPL and SSGC are operational for consumer complaints, with SNGPL achieving a complaint resolution rate of 93% and SSGC at 79%. Furthermore, all gas fields in the country are fully operational.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahsan Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, and other senior officials.

### Traced missing person is facing trial in military court, IHC informed

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A missing person has also been found facing trial in a military court, the Ministry of Defence informed the Islamabad High Court on Friday.

The Defence Ministry submitted a report in the court of Justice Mohsin Akhtar Riyani during hearing of a missing person's case.

The ministry informed the court that Mudassar Hussain Khan, who has been missing since March 2024 from Muzaffarabad, has been found. "Mudassar is an under-trial accused undergoing a trial in a military court," the Ministry added.

The petitioner's counsel urged the court to allow Mudassar's family to meet him. The court directed the Defence Ministry's representative to arrange a meeting between Mudassar and his family in accordance with the law.

Imaan Mazari advocate represented petitioner Nazima Fatehyab in the court while assistant attorney general and Defence Ministry's Brig Falak Naz appeared in the court.

## Maulana Fazlur Rehman suspends political activities due to health concerns

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), has paused all political engagements following health concerns on Friday.

Sources indicated that doctors have recommended complete bed rest and advised him to refrain from walking due to swelling in his left foot.

This condition reportedly arose after his recent meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where he discussed matters related to the Seminary Registration Bill on December



20. Recently, Prime Minister, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and Zardari have reportedly reached a consensus on a presidential ordinance for the registration of madrasahs, with the Ministry of Law tasked with its preparation.

## Chinese robbed in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Two motorcyclists have snatched mobile and other valuable from foreigners at gunpoint from Islamabad's posh area on Friday.

According to police, two

motorcyclists have snatched five mobiles and Rs3000 cash from four Chinese nationals in Sector P8 Sector 1 in the limits of Margalla police station and escaped from the scene.

After receiving the complaint, police has started investigation of the incident.

# PM AJK welcomed DG ISPR's press conference

**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD/ MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has welcomed the DG ISPR Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry's recent press conference in which he reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the people of occupied Kashmir.

The AJK premier said that the Pakistan Army has been a strong supporter of the Kashmiri people and their struggle for right to self-determination.

Commenting on the DG ISPR's press conference, the PM Haq said that reaffirmation of the military's solidarity and support to Kashmiris' legitimate struggle has boosted the morale of the Kashmiris on both sides of the ceasefire line.

Terming Pakistan army as the guardians of the nation, he said, "Every Kashmiri loves Pakistan Armed Forces and this love is ingrained in our blood"

"Pakistan Army is the symbol of peace in the region", the PM said adding that it is the Army that has so



daringly defended the country's territorial and ideological frontiers.

Referring to the unprecedented sacrifices rendered by the Paki-

stan Army during the war against terrorism and extremism, the AJK premier said, "The Pakistan Army has proven its professional capabilities on

every front, within and outside the country".

He said that the entire nation stands firmly besides the armed forces.

## Visitors to Neelum Valley advised to observe precautions



**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Locals and Pakistani and foreign tourists of Neelum Valley should take precautionary measures during the winter season. District Disaster Management Authority Neelum has issued an advisory for tourists and locals. The issued guideline for tourists has said that whenever they travel, they must get prior information about the weather and road from the concerned authority. Do not travel/drive for more than eight hours. If you have less time, please do not leave home. Avoid hasty travel and return after enjoying the views near your home. Get a complete check-up of the vehicle, carry a snow check with you, check the tires, keep the brakes in good condition and avoid night travel altogether. Start your journey after contacting the local police, district disaster management authority, public highways department on the numbers given below, especially in mountainous areas like Neelum Valley, Pir Chinasi and Leepa Valley etc.

## AD (Ops) Food Authority Tariq Mehmood Gill visited Toba Tek Singh

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of DG Punjab Food Authority Muhammad Asim Javid, Additional Director (Operations) Food Authority Faisalabad Division Tariq Mehmood Gill visited Toba Tek Singh. Food safety teams along with Additional Director (Operations) Tariq Mehmood Gill and Deputy Director (Operations) Toba Tek Singh Yasir Mushtaq Various Sweets & Bakers of Tehsil Gojra and inspected the confectionery units. A number of units were fined a total of 1 lakh 15 thousand rupees for poor sanitation arrangements and the presence of insects in the production area. Additional Director (Operations) Tariq Mehmood Gill said that providing quality food to the people is our first priority is. He further said that the actions against the sellers of adulterated and substandard food items have been intensified to ensure supply of healthy food to the people.

## Students of Air University Aerospace and Aviation Campus participated in the field of social service

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The students of the third semester from the Department of Aviation Management at Air University Aerospace and Aviation Campus participated in the field of social service. They impressed everyone by presenting various presentations based on social issues. The chief guest of the seminar was Deputy Director of Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal, Attock, Mr. Arif Mehmood Siddiqui, while renowned social activist and Chairman of Human Rights, Mr. Kashif Ilyas, and the program sponsor, Mr. Rehan Mehboob (Finance Secretary, Anjuman Tajran Attock, and owner of People's Mart) also attended the event. They appreciated the efforts of the students. Deputy Director Arif Mehmood Siddiqui encouraged the students, praised their performance, and awarded them certificates. Under the guidance of the Head of Department, Dr. Danish, and advisor, Sir Tariq, the students demonstrated excellent teamwork and collaboration, realizing the importance of community service. Arif Mehmood Siddiqui explained how an ordinary or professional social worker could act as a bridge between a resource-less individual and available resources, personally aiding those in need. He highlighted how students could support differently-abled individuals in their surroundings by identifying their needs and connecting them to resources. He mentioned that students could approach the Deputy Director's office to obtain disability certificates for such individuals, which could then be used to acquire a disabled CNIC (National Identity Card) from NADRA. He further explained that this would make them eligible for employment under the 3% disability quota in both government and private sectors. Additionally, these individuals could access financial aid, artificial aids, travel facilities, and quarterly scholarships of PKR 10,500 through the Chief Minister's Ehsaas Card, among numerous other resources and priorities. He emphasized that bridging the gaps between societal diversity, needs, and resources, as well as fostering unity, would lead to social progress.

## Residents of Jamshoro demand improvements in administrative affairs

**Qayoom Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: Residents of Jamshoro district demand improvements in administrative affairs along with an increase in the budget for education and health.

A seminar was organized by "Saharo Human Aid Association with the collaboration of CPI, CNB, and National Endowment for Democracy at the District Press Club Kotri. The seminar reviewed the provincial and federal governments' allocated budget for education and health. The event was attended by citizens, journalists, and officials from the Jamshoro Education Department.

During the seminar, journalists and citizens expressed grave concern over the available facilities in health and education. They stated that, according to statistics, the Sindh government allocated 6% of its budget for health and education this year, giving it significant importance compared to other provinces in Pakistan. However, many schools in Sindh, including those in the Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah's district Jamshoro and the Sewan sub-district, remain unreconstructed after being destroyed by floods. Consequently, thousands of children are out of school, and 95% of primary schools lack essential facilities and are short-staffed.

On this occasion, Assistant Education Officer for Primary Education Jamshoro, Abdul Kareem Panhwar, stated that Jamshoro district has 741 primary and 140 secondary schools, out of which the Education Works Department has deemed 441 schools in poor condition. He further mentioned that, following the orders of the Sindh Chief Minister, 25 schools out of these 441 are being rebuilt, and the construction work will soon be completed. Once reconstructed, children in these areas will have access to education.

The seminar was attended by Nisar Soomro, Faisal Munir, Majeed Baloch, Ghulam Hussain Khaskheli, Arman Ali, and others.

## Protest

LAHORE: Activists of Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen raise slogans during a protest sit-in against the closure of roads in Parachinar in front of the provincial capital's Press Club.



Photo: Online

# Muslim Conference announced 'Kashmir Bane Ga Pakistan' convention on January 5, 2025

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

DHIRKOT/GHAZIABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslims have announced the holding of the "Kashmir Bane Ga Pakistan" convention on January 5, 2025 at the historical place of Kohala. Yesterday, a meeting was held at Mujahid e Awwal House, Ghaziabad under the chairmanship of President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, in which the central chief organizer of the Muslim Conference Raja Saqib Majeed, Major (Retd) Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Sajjad Anwar Abbasi, Sardar Irfan Abbasi, Raja Muhammad Munir Khan, Sajid



Qureshi Advocate, Sardar Zarif Abbasi, Raja Tabarak Ali Khan and other senior workers and officials participated. Addressing the meeting, President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the

Muslim Conference has decided to hold the "Kashmir Bane Ga Pakistan Convention" on January 5, in which lakhs of people are expected to participate. This convention is the message of Kashmir Bane Ga Pakistan. In the state

of Jammu and Kashmir, the slogan of "Kashmir Bane Ga Pakistan" is the surest slogan of Pakistan's accession. He said that during the recent political crisis in Azad Kashmir, an unsuccessful attempt was made to achieve the objectives of elements hostile to Pakistan by creating a state of national and political chaos through ideological sabotage. He said that in this uncertain situation, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, the people loving party of Kashmir, and the policy making powerful circles of the Government of Pakistan showed foresight and avoided any kind of provocation and during this time, not a single pot was broken.

# Benazir Bhutto's 17th death anniversary being observed

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The 17th death anniversary of the leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Prime Minister of Pakistan, daughter of the East, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed, was celebrated on Friday, December 27, with great devotion, respect and ideological enthusiasm in all four provinces of Azad Kashmir. The morning began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the recitation of Fatiha in homes and mosques. The national and international services of the party's founder chairman, Quaid-e-Awam, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, daughter of the East, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed, were praised in glorious words and their eternal sacrifices were paid tribute to, while dignified ceremonies were held and rallies were taken out in the district and tehsil city places of Azad Kashmir. On the occasion of the

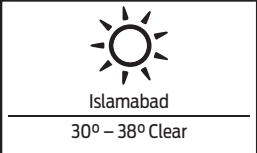


death anniversary of Shaheed Ms. The events were held in the People's Secretariat Chhatar as well as in the regional office of the Benazir Income Support

Program under the guidance of Chairperson Ms. Rubina Khalid. The Quran was recited and Fateha was recited in which the Central Deputy Secretary

Information of the Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir, the nominated candidate for the Assembly

Constituency 7 Shaukat Javed Mir, Director Benazir Income Support Program Dr. Abdul Aziz Qureshi, Candidate District Council Abdul Aziz Gorsi, Inayatullah Khan, Sheikh Saadi, a large number of party officials, workers, Benazir Income Support Program staff and the public attended the 70th anniversary ceremony. The chief guest of the ceremony was Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir's Central Deputy Secretary Information Nominated Assembly Constituency 7 Leepa Valley Shaukat Javed Mir, while addressing the gathering, said that the judicial murder of the people's leader Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the martyrdom of Ms. Benazir Bhutto through terrorism was an organized imperialist conspiracy to destroy the integrity of Pakistan.



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr .....5:42 am  
Zohr .....12:09 pm  
Asr .....3:29 pm  
Maghrib .....5:07 pm  
Isha .....6:36 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH .....561111  
MH ..... 561116  
MH ..... 561116  
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ .....5556311-4  
RGH .....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS .....9261170-79  
Polyclinic ..... 9218300-09  
Shifa International .....4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**Chairman CDA reviews progress on Serena Chowk Interchange Project**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited the Serena Chowk Interchange project site on Friday to assess the progress of the ongoing construction work.

He was accompanied by the Member Engineering and other senior officials. During the visit, officials briefed the Chairman on the current status of the project.

According to the briefing, significant progress has been achieved, with simultaneous work underway on the underpasses and connecting roads. Additionally, the piling work for the interchange has been completed, marking a critical milestone in the project's development.

The officials informed Chairman Randhawa that construction teams are working round the clock to ensure the project meets its deadline. Any hurdles encountered during the construction process are being addressed on a priority basis.

Expressing satisfaction with the progress so far, Chairman Randhawa directed the concerned authorities to accelerate the pace of construction while maintaining the highest standards of quality.

He emphasized the importance of adhering to the stipulated timeline and resolving any remaining challenges promptly. The Serena Chowk Interchange project is a key infrastructure initiative aimed at improving traffic flow in the federal capital.

# Mushaal fears Kashmir conflict a ticking time bomb to unleash Indo-Pak war

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of unlawfully incarcerated Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik, sounded a dire warning that the Kashmir conflict was a ticking time bomb, threatening to unleash a catastrophic Indo-Pak war that could escalate to conventional or even nuclear levels.

Speaking at a function titled 'AJK and Pakistan: Intertwined Fate and Shared Challenges' Mushaal said that the relationship between Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Pakistan was deeply rooted in history, culture, and shared political aspirations.

However, she said that in recent years, the evolving dynamics of the Kashmir conflict, combined with regional and global shifts, have posed both challenges and opportunities for this interconnected relationship.

The chairperson said that the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A by India in August 2019 fundamentally changed the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir, sparking political and military tensions

between India and Pakistan because Kashmir conflict represented a central pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy and a continuous strain on its defense and diplomatic resources. Mushaal stated that for AJK, this has translated into heightened security concerns and increased cross-border skirmishes, particularly along the Line of Control (LoC).

However, Mushaal emphasised that on the global stage, Pakistan must strengthen its diplomatic efforts by emphasizing the human rights dimension of the Kashmir conflict and leveraging its strategic partnerships with countries like China, Turkey, KSA, UAE and Middle Eastern nations.

While the complexities of the Kashmir conflict continue to test their resolve, she said that a forward-looking approach rooted in development, diplomacy, and regional cooperation can pave the way for a more stable and prosperous future.

Mushaal stated that a unified vision, both domestically and internationally required to ensure peace and progress in the region.



**Safety**

ISLAMABAD: A view of plants covered with dry grass on a green belt to protect them from frost and cold weather, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## A. Aleem Khan Expressed Condolences with Khazar Farhadov

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited the Azerbaijani Embassy in Pakistan in Islamabad where he expressed his deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives in the plane crash and sympathized with Ambassador of Azerbaijan H. E. Khazar Farhadov. Expressing his heartfelt feelings over the incident, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that he is extremely saddened by the loss of innocent lives in the plane accident of Azerbaijan and he has come to express his sympathy not with the Azerbaijani Ambassador but to his Brother in this difficult time. He said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan are brotherly Islamic countries that share each other's sorrows and joys equally and



the Pakistani people have their heartfelt sympathies with the citizens of Azerbaijan and the affected families. President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party Abdul Aleem Khan in his comments wrote in the book kept at the Azerbaijani Embassy and prayed that may Allah

Almighty grant peace to those who died in the plane crash and grant a speedy recovery to the injured ones. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H. E. Khazar Farhadov, while expressing his gratitude to President IPP and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan for visit-

ing the Embassy, said that he thanks the people of Pakistan and sincerely appreciate their sentiments which they have expressed by coming here in this difficult time. May Allah Almighty protect every country from such accidents and shower blessings upon us.

## 17th Death anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto observed in all offices of BISP



**Qayoom Sarohi**

KARACHI / HYDERABD / SUKKUR: The 17th death anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was observed with great solemnity across all offices of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in Sindh, including Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana and Sukkur. Officers and officials of BISP gathered to offer Quran Khawani and Fateha Khawani, paying tribute to Bhutto's services to democracy and the country.

The anniversary was marked with reverence, acknowledging Bhutto's legacy as a champion of democracy and women's empowerment. The Benazir Income Support Programme, established in 2008, continues to support vulnerable populations, particularly women, through various initiatives, including financial assistance, skill training, and education.

The programme's efforts align with Bhutto's vision of empowering marginalized communities and promoting social justice. As the country remembers Bhutto's sacrifices and contributions, the BISP's work serves as a testament to her enduring legacy.

## Spotify partners with JazzCash to localize Premium Subscription Payments in Pakistan

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Spotify has partnered with JazzCash, one of Pakistan's leading digital financial services providers, to offer a seamless payment solution for Spotify Premium subscriptions. This collaboration will allow JazzCash users from now on to subscribe to Spotify Premium Individual plan without the need for a traditional bank account, making ad-free music, track downloads and exclusive Spotify Premium features like AI DJ or Jam more accessible to millions of people across the country.

Murtaza Ali, President of JazzCash, commented on the partnership, stating, "A large part of Pakistan's population remains underbanked, relying heavily on fintech platforms like JazzCash. Our mission is to provide people with greater access to technology. With JazzCash, millions of Spotify users can now enjoy a premium music experience by simply paying for the subscription directly through their mobile wallets, making a global entertainment platform accessible to everyone."

## Ejaz Bukhari says those who incited the public against the army in the past should also be held accountable

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Punjab, Syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhari Advocate, has stated that those who incited the public against the army in the past should also be held accountable. He alleged that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Federal Defense Minister Khawaja Asif played a significant role in provoking the public against the army in the past. Speaking at his residence, "Al-Murtaza House," Kamalpur Syedan, Attock Cantt, during a special conversation with media representatives, he said that PTI is not engaged in any civil disobedience. He urged Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Tarar to conduct an even more transparent trial of the nation's offenders and bring Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Khawaja Asif to justice for their alleged past actions against the army. Syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhari added that they do not support double standards like negotiating while engaging in civil disobedience. He called on the current government to refrain from issuing hateful statements aimed at winning public favor, as such remarks do not affect PTI supporters or voters. He asserted that their leader, Imran Khan, is popular among Pakistan's 240 million citizens and will remain in their hearts in the future as well. He further stated that the current central and provincial governments have failed to provide any relief to the poor and emphasized that Imran Khan desires a consensus for the sake of national interest.

**Newborn's vision and life rescued**

## Al-Shifa specialists treat rare eye tumour

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: A team of specialists at the Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital have successfully treated a rare eye tumour to save the vision and life of a new-born.

Mirha Ameer from Gujjar Khan, just 2 hours old, faced a life-threatening congenital eye tumour, risking both her vision and life. After a week of consulting different hospitals, the parents eventually came to Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital for assistance.

The tumour was three times larger than the size of her eyeball and was in life-threatening condition, prompting doctors to urgently perform complex surgery, which continued for two and half hours and concluded successfully.

Dr Tayyab Afghani informed media persons that not only Mirha's life but 50% of her sight has also been preserved.



Mirha Ameer with life threatening congenital eye tumour



Recovering after operation

He said that it was a rare case of a congenital tumour but after complete treatment, the child could live a normal life.

He added that congenital eye tumours are present at birth and can affect the orbit or the eye itself.

Afghani said that congenital eye tumours could cause vision problems or

disfigurement if left untreated. They can also spread to the brain, optic nerve, and the rest of the body, becoming life-threatening.

The symptoms include blurry vision, seeing floaters or flashes of light, shadows or dark spots in vision, light sensitivity, lumps on the eyelid or other parts of the eye, changes in the shape of the pupil,

bulging, redness, or swelling of the eye, changes in the way the eye moves, and pain in the eye.

He said that over the past three years, the Al-Shifa Eye Cancer Centre has successfully performed 2,500 sessions of chemotherapy procedures for children who have been diagnosed with eye cancer.

Genetic testing can reduce the incidence of childhood eye cancer.

Dr Afghani said that 2000 children with eye cancer have been registered, of whom 500 have fully recovered. The Al-Shifa Eye Cancer Center caters to surgery, chemotherapy, and rehabilitation under one roof, free of cost.

Dr Tayyab Afghani, Dr Mansoorul Haq, Ms Shumaila Niazi, Ms Umera Asad, Mr Asfandyar Amirzada, and Muhammad Tariq are among the team members who removed the tumour.

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# Richard Grenell: Catalyst or Noise?

The Establishment, after having consolidated control over all pillars of the state, the country's polity, and the media, perhaps feels more powerful and in full control than at any time since the autocratic rule of General (R) Pervez Musharraf. Musharraf, who passed away as a fugitive in Dubai, faced an ignominious end after battling amyloidosis, a rare disease.

People, left with no effective means to express their sentiments against what they perceive as suppression, resorted to protests and agitations. These were met with brutal crackdowns, with reports of several protesters being killed at point-blank range. Amid this atmosphere of despair and helplessness, the latest interview of Richard Grenell, a former U.S. diplomat and close ally of Donald Trump, came as a breath of fresh air for Pakistanis both within the country and in the diaspora.

Grenell, for his part, expressed shock and surprise at the incoherence of Khawaja Asif's statements. Taking to social media, he criticized the Defense Minister's baseless claims as reckless and called for accountability from Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Washington, D. C. Tagging the Pakistan Embassy (@PakinUSA) and Ambassador Rizwan Sheikh, he demanded an explanation for the inflammatory rhetoric and the apparent indifference to death threats arising from such conspiracy theories. Grenell also suggested that the U.S. government review the aid it provides to Pakistan, questioning whether American taxpayer funds should continue to support a regime that tolerates such behavior from its senior officials.

Grenell's critique, particularly his call for a reevaluation of U.S. aid, has added a new dimension to the ongoing discourse about governance and accountability in Pakistan. By drawing attention to the conduct of senior officials, his comments could intensify international scrutiny of Pakistan's political landscape. While the establishment's reactions were intended to discredit Grenell, they inadvertently highlighted the very issues he sought to expose, reinforcing the perception that Pakistan's ruling elite is increasingly out of touch with reality.

The widespread sharing and discussion of Grenell's interview reflect a growing frustration among Pakistanis, both at home and abroad. In an environment where traditional media is tightly controlled, social media has become a critical platform for voicing dissent. The international attention generated by Grenell's comments provides a counter-narrative to the establishment's control, energizing opposition movements and raising awareness about the country's political challenges.

If Grenell's views gain traction within U.S. policymaking circles, especially under a potential Trump administration, Pakistan's ruling elite may face significant diplomatic pressure. The United States has historically used financial aid as leverage to influence Pakistan's policies. A credible threat to reduce or reallocate aid could compel the establishment to soften its stance on political dissent and human rights. However, this depends on how unified and consistent U.S. foreign policy toward Pakistan remains.



Qamar Bashir

Another controversial remark emerged from a senior Pakistani leader who suggested an improbable "swap" of Imran Khan with Aafia Siddiqui, a statement that was widely criticized for its absurdity and insensitivity.

However, the most bizarre and convoluted reaction came from Defense Minister Khawaja Asif, who introduced a baseless theory he termed "Operation Goldsmith." He alleged that Grenell had been enlisted by external forces, particularly Jemima Goldsmith, to destabilize Pakistan—the world's only Muslim-majority nuclear-armed nation.

This claim, entirely without evidence, drew widespread ridicule for its outlandishness. Jemima Goldsmith, visibly dismayed by the allegations, firmly denied any involvement in Pakistani politics. She stated unequivocally that she has never, and would never, finance or interfere in political affairs in Paki-

stan, either directly or indirectly. Grenell's remarks amplify this scrutiny, potentially strengthening calls for Khan's release. However, while international attention can embolden Khan's supporters, his political fate remains tied to Pakistan's internal dynamics, including public mobilization and potential fractures within the establishment. External voices like Grenell's may act as a catalyst but cannot singularly change the situation.

If Grenell secures a formal role in a future U.S. administration, his statements could carry more weight and lead to increased international scrutiny of Pakistan's governance. As a special envoy, he could advocate for human rights and political freedoms, challenging the ruling elite's actions. However, his effectiveness would depend on whether the U.S. government adopts a coherent and sustained approach toward Pakistan, along with support from other inter-

national actors. For now, Grenell's remarks serve as a symbolic yet powerful reminder of the need for accountability and reform.

The Richard Grenelles remarks is an addition to many voices which has been raised at various forums in the United State expressing deep concern over weakening of democracy and reduction of democratic institutions just rubber stamps. like Grenelle, the U.S. Congress, Biden administration, and civil society have increasingly voiced concerns over Pakistan's political trajectory, focusing on human rights abuses and democratic backsliding.

A recent congressional resolution called for an investigation into alleged election irregularities, while over 60 lawmakers urged President Biden to push for the release of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Biden administration has condemned the use of military courts to try civilians and raised alarms over restrictions on free speech, assembly, and due process. Meanwhile, international organizations and civil society groups have echoed calls for accountability and democratic reforms, emphasizing the need for transparency, fair elections, and the protection of fundamental rights in Pakistan.

These voices may collectively compel the upcoming U.S. administration to take decisive action against Pakistan's ruling elite. If this pressure intensifies, even a slight adjustment in IMF policies could cripple the fragile economy of the country, forcing it to confront its governance failures. Let us hope this prompts Pakistan's leadership to learn a lesson and take swift, corrective action to avert the looming economic meltdown.

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Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

## Administration is Bent on Disrupting the System

Infrastructure refers to the physical systems of a city that ensure the smooth flow of essential services, such as roads, energy, water, drainage, information networks, waste management, and horticulture. These systems are vital for the city's functionality, beauty, and development. Unfortunately, the infrastructure of Multan has deteriorated significantly, a point raised by renowned industrialist Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum during a discussion on City Traffic Police's FM radio program. He urged the administration to focus on improving the city's infrastructure.

In Multan, the administration seems to exist only on paper. Their inefficacy is evident in illegal commercial constructions, encroachments, broken roads, drainage issues, and slums that plague the city. These issues have made life difficult for the residents, yet the administration has consistently failed to address them.

The Anti-Encroachment Departments of the Multan Development Authority (MDA) and Municipal Corporation remain inactive and incompetent, allowing illegal constructions and encroachments to persist. These problems not only disrupt the traffic system but also put undue pressure on civic amenities. The administration has taken no concrete steps to remove these illegal structures, leading to worsening conditions.

The city's roads, once a symbol of progress, are now riddled with potholes and cuts made deliberately under administrative supervision to favour certain contractors. This is a glaring example of corruption and inefficiency in Multan's bureaucracy. Neglecting

road maintenance has resulted in accidents and traffic jams, further complicating the lives of citizens. Instead of addressing these issues, the administration focuses on superficial projects, such as building unnecessary monuments, which serve more as publicity stunts than practical solutions.

The city's outdated sewerage system creates severe difficulties for residents. Problems like waterlogging during rains and frequent sewer blockages have become routine, with no permanent solutions in sight. Every new Deputy Commissioner comes with grand promises but leaves without addressing core issues. This lack of competence and a solutions-driven approach has deepened the crisis.

For over three decades, countless announcements have been made, but tangible progress remains elusive. Projects like relocating the crowded and chaotic markets—such as Loha Market, Lakri Mandi, and Galla Mandi—outside the city remain incomplete.

Globally, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a pivotal role in managing urban infrastructure and services effectively. ICT enables authorities to utilize real-time data from sensors and other sources to monitor and improve resource management, service delivery, and environmental sustainability. However, in Multan, this potential remains untapped. Constructive feedback from informed citizens, media, and businesses is often ignored, and the city's infrastructure stagnates due to the dismissive attitude of those in power.

Since the tenure of former DCO Deputy Commissioner Naseem Sadiq—who took commendable steps like removing illegal shops around Qila Kuhna. In just six months, he effectively handled the land grabbers and encroachment mafias in Multan and gave the city a fresh new look—the city's administration has failed to make any significant improvements. Recently, a Deputy Commissioner placed a train bogie in a park and called it an innovation, but it was essentially an act of encroachment with no real benefits to the public.

Moreover, the unspoken alliance between powerful individuals and the administration continues to hinder progress. Encroachments, drug mafias, illegal constructions, and unapproved housing colonies flourish under this protection, creating further obstacles to development.

The Multan administration must break ties with these mafias and focus on genuine urban development. Tackling illegal activities and prioritizing infrastructure upgrades are essential to setting the city on a path to progress. Transparent governance, effective urban planning, and a commitment to public welfare are the keys to overcoming these challenges. Only then can Multan's infrastructure improve, paving the way for sustainable development and a better quality of life for its citizens.

A suggestion from the public for improving infrastructure has emerged, highlighting that the complaint cell established at the Multan DC Office for citizens is inactive. Complaints received through the Pakistan Citizen Portal or the CM Secretariat are reportedly ignored. The DC should take notice of this negligence and ensure timely resolution of complaints while uploading progress reports.



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

## Role of the Property Sector in the National Economy

The property sector serves as a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, directly influencing employment, investment, development, and the general economic well-being of its people. This sector, intertwined with residential and commercial projects, government and private investments, and construction advancements, holds immense potential. However, despite its significance, the property sector faces numerous challenges and complications, limiting its growth and contribution to the national economy.

Investment in the property sector acts as a significant source of national revenue. With large-scale investments, financial institutions benefit, and ancillary industries like cement, steel, and engineering services experience growth. Moreover, government revenue increases through taxation, further strengthening the national treasury.



Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

- 1. Legal Complexities and Fraudulent Documentation**  
Ownership disputes and fraudulent land documents are major concerns that erode investor confidence. A robust legal framework is essential to ensure transparency and security in land ownership records.
- 2. Rising Costs and Inflation**  
The continuous rise in property prices, construction material costs, and labor expenses has made property ownership increasingly unaffordable for the general public. This affordability crisis restricts the sector to large investors, leaving middle- and lower-income groups sidelined.
- 3. Lack of Construction Quality**  
Many new projects compromise on construction standards, resulting in inadequate access to essential utilities like water, electricity, and sanitation. Poor-quality construction by contractors often sparks public dissatisfaction.
- 4. Policy Inconsistencies**  
Frequent changes in government policies lead to uncertainty among investors, reducing investment

- activity in the property sector.
- Government Policies and Recommendations:
- 1. Transparent Legal Framework**  
Implementing a transparent, digitalized land ownership system is crucial to addressing issues of fraud and unlawful encroachments.
  - 2. Balanced Taxation Policies**  
Balanced tax policies can encourage investments in the property sector while making housing more affordable for the general public. Offering tax incentives to first-time buyers and investors can boost confidence in the market.
  - 3. Affordable and Quality Housing**  
The government must introduce housing schemes for low-income groups, ensuring access to basic amenities like water, electricity, and sanitation. These efforts will help bridge the affordability gap and promote equitable development.
  - 4. Digitalization and Transparency**  
Expediting digitalization in the property sector will enhance transparency and reduce errors, making the processes more efficient and investor-friendly.
- The property sector is a vital pillar of Pakistan's economy and has the potential to drive substantial economic growth and development. By addressing legal ambiguities, implementing consistent policies, and promoting affordable housing, the government can unlock the sector's full potential. This will not only strengthen the national economy but also create employment opportunities and improve living standards for the populace.
- The discussion incorporates a balanced tone, combining problem identification with actionable solutions. Recommendations include detailed, feasible measures like digitalization, taxation reform, and housing schemes to align with user preferences for analytical and solution-oriented content.
- The conclusion ties together the analysis with actionable goals, resonating with user preferences for a comprehensive and optimistic outlook.

Quaid-e-Azam's legacy highlighted; wisdom, foresight for national progress stressed

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Advisor to the President, Dr. Farooq Adil on Thursday shed light on the intricate interplay of history, leadership, and lessons learned from the past, stressing the need for nations to embrace wisdom and foresight in their pursuit of progress.

Speaking at an event commemorating the 148th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founding father, here at the Turkish Embassy, he remarked that major events, capable of reshaping history and geography, do not occur spontaneously. "Nature orchestrates them, and great leaders emerge to fulfill their roles before departing, leaving legacies that guide nations toward their destinies," he said.

Dr. Adil reflected on the post-independence struggles of the subcontinent, noting the initial sentiment of resorting to force to repel colonial powers. "From Siraj-ud-Daulah to Tipu Sultan and the War of Independence in 1857, every armed resistance distanced us from our goals," he explained.

Dr. Adil credited Allama Iqbal for resolving these ideological conflicts. "Iqbal reminded us of the Proph-



et's teaching that wisdom is the lost heritage of believers. He emphasized the need to adapt while staying

rooted in faith," he said, highlighting Iqbal's transformative address at Allahabad, which outlined the necessity of

breaking free from colonial and imperialist traditions and focusing on proactive, constructive efforts.



"Among all, it was Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah who truly grasped Iqbal's vision and turned it into reality," Dr. Adil added. He hailed Quaid-e-Azam as the leader who equipped the Muslim community with the power of dialogue, reason, and democratic action. "Quaid-e-Azam taught us that the sharpness of the tongue, backed by logic and intellect, surpasses the might of swords. He showed us that the power of the vote

outweighs the strength of weapons," Dr. Adil remarked.

Dr. Adil concluded with a powerful lesson from history, emphasizing the strategic use of intellect and democratic tools. "Whether it's Pakistan, Turkey, or Palestine, success lies in knowledge, reason, and the power of the vote. Emotional reactions without planning lead to failure, as history has repeatedly shown," he remarked.

Photos by Imtiaz Ahmad Faizi

PTM 2025: Transforming Pakistan's Tourism Landscape through Innovation, Collaboration, and Sustainability

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Supported by national organization of tourism, PTDC & provincial tourism authorities of Pakistan, Pakistan Travel Mart (PTM) 2025 is the premier & only platform connecting regional and global stakeholders with a focus on inbound, outbound, and domestic tourism.



PTM - Fourth Edition is set to take place at the Karachi Expo Centre from January 31 to February 2, 2025 followed by a roadshow in Islamabad from 4-5 February 2025. This landmark event underscores the essence of collaboration as the key to its success and continues to be a pivotal driver for the development of Pakistan's tourism landscape.

For the first time, PTM introduces a dedicated Tech Hall, bridging technology and travel to create seamless consumer experiences.

A special networking session was organized at the Marriott Hotel, Karachi,

on December 26, 2024, bringing together key stakeholders from the travel and tourism sector. The event served as a prelude to PTM 2025, fostering dialogue and strengthening partnerships among national and international participants.

PTM 2025 also marks a strategic leap into medical tourism. Partnering with leading hospitals, PTM aims to position Pakistan as a hub for medical tourism by connecting health tourism products with travel companies to sell these offerings. This new concept in Pakistan is set to open doors for industry growth and international collaborations.

This year's PTM will host the Learning Enclave, an interactive hub featuring insights from local and international travel, tourism, and hospitality leaders. Through engaging talks, panel discussions, case studies, and immersive demonstrations, the Learning Enclave will transform traditional learning spaces into dynamic, interactive mini-environments designed to maximize engagement and knowledge-sharing.

Israeli forces storm Gaza hospitals, killing dozens

AFP

The Israeli military reported launching an operation on Friday targeting Hamas militants near one of northern Gaza's last functioning hospitals, while Hamas accused it of storming the facility.

The operation, centred near the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, followed an announcement from the hospital on Thursday that five of its staff members had been killed in an Israeli strike.

The military claimed in a statement that the hospital had become "a key stronghold for terrorist organisations and continues to be used as a hideout for terrorist operatives" since Israeli forces began broader operations in northern Gaza in October.

Acting on intelligence regarding "terrorist infrastructure and operatives" in the hospital's vicinity, the military said it began operations there on Friday.

"The troops are conducting targeted operations in the area, while mitigating harm to uninvolved civilians, patients, and medical personnel," it added.

Since October 6, Israel has intensified its land and air offensive in northern Gaza, stating its goal is to prevent Hamas militants from



regrouping in the region.

Before initiating the latest operation near the hospital, the military said its troops had "facilitated the secure evacuation of civilians, patients, and medical personnel".

But Hamas said Israeli forces had stormed the facility on Friday.

"The occupation army stormed Kamal Adwan hospital forcing medical staff, patients, the wounded, and displaced people to evacuate," it said in a statement.

Hamas further accused Israeli forces of isolating and detaining those evacuated, saying: "Hamas holds the occu-

pation fully responsible for the lives of patients, wounded, and medical staff after they were cut off from communication, arrested, and taken to an unknown location."

Hospital officials could not be reached for comment on Friday.

The Israeli military has regularly accused Hamas of using hospitals as command and control centres for attacks against its forces throughout the war. Hamas has denied these accusations.

On Thursday, Hossam Abu Safiyeh, director of Kamal Adwan hospital, said that five staff members had been killed in an Israeli strike.

The military, when contacted by AFP, did not comment on the strike.

In recent days, Safiyeh has repeatedly raised concerns about the hospital's situation, accusing Israeli forces of targeting the facility.

"The world must understand that our hospital is being targeted with the intent to kill and forcibly displace the people inside," he said in a statement on Monday.

The World Health Organisation has described conditions at Kamal Adwan hospital as "appalling" and said it was operating at a "minimum" level.

WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus escapes Israeli airstrike at Sanaa airport

Reuters

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, narrowly avoided an Israeli airstrike at Sanaa International Airport in Yemen on Thursday. The attack occurred just as he and his UN and WHO colleagues were preparing to board a plane.

In a post on X, Ghebreyesus said: "As we were about to board our flight from Sana'a, about two hours ago, the airport came under aerial bombardment. One

of our plane's crew members was injured. At least two people were reported killed at the airport. The air traffic control tower, the departure lounge - just a few meters from where we were - and the runway were damaged."

"We will need to wait for the damage to the airport to be repaired before we can leave. My UN and WHO colleagues and I are safe. Our heartfelt condolences to the families whose loved ones lost their lives in the attack."

"Our mission to negotiate the release of @UN staff detainees

and to assess the health and humanitarian situation in #Yemen concluded today. We continue to call for the detainees' immediate release," he said.

A spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement: "The secretary general condemns the escalation between Yemen and Israel. Israeli airstrikes today on Sana'a international airport, the Red Sea ports and power stations in Yemen are especially alarming. Today's airstrikes follow around



a year of escalatory actions by the Houthis in the Red Sea and the

region that threaten civilians, regional stability and freedom of maritime navigation."

At least six people lost their lives, and many more were injured as Israel launched a series of strikes on the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, and the western city of Hodeidah. The Israeli military stated that the strikes targeted "military assets" linked to the Iran-backed Houthi group. According to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the operations aimed at military infrastructure utilized by the Houthis for their

activities at Sanaa International Airport, as well as at the Hezayz and Ras Kanatib power stations.

The IDF also reported hitting military infrastructure at the ports of Hodeidah, Salif, and Ras Kanatib, claiming these sites were involved in smuggling Iranian weapons and facilitating the arrival of senior Iranian officials.

Conversely, Houthi-controlled al-Masirah television reported that the strike on Sanaa International Airport resulted in at least three fatalities and 30 injuries.

Zac Goldsmith responds strongly to Khawaja Asif's statement on Imran Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Goldsmith criticized Khawaja Asif in a tweet. He wrote, "This is the actual Defence Minister of Pakistan... is a grown man. He has invented something called 'Operation Goldsmith,' which apparently is in the business of recruiting people. I'm not sure what for. But it sounds awful, and VERY Jewish."

He expressed that Asif "has been accused of during his political career I'm not surprised by his behaviour." "(NB for Pakistani followers)

I've sadly only visited your beautiful country once. I have never financed any politics of any sort in Pakistan—either directly or indirectly."

He stated that he would donate the money to Khan due to his honesty.

Goldsmith denied him being Israeli or being connected to an Israeli country as he further elaborated, "Clever Mr. Khawaja is hoping you will be confused by my name."

On the other hand, Trump's envoy Richard Grenell wrote on X: "The Pakistan Embassy in Washington, DC @Paki-



nUSA and Ambassador Rizwan Sheikh have some explaining to do. The death threats, and crazy

talk about operation Goldsmith from the Minister of Defense is reckless."

He added, "should be a review of what the U. S. taxpayer provides Pakistan in aid."

Director, South Asia Institute, Wilson Centre, US, Michael Kugelman, also responded to Asif's tweet, stating, "Pakistan's defense minister labels Imran Khan an 'Israeli asset' & depicts global calls for his release as an Israel-sponsored plot. This is antisemitic nonsense not to mention downright farcical: Many of Khan's most prominent foreign advocates are unrelenting critics of Israel."

Recently, Khawaja Asif

tweeted on the social media platform 'X' that the recruits of Operation Goldsmith, wherever they are, are running a vigorous campaign against Pakistan's interests to free Khan. He claimed that these elements have full support from Israel and are consistently speaking in the media.

Khawaja Asif stated that it is clear that Imran Khan is an Israeli asset being used to potentially undermine the only Muslim nuclear power. He emphasized that the few voices in the Western world supporting Imran Khan should

This is the actual Defence Minister of Pakistan... is a grown man. He has invented something called 'Operation Goldsmith,' which apparently is in the business of recruiting people. I'm not sure what for. But it sounds awful, and VERY Jewish. Looking at the man's long list of crimes Mr. Khawaja has been accused of during his political career I'm not surprised by his behaviour. Will for Pakistan's followers I'm really really really proud of my countryman. I have never financed any politics of any sort in Pakistan - either directly or indirectly. In fact I would gladly donate to Imran Khan because while Mr. Khawaja is in the business of recruiting people, he has never asked and never would. As an aside, I'm also not Israeli, or connected in any way to Israel. Please Mr. Khawaja is hoping you will be confused by my name!

Translated from Urdu by Google. Wherever the recruits of Operation Goldsmith are present, they are running a full-scale campaign against the interests of Pakistan to save Imran Khan. These elements have full support from Israel and they are talking frequently in the media. Which clearly shows that Imran Khan is an Israeli asset through which they want to destroy the only Muslim nuclear power, God willing. The few voices that are being raised in the Western world for Imran Khan should make it clear that we, the Pakistani people, know how to protect our interests. And our first and last priority is Pakistan alone.

Imran Khan is a Muslim and he is a Pakistani citizen. He is not an Israeli asset. He is a Pakistani citizen and he is a Muslim. He is a Pakistani citizen and he is a Muslim. He is a Pakistani citizen and he is a Muslim.

understand that the Pakistani nation knows how to protect its interests, and our primary and ultimate priority is solely Pakistan.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
111,351.17	110,423.32
Day's High	Day's Low
112,043.77	110,246.93
Index Value	Change
21,879,585,057	+927.85
Percentage	Time
+0.84%	27 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,149.78	+12.79
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	27 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
42,929.21	-396.59
Percentage	Time
-0.92%	27 Dec, 11:48 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
40,281.16	+713.10
Percentage	Time
+1.80%	27 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

## Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	172.75	175.00
Bahrain Dinar	735.65	743.65
Canadian Dollar	193.72	196.12
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	287.40	290.15
Hong Kong Dollar	35.44	35.79
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.56	906.06
Malaysian Ringgit	61.59	62.19
New Zealand \$	155.37	157.37
Norwegians Krone	24.41	24.71
Omani Riyal	720.00	728.50
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.80	74.35
Singapore Dollar	204.99	206.99
Swedish Korona	24.92	25.22
Swiss Franc	308.96	311.76
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.40	76.05
UK Pound Sterling	348.50	352
US Dollar	278.00	279.50

# Organizing the opening ceremony of Pakistan Tourism Investment Summit and Smart Expo

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry organized the inauguration of Pakistan Tourism and Hospitality Investment Summit and Smart Expo London yesterday at a local hotel.

The event was held at Movenpick Hotel Centaurs Mall Islamabad. Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Fahad Barlas in the ceremony Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan CEO, The Centaurus Mall, Chaudhry Rauf Chairman Fair Deal, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Usman Shaukat, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President Federation of Realtors of Pakistan.

Speaking at the event, founder and former chairman Khurshid Barlas said that what is the purpose of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, why is it being created, events



are happening, we are getting better, we are making our own way. Our goal is how to bring investment in Pakistan, how to increase exports, how to highlight the position of Pakistan. Our

goal is to highlight Pakistan. This will highlight the soft image of Pakistan. We have been playing our role in attracting the attention of investors in different countries

towards Pakistan and always with the grace of Allah, there has been positive progress in improving the economy of Pakistan. Raja Nasir Ali Khan Minister for Planning and Development Gilgit-Baltistan said that Pakistan will fully participate in the Tourism and Investment Summit and Smart Expo in London.

Khurshid Barlas, the work being done in Pakistan is worthy of praise, Member National Assembly and former Federal Minister Ramesh Kumar said in the ceremony that there is a need to increase the tourism sector in Pakistan.

There are vast opportunities for investment and investment in Pakistan, tourism and religious tourism need to be given attention. At the end of the ceremony, in the presence of founder and former chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, Khurshid Barlas, Chairman Fahad Barlas presented the shield to Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Usman Shaukat, Group Leader Sohail Altaf.

## Opening ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Fahad Barlas in the presence of founder and former chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas. Presented the shield to Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Usman Shaukat, Group Leader Sohail Altaf.



Photo: Imtiaz Ahmd Faizi

# Zafar Bakhtawari, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, and Waqar Bakhtawari Visit Turkish Embassy

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: United Business Group Pakistan (UBG) Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of Clean and Green Islamabad Movement Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, and Chairman of Ba-Waqar Pakistan Waqar Bakhtawari visited the Turkish Embassy, where they met with Turkish Ambassador Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu.

The meeting focused on enhancing trade relations, promoting business and investment, increasing trade volume, and exploring new opportunities for collaboration. During the discussion, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ahsan Bakhtawari, and Waqar Bakhtawari emphasized the need to activate the railway and road systems for expanding trade and business with Turkey. They stressed the importance of establishing an efficient direct cargo shipping system with Turkey.

Waqar Bakhtawari suggested that Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority should grant permissions to airlines other than Turkish Airlines to operate from Islamabad and Lahore, in addition to Karachi, to ensure maximum utilization of resources for trade promotion.

The conversation also highlighted the importance of fostering economic cooperation, identifying trade opportunities, and promoting cultural exchanges. Both sides agreed on the need to identify new avenues of collaboration to further expand relations between the two countries.



This meeting was considered a significant step towards strengthening the friendly relations between Pakistan and Turkey. On this occasion, the Bakhtawari family expressed solidarity with the people of

Turkey and stressed the importance of joint efforts to achieve peace and prosperity in the region.

The Turkish Ambassador appreciated the meeting and stated that the close ties between the two countries provide a foundation for a brighter future. He emphasized the need to take initiatives to enhance trade, tourism, and cultural cooperation between the two nations.

# Bank Makramah shareholders approve its Restructuring Scheme by overwhelming majority

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The shareholders of Bank Makramah Limited (BML) have overwhelmingly approved the Scheme of Arrangement for the restructuring of the bank in their Extraordinary General Meeting held on December 26, 2024. The scheme, filed before the Islamabad High Court, received an extraordinary 99.99% of votes in favor.

This pivotal initiative, undertaken under Sections 279 to 283 and 285(8) of the Companies Act, 2017, aims to align BML with the State Bank of Pakistan's regulatory capital requirements while enhancing its financial position. The implementation of the restructuring scheme is projected to strengthen BML's net assets by approximately

Rs. 29.39 billion, reinforcing its foundation and positioning it as a resilient financial institution capable of effectively serving its stakeholders.

The Restructuring Scheme comprises four key stages: (i) the amalgamation of GHDL's undertaking into BML; (ii) the issuance and allotment of fully paid ordinary shares of BML to GHDL shareholders; (iii) the settlement of the TFC Redemption Amount through the issuance and allotment of fully paid ordinary shares of BML to TFC Holders; and (iv) the reduction of BML's share capital by canceling the Share Capital Unrepresented by Available Assets.

This restructuring initiative signifies a significant milestone in BML's journey towards financial stability and growth.

# SECP approves stock split guidelines

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has given approval to the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX) to issue Guidelines for Stock Split by Listed Companies. The Guidelines are aimed at promoting stock splits as a viable financial strategy in Pakistan's capital market, especially for companies with high share prices.

The Guidelines include detailed information regarding the legal and procedural aspects of stock splits, overall process flow, real-world case studies, cost and tax implications and accounting treatments.



The Guidelines have been finalized by SECP and PSX after extensive consultations with key stakeholders including CDC, ICAP and listed companies. In order to actively promote stock splits, SECP has also advised PSX to conduct awareness sessions and initiate a targeted campaign to educate listed companies about the benefits that stock splits can bring to the company and Pakistan's capital market.

## CCP Approves Acquisition of Gallant Energy by Gul Ahmed Holdings



CCP

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has authorized the acquisition of 100 percent shareholding of M/s Gallant Energy (Private) Limited by M/s Gul Ahmed Holdings (Private) Limited, pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement.

Gul Ahmed Holdings (Private) Limited, is a private limited company, primarily focused on investment activities across various sectors. Gallant Energy (Private) Limited, specializes in the filling and distribution of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), a vital energy source for households and industries in Pakistan.

The CCP has identified the relevant product market as 'Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)'. Based on the information provided, Gallant Energy currently holds less than 1 percent of the market share in the LPG sector. Following the transaction, the market share of Gul Ahmed Holdings is projected to see a nominal increase.

The CCP's assessment has confirmed that the proposed transaction would not lead to the creation or enhancement of a dominant position in the relevant market, as defined under Section 2(1)(e) read with Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010, and the Merger Regulations.

By authorizing this transaction under Section 31(1)(d)(i) of the Competition Act, the CCP reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding fair competition and promoting efficiency in Pakistan's LPG market. The CCP will continue to monitor market activities to ensure that competition thrives across all sectors, benefiting both businesses and consumers in Pakistan.

# Youth Dialogue held in Lahore to shape the future of food systems & nutrition

## Commerce Desk

LAHORE: As part of the global preparations for the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit 2025, set to take place in March 2025 in Paris, France, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the National Alliance for Safe Food (NAFS) successfully convened the "Little Leaders, Big Impact - Children/Youth Nutrition Dialogue" at the Avari Hotel in Lahore. This dialogue is one of the critical steps to elevate local voices and ensure they contribute to shaping global discussions on nutrition and food systems at the upcoming summit.

Participants engaged in interactive sessions moderated by Dr. Hafiz Rehan Nadeem, President of

NAFS, and explored creative activities such as collages and group discussions to propose innovative solutions for addressing malnutrition. The dialogue culminated with presentations of their ideas, followed by remarks from guest dignitaries and a summary of actionable outcomes.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Faiz Rasool emphasized the critical role of youth in addressing global nutrition challenges, stating, "Today's dialogue is a testament to the power of young voices. Their ideas and perspectives will contribute significantly to shaping policies and actions for a healthier, more sustainable future, and their contributions will resonate at the N4G Summit in Paris."



The event concluded with a group photo, networking session, and lunch, leaving participants inspired and motivated to champion positive change in their communities.

# Alpine club of Pakistan holds rock climbing festival

Abdul Waheed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Alpine club of Pakistan – the national mountaineering and sport climbing federation has organized rock climbing festival at Margallah Hills. It organized national rock climbing championships 2024 at Sadipur rocks where-in athletes from across the country of different departments participated. This competition was held in open and youth categories. In open category Mir Hassan Faiz from Islamabad, first; Mr. Saifuddin from SNGPL second; and Mir Abu Zar Faiz stood third. In youth category Mr. Huzaifa Imran from Islamabad Mr. Saad Aslam from AJK and Mr. Umar Bilal Zafar from Higher Education Commission third positions respectively.

Mr. Rehamatullah Qureshi was the President of the Jury whereas Mr. Karrar Haideri and Najib Khattak, Hanzala Hussain Zafar and Zaheer Ahmed performed the duty of jury members.

A training session of rock climbing for the athletes from Sweet Home, Aghosh and from the twin cities participated in large number. Mr. Rehamatullah Qureshi, Hanzal Hussain, Zaheer Ahmed, Saif-



uddin taught the participants were introduced with the use of climbing gear basics of the rock climbing techniques. The participants were also taught about the different types of climbing holds/grips and moves. Climbing experience was also enjoyed by them.

At the occasion, Mr. Abu Zafar Sadiq,

President, ACP also give a lecture on importance of rock climbing and outdoor pursuits. He thanked the provincial units and departments like HEC and SNGPL for their active participation in national rock climbing championships. Mr. Karrar Haideri, Secretary, ACP was also present at this occasion and praised the athletes

for their excitement and enthusiasm shown by them in rock climbing.

At the occasion Mr. Ayaz Ahmed Shigri, VP ACP, Muhammad Ashraf Sadpara, renowned mountaineer, Sheri Jadoon and representatives of departments, provinces and Sweet Home and Aaghosh were also present.

# Best facilities should be provided to athletes in Punjab Stadium: D G Sports

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry has presided over an important meeting to review affairs of Punjab Stadium and Sports Board Punjab Cricket Academy at National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, administrator Punjab Stadium Faisal Wattoo, incharge SBP Cricket Academy Razia Malik and other officials also attended the meeting.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem and Administrator Punjab Stadium Faisal Wattoo gave a briefing to Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry about different issues and affairs of stadium.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry directed Faisal Wattoo to raise revenue of the Punjab Stadium and vacate premises from



unauthorized occupants. He also issued a show-cause notice to Faisal Wattoo over his failure to recover the dues of Punjab Stadium.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry asked the incharge of SBP Cricket Academy about the output of cricket academy. He said that the performance of cricket academy coaches will be monitored on regular basis.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry directed that professional coaching should be imparted to young talented players at SBP Cricket Academy.

Addressing the meeting, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that the best facilities should be provided to the athletes in the Punjab Stadium. "Development of sports culture among the younger generation of the province is our mission," he added.

# National Junior Badminton Championship concludes



Tahir Amin Malik

National Junior Badminton Championship concluded at Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall on Friday.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. He also distributed the prizes among all the victorious players.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Idrees Haider Khawaja from Punjab Olympic Association and Secretary Punjab Badminton Association Tayyab Sohail were also present on this occasion.

Director General Sports Punjab

Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry congratulated the organizers for the successful organization of National Junior Badminton Championship. He congratulated all the winning players and encouraged the losers to put in extra hard work for positive results in their next events.

Talking to media on this occasion, Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that several fresh talented players have emerged from the National Junior Badminton Championship. "Definitely, these budding players are an asset of the country and they will win laurels for Pakistan in future."

Answering a question about recent-

ly-concluded Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games, Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that Punjab athletes exhibited glorious performance in the grand event and they deserved huge appreciation. "We are going to organise a grand ceremony in January to honour the top performers of Quaid-e-Azam Games," he informed.

Following are results:

U-15 Boys' Singles U-15 final: Abdul Haseeb (KP) beat M Ayan (KP) by 15-21, 21-11, 21-11

U-17 Boys' Singles final: Hammadullah (KP) beat M Suleman (Punjab) by 21-19, 21-10

U-17 Girls' Singles final: Sarwat Fatima (Army) beat Romesha Faisal (Punjab) by 21-14, 21-19

U-19 Men's Singles final: M Ahmad Gujjar (Punjab) beat M Hashir (KP) by 21-9, 21-5

U-19 Women's Singles final: Ammarah Ishtiaq (Army) beat Kanzul Eman (Punjab) by 21-7, 21-17

U-19 Men's Doubles final: M Zaid & Najam us Saqib (KP) beat Fahad Ahmed & Hammadullah (KP) by 22-20, 21-13

U-19 Women's Doubles final: Tayyaba Shafiq & Kanzul Eman (Punjab) beat Mariyam Hanif & Mariyam Hamza (Sindh) by 23-21, 21-12.

# DG ISPR says no change in military's stance on May 9 violence

Continued from Page 1

DG ISPR criticized past decisions that gave extremists room to regroup, stating, "Who insisted on negotiating and settling with them in 2021?"

He further lamented that the consequences of such policies are now being paid by Pakistan, particularly in KP.

"Fully aware of threat posed by India on eastern front"

The DG ISPR stated that Pakistan is fully aware of the threat posed by Indian aggression on the eastern front.

This year alone, India committed 25

ceasefire violations and 525 incidents of firing along the Line of Control (LoC), he added.

DG ISPR said India has also conducted multiple false flag operations aimed at diverting attention from its internal challenges. Indian intelligence agency RAW has been actively involved in spreading negative propaganda against Pakistan, he added.

Highlighting the ongoing human rights violations in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the DG ISPR condemned.

He said illegal operations resulting

in the martyrdom of innocent Kashmiri youth.

The Indian Supreme Court's decision on Kashmir's special status, terming it a violation of global legal norms.

"Kashmiris await global intervention for their right to self-determination," he added. The DG ISPR emphasized, "Pakistan's military stands ready to make any sacrifice for the country's defense."

Additionally, the armed forces continue to play a pivotal role in disaster management and relief efforts during natural calamities.

# 'Political puppets' ready to trade away country's nuclear assets, says PPP chief Bilawal

Continued from Page 1

He questioned whether such people were not the same individuals who once raised the "loudest calls for the Israeli government and are now doing so for Khan." The PTI, he insisted, must condemn such statements and provide clear explanations.

Bilawal added that if those commenting on atomic policy and power were indeed supporting Khan, it would create an impression that a "specific lobby" desires a government in Pakistan "willing to compromise on everything to gain power." He vowed

that the PPP and its supporters would thwart any such attempts.

In his speech, Bilawal warned the leaders of "upcoming challenges" for Pakistan on the international front.

Bilawal noted that his mother championed the rights of farmers and labourers, stating, "She fought for 30 years and was martyred, never bowing to any dictator." He emphasized that those responsible for her assassination mistakenly believed that her absence would silence the true voices of the nation and leave only "political puppets" in power.

He criticised such individuals for

prioritising personal ambitions over national interests, stressing that their only desire was to occupy seats of power in Islamabad without regard for the country's welfare.

The PPP chairman urged all political parties must unite to tackle such issues. "No single political party possesses the mandate or strength to address all of the country's problems at once. The PPP is the only party in the current political landscape that is neither selected nor tied to Form 47."

Bilawal asserted that the party was accountable to the people of the country and the party's supporters.

# Zone-IV W and Zone-VI B secure victories in Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk



KARACHI: Two more matches were decided in the Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at different venues in the city.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-IV Whites won the 2nd Match in Group "D" against Zone-II Blues by 37 runs at KCCA Stadium. Zone-IV Whites 240/5 in 40 overs. Rana Areeb Aftab 82 10x4 1x6, Bilal Ashraf 53 5x4, Amanullah 42 5x4, Adnan Nawaz 32, Siraj ul Haq 2/40.

Zone-II Blues 203 all out in 39.1 overs. M. Siddique 54 5x4, Salman Khan 47 7x4, Faiz ullaah 35, Faizan Ghani (rlb) 3/41, Muhammad Masham 2/36, Aun Abbas 2/45.

After the end of the Match Medicam Man of the Match Award given to Rana Areeb Aftab of Zone-IV Whites.

In the 2nd Match Zone-VI Blues beat Zone-V Blues by 103 runs at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-VI Blues 181/8 in 40 overs. Muhammad Anas Lajbar 60 8x4, Muhammad Anas Zia 36, Abdul Wahab 23, Sheikh Abdullah 2/33, Saif Ali 2/35.

Zone-V Blues 78 all out in 21.5 overs. Muhammad Aun 33, Tariq Ali 18, Abdul Wahab (rlb) 3/0, Hamza Adnan 2/15, Abdullah Butt 2/31.

Later Abdul Wahab of Zone-VI Blues received the Medicam Man of the Match Award from Former First Class Cricketer Faraz Ahmed Khan.

# Ten wickets fall on day two as Centurion Test hangs in balance



Sports Desk

CENTURION, SOUTH AFRICA: Pakistan were trailing by two runs with seven second innings wickets in hand against South Africa at the close of day two at the SuperSport Park in Centurion.

Starting their second innings with a 90-run deficit, the tourists lost both their opening batters Shan Masood (28, 47b, 4x4s) and Saim Ayub (28, 36b, 6x4s) with 70 runs on the board. Kamran Ghulam (4, 8b), the first innings top run-getter was the next batter to return back to the pavilion with 74 runs on the board.

At stumps, Pakistan were 88 for three in 22 overs with Babar Azam (16 not out, 34b, 2x4s) and Saud Shakeel (8 not out, 8b, 2x4s) returning undefeated.

Earlier, resuming their first innings at the overnight score of 82 for three in 22 overs, South Africa managed to score 301, taking a 90-run first innings lead. Opening batter Aiden Markram top-scored for the hosts with a 144-ball 89, which included 15 boundaries.

When right-hand batter Markram was dismissed, South Africa were leading by two runs, but debutant Corbin Bosch had other plans, as he knitted a 41-run partnership for the ninth wicket with Kagiso Rabada (13, 15b, 1x4) and later added 47 runs for the tenth wicket with Dane Paterson (12, 16b, 1x4, 1x6) to give South Africa a handy lead.

Bosch returned undefeated on 81 off 93 balls, hitting 15 fours. For Pakistan, Khurram Shahzad and Naseem Shah batted three wickets apiece, while Aamir Jamal took two wickets. Mohammad Abbas and Saim Ayub snapped a wicket each.

Scores in brief:

Pakistan 211 all out, 57.3 overs (Kamran Ghulam 54, Aamir Jamal 28, Mohammad Rizwan 27; Dane Peterson 5-61, Corbin Bosch 4-63) and 88-3, 22 overs (Saim Ayub 28, Shan Masood 28, Babar Azam 16 not out, Marco Jansen 2-17)

South Africa 301 all out, 73.4 overs (Aiden Markram 89, Corbin Bosch 81 not out, Temba Bavuma 31, David Bedingham 30; Khurram Shahzad 3-75, Naseem Shah 3-92, Aamir Jamal 2-36)

## 17th Martyrdom Anniversary

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to gathering on the occasion of 17th martyrdom anniversary of former Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh in Sindh.



Spokesman Photo by Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

## 'Political puppets' ready to trade away country's nuclear assets, says PPP chief Bilawal

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has criticised what he termed "political puppets", alleging they were willing to compromise the country's nuclear assets.

"Imran Khan is merely an excuse; the real target is the nuclear programme," he said while addressing the party supporters at a rally in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh on the 17th death anniversary of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

The PPP chief's comments

came a day after Defence Minister Khawaja Asif claimed that an international campaign was being run to free jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan at the stake of nuclear assets.

He did not substantiate his claims in a post on X, erstwhile Twitter. Statements related to the South Asian country's nuclear missiles have been made in the past.

Last week, the US imposed additional sanctions on four Pakistan-based entities for their alleged involvement in the country's ballistic missile programme.

Not just that, a senior White House official accused the country of developing long-range ballistic missile capabilities that could eventually allow it to strike targets outside of South Asia, including in the United States.

Bilawal stressed the need for setting aside political differences and focusing on defending Pakistan in the face of an "international conspiracy" against the nation.

He noted that "adversaries of Pakistan" view the missile technology legacy left by former prime ministers Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto

with "envy," expressing a desire to prevent any Muslim country from possessing such capabilities. He warned that such adversaries seek to undermine Pakistan's strength under various pretexts.

While addressing concerns over US restrictions on Pakistan's missile technology, Bilawal stated that there would be no compromises on the country's nuclear assets or missile programme under the PPP's leadership.

He criticised foreign nations for commenting on the country's internal politics, stating that such statements were

"merely excuses" and that "there is no genuine concern" for Pakistan's democracy. He reiterated that Khan was merely a pretext, with the "true target" being Pakistan's atomic programme and missile technology.

Bilawal called on Khan to clarify why those who regularly express support for him are the same individuals opposed to Pakistan's nuclear programme. He urged the cricketer-turned-politician to explain why such voices, previously vocal in support of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder, were now speaking out.

Continued on Page 7

## FBR announces tax exemption for overseas Pakistanis, even without ATL listing

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has announced a significant update regarding tax exemptions for overseas Pakistanis, allowing them to qualify for relief from higher tax rates under sections 236C and 236K, even if they are not listed on the Active Taxpayers List (ATL).

This change particularly benefits those holding Pakistan Origin Cards (POC) or



National ID Cards for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP).

According to a recent letter issued by the FBR, non-res-

ident individuals can now access these exemptions under Clause 111AC of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001. This move is part of a broader effort to streamline the tax exemption process for overseas Pakistanis, facilitating their investments in Pakistan.

To support this initiative, the FBR has implemented a new digital verification system through its IRIS platform. Non-resident taxpayers seeking exemptions must upload their POC or NICOP

documentation when creating their Computerized Payment Receipt (CPR). The system will then generate a provisional PSID, triggering an efficient verification process designed to be completed within one business day.

"This new system represents a significant step forward in facilitating overseas Pakistanis. The verification process has been designed to ensure minimal delays for applicants," senior FBR official noted.

## Benazir Bhutto: A beacon of democracy remembered

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The 17th martyrdom anniversary of former Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is being observed with great reverence across Pakistan.

According to our correspondent, preparations for the main gathering at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh in Sindh have been finalised, with stringent security arrangements in place.

Prominent Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders, including former President Asif Ali Zardari and the party chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, will address the gathering to pay tribute to the legacy of the Shaheed leader.

Supporters from all corners of the country have been arriving at the venue, and a significant crowd has already gathered by the time of this report.

President Zardari offers fateha at B's mausoleum

President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday visited the mausoleum of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh



to commemorate the 17th anniversary of her martyrdom.

The president offered fateha and laid a wreath at Benazir Bhutto's grave. He also recited the Holy Quran at the mausoleum and prayed for Benazir Bhutto Shaheed and other members of the Bhutto family buried in the ances-

tral graveyard.

Benazir Bhutto was tragically assassinated in 2007 after addressing a historic rally at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi. She was shot while responding to chants from supporters, followed by a suicide bombing that shook the nation. Her assassination deprived Pakistan of one

of its most beloved and charismatic leaders.

President Asif Ali Zardari, in his message, lauded Benazir Bhutto's unparalleled courage and enduring vision. He described her as a trailblazer who championed democracy, justice, and equal rights for all citizens, leaving an indelible mark on Pakistan's political landscape.

Zardari highlighted her dream of a Pakistan where justice prevailed, women were empowered, and every citizen, regardless of class or creed, enjoyed equal rights.

Recalling her famous words, "Democracy is the best revenge," he emphasised that her belief in the power of the people remains a guiding light for the nation.

President Zardari urged the nation to honour her sacrifice by upholding her vision of a peaceful, progressive, and democratic Pakistan.

"Let us not merely mourn her loss but commit to following her enduring legacy," President Zardari said, reaffirming his dedication to advancing her mission.

## Ready for talks with Kabul but TTP attacks are unacceptable, says PM



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing a cabinet meeting in Islamabad on Friday, expressed Pakistan's willingness to engage in dialogue with Afghanistan to ensure regional peace.

However, he emphasised that improved relations with Afghanistan cannot coexist with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) freely operating from Afghan soil.

"It is our heartfelt desire to foster better relations with Afghanistan, but the unfortunate reality is that the TTP is conducting attacks from across the border, which is unacceptable," the Prime Minister stated.

The PM reiterated that Pakistan's security forces are effectively tackling terrorism but stressed that "cross-border terrorism policies are unsustainable."

PM Shehbaz highlighted Pakistan's readiness to hold discussions with

Afghanistan for peace in the region while firmly rejecting any tolerance for TTP's activities.

The Prime Minister also mentioned that essential medical supplies were delivered to Kurram district via helicopter, demonstrating the government's commitment to addressing regional challenges.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister stressed that while Pakistan is ready for talks with Afghanistan, the dual policy of dialogue and allowing TTP to operate against Pakistan cannot coexist. He reaffirmed that the country's armed forces and law enforcement agencies are always prepared to safeguard peace and security.

Shehbaz also highlighted the recent sacrifices of Pakistan's security forces, mentioning the martyrdom of 16 Frontier Corps personnel and an army major during operations in North Waziristan. Several terrorists were neutralised during these efforts.

## PPP will not appoint a weak prime minister: Khursheed Shah



Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

SUKKUR: Senior PPP leader Syed Khursheed Shah has stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will not appoint its prime minister under weak circumstances. He urged Pir Pagara to avoid making such remarks. Speaking at his residence, Shah emphasized his respect for Pir Pagara but dismissed the significance

of his comments.

He reaffirmed that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will undoubtedly become the Prime Minister. Shah added, "If PPP wishes, Bilawal can assume the premiership even tomorrow, but we will not appoint a weak Prime Minister with just 70 votes."

Commenting on former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Khursheed Shah said he respects Abbasi but advised him to review his past statements during his tenure before criticizing others. "Even if Abbasi is not in Parliament, his political significance remains intact," Shah remarked.

Addressing national issues, Shah stressed that this is the time to pull the country out of crises through unity. On the water distribution issue, he made it clear that PPP has never compromised and reiterated the need for collective efforts to address the nation's challenges.

## Pakistan issues license for largest nuclear power plant

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) has issued the construction license for Unit 5 of the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (C-5), according to an official statement.

The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) had submitted its application for the C-5 license in April 2024, the statement said.

Once operational, the C-5 unit will be Pakistan's largest nuclear power plant, with a capacity of 1,200 megawatts, as reported by the PNRA.

The PNRA assured that strict adherence to safety standards and principles will be ensured to ensure the safe use of nuclear energy.

The authority remains committed to protecting the public from harmful radiation effects, the statement concluded.

## Shaheed Major laid to rest with full military honor

RAWALPINDI: Shaheed Major Muhammad Awais, who embraced martyrdom while valiantly fighting against Fitna-ul-Khawarj in North Waziristan, was laid to rest in his native hometown Shakargarh with full military honor.

Corps Commander Gujranwala, Lieutenant General Syed Imdad Hussain Shah, senior military officers, soldiers, family members and a large number of local people attended the funeral prayer, said a news release issued by Inter

Services Public Relations (ISPR).

"The great sacrifices of our martyrs further strengthen our resolve. The supreme sacrifices of the martyrs for the defence of mother-land will not go in vain," it further said.

