



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Security forces kill 15 while thwarting infiltration attempt at Pak-Afghan border

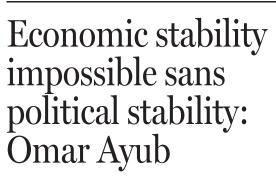
Putin apologies for AZAL airliner incident in Russia's airspace – Kremlin



😂 TASS

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin offered his apologies to his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev that the incident with the AZAL airliner occurred in Russia's airspace and conveyed his condolences to those injured the quickest the families of the plane crash recovery," the press office said victims, the Kremlin press in a statement.

office reported on Saturday. "Vladimir Putin offered his apologies that the tragic incident had occurred in Russia's airspace and once again conveyed his deep and sincere condolences to the families of the plane crash victims and wished





ment. Opposition leader said PTI wanted to talk about May 9 and November 26 events. He said PTI wants judicial inquiry on these accidents. He also questioned the veracity of military courts. He claimed that Hassan Niazi and other PTI leaders will get relief from high courts.

### 🐞 Umar Wazir

WANA: Security forces thwarted an infiltration attempt by the Khorasan faction of the Khawarij terrorists at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

According to sources, 20 to 25 Khawarij terrorists attempted to infiltrate into Pakistan from two locations in Kurram and North Waziristan on the night between Dec 27 and 28, using Afghan Taliban border posts. Pakistani security forces acted promptly and foiled the infiltration attempt.



Sources revealed that on the and Afghan Taliban jointly morning of Dec 28, the Khawarij opened fire on Pakistani posts

with heavy weapons without provocation.

Pakistani security forces responded swiftly and forcefully to the firing. According to sources, initial reports indicate significant losses on the Afghan side.

Effective retaliatory fire led to the death of over 15 Khawarij and Afghan Taliban fighters, with several others injured. Due to the effective counter-action and shelling, Afghan Taliban forces fled, abandoning six posts.

the interim Afghan government to prevent the Khorasan faction of the Khawarij from using Afghan soil against Pakistan. Instead of controlling the Khawarij, the Afghan Taliban continues to support these terrorist elements.

that the Khorasan faction of the Khawarij operates freely in Afghanistan and is exploiting Afghan territory for anti-Pakistan terrorist activities. Pakistani security forces are fully capable of giving a befitting response to any act of aggression.

Sources further mentioned

😂 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Opposition leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub has said that it is age of Internet therefore spread of accurate information is need of the hour.

Talking to media, Opposition leader made it clear that "dream of economic stability in the country will never come true until and unless we bring political stability in the country".

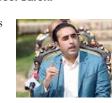
He claimed that the federal government owes Rs15000 billions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. He said federal government has not given any help to KP govern-

He said decision regarding starting of talks with TTP during PTI government was General Bajwa's decision as he used to say that talks were the best solution. Omar Ayub claimed that Rs550 billion petrol is being smuggled from Afghanistan and Iran border and who are sitting at borders and who is

responsible for it. Opposition leader advised intelligence officials to look into borders issues instead of controlling the media. He said country was being run on the advice of IMF. He claimed there was a hell of difference in the economics of 2021 and 2024.

### Bilawal laments federal govt not fulfilling commitments regarding PSDP 😂 🛛 Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

Pakistan People's Party(PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Sindh government



was committed to resolves public issues on priority basis despite limited resources.

Talking to media in Larkana on Saturday, Bilawal Bhutto said all stake holders have to play their due role to solve the problems of the people. PPP chairman complained that federal government was not fulfilling their commitment with the Sindh government.

Bilawal Bhutto said before the formation of federal government, it was decided and agreed with Shehbaz government that public sector development projects will be released for four provinces without discrimination. He said it was promised that funds would be given for development projects in Sindh and Balochistan by central government. Bilawal Bhutto said that federal government has failed to fulfil promises made with PPP. He announced that Sindh government will register its compliant with federal government.

### PM directs completion of smart meters' installation; steps to overcome power theft

### 😂 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed to complete the installation of smart meters as soon as possible to ensure transparency in the billing system and called for concrete steps to prevent electricity theft.

The prime minister chaired a review meeting on the performance of Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOs). The deliberations centered on the affairs of Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that the overbilling was unacceptable and strict action would be taken against officers involved in such practices.

He expressed concern over the delay in the appointment process of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the distribution companies and directed for ensuring CEOs' appointments through a highly transparent process and asked for its completion at the earliest.

Recruitment of workforce in distribution companies should be merit-based, with no compromise on transparency, he further added.

The prime minister said that all the available resources should be utilized to



meet the targets of NEPRA.

Minister for Economic Affairs Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Power Division Sardar Owais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervez Malik. Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and senior government officials attended the meeting.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the achievement of targets which included recovery rates (up to November of FY 2024-25): LESCO: 96.82 percent, PESCO: 87.98 percent and FESCO: 97.57 percent.

Transmission and distribution losses

(up to November of FY 2024-25) in these companies remained at: LESCO: 13.04 percent, PESCO: 33 percent and FESCO: 6.01 percent.

The meeting was also apprised of the smart meter installation progress:-

LESCO: Out of 223,365 three-phase smart meters, 49,470 had been installed.

PESCO: Out of 152,559 smart meters, 51,173 have been installed. FESCO: Out of 192,311 smart meters.

11,276 have been installed.

LESCO, PESCO and FESCO offered consumers' facilities for complaint resolution and other services via call centers, emails, websites, interactive voice response (IVR) systems, and NEPRA's mobile and web services.

resolved through talks. He said PMLN saved the country from ISLAMABAD: Special Assisdefault, even by suffering polittant to Prime Minister on ical setback.

Earlier, PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui said that talks between PTI and the Centre are ongoing, with Nawaz Sharif's approval.

Senator Siddiqui emphasized that the committee will focus on written demands rather than statements made by PTI's founder.

Prior to this, PTI set a deadline for the completion of talks with the government, aiming to conclude negotiations by January 31, 2025.

Addressing reporters outside Adiala jail, SIC head Hamid Raza stated that Imran Khan has expressed confidence in the negotiating committee who are working to resolve issues with the Centre.

Political Affairs, Rana Sanaullah said that PTI founder Imran Khan, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari

says Rana Sana

腾 🛛 City Desk

PTI founder, Nawaz

Sharif, Zardari should

sit together for Pakistan,

should shit together resolve Pakistan's problems. Addressing a seminar in connection with martyrdom

ceremony of Shaheed Khawaja Muhammad Rafique in Lahore today, he said attitude of some political parties has been changed after failed protest on November 26 this year.

He expressed Government's resolve to make negotiation process with Opposition successful.

Special Assistant said national issues can only be

Security sources stated that Pakistan had repeatedly urged

# 2 The Spokesman

Sunday, December 29, 2024

# **CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Introduced Exemplary Projects in Health Sector**

#### 🐞 Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's healthcare projects have set remarkable examples for the other provinces to follow. She said,"The projects like Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital Lahore, Cardiology Institute Sargodha, Clinics on Wheels, Field Hospitals, Children's Heart Surgery Card, and Free Medicine Home Delivery have no doubt revolutionised the healthcare system of the Province." She added,"Chinese cancer treatment method: "No Chemotherapy, No Surgery" will also be introduced for the treatment of cancer patients in Punjab."

Madam Chief Minister highlighted,"Punjab has become the first province in Pakistan to formally start air ambulance service." She said,"About 6.8 million patients are benefiting from Clinics on Wheels and Field Hospitals across Punjab." She added,"Mega project of revamping rural and primary health centers across Punjab is nearing completion." She converted the traditional BHU into "Maryam Health Clinic."



Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said,"We are revamping a record number of more than 2800 hospitals across Punjab. Field hospitals are providing quality healthcare services remote rural areas across Punjab." She added,"Unparalleled hospital services continue as 950,000 patients have benefitted from the field hospitals.

60,000 X-rays, 135,000 lab tests, ultrasound, first aid and maternal & child health facilities have been provided."

Madam Chief Minister noted,"6.7 million patients have benefitted from Clinics on Wheels in densely populated areas of cities. Doctors, LHVs, vaccination and ultrasound facilities are available in Clinics on Wheels." She said,"Pakistan's first public sector Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital in Lahore for the treatment of cancer patients is rapidly moving towards completion. The first Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology for the treatment of heart diseases in Sargodha Division is also nearing completion." She added,"A target has been set to meet the shortage of specialist doctors in district hospitals. A proposal of special package for the doctors working in remote areas has also been agreed upon, besides a decision to establish cath labs and cardiology centres in district hospitals of Punjab in phases.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said,"Free treatment and operation of children with heart disease under the Chief Minister's Heart Surgery Program have been started." She added,"Public health is a priority, provision of sufficient resources will be ensured." She highlighted,"We want to provide a better environment for public in government hospitals than in private clinics." She underscored,"We want to bring improvement in every hospital, every patient should get free treatment and medicine."

### Walima party

FAISALABAD: Group photo of Ustad Muhammad Tufail Tarar, RPO spokesperson Dr. Rizwan Bhatti, trader leader Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra, Welfare Officer BISEF Dr. Sardar Babar Dogar, CTO spokesperson Muhammad Ismail, News Editor Abdul Wahid, Caretaker Igbal Stadium Naveed Nazir, Chairman Professional Photographers Association Syed Tanveer Zaidi, President Muhammad Ahmed, Muhammad Aamir (Islamabad), Ali Shahid (Lahore), journalists, relatives, friends, and others at the Walima party hosted by Ghazanfar Majid at a local marquee. Photo Ghulam Nabi



Hazar Khan says Coordinator's and Social Security team harassing the factory owners 腾 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Coordinator of the Minister for Labour and Human Resources Punjab has started conducting raids on various factories in Faisalabad, harassing their owners, while we are fully complying with social security contributions and paying all workers' dues. This was stated by Hazar Khan, Senior Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association, during a media talk.

He said that workers' social security payments are being made in accordance with the minimum monthly salary of Rs. 37,000 set by the Punjab government, whereas social security laws do not set a limit on the maximum wage, and these workers are not subject to it.

Hazar Khan further said that, unfortunately, the Coordinator's team and the Social Security Commissioner's team have been harassing our factory owners for the last few days, forcing them to pay all workers' dues. He added that our industry is already facing major challenges, and these unforeseen raids could disrupt our Christmas and New Year orders, heightening the risk of worker unemployment.

He urged the government to promptly stop these surprise raids and restore the officers from the Social Security and Labour Departments who were suspended. He warned that if this issue is not resolved, a press conference will be held, and a strike will be called.

### Shaheed Benazir Bhutto: A Symbol of Democracy and Štruggle

### 😂 🛛 Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

On the occasion of the 17th anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, the Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro pays tribute to her unparalleled sacrifices, ideals, and relentless struggle for democracy.

In a message he said "In line with the policies of the Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro, the mission of spreading the light of knowledge and providing free education to every child in Sindh will continue. We are committed to building a society following the path laid by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, where every child has access to the fundamental right of education and awareness".

"Education is the guarantee of a bright future."

### Police bust two bike-lifting gangs, recover 12 stolen bikes, laptop

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Khana and Humak police teams apprehended five wanted members of two bike lifter gangs involved in numerous bike lifting activities and recovered 12 stolen motorbikes and one laptop from their possessions on Saturday. Police spokespersons told APP that the Khana and Humak police

teams used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending five wanted members of two bike lifter gangs involved in numerous bike lifting incidents.

The police team also recovered 12 stolen motorbikes and one laptop from their possession. The accused were identified as Rasheed, Nazrik, Sajjad, Azeem and Mohsin.

Cases were already registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. During the preliminary investigation the accused confessed to being involved in numerous bike listings activities.

SSP operations/Investigations Muhammad Arslan Shah Zaib directed all officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in car and bike lifting incidents. The performance of police officers in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis.

They further directed all zonal officers to intensify the crackdown

### against the criminal elements. "Safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard.

### A Study in White

### 😂 Sameet Fatima

### wo lessons echo in classrooms nationwide: the symbolism of the Pakistani flag's colors and the imperative of respecting minorities. The green embodies the Muslim majority, while the white signifies peace and inclusivity, symbolizing the rightful place of minorities. Though

this ideal is ingrained in our collective conscience, it remains a theory seldom realized. Instead of celebrating diversity, troubling trends overshadow this symbolic white. The surge in blasphemy cases, disproportionately targeting minorities, raises grave concerns about justice, social harmony, and Pakistan's foundational principles. This ostracism drives minorities to question their basic rights to existence and religious freedom.

The current treatment of minorities starkly contradicts Quaid-e-Azam's vision, where every citizen, irrespective of faith, was promised equal rights. Misuse of blasphemy laws has turned them into tools of oppression, driven by personal vendettas, intolerance, and systemic bias. Recent years have witnessed attacks ranging from the burning of churches, forceful conversions of underage Hindu girls in Sindh, to the desecration of Ahmadi graves. These incidents highlight a systemic failure to protect the vulnerable, tarnishing the sanctity of justice and fostering an atmosphere of fear and exclusion.

The symbolic white of Pakistan's flag, now marred by fear and injustice, calls for restoration. Legal reforms to curb the misuse of blasphemy laws are imperative, alongside education that fosters tolerance and empathy. Mechanisms to safeguard minorities must be reinforced with sincerity.

Let us remember that the whiteness of our flag does not fade but grows brighter when illuminated by justice, equality, and humanity. Only by protecting the vulnerable can we truly honor our flag's promise, embracing every shade within it as an integral part of our nation's fabric.

### Press Conference of MNA Riaz Fatiana at **Chaudhary House Kamalia**

### 腾 Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the Details, Press Conference of MNA Kamalia Riaz Fatiana at Choudhry House Kamalia. Former Chairman Market Committee Kamalia Chaudhry Faisal Qazafi, former Chairman Chaudhry Rizwan Ahmad Nusrat and Patron In-Chief of Kamalia Tajer Ittehad Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat, Chaudhry Furgan along with others were present. In the press conference MNA Riaz Fatiana said that the opposition has expressed confidence in the Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. He further said that the government should show seriousness instead of obstinacy. The government and the opposition should sit together and increase the political process.



When political stability comes, the national prestige of Pakistan will the country will move forward and be better in front of the world. Riaz

Fatiana said that when the resignation process took place in the assembly

So I opposed it. When people were leaving the party, I organized the biggest gathering. After May 9, bank accounts raided at my house were seized. I voted for the party. Did not vote for the 26th Amendment. My son, former MPA Ahsan Fatiana, was kidnapped twice. I still sit on the opposition benches. The party showed Non-seriousness to me on the show cause notice. i said sit in Sanjani Chowk, I don't know whose decision it was to go to D Chowk

Whoever made the decision to go to D Chowk should think about it, the martyrdom and injuries are regrettable. We should reorganize the party and have a dialogue with my friends in all political parties.

# Efforts to Improve Traffic Management in Multan: A Step Forward

### 腾 Zain Khan

MULTAN: In 2024, the City Traffic Police of Multan made significant strides by registering over 500 cases against encroachments. This initiative is part of a larger effort to enhance traffic management and ensure smooth vehicular flow across the city.

The joint teams of Multan Police and City Traffic Police have been actively cracking down on encroachments and wrong parking, aiming to resolve the city's persistent traffic woes. CTO Multan, Sardar Moarahin Khan, personally visited key areas such as Vehari Chowk and Double Phatak Road to review the progress of anti-encroachment operations.



During his visit, he instructed to actively monitor their areas, ping malls, and take immediate His proactive and transparent dent and raised public expectations sector in-charges and circle officers clear wrong parking near shop- action against any encroachments. approach has set a positive prece- for better traffic management.

While the CTO's efforts are widely appreciated for being public-friendly and focused on removing obstructions, citizens have voiced concerns about the prevailing practice of targetbased challans. Unlike Lahore's CTO, who abolished this system, Multan's traffic wardens are often seen prioritizing their monthly challan targets over ensuring smooth traffic flow. Residents have urged the CTO to address this issue, aligning the wardens' efforts with the broader goal of efficient traffic management.

The success of these measures will depend on consistent follow-ups and a balanced approach to addressing both enforcement and public concerns.



# The Spokesman 3



Islamabad 30º – 38º Clear

Namaz	Timings
	5:42 am
Zohr	12:09 pm
Asr	3:30 pm
Maghrib	5:08 pm
Isha	6:37 pm
EMED	CENCV

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

😂 City Desk

### **Women Police** Stations

Islamabad 9222596 Rawalpindi . 9270601-20

..115

#### **ENQUIRY** Edhi Ambulance

**PIA Flight Info** ... 114 PIA Cargo. 9280979 Railway Inquiry .. .... 117 ...9270831-5 Railway Exchange WASA Rawalpindi ..5555489 9281092

HOSPITALS			
CMH			
MH			
MH			
Cantt Hospital			
DHQ	5556311-4		
RGH	9290301-7		
Holy Family	9290322-7		
PIMS	9261170-79		
Polyclinic	9218300-09		
Shifa International			

### DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-4
CDA	9208301-0
Met Office	9250360-
RDA	555586
ТМА	577088
Cantonment Board	9270151-
Islamabad Metropo	
<b>c</b>	020022

Corporation	920922
Potohar Town	920922
Rawal Town	. 577334

### COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service E-7, F-10 & F-11 ..... 9204654 G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, ..9203883 G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 ..9266316 Wapda Islamabad.......9217579-80 Sui Gas Complaint ..... 119, 9272249 Wasa Water Tank ....0331-5022125 Rawalpindi.

A.Aleem Khan condoles Fayyaz Chohan's father's *death* 

# **Justice Mansoor Ali Shah** calls for the establishment of a new 'Judicial Silk Road'



Honourable Justice Jawad Hassan Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a crucial emphasized Pakistan's legal and consti- measure to boost investor confidence. tutional advancements supporting Justice Hassan underscored the importhe implementation of CPEC, now tance of arbitration and mediation in effiapproaching its third phase. He praised ciently resolving legal challenges, espethe formation of the Special Investment cially in large-scale projects like CPEC. sized the urgent need to enhance Paki- Professor and Director of the Centre for Phase II.

Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, highlighted concerns regarding the lack of institutional capacity to handle complex legal contracts for largescale infrastructure projects. He empha-

stan's legal and institutional frameworks to eliminate ambiguities and ensure effective implementation of CPEC initia-

Dr. Sikander Ahmed Shah, Associate

Chinese Legal Studies at LUMS, highlighted the need to build mutual trust and understanding between Pakistan and China. He noted that their partnership extends beyond infrastructure projects, symbolizing friendship and shared objectives.

Mr. Khalid Taimoor Akram, Executive Director Pakistan Research Centre for A Community with Shared Future, pointed out that Pakistan's strategic location makes it a vital transit route for China and landlocked Central Asian states, however, he noted, the absence of a comprehensive legal framework to govern these projects effectively.

Other notable contributions included Dr. Tariq Mahmood, Barrister and Arbitrator,. Ms. Riffat Inam Butt, Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Aziz Qazi, Advocate Supreme Court and Vice Chairman of the Islamabad Bar Council, Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed Mirza, Chief Prosecutor and Head of Legal Affairs at the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Mr. Ashfaq Ahmad Khan, Deputy Inspector General of Police and Commandant of Police College Sihala (PCS).

The event brought together judges, policymakers, legal scholars, media professionals, and industry leaders to discuss the strategic direction of CPEC

### Kashmir Rang

kistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

investor-friendly.

ISLAMABAD: Students wearing Kashmiri traditional dress as performing tableau during a ceremony title "Kashmir K Rang" at IMCG F8-1, in the Federal Capital.

JEINNEL INEIZEES

# CDA pushes for Eco-friendly public transport in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) is intensifying efforts to establish an environmentally sustainable public transport system in Islamabad.

In a meeting chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday, progress on the operations of electric and feeder buses was reviewed.

Senior officials, including members from the Planning, Technology, and Finance departments, participated in the session.

During the meeting, it was revealed that 160 electric buses have been allocated to feeder routes, designed to integrate seamlessly with the city's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network.

The project also includes the establishment of 216 bus stops and four strategically located depots, supported by robust charging infrastructure.

Four feeder routes, operational since July this year, have already witnessed a notable increase in daily ridership.

IGP Islamabad to resolve public grievances on priority

### 腾 City Desk

Istahkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited the residence of senior party leader and former Provincial Minister Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Chohan in Islamabad. Abdul Aleem Khan expressed his heartfelt sympathies and condolences to him on the death of his father. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan offered Fateha for the deceased and prayed that may Allah Almighty grant him a place in His Mercy and grant Fayyazul-Hassan Chohan and the grieving family to bear this lose with courage and strenght. Istahkam-e-Pakistan Party Punjab President Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan was also accompanied with him on this occasion



dent Usman Shaukat along with Executive Committee members, visited the Azerbaijan Embassy in Islamabad to express heartfelt condolences over the tragic crash of an Azerbaijani airliner near Aktau, Kazakhstan, which claimed numerous lives.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

### RCCI delegation led by Usman Shaukat visits Azerbaijan Embassy to offer condolences

### 腾 City Desk

During his meeting with Azerbaijan's Ambassador,

Khazar Farhadov, President Usman Shaukat conveyed deep sorrow on behalf of RCCI and prayed for eternal peace for the departed souls. He also extended prayers for strength and patience for the bereaved families and wished a swift recovery for the injured.

The RCCI stands in solidarity with the people of Azerbaijan during this moment of profound grief and loss.

### 腾 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, reaffirmed his commitment to addressing public grievances during a Khuli Katchery (open court) held at the Central Police Office, on Saturday.



A public relation officer told to media that during the khuli katchery, IG listened the issues of citizens and police officers and issued directives to senior police officers on the spot for timely resolution of their concerns.

IG Rizvi said that resolving citizens' issues on merit is our top priority. Negligence and carelessness in duties will not be tolerated. Citizens facing any issue related to the police can come to the Khuli Katchery. My office is always open for my citizens, he said.

Rizvi further directed the officers to resolve the citizen grievances on merit within the stipulated time frame and report back to the Central Police Office. He directed all SDPOs and SHOs to adhere to the designated office hours and prioritize resolving citizens' issues

On this occasion, the IG Rizvi said that the Islamabad Police are taking various measures for the facilitation of citizens. The daily holding of Khuli Katchery helps in resolving issues on a priority basis, he added.

Moreover, all zonal officers and SHOs are directed to meet citizens during the designated office hours and resolve their issues promptly and on merit.

### Practical steps must be taken to increase trade volume between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, Envoy

### 腾 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan's Ambassa-\$400 million. Both countries need to networks. take practical steps to further increase this trade volume.

conversation with the Secretary General UBG, Zafar Bakhtawari, Member Ahsan Bakhtawari, and Chairman of Ba-Waqar Pakistan, Waqar Bakhtawari, who visited the embassy.

Ambassador stated that there is a Karachi and Islamabad to Tashkent will commence soon.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan share deep

the two countries.

It was stated that Uzbekistan has dor to Pakistan, Alisher Taqtayev, has already begun efforts to import and stated that the trade volume between export its goods through Karachi Pakistan and Uzbekistan stands at and Gwadar via railways and road

It is expected that both nations will play a significant role in promoting He expressed these views during a regional connectivity. Zafar Bakhtawari suggested that Zahir-ud-Din Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, serves Central Core Committee UBG, as a historical and cultural link between the two countries. He remarked that without Babur and the Indian Subcontinent, the existence of Pakistan might not have been possible. He suggested direct air link between Lahore and that we should establish the tradition Tashkent, and direct flights from of celebrating "Babur Day" every year to highlight the remarkable personality of Babur.

Similarly, the day of Uzbek national historical and religious ties, and there poet Alisher Navoi should also be is a need for further initiatives to high- commemorated annually to further

light the cultural connections between strengthen the literary and cultural ties between the two nations.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized the promotion of tourism between the two countries, stating that infrastructure, air connectivity, railway systems, and road networks should be further improved to achieve this goal.

He also suggested that students from both countries should be offered admissions and scholarships in each other's universities, enabling the younger generation to better understand each other's nations. These initiatives, he added, will not only strengthen educational ties but also foster cultural and economic relations.

Wagar Bakhtawari proposed that joint initiatives should be launched to promote tourism between the two countries, providing opportunities for people from both nations to closely understand each other's culture. He emphasized that both countries must



# The Spokesman

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### **'Bond between Pakistan & Kashmir is** unbreakable'

ederal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam here Saturday said that the bond between Pakistan and Kashmir was unbreakable and Kashmiri people were the guardians of Pakistan's borders.

He proposed that essentials like electricity and flour should be provided free of cost for Kashmiri people.

He shed a light on the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people which played a pivotal role in safeguarding Pakistan's borders.

He lauded the ministry's efforts in showcasing the culture and beauty of Kashmir through this vibrant event and festival.

He praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's courageous stance on the Kashmir issue, describing it as a reflection of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the cause and desire for a just and peaceful resolution to the longstanding dispute.

The minister extended congratulations on behalf of himself and the Prime Minister for organizing a successful event, and appreciated the efforts of the Federal Secretary of Education and his team.

Engineer Amir Muqam expressed his pride in being part of an event held in the heart of Islamabad that celebrates Kashmiri culture and heritage, showcasing solidarity with Kashmiri brothers and sisters.

"The event provides an opportunity to experience the richness of Kashmiri culture, art, and history, which embodies a unique blend of Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic traditions," he pointed out.

He acknowledged the immense challenges faced by the Kashmiri people.

"Despite these adversities, the resilience and determination of the Kashmiri people are evident in their continuous efforts to preserve and promote their cultural heritage," he noted.

The minister lamented the decades-long Indian occupation of Kashmir, which has caused significant damage to the region's social, cultural, and economic fabric. He underscored that repeated strikes and shutdowns have severely impacted the region's economy, while the ongoing Indian terrorism and extremism have turned the lives of Kashmiris into a nightmare. Despite these challenges, he commended the Kashmiri people for keeping their traditions alive and preserving their cultural identity. He recalled that the Kashmiri Muslims had ideologically aligned their future with Pakistan even before its creation, and Pakistan has never abandoned the Kashmiri people during difficult times.

# DG ISPR Says the Country is in Safe Hands

he DG ISPR began his latest to individuals and groups who participate press conference by highlighting the professional achievements that demonstrate the war readiness of the armed forces to counter any foreign

aggression. As evidence, he elaborated on various professional tasks undertaken by the armed forces to prepare them to face any adversity. These included the construction of dams, restoration of the Kachi Canal, rehabilitation of the Sibi-Harnai railway track, construction and opening of schools in Balochistan and the erstwhile FATA, the establishment of medical camps, border control along the Afghan-Pakistan trade corridor, and measures to counter electricity theft. He informed the audience that disproportionate funds have been invested in Balochistan to alleviate and improve the socio-economic well-being of its people, highlighting this as one of the armed forces' most significant professional achievements.

He also elaborated on other professional achievements, including the punishment meted out to the alleged 85 civilian perpetrators of the events of May 9 by military courts. He equated this to the swift justice delivered to civilians involved in violent agitation in the USA, UK, and France, while conveniently overlooking the fact that in the countries he cited, such punishments were handed down by civilian courts, not military courts.

The ISPR Chief also claimed the distinction of labeling various sections of Pakistani society with his preferred terms. He referred to the TTP Pakistanis as Khawarij, labeled social media activists, whether operating inside or outside Pakistan, as "digital terrorists," and described Pakistanis living along the border areas as "smugglers." Additionally, he branded those exercising their constitutional right to assembly and protest as "armed thugs." This time, he added yet another label to his repertoire-"political terrorists"-referring gag social media platforms in order to safe- the armed forces remained engaged with

in processions, sit-ins, or protests. Without explicitly naming PTI, he implied that this term exclusively applies to its members and supporters. While describing the armed forces'

approach to Afghan policy, he stated that the armed forces are engaged with the Afghan government at various levels, both bilaterally and through mutually friendly countries. He clearly conveyed that such engagements are undertaken at the direction of the Army Chief.

Analysis

Qamar Bashir

It can be easily anticipated that, in future press conferences, should this policy fail, its failure will be conveniently attributed to the civilian leadership, who, according to the armed forces' narrative, are often portraved as neither competent nor

capable of handling such sensitive matters. This strategy of shifting responsibility has been effectively employed by the armed forces in the past. A recent example is the policy of negotiating a settlement with the TTP, which was led by the former Army Chief and DG ISI. Not a single civilian was involved in the negotiations, the signing of agreements, or the facilitation of the TTP's settlement in certain regions of Pakistan. These actions were undertaken without any coherent or effective efforts to deradicalize TTP members or ensure their integration into society as responsible citizens. However, now that this policy has failed, its failure has conveniently been attributed to the former civilian government.

The DG ISPR reiterated the commitment of the armed forces to the defense of the country. In this regard, he identified social media activists as the biggest enemies of the state and elaborated on a comprehensive offensive set in place to counter this threat. He stated that millions of dollars have been invested to

guard the country from the onslaught of political parties both overtly and covertly, 'digital terrorists," who are incidentally Pakistanis, both within the country and from the overseas Pakistani community. He also accused human rights organizations, civil rights movements, and international human rights watchdogs of fictitiously highlighting human rights abuses by fabricating and disseminating fake videos on social media. He advised these organizations to focus instead on human rights abuses in Gaza and Indian-Occu-

pied Kashmir. The DG ISPR also rightly identified governance issues as the root cause of the societal, economic, and law and order challenges facing the country. However, he conveniently stated that these were the responsibility of the civilian

leadership and bureaucracy. Conversely, during his press conference, he did not hesitate to convey the perception that the armed forces are in control of every facet of national life without exception. He touched upon governance issues, political matters, foreign policy, domestic politics, the justice system, development projects, border control regimes, developments in Balochistan, Afghan policy, and relations with India. In fact, the DG ISPR made it clear during his press conference that the armed forces are fully in control of the entire governance system, while conveniently shifting the blame for the root causes of the country's myriad issues onto the civilian government.

While replying to a question, the DG ISPR stated that the armed forces have no favorite or unfavorite political party, seemingly unaware that his entire press conference targeted one political party and its leaders, labeling them as "political terrorists." While professing the armed forces' neutrality, he also mentioned that

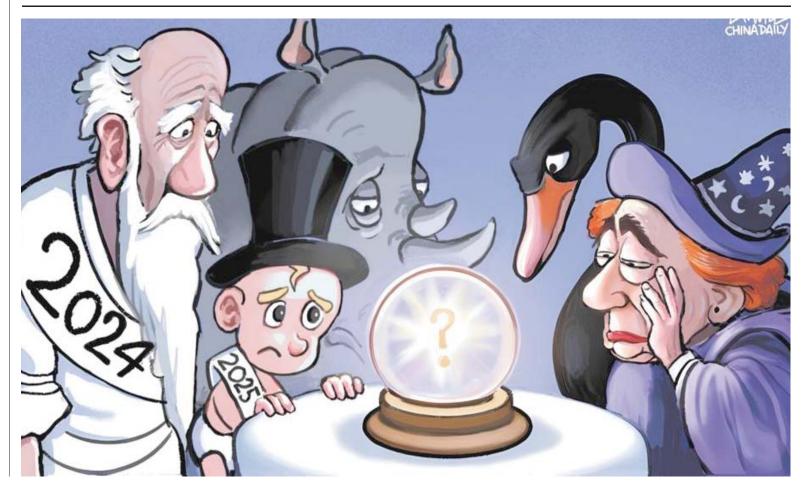
which he claimed was irrefutable evidence of their neutrality.

Sunday, December 29, 2024

The DG ISPR repeatedly used a standard narrative in his comments. He claimed that the armed forces, with the help of the people of Pakistan, defeated the D-Chowk protesters who allegedly carried firearms, tear gas shells, and nail-studded batons, and referred to them as "political terrorists" who had killed Rangers personnel. However, he conveniently omitted any mention of civilians allegedly killed by the Rangers' direct fire. He further stated that the armed forces would defeat the political party marked with a "red cross" with the help of the people of Pakistan. Similarly, he asserted that the armed forces would defeat digital terrorists and smugglers with the support of the people of Pakistan. Yet, he failed to provide any reason, logic, or evidence to substantiate the claim that the people of Pakistan support the armed forces in their actions against these various "terrorists," all of whom happen to be Pakistani citizens.

Following the heavily attended press conference, the entire Pakistani nation has been assured that it is in the safe and capable hands of Pakistan's armed forces. The message conveyed was that no harm could come to the nation under their protection. While traditionally the armed forces were the defenders of the country's borders, during Zia's era, they additionally assumed the role of defending the country's ideological frontiers. Now, they have taken on the additional title of defending the nation's social media space. Practically, they have become the defenders of every aspect of national life without exception. The nation is thus reassured, feeling safe, sound, and protected under the firm and patriotic grip of the armed forces.

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# **Editorial/Opinion**

"Pakistan and Kashmir are inseparable," he remarked.

# **Criminal Networks** Exploit Fake Documents for Global Visa Fraud

visa applications to European countries, Australia, Japan, New Zealand,

According to the investigation, individuals from countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan-where obtaining a visa is often a difficult task—are turning to Malaysia to procure fake visas for these destinations.

The scheme involves unregistered consultancy

agencies and rogue agents who operate from for individuals seeking a better life, but it their rooms, offering visa consultancy services for a fee ranging from 3,000 to 15,000 Malaysian Ringgit. These agents prepare visa applications with fake bank statements, hotel bookings, forged details, and sometimes even fake work permits, which are then submitted to embassies.

These embassies primarily focus on assessing security risks to determine whether an applicant poses a threat to the host country or is genuinely traveling for tourism. involved in criminal activities. However, there is a glaring oversight in veri-

bookings with official sources.

Many of these documents are, in fact, and the United States are being facil- fabricated. Once successful, these individuals itated through fake documents in Malaysia. use their visas to enter the target countries

and continue their fraudulent practices.

They then share these shortcuts with friends and family members, helping others bypass legal immi- them to 50,000. gration channels and reach countries where obtaining a visa is typically challenging. This illegal network

not only facilitates entry also opens the door for criminals involved in serious offenses in their home countries. These individuals often know that by applying for political asylum, they might eventually acquire citizenship.

The prevalence of this issue has made it easier for organized crime to penetrate European nations, Japan, the U.S., Australia, and through such fraudulent means are often

It is critical that the embassies in Malaysia,

n a startling investigative report, it fying the authenticity of documents like work representing European countries, the U.S., has been revealed that fraudulent visas, bank statements, insurance, and hotel the UK, and Japan etc, take immediate action.

They must verify the authenticity of visa applicants' work visa permits, bank statements, company letter, travel insurance, and hotel bookings with official sources to ensure that the documents submitted are genuine and not tampered with. In many cases, visa applicants present bank account balances as low as 5,000 Ringgit but artificially inflate

Yet, these embassies fail to carry out basic checks. To combat this, it is essential that these embassies include clear disclaimers on their websites and visa application forms, warning that providing fake documents or information will result in legal action. Offenders should be handed over to the police or immigration authorities, and the media should be notified through press releases to discourage individuals from resorting to fraudulent methods.

It is high time that strict action be taken to curb this growing problem, and prevent the exploitation of the visa system that continues the UK, etc. The majority of those entering to compromise the security and integrity of these nations.

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# A Fool's Dream

a broken sidewalk by the road, shivering. His face looked tired, and his eyes were wrapped his old blanket tighter around himself and stared at the dim light of a streetlamp, lost in his thoughts.

This was his everyday life: hunger, worry, and exhaustion. He looked around at the smoke, noise, and people sitting helplessly on the street. He stood up, his eyes staring blankly into the distance,

as if he was searching for something. He kicked a small stone and mumbled, "Is this what life is? Just this?" Slowly, he sat down on an old bench, his only escape from the harsh reality.

As he sat, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Suddenly, he felt fresh air around him. He opened his eyes, and everything had changed. The fog and smoke

washed the whole city. He looked at his rough, cracked hands, and they seemed soft and smooth now.

Iqra Lali

He stood up, surprised, and looked around. Across the street, a small café with clean tables stood. For a moment, he thought, "If only I could sit there and have a cup of tea." The café owner smiled at him and said, "Baba ji, would you like park that had been green and lively was now some tea?

The man asked in surprise, "Me?"

"Yes, you!" the owner said with a smile. The smell of the tea made him feel calm. When he took the first sip, it felt as though life was imagine light in a dark world, but when the dream coming back to him. He looked around and saw ended, reality swept it away.

t was a cold night in Lahore. The sky was the streets were clean and quiet, with no honking covered in fog and smoke. A man sat on cars. People walked peacefully on the sidewalks. In the distance, he saw a hospital. There were no long lines outside, no cries of pain. The doctors heavy with sleep but showed no peace. He seemed to be doing their work properly. A feeling of peace filled him.

> After finishing his tea, he decided to walk. As he walked, he noticed something strange, there were no children begging or working. "Is this real? Or am I dreaming?" he thought.

> He passed by a park where people of all ages were smiling. The park was full of greenery, chil-

dren were laughing on swings, women were walking freely, and everyone seemed happy.

He walked until he got tired and sat down again. He looked up at the sky and saw the moon shining so clearly that it gave him hope. He whispered to himself, "Maybe my life can change too. Maybe the world is getting better." But that hope didn't last long.

were gone. The air was clean, as if someone had Suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned and saw a policeman standing there. "What are you doing here? Get up!"

Panicked, he looked around. The smoke was back. The streets were noisy again, with cars honking and people shouting. The children were begging and working on the sidewalks. Outside the hospital, people were groaning in pain. The empty and dead.

He realized it was all just a dream, a brief vision of a better world. "A fool's dream".

It was the dream of someone brave enough to

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Sunday, December 29, 2024

International

# Rapidly growing environmental degradation manageable through climate-resilient

### 腾 City Desk

LAHORE: The experts on Friday at policy dialogue underscored the need to align climate-resilient Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) interventions with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a pathway to achieving sustainable development and economic prosperity to join the League of upper-middle-income countries by 2030.

This national commitment highlights the importance of aligning policy frameworks, investments, and initiatives with the SDGs to drive progress across all sectors, including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), asserted the policy experts at the dialogue organised by WaterAid in collaboration with the Sustainable Devel- ment Goals (SDGs). opment Policy Institute (SDPI), that also marked the launch of a Change and WASH, Wate-



Sustainable Development Goals". The event brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners from the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector to deliberate on actionable strategies for enhancing climate resilience in WASH systems and achieving Sustainable Develop-

Senior advisor, Climate policy brief "Climate-Resilient rAid Dr Shakeel Hayat ad WASH: A Pathway to Achieving underscored the importance of Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

access to WASH for health and sustainable development, especially in regions vulnerable to climate change, pandemics, and conflicts. "Millions of people lack access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, leading to significant health and economic

challenges," stated Dr. Hayat. The Lead author of the Policy Brief, Mr Muhammad Awais Umar, highlighted the importance of Climate Resilient Water,



systems in Pakistan, emphasizing their role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health, education, gender equality, and climate action.

The provincial manager of

Muhammad Sufyan concluded by emphasising, "The pathway to achieving sustainable development lies in integrating climate resilience into WASH systems.

WaterAid for Punjab and KP, Mr. Struggle for Empowerment said safe drinking water has become a class question in the country, whereas depleting groundwater and pollution was increasing that forced women to travel to every student was bound to

The Spokesman 5

drinking water.

Ms. Khalid pointed out absence of local governance in Punjab as another problem that was growing into a crisis as water shortage and overflowing drains in impoverished areas was a serious issue limiting mobility of household women and working women due to lack of local government departments responsible to manage the issues. Shahnawaz Khan from

Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) said local government was responsible for ensuring WASH facilities but the province of Punjab lacked any local government for past many years.

Dr Uzma Ashiq Incharge Gender and Development Studies Department, Lahore College Women University said the varsity had started various activities with Water Aid and Bushra Khalid from Women in far-flung areas for accessing clean implement community work.

## Israel exploits international failure to complete the genocide and displacement of our people: Palestine

### 🐞 News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Israeli occupation state is exploiting the failure of the UN Security Council to assume its legal responsibilities and is continuing to abuse our people in the Gaza Strip, racing against time to turn it into a scorched, uninhabitable land, by escalating its massacres, displacing its residents, destroying its hospitals, and mass bombing of citizens' homes, especially in the northern Gaza Strip.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates expresses its strong condemnation of the international community's coexistence with scenes



of public collusion with this massive

people, which have reached the point law without supervision or accountability, and stresses that the institutions of genocide and displacement of our amount of violations of international of international legitimacy lose their

credibility and their legitimacy erodes the longer the genocide continues, and as long as the UN Security Council is unable to stop it, and its inability to listen to the calls of the relevant international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the World Food Program, and UNRWA.

The Ministry calls on the UN Security Council to implement its Resolution 2735, which stipulates a ceasefire, the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip, the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, enabling the State of Palestine to assume its full responsibilities in the Gaza Strip as well as in the West Bank, and stopping Israeli attacks in the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem.

### Memories of December

Entering December, the mass media of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea release many articles and programmes on reminding the Korean people of Chairman Kim Jong Il (1942-2011).

Whenever December comes round every year, the Korean people miss him with growing yearning, because he passed away in this month after dedicating all his life to their happiness

He was more like a father than a state leader to the Korean people. He usually mixed with them to acquaint himself with their living conditions and mental agony and made sure that state policies were formulated to reflect their demands and aspirations.

The following story vividly describes how the Korean people held him in high esteem as their father.

Once he toured a farm in the northern part of the country. During his visit he dropped in at a newly-wed couple of farmers. The wife, as if she would do to her own father, asked him in whispers to name her baby which was due to be born.

He named it not blaming her on her impolite request. This story showing the kindred relations between the leader and his people is still widely told among the Korean people.



When he visited a shop, he expressed satisfaction over the fact that the shelves were filled with goods, saying that the people would like it. When officials made a slight mistake, he criticized them, asking them what the people would say out it. When he was on a train journey for field guidance in the middle of night,

# **Appellations Replete with Admiration**

Kim Jong Il (1942-2011), of the Nationa 19irman

the world. They called him a "seasoned

that a distinguished general is trained under a distinguished

Defence Commission of the DPRK, enjoyed many appellations as well as boundless respect and admiration from the Korean people and the world people for his noble virtues and unassuming character, and the great exploits he achieved for the socialist cause and the cause of global independence.

### **Appellations from the Locals**

Chairman Kim Jong Il was awarded such endearing and respected appellations by the Korean people as "dear leader", "our General", "fatherly General", "father of the people", "architect of happiness" and "peerless patriot".

These appellations epitomize their boundless reverence for Kim Jong Il.

He regarded it as his firm work, but he got on the train to



spect, it can be seen that his doctors, that I cannot do what joy, happiness and worth of life were all linked with the road for serving the people. In December 2011, the

last period of his life, medical him in high esteem with workers tried to dissuade him endearing appellations and from going on an inspection trip as they worried about his Appellations from the World serious illness caused by hard **People** 

faith and worth of life to serve set out again on the trip for the received numerous appellathe people all his life. In retro-people, saying, "I'm so sorry, tions from many people across

you asked me to do. Please do what I tell you to do." And he passed away on that train.

The Korean people held still remember him.

Chairman Kim Jong Il

olence", "great saint attracting

and outstanding statesman", "great ideologist", "outstanding political veteran", "defender of justice", "guardian of peace for mankind", "world's most preeminent military strategist", "immensely dear leader", "incarnation of affection", "great saint of the times", "master of diplomatic strategy", "leader of great versatility", "kind-hearted and humble man", "incarnation of benev-

all the people", etc. In April 1965 Premier Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) visited Indonesia.

At that time Indonesian President Sukarno, seeing Chairman Kim Jong Il devoting great efforts for ensuring health and safety of Kim Il Sung while accompanying him, said as follows: "In my country a saying goes

general. As Premier Kim Il Sung is a world-famous man, his 'young commander' must surely also be a great man." When asked about his

impression after meeting Chairman Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in July 2000, Russian President Putin said that Kim Jong Il was a modern man who is well aware of the world situation and analyses and appraises it objectively and accurately.

In her report submitted to the US President after her visit to the DPRK in October 2000, then US Secretary of State Albright wrote: All in all, I admit that Kim Jong Il is a leader of great versatility who has well-knit theories on political, economic, cultural, military, diplomatic and all other subjects and firm faith, and is broad-minded and scrupulous.

he asked accompanying officials not to blow a whistle lest it should disturb the sleep of the locals nearby.

During his long-standing leadership over the Workers' Party of Korea he built it into a motherly party which serves the people.

Towards the close of the last century the socialist system of the world was thrown into a political turmoil. In its wake the hostile forces made undisguised attempts to isolate and suffocate the DPRK, which resulted in worsening its economic situation. In spite of all these challenges Kim Jong Il made sure that the WPK pursued people-oriented policies as ever and that all Party officials worked devotedly for the people, regarding it as their duty. He never overlooked any slight violation of the people's interests.

The Korean people show admiration for him also because he developed the country into a military power.

In the years when the schemes of the hostile forces to stifle the country reached extremes, he built his country into a military power with strong war deterrent by dint of his matchless courage. Stability and environment for peaceful development have been maintained and provided in the Korean peninsula and the DPRK has entered the front rank of the world military powers. The Korean people believe that strong foundations for all this were laid thanks to his painstaking efforts.

# Harnessing Shared Potential: Pakistan and Tajikistan's Path to Prosperity

### 😂 🛛 Ramzan Mughal

and exemplifies the spirit of mutual respect and partnership, rooted in shared history, culture, and strategic goals. As Tajikistan celebrates over three decades of independence, Pakistan remains one of its earliest supporters, having recognized its sovereignty in 1991. Today, both nations are embarking on a promising path of enhanced cooperation across multiple sectors, heralding a new chapter in bilateral relations.

Recent high-level engagements between the two countries reflect a commitment to strengthening ties. The seventh session of the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission in Islamabad marked significant milestones, including the signing multi-modal transport networks of two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). The first MoU established a partnership between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

and Tajikistan's Khatlon prov-stands as a beacon of regional ince, fostering regional develhe relationship opment and collaboration. between Pakistan The second MoU, aimed at Tajikistan promoting sports, promises to enhance people-to-people connections through the collaboration of the two countries' football federations.

These achievements are a testament to the proactive efforts of both governments to explore new avenues for cooperation. Notably, the Joint Commission's emphasis on trade, energy, agriculture, education, and industry has laid the groundwork for tangible progress in these areas.

As Pakistani officials highlighted during the meetings, Pakistan's strategic location offers Tajikistan unparalleled access to global markets through trade corridors such as the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program and connecting Gwadar and Karachi. The Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000)

cooperation. The \$1.2 billion initiative aims to channel surplus electricity from Central Asia, particularly Tajikistan, to energy-deficient South Asia, including Pakistan. Both sides reiterated their commitment to expediting this vital project, which promises to transform the region's energy landscape. By addressing technical and logistical hurdles, the timely completion of CASA-1000 can serve as a cornerstone of Pakistan-Tajikistan energy collaboration, ensuring mutual benefits and

sustainable development. Tajikistan's investments in renewable energy, particularly hydropower projects like the Roghun Hydro Power Plant, also signal the potential for future cooperation in green energy. Pakistan, grappling with its own energy challenges, stands to gain significantly from these initiatives, creating a win-win scenario for both nations.

Bilateral trade between Pakistan and Tajikistan has witnessed

a commendable increase. The establishment of a Joint Coordination Committee on Transit Trade is a promising step toward addressing operational challenges and ensuring smoother trade flows. By leveraging their proximity through the Wakhan Corridor, both nations can unlock untapped potential, creating robust economic linkages that benefit businesses and communities alike.

The upcoming Pakistan-Tajikistan Business-to-Business (B2B) Forum further underscores the commitment to economic collaboration. By facilitating direct interactions between entrepreneurs and investors from both countries, this forum will pave the way for innovative partnerships and ventures.

Beyond trade and energy, Pakistan and Tajikistan are fostering cooperation in education, agriculture, and cultural exchanges. These efforts are critical for strengthening peopleto-people ties, which form the

foundation of enduring bilateral relationships. The cultural and historical commonalities shared by the two nations present unique opportunities for collaboration in areas such as tourism and heritage preservation.

Sports diplomacy, as highlighted by the football federation partnership, is another innovative avenue for engagement. Such initiatives not only promote camaraderie but also inspire the youth of both nations to connect through shared passions.

In a world marked by shifting geopolitical dynamics, Pakistan and Tajikistan's growing partnership sends a powerful message about the importance of regional cooperation. Both nations recognize that their future prosperity is intertwined with regional stability and connectivity. By working together to overcome challenges-whether in the energy sector, trade, or transitthey can set an example for other countries in the region.

As global tensions and



the collaborative spirit between Pakistan and Tajikistan is a beacon of hope. By reinforcing trust, promoting dialogue, and pursuing shared goals, both nations can contribute to the broader vision of a more interconnected and prosperous Central and South Asia.

The journey of Pakistan and Tajikistan toward deeper cooperation is one of shared aspirations and mutual benefits. The leaders and people of both forward to the many milestones nations deserve recognition for vet to come.

economic uncertainties persist, their unwavering commitment to this partnership. As new opportunities emerge, continued efforts to enhance collaboration will undoubtedly pave the way for a brighter future.

The bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Tajikistan is not just a model of cooperation; it is a celebration of the possibilities that arise when two nations come together with a shared vision. Let us celebrate the achievements so far and look

# Economy/Commerce

### **Bull & Bears** PSX 100-Share **Index Fluctuation**

Pakistan: PSX 1	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: FTS	SE 100 Index			
Index Value	Change			
8,149.78	+12.79			
Percentage	Time			
+0.16%	27 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT			
USA: Dow Jones	ndustrial Average			
Index Value	Change			
	-396.59			
42,929.21	-396.59			
42,929.21 <b>Percentage</b>	-396.59 Time			
Percentage -0.92%	<b>Time</b> 27 Dec, 11:48 am			
Percentage -0.92%	<b>Time</b> 27 Dec, 11:48 am GMT-5			
Percentage –0.92% Asia Pacific: Nikk	Time 27 Dec, 11:48 am GMT-5 cei Stocks Average			
Percentage –0.92% Asia Pacific: Nikk Index Value	Time 27 Dec, 11:48 am GMT-5 cei Stocks Average Change			
Percentage -0.92% Asia Pacific: Nikk Index Value 40,281.16	Time 27 Dec, 11:48 am GMT-5 cei Stocks Average Change +713.10			
Percentage -0.92% Asia Pacific: Nikk Index Value 40,281.16 Percentage +1.80%	Time   27 Dec, 11:48 am   GMT-5   cei Stocks Average   Change   +713.10   Time   27 Dec, 3:45 pm			

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	
NewZealand \$	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	
	0.40 50	050	

# **Pakistan launches ambitious Carbon** Market Policy to combat climate change

### 腾 N A Khan

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking move to combat climate change, the Federal Cabinet has approved Pakistan's first-ever Carbon Market Policy.

The Spokesman

The policy, spearheaded by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, is a bold step toward achieving the country's climate and development goals while aligning with global efforts under the Paris Agreement.

The Carbon Market Policy provides a comprehensive framework to operationalize carbon markets in Pakistan, creating opportunities for emissions reductions across sectors such as energy, agriculture, waste management, and forestry.

According to Climate Ministry Spokesperson, the initiative aims to attract both domestic and international investments while ensuring social equity and environmental integrity.

The Ministry highlighted that the policy is rooted in three pillars: environmental integrity, economic development, and equitable benefit sharing.

These priorities ensure that projects under the carbon market generate real, verifiable emission reductions and deliver economic and fees. social benefits for communities.



and efficient to attract investors, with minimal

The approval process has been made simple allocate 12% of net revenues to provincial and generated will be adjusted toward Pakistan's A Corresponding Adjustment Fee (CAF) will voluntary climate commitments.

The policy is supported by international organizations such as USAID, World Bank, UNEP, and GIZ, which are aiding Pakistan in building carbon market regulations, a carbon registry, and a pipeline of projects. These partnerships are expected to mobilize significant capital and expertise to turn the policy into impactful actions for climate resilience.

Federal officials emphasized that the policy will channel investments into sectors with high emissions reduction potential, foster the deployment of clean technologies, and contribute to achieving Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

With this policy, Pakistan has extended an invitation to global carbon market players to  $collaborate \, in \, developing \, projects \, that \, support$ national development, uplift local communities, and contribute to a sustainable low-carbon economy.

"This policy marks a decisive step forward for Pakistan's climate ambition. It's a call to action for both domestic and global partners to join hands in creating a resilient, low-carbon future for Pakistan," stated the ministry spokesperson.

As one of the most climate-vulnerable nations, Pakistan's proactive approach through national climate funds, while only 5% of credits its Carbon Market Policy could set a benchmark for other developing nations striving for sustainable growth and climate action.

### Anniversary

ISLAMABAD: The birthday of Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad was celebrated at FPCCI Capital Office. On this occasion, President FPCCI and other staff cut the cake.



# **K-Electric files** plea in NEPRA for Rs5 per unit cut in power tariff



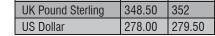
### 😂 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: There is a likelihood of the consumers of Karachi getting relief

in their electricity bills as Karachi Electric (K-Electric) on Saturday filed a petition in the National Electric the K-Electric's petition on Power Regulatory Authority January 15, 2025.

#### (NEPRA) for Rs5 per unit cut in the electricity prices under the monthly fuel price adjustment.

If approved, the consumers of the port city will get a relief of over Rs7 billion. The NEPRA will hear



### China launches investigation into beefimports

😂 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: China's commerce ministry on Friday launched an investigation into imported beef at the request of representatives from its struggling domestic industry, it said.

The local price of beef in China has trended downwards in recent years, with analysts blaming oversupply and a lack of demand as the world's second largest economy has slowed.

At the same time imports have surged, with China representing a hugely important market for countries like Brazil, Argentina and Australia.

The application for an investigation from domestic associations said that a sharp increase in beef imports in recent years "has had a significant adverse impact on the domestic industry", the commerce ministry said in a statement

Beef imports in 2023 were 65 percent higher than in 2019, it quoted the producers as saying.



The investigation takes effect from Friday and should take eight months, but "may be extended appropriately under special circumstances", the announcement said.

Normal trade will not be affected during the investigation period.

Brazil, the world's biggest beef exporter, said it "will seek to demonstrate that Brazilian beef exported to China does not cause any type of harm to the Chinese industry, and is, on the contrary, an important factor in complementing local Chinese production."

Its foreign ministry noted that, "in principle, no preliminary measures will be adopted, and the 12 percent 'ad valorem' tariff that China applies to beef imports will remain in force.'

Brazil's statement said that China, its main trading partner, this year received more than one million tonnes of Brazilian beef, a 12.7 percent increase over last year.

It added that it was committed to defending Brazil's agribusiness sector and was "always seeking constructive dialogue in search of mutually beneficial solutions" with China.

# Record Rs39 per unit hike in power tariff in 2024 bamboozles consumers

### b Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: While 2024 proved to be a good year for people as prices of items of daily use came down, a record increase in electricity prices during the same year not only hit the industrial sector hard but also forced domestic consumers to install solar plates so that they did not have to pay inflated electricity bills.

The tariff for the consumers of stateowned power distribution companies (DISCOs) went up by Rs39 per unit in just one year, while there was a hike by Rs26.11 per unit in the tariff for the consumers of Karachi Electric (K-Electric).

The consumers were given electric shocks under the heads of monthly and guarterly fuel price adjustments as well as line losses and capacity payments.

Hence, an additional burden of millions of rupees was put on them.

According to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA),

under the head of a monthly fuel adjustment, thus putting an additional burden of Bs32.68 per unit on consumers while these were reduced only four times under the same head during the year under review.



The NEPRA has said that similarly, the power tariff was increased four times under the head of quarterly fuel adjustment during the year, 2024; hence putting an additional burden of Rs6.57 per unit on the people.

The Authority goes on to inform that while on the one hand, a record hike in

electricity prices were increased eight times electricity prices gave sleepless nights to the people, on the other hand, the government was also forced to revisit its energy policy.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formed a Taskforce so that the power production cost could be brought down.

The Force held negotiations with the independent power producers (IPPs) so that the burden on the government as well on the people could be reduced.

So far, agreements with five IPPs have been terminated while negotiations with 13 IPPs are in the final stages, the NEPRA has informed.

The Authority has also shed light on the performance of Discos, which it had termed 'disappointing'.

It has said that the poor performance of these DISCOs caused a loss of Rs596 billion to the national exchequer in just one year.

Moreover, the NEPRA has disclosed that 140 people lost their lives in the country during one year due to electrocution.

### K2 Airways commences domestic cargo services



腾 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A private

on both domestic and international routes. The cargo flight operations will carry 20 tons of goods from Karachi to Lahore and Islamabad.

During the first phase, flight operation was started domestically while during the second phase flight operation will be started for members of Gulf Coopera-Airways will use Boeing 737 tion Council (GCC) counaircraft for flight operations tries

## SBP issues new regulatory framework for exchange companies

### 😂 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan has issued a new regulatory framework for exchange companies, effective from January 1, 2025.

According to reports, under this framework, exchange companies are required to adjust their policies and systems in accordance with the new regulations by June 30, 2025.

The minimum paid-up capital for exchange companies has been increased to Rs. 1 billion. Full implementation of this paid-up capital requirement is expected by 2027. By December 2025, exchange companies must ensure their paid-up capital reaches Rs. 600 million, and by December 2026, it should be Rs. 800 million.

Furthermore, exchange companies are required to maintain 15 percent of their regulatory reserves as cash security with the State Bank. Exchange company shareholders and directors must seek State Bank approval before withdrawing company funds or taking loans.

State Bank has also mandated that exchange companies can only use financing for vehicle-related loans. Exchange companies must report their returns, regulatory reserves, and documents to the State Bank for framework compliance.

The new framework is designed to increase transparency within exchange companies and is aimed at strengthening investor confidence, according to the State Bank.

Earlier, the State Bank of Pakistan



launched a new version of the Electronic Credit Information Bureau (eCIB) system V2 in Karachi.

According to reports, the new eCIB system, will be operational from January 1, 2025. The newly introduced V2 aligns with technological advancements and reporting standards.

It introduces several updates and amendments to credit information

### reports. What is eCIB?

The Credit Information Bureau (CIB) of the State Bank of Pakistan, established in 1992 under Section 25(A) of the Banking Companies Ordinance-1962, plays a crucial role in credit risk management and promoting a sound credit culture within the financial system.

Initially, CIB's activities were focused on collecting and organizing data of borrowers with loans of Rs. 500,000 and above on a quarterly basis. However, the system evolved significantly with the introduction of eCIB online facilities in 2003, making CIB the first in the region to offer such services.

The revamped eCIB, operational since September 2005, now incor-

porates a wider scope by removing the minimum reporting threshold, capturing data from more than 4 million borrowers across about 100 member institutions.

This new system uses advanced technology, including high-capacity servers, security measures, and pointto-point encryption, improving efficiency, speed, and reliability. The enhancements enable financial institutions to make informed lending decisions, assess credit risks more accurately, and expand access to credit across diverse borrower categories like SMEs, agriculture, and consumer finance sectors.

The strengthened CIB contributes to the financial stability and promotes international standards in Pakistan's financial system.

#### airline of Pakistan, K2 Airways, on Saturday commenced its domestic cargo flight operation and the first cargo flight was operated between Karachi and Lahore. According to details, K2

### **Sports** Sunday, December 29, 2024

# The Spokesman

# South Africa lose quick wickets chasing 143 against Pakistan

### 😂 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: A nervy South Africa slumped to 27-3 when bad light brought play to an early close on a rain-delayed third day, still 121 runs shy of victory in the first test against Pakistan at Centurion and a place in next June's World Test Championship.

The home side are chasing a modest target of 148 after bowling out Pakistan for 237 and if they win will be assured a place in the WTC final at Lord's.

But Pakistan kept alive their own hopes of victory as they took three wickets in the opening nine overs of South Africa's second innings with Mohammad Abbas taking two wickets and Khurram Shahzad the other as Tony de Zorzi (2), Ryan Rickleton (0) and Tristan Stubbs (1) were all trapped leg before wicket.

Aiden Markram, who top scored for the hosts in the first innings, will resume on 22 not out, alongside skipper Temba Bavuma, when play resumes on Sunday.

South Africa had a 90-run lead over the tourists after the opening innings and although the contest ebbed and flowed through the day, will have felt they had worked their way into a winning position before they came out to bat.

### **Bright Start**

Marco Jansen finished with 6-52 to put the brakes on Pakistan's hopes of a bigger second innings tally after Saud Shakeel and Babar Azam made a bright start to the day's play, which was delayed until after lunch because of a passing rainstorm.

Shakeel top scored with 84, before



being undone by a full toss from Jansen, but his dismissal was unlucky in contrast to a raft of injudicious shots that saw his teammates get out.

Babar moved briskly from 16 not out overnight to 50 - his first in his last 20 test innings – but was then tempted into he could not resist attempting to pull a swinging at a short and wide delivery in short delivery from Dane Paterson and be at Newlands in Cape Town, starting Jansen's first over and caught by Corbin

Bosch on the boundary.

Mohammad Rizwan then gave away his wicket cheaply while Salman Ali Agha drove at only the third ball he faced and edged behind.

Aamer Jamal was dismissed for 18 as was caught by Rickelton.

Successive test wins over the West Indies, Bangladesh (2) and Sri Lanka (2) have left South Africa needing to win one of their two test series against Pakistan for a first-ever appearance in a WTC final.

The second test against Pakistan will next Friday

### Four more matches decided in Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament

### 腾 Sports Desk

KARACHI: Four more matches were decided in the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at various Grounds.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricant. **Scores in Brief:** 

Northern Gymkhana beat Quaidabad Gymkhana by 8 wickets at KCCA Stadium. Quaidabad Gymkhana 77 all out in 31.4 overs. M. Arif 24 Nadir Shah (sla) 5/24, M. Makki (md) 3/16. Northern Gymkhana 79/2 in 10.5 overs. Haider Abbas 34 not out. Saim Sohail 22.

In the 2nd Match Bilal Friends beat Millat Cricket Club by 122 runs at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. Bilal Friends 271/6 in 40 overs. Muhammad Asif 79 8x4 4x6, Shahza Khan 44, Zohaib Abid 42, Shoaib Khan 40, Daniyal Shinwari 23. Yaqoob Ali 2/13, Sultan Ali 2/44.

Millat CC 149 all out in 26 overs. Arafat Jamil 47, Salman Khan 27. Ali Butt (ob) 3/21, Ali Hassan (sla) 3/25.

In the 3rd Match Nazimabad Youngster beat Tariq Memorial CC by 31 runs at Abasi Gymkhana. Nazimabad Youngster 23/9 in 40 overs. Saad ullah 56 6x4 1x6, Asim ullah 48, Hassan Saif 36, S Qussain Hussain 27, Kashan Faheedm 23. Daniyal 4/32.

Tariq Memorial CC 205/8 in 30 overs. Adil Iqbal 51 6x4 1x4, Mufti Mehmood 46, Ahmed Malik 26 not out, Zeshan Afridi 20. Shayan Faheem 3/38. Adnan Abbasi 2/26, Samad Najmi 2/36.

In the fourth match Taiser Town Tiger beat Liaquatabad Eaglets by 5 wickets at Student Ground. Liaquatabad Eaglets 208/6 in 40 overs. Farman Ahmed 74 9x4, M. Talah 48, Taha Nehmood 32, Noman Aliv25. Saeed Hassan 2/25, Navaid Balouch 2/43.

Taiser Town Tiger 209/5 in 32.2 overs. Saeed Hassan 92 9x4 5x6, Salman Khan 28, Hikmatullah 27, Karim Khan 22. M. Latif 2/40.

### Rohit Sharma gets irritated with Ravindra Jadeja



### Sports Desk

MELBOURNE: Indian captain Rohit Sharma got frustrated with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja over the setting of fielding. He annoyingly said to Ravindra Jadeja that if the captain bowls

himself to take wickets (Out kaun karega phir, main? The conversation between Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja was caught on the stump mic at the Melbourne Cricket Ground

(MCG) and has since gone viral. The exchange took place towards the end of the first innings, when Australian tail-enders Nathan Lyon and Scott Boland were at the crease, adding 19 runs to their team's total.

In the video, Rohit can be heard telling Jadeja to set an aggressive field, saying 'Nahi jaayega yaar... udhar out hojayega. Itna lamba hai udhar yaar. Hume out karne mein dekhna hai usko yaar. Out kaun karega fir, main? Mereko daalna padhega!'

He said, "If no one takes the wickets, I'll have to take the ball myself!" He adds, "It won't go out, man ... the boundary is quite long on that side. We have to look to get him out. Who will get him out then, me? I'll have to bowl then!" Indian captain Rohit Sharma is currently facing significant challenges with his batting performance in Test cricket, and his recent struggles in the ongoing Boxing-Day Test series against Australia have intensified the scrutiny surrounding him. In the first innings of the Boxing Day Test, Rohit Sharma scored a mere three runs off five balls after choosing to open the batting order, but this decision did not yield the expected outcome, as he was dismissed by Australian captain Pat Cummins for yet another low score. Throughout this Australian tour, Rohit Sharma has encountered difficulties, accumulating only 22 runs across four innings, which translates to a disappointing average of 5.50. Over his last eight Test innings for India, he has managed a total of 155 runs at an average of 11.07, with just one half-century to his name.

# Ali Ilyas of the rider of SSGC set up new National Record in individual Pursuit cycling event

### 🐞 🛛 Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The second day of the 69th National Track Cycling Championship at the Cycling Velodrome in Lahore was filled with thrilling performances by cyclists representing various units across Pakistan. Organized by the Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) under the patronage of the International Cycling Union (UCI), the competition featured high-energy races and remarkable

displays of talent, speed, and endurance. The results of today's events are as



Gold Medal: Rajia, SSGC Silver Medal: Kishwar, Punjab Bronze Medal: Marina, Balochistan A historic moment of the day was achieved by Ali Ilyas, rider of SSGC, who set a new national record in the Individual Pursuit event. He completed 4000 meters in an impressive 4 minutes, 54.54 seconds, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's cycling history.

The medal distribution ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, including Qaiser Mahmood Bhatti, Secretary POF Wah Sports Board, Col. (R) Tahir Zaman Col. (R) Saad of SSGC, and Syed Azhar Ali Shah, President Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF). They presented medals to the winners and lauded the athletes for their outstanding performances. Day 2 concluded with excitement and anticipation for the final day of the championship tomorrow. The competition will feature the Keirin Race Finals, Team Pursuit Finals, and the Closing Ceremony, where the overall champions will be crowned.

follows: 1. Team Sprint (Men Elite, 1000 m-

Finals) Gold Medal: SSGC Silver Medal: KP Bronze Medal: Punjab 2. Team Sprint (Women Elite-Finals) Gold Medal: SSGC Silver Medal: Punjab Bronze Medal: Sindh 3. Individual Pursuit (Men Junior-Final)

Gold Medal: USAID Ullah, KP Silver Medal: Sohan, Punjab Bronze Medal: Abdul Wajid, Sindh 4. Individual Pursuit (Women Junior-Final)

Gold Medal: Savira Durrani, Balochistan

Silver Medal: Noor Fatima, Punjab 5. Individual Pursuit (Women Elite-Final)

Saim Ayub shortlisted for ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of Year award

#### 😂 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD/DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Saturday shortlisted young Pakistani batter Saim Ayub for the ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of the Year 2024 award.

2024 especially in the one day format, scoring 515 runs in nine matches with an average of 64.37. He has also smashed three centuries in the format, including two against South Africa, helping Pakistan white wash the Proteas in threematch series.

"In Ayub, Pakistan found a new flamboyant southpaw at the top of their batting order. While Ayub was a consistent feature across all three formats, many of his best performances in 2024 came in ODIs. As Pakistan won multiple away series in Australia, Zimbabwe and Saim Ayub has been exceptional in South Africa to prime themselves for the ICC Champions Trophy defence, Ayub went big as an opener," the ICC's statement read.

It added that Saim Ayub was also impressive in a low-scoring affair in Australia, that saw Pakistan edge past the hosts to clinch their first ODI series



triumph Down Under in 22 years.

"The 22-year-old also provided Pakistan a handy option with the ball, claiming five wickets and boasting an

with the ball, Ayub helped orchestrate one of the most impressive wins for Pakistan in the calendar year."

Kamindu Mendis of Sri Lanka, Shamar Joseph of West Indies and Gus Atkinson of England have also been shortlisted for for the ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of the Year 2024 award.

Meanwhile, the ICC also revealed the names of women cricketers for the ICC Emerging Women's Cricketer of the Year 2024 award. India's Shrevanka Patil, Saskia Horley of Scotland, Annerie economy rate of 4.63. Having claimed the Dercksen of South Africa and Freya all-important wicket of Aiden Markram Sargent of Ireland have been shortlisted.

## PSB increases prize money for medalists in Olympics, other Games

#### 😂 Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) announced a significant boost in prize money for medalists in the Olympics and other Games.

Gold medalists in the summer, winter, and Para-Olympic Games will now receive a whopping Rs10 million, while silver and bronze medalists will get Rs7.5 million and Rs5 million, respectively.

fication regarding this regard.

The prize money for other Games getting Rs5 million. international competitions has also been increased, with gold silver and bronze medalists medalists in the Asian Games would be awarded Rs5 million



The PSB has issued a noti- receiving Rs7.5 million, and and Rs3 million respectively. those in the Commonwealth In the Commonwealth Games, the silver and bronze For the Asian Games, the

medalists will get Rs3 million and Rs2 million respectively. Even the Special Olympics

World Games, Blind World also receive Rs1 million each. Games, and Deaf Olympics have seen a hike in prize money.

For the Special Olympics World Games, the prizes for gold, silver and bronze medalists would be Rs5lac, Rs3 lac and Rs2 lac respectively.

In the Blind Sports Games that are held every four years, the gold, silver and bronze medalists would get Rs2 million, Rs1 million and Rs5lac respectively. For medalists in the Deaf Olympics, the amount of cash prizes are same as in the Blind Sports Games.

But that's not all - gold medal winners in the National Games and Quaid-e-Azam Games will

And, as part of the Cash Award Policy, all medalists will get a Gold Card, granting them access to all PSB facilities and coaching centers, additionally, the athletes would be entitled to a 20-day free stay at the PSB and coaching center hostels.

The increase in prize money and other facilities was approved during the PSB meeting held on December 4, according to the PSB spokesperson.

Notably, this year Arshad Nadeem won the men's javelin title, Pakistan's first individual gold at an Olympics, with a Games record of 92.97m.

### Komal Khan to lead Pakistan in ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday revealed the squad for the upcoming ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025.

The Women's National Selection Committee named a 15-member squad that will partake in the 16-team tournament, scheduled in Malaysia from January 18 to February 2, 2025.

Wicketkeeper-batter Komal Khan will lead the side, while Zoofishan Ayyaz will be vice-captain of the team.

Pakistan team, which recently featured in six-team ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup in Malaysia will undergo a training camp at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre in Karachi from 31 December to 9 January.

The team will depart for Malaysia from Karachi via Dubai on 10 January.

According to the tournament's format, there are four groups, with each group consisting of four teams.

Pakistan are placed in Group B alongside England, Ireland and the USA. Pakistan will play their opening match on 18 January against the USA.

This will be followed by the encounter against England on 20 January, while Pakistan's last group match will be against Ireland on 22 January. All three Pakistan matches will be staged at the JCA Oval, Johor in Malaysia.

Following the conclusion of the Group Stage fixtures, three teams from each group will qualify for the Super Six. The bottomranked sides from Groups A and D, and B and C will contest in last place play-off on 24 January

The 12 teams, which will qualify for the Super Six stage will be divided into two groups. Group one will include the top three teams each from Group A and Group D while Group two will have top three teams each from Group B and Group C.

In the Super Six stage every team will carry forward their wins, points and Net Run-rate (NRR) which is secured against their fellow Super Six qualifying teams. Each team will play two games in the Super Six stage

The top two sides from the two super six stage groups will qualify for the semi-finals. The semi-finals are set to take place on January 31, while the final of the tournament will be played at Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur on 2 February.

### Pakistan squad for ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup

Komal Khan (c)(wk), Zoofishan Ayyaz (vc), Aleesa Mukhtiar, Areesha Ansari, Fatima Khan, Haniah Ahmer, Maham Anees, Mahnoor Zeb, Memoona Khalid, Minahil, Quratulain, Ravail Farhan, Shahar Bano, Tayyaba Imdad and Wasifa Hussain.





Sunday, December 29, 2024

### Inauguration

SUKKUR: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the inauguration ceremony of Dr Ziauddin Hospital Sukkur Campus, on Saturday.



# **President Zardari vows to** uphold Bhutto family's legacy of serving humanity, poor

### 腾 🛛 Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

SUKKUR: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday vowed to keep up the Bhutto family's legacy of public service, dedicated to improving the socio-economic well-being of the nation. He hailed the establishment of Dr Ziauddin Hospital Sukkur Campus, adding that it will provide the people of Sukkur.

the inauguration of Ziau- Hussain and the Ziauddin Hospital's campus in Hyderddin Hospital in Sukkur. Hospital management for Chief Minister Sindh Syed their efforts in establishing a

Asim Hussain, Sindh provincial ministers, MNAs, MPAs, hospital establishment, and

of life attended the event. President Zardari vows to uphold Bhutto family's legacy of serving humanity, poor

Speaking at the event, President Asif Ali Zardari hailed the inauguration of the

Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, Dr of highly skilled professionals. The President reflected

on his personal involvement in encouraging Ziauddin people from different walks Hospital to invest in Sukkur, highlighting the need for such initiatives to uplift healthcare standards in underserved areas. He said that the Government of Sindh would also bear the expenses for the establishment of a university at the quality healthcare services to state-of-the-art hospital as a Ziauddin Hospital Sukkur transformative moment for Campus. He stated that he had The President expressed Sukkur and its surrounding also donated his personal land these views while addressing areas. He praised Dr Asim for establishing Dr Ziauddin Ziauddin Network for setting

ning and Rs 15 billion would be spent annually in this regard. He said that the funds generated from the trading of carbon credits in the international market were being used for the lining of the Rohri Canal project.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah welcomed the establishment of Dr. Ziauddin Hospital in Sukkur, terming it a significant milestone in the province's healthcare landscape. He praised the Dr. up hospitals and educational institutions in Sindh and

The chief minister also announced that a separate road is being constructed to connect the Dr. Ziauddin Hospital to the Sukkur Airport, which will be completed soon. He noted that the hospital's establishment will further enhance the healthcare facilities available to the people of Sukkur, which already has several major hospitals.

Murad also appreciated Dr. Asim Hussain's announcement to establish world-class schools in Sindh, calling it a welcome move. He assured in this endeavor.

aries. He said that a lot of sacrifices were

rendered in operation Zarb-e-Azb and

operation Radd-ul-Fasaad and with the

grace of Allah Almighty, efforts to curb

terrorism yielded positive results. He

said that on May 9, protests were held

at military installations and an effort

was made to weaken Pakistan. He said

that the opposition was not stopped from speaking on the floor of National

Former federal minister Khawaja

Saad Rafique said dialogue should be

unconditional, adding that despite crit-

icism there should be seriousness in

Senior journalist and analyst Sohail

Warraich and others also spoke. All

speakers paid glowing tribute to the late

Assembly.

dialogue.

# No leniency for May 9 violence in PTI negotiations: Tarar

### 腾 🛚 Bureau Report

GUJRANWALA: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar categorically stated on Saturday that the events of May 9 are unpardonable and will not be compromised or forgiven due to ongoing negotiations with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

During a media interaction in Rahwali, Gujranwala, the minister stressed that overlooking PTI's anti-state activities would be tantamount to opening the gates of jails (and releasing the culprits). Letting PTI's anti-state activities go unpunished would render the country's jails meaningless. While acknowledging the seriousness of the crimes, the government is negotiating with PTI to prioritize national stability.

Criticizing PTI, he said the party was promoting an incomprehensible

convictions, often changing its stance with remarks like "Are we slaves?" He stressed the importance of adhering to the correct narrative and avoiding politicization of state affairs, particularly in matters of international relations. PTI often makes statements and then reverses its position.

Tarar stated that 85 PTI activities responsible for the violence on May 9 were convicted by military courts false narrative about military court following a thorough legal process.

Govt likely to increase petroleum prices by Rs4 on New Year night

### 😂 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government is likely to increase the petroleum prices by Rs4 on New Year night.

According to sources, the price of diesel is likely to be increased by Rs4 per litre. The price of petrol is likely to remain unchanged, the sources said.

Moreover, the price of kerosene oil is likely to be increased by Rs1 per litre.

The finance minister will announce the new prices on December 31 after consulting the prime minister.



The people are likely to welcome the Year 2025 with increase in petroleum prices.

Earlier, the government had kept the petrol prices unchanged, while the price of high-speed diesel (HSD) was reduced by Rs3.05 per litre.

### **Peace agreement** reached between parties in Kurram Grand Jirga

Minister Balochistan Mir edge technology and a team being lined from its begin- abad.

The President also high- expressed his desire to see the that the Sindh government Murad Ali Shah, Chief facility equipped with cutting- lighted that Rohri canal was network expand to Hyder- will provide full cooperation

# Dialogue only way to move forward in politics: Khawaja Asif

abad

#### 😂 🛛 Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, while paying tribute to the late Khawaja Muhammad Rafique, said on Saturday that he was brave and seasoned politician.

Speaking at the seminar held at 52nd death anniversary of Khawaja Muhammad Rafique at a local hotel, he said that dialogue was the only way to move forward in politics, adding that the PML-N had always supported dialogue process.

Khawaja Asif said, "If we look at past few years, it is PML-N which made efforts for dialogue." He said it was evident from



history that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf history. He said that in the past, there founder was not sincere with anyone. The had been differences between the PPP minister termed tenure of PTI govern- and the PML-N but Mian Nawaz Sharif Ayaz Sadiq said that security forces ment a black chapter in the country's and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto signed the were protectors of the country's bound-

charter of democracy very sincerely. National Assembly Speaker Sardar Khawaja Muhammad Rafique for his services in the field of politics.

## Privatization of 3 DISCOs likely to be completed by next year: Awais

### 😂 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Saturday expressed the hope that privatization of three power distribution companies (DISCOs) would be completed by end of next year.

Sharing the last 9 months performance of power sector under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at press conference here, the minister said the government was moving towards privatization and concession models and already appointed members of Board of Directors (BoDs) of DISCOs purely on merit. Circular debt costs were also being shifted from electricity bills to the national debt to reduce burden on the consumers, he added.



He said the average price of elec- unit from Rs 48.70 per unit owing tricity has decreased to Rs 44.04 per the reforms initiated in power sector he added.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

#### 😂 🛛 Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: A peace agreement has Jirga members, has now been successbeen finalised between the parties in the Grand Jirga aimed at restoring all points. Yesterday's session, held peace in Kurram District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As per the agreement, parties involved in the use of weapons in on various issues. Kurram would face fines.

and all parties would be required to deeming it a significant risk. surrender their weapons.

The Jirga had been ongoing for three weeks to address the district's security challenges.

The agreement signing, delayed due to incomplete attendance of fully concluded with consensus on at Kohat Fort under the leadership of Commissioner Kohat Muatasim Billah, involved extensive discussions

The administration has expressed Additionally, the 2008 Murree concerns over reopening roads while Agreement would be implemented, heavy weapons remain in the area,

In the meantime, helicopter services are ongoing to deliver essential supplies, including medicines, to Kurram District.

# **Telecom operator ordered to refund Rs2** billion to customers

### 腾 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has upheld the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority's (PTA) order for Pakistan's digital and telecommunication service provider ZONG to refund more than Rs 2 billion to customers.

Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb dismissed Zong's appeal against the PTA order, directing it to refund Rs2,028,038,584 (more than 2 billion, 28 million rupees) collected from customers on account of service/maintenance/cards/operational fee charges from 26.04.2019 to 12.07.2019.

The court observed in its decision "Cellular mobile operators, including the appellant, had been charging Rs10 from customers each time they purchased and used a prepaid card valuing Rs.100/- as assistance/maintenance / administrative service charges".

Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb said that the Supreme Court, in its order, expressed that the service charges could not have been validly and legally imposed on the amounts loaded by users of mobile phone devices."

IHC dismissed Zong's appeal against the PTA decision calling it not maintainable

According to the court order, PTA

directed Zong to provide complete details of service/maintenance charges recovered from 24.04.2019 onwards.

It was reported that Zong had charged and collected Rs2,028,038,584 from its customers between 26.04.2019 and 12.07.2019 on account of service/ maintenance/card / operational fee charges.

PTA directed Zong to refund the said amount to all its concerned subscribers in the form of a balance amount without any validity restriction.

Earlier, Pakistan's Telecom Operators Association expressed concerns over the heavy taxes slapped in budget 2024.

In a letter written to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, Salim Mandviwala, the Telecom Operators expressed concerns over the heavy taxes introduced in the budget.

The telecom sector has warned that foreign investment might withdraw from Pakistan if tax issues are not resolved. According to the telecom operators, unresolved tax issues could lead to legal complications for the government.

The letter highlights that two major market players have already decided to leave Pakistan. The telecom sector contributed PKR 340 billion in tax revenue last year, and has attracted direct investment of USD 15 billion to date, the letter stated.

trial consumers has also decreased to Rs 47.17 per unit from Rs 59.50 per unit, he added. Both the domestic and industrial consumers have witnessed Rs

4.66 per unit and Rs 11.33 per unit decreases respectively in the tariff since June 2024.

by the incumbent government. Simi-

larly, average power tariff for indus-

He went on to say that the government has eliminated Rs 150 billion in cross-subsidies from the industrial sector, a step that has boosted industrial growth and job creation in Pakistan.

The government was also diligently working on upgrading the transmission sector, including the division of National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) into three entities,