



## 5G spectrum expected to improve internet situation

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication was informed on Thursday about the planned 5G spectrum auction in April, which is expected to improve the internet situation in the country.



## Submarine cable fault may impact internet services in Pakistan: PTA

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has said that a fault has been reported in the submarine cable AAE-1 near Qatar (one of the seven international undersea cables connecting Pakistan for international internet traffic). According to a news release, this may impact internet and broadband user experience across Pakistan.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Leadership Summit

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani addresses the Quaid-e-Azam Leadership Summit and Quaid-e-Azam National Leadership Awards at a local hotel in provincial capital.



Spokesman Photo by Imtiaz Ahmad Falzi

## Mercy petitions by 19 May 9 convicts accepted: ISPR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mercy petitions filed by 19 people convicted of involvement in the May 9 protests have been accepted, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations. According to an ISPR statement issued on Thursday, the appeals were accepted on 'humanitarian' grounds. "They all shall be released after completion of procedural formalities," ISPR said.

The names of those whose applications were accepted include:

Muhammad Ayaz s/o Sahibzada Khan, Sami Ullah s/o Meer dad Khan, Laeeq Ahmed s/o Manzoor Ahmed. Amjad Ali s/o Manzoor Ahmed. Yasir Nawaz s/o Ameer Nawaz Khan, Said Alam s/o Maaz Ullah Khan, Zahid Khan s/o Muhammad Nabi, Muhammad Suleman s/o Said Ghani Jan, Hamza Sharif s/o Muhammad Azam, Muhammad Salman s/o Zahid Nisar, Asher Butt s/o Muhammad Arshad Butt, Muhammad Waqas s/o Malik Muhammad Khalil, Sufayan



Idrees s/o Idrees Ahmed, Muneeb Ahmed s/o Naveed Ahmed Butt, Muhammad Ahmed s/o Muhammad Nazir, Muhammad Nawaz s/o Abdul Samad, Muhammad Ali s/o Muhammad Boota, Muhammad Bilawal s/o Manzoor Hussain, Muhammad Ilyas s/o Muhammad Fazal Haleem, ISPR added that 20 people were released on humanitarian grounds in April 2024. The statement also added that the rest of convicts can also appeal their decision. "The remission of punishments is a testament to the strength of the due process and fairness, which ensures that justice is served while also taking into account the principles of compassion and mercy," ISPR said.

# Economic development directly linked with political stability: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday underlined that the economic development was directly linked with political stability as the strength of a country's economy was deeply rooted in its political framework.

Chairing a meeting on Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the prime minister said the country's macroeconomic indicators had significantly improved due to the untiring efforts of the economic team, expressing his confidence that the year 2025 will bring prosperity and growth in the country.

For the first time after 2018, the inflation rate has been eased down to 4.1%, foreign remittances have posted increase of 34%, exports have also jumped, and foreign exchange reserves have jumped from \$4 billion



File Photo

to \$12.5 billion," PM Shehbaz said adding that the policy rate which was now at 13%, had space of further 8% keeping in view the inflation rate.

As regards, foreign investment, the prime minister emphasized that MoUs worth billions of dollars had already been signed with Saudi Arabia,

Qatar and UAE.

He said having achieved economic stability, the country had now entered the growth stage. "If we want to achieve the

economic development, then we will have to focus on export-led growth.....and we have no other option".

The prime minister also appreciate the efforts of Federal Board of Revenue and the economic team for collecting additional Rs 72 billion under ADR (advance-to-tax ratio) due to which the government's target of tax revenue for December 2024 had almost been achieved.

The prime minister noted that due to the faceless interaction facility, 39% time duration of container inspection had been reduced while the businessmen got relief of 89%.

Additionally, he said smuggling of sugar through Afghanistan had been reduced to zero which was a positive sign for the country's economy. He informed that the national exchequer received \$0.5 billion in term of sugar export while the rice exports posted \$4 billion.

## Opposition demands under legal, constitution domain to be fulfilled: Muqam

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs and States and Frontier Regions, Engr Amir Muqam here on Thursday said that the government has started negotiations with opposition parties with an open heart and only those demands, which are under legal and constitution domain would be fulfilled.

He made it clear that cases of PTI founder are of serious nature that would be decided by the courts and not by the negotiation committee.

The Federal Minister was talking to the media at Peshawar Press Club where



he congratulated its newly elected Cabinet including its President M. Raiz and General Secretary Tayyab Usman.

Engr Amir Muqam said that judiciary was independent that would deliver judgments in all cases of the PTI founder, who was in jail in serious nature corruption cases.

He said that no one was above the law as PMLN leadership including he himself were appeared in the courts and were later acquitted after trials.

## PTI to table 'Charter of demands' in 3rd round of talks next week

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is set to present a 'Charter of Demands' in the third round of talks with the government next week.

According to the official statement, the PTI committee has reiterated its demand for the release of the party's founder Imran Khan and all workers. Additionally, they have called for a judicial commission to investigate the events of May 9 and November 26.

The statement added that before presenting the charter of demands, the PTI committee will consult with the party's founder. The party maintains that one more consultation is necessary to finalize their demands before the 3rd meeting which is scheduled for next week.

The in-camera meeting, chaired by National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, was held at the Parliament House in Islamabad. Key members from the government side include Federal Minister Ishaq Dar, Rana Sanaulah, and Irfan Siddiqui.



PTI has also urged the government not to file additional cases against political prisoners and to ensure that existing cases are decided in accordance with the law. The party has stated that it will not hesitate to launch a protest movement if its demands are not met.

Earlier, 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.

The government committee comprised Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Irfan Siddiqui, Aleem Khan, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Naveed Qamar, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Farooq Sattar. The opposition committee, on the other hand, included Asad Qaiser, Hamid Raza, and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas.

## Roads cleared as MWM concludes nationwide protests after Kurram agreement

Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: Roads in Karachi were cleared on Thursday as Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) announced the conclusion of protests across Pakistan following a recent agreement concerning the situation in Kurram.

This has led to the end of demonstrations in various areas of Karachi, allowing roads to reopen for traffic.

Traffic police reported that Exhibition Chowrangi and Abul Hasan Isphahani Road through Abbas Town have been cleared for vehicular movement. Routes from Kamran Chowrangi to the Meteorological Department, University Road and from Water Pump to Ancholi are also operational.

Meanwhile, the road from Sohrab Goth to Water Pump is open, but protests by the Jamaat Ahl Sunnat continue at several locations.

However, the main highway in Kurram remains closed, leaving local residents in a challenging situation.

## PTI claims Imran Khan was offered shifting to Banigala from Adiala Jail

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: PTI has claimed that founder Imran Khan was offered a deal under which he would be shifted to Bani Gala, his residence in Islamabad, to serve the remaining jail time.

PTI lawyer Faisal Chaudhry told media outside Adiala Jail on Thursday that, "Imran Khan said he was offered to be moved to Bani Gala. However, he stressed that he would not move anywhere until those detained without trial are released."

PTI lawyer said that Tosha Khana two case registered against PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi is baseless like other cases, as ridiculous allegations have been leveled against Imran Khan in it, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

Faisal Ch said that Tosha Khana two case will met the fate like other such cases. He said Imran Khan was of the view that PTI can not be



controlled with the power and era of PTI has returned. He said Imran Khan has condemned sentence against former GB Chief Minister Khalid Khurshed.

Faisal Ch said PTI can bring peace and prosperity, political stability and end menace of terrorism from the country. He said PTI founder was of the view that undue pressure on media, courts and investigation authorities should come to an end.

Faisal Ch said PTI founder again demanded judicial commission on May 9 and Nov 26 incidents. He said that Imran Khan wants trial of civilians in civil court as military courts are set up for the trial of military men.



# January 4 would be observed all across Azad Kashmir as 'Kashmiri Children day', says PM AJK

**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of prime minister Chudhary Anwar ul Haq January 4 would be observed all across Azad Kashmir as "Kashmiri Children day" to draw world attention towards the sufferings of the children of the occupied Jammu and Kashmir who are the victims of Indian aggression and brutality.

Pertinently, a circular has been formally issued by the Department of Services and General Administration of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir in this regard.

The Prime Minister Haq, while highlighting the plight of the Kashmiri children, said that during the years of turmoil hundreds of children have



fell to the bullets of Indian occupation forces whereas tens of thousands of children have been rendered orphaned. "Similarly, hundreds of children

have been blinded due to blatant use of pellet guns and live ammunition by the Indian forces", the PM said, adding that a number of children have been injured or disabled due to use of excessive force by the Indian army during military operations.

On the other hand, the PM said, "The unprovoked firing by the Indian forces on the LoC had left behind a harrowing legacy in the shape of injured and disabled children.

He said that the purpose of observing this day was to draw the attention of the international community to India's brutality and aggression. Meanwhile, the Forest Department has been directed to attribute this year's tree plantation campaign to the Kashmiri children.

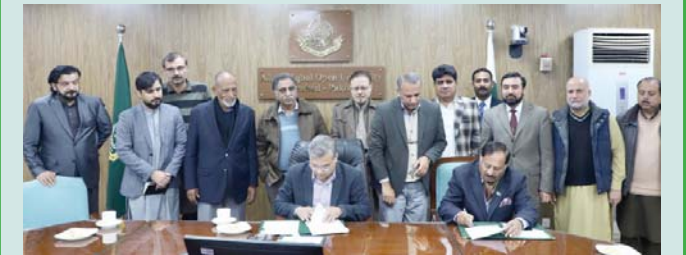
## Literacy Center for the promotion of education of prisoners in Central Jail Haripur inaugurated



**Zakir Hussain Tanoli**

HARIPUR HAZARA: The Literacy Center for the promotion of education of prisoners in Central Jail Haripur in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Development and the Prisons Department was formally inaugurated by Jail Superintendent Hamid Azam. NCHD Deputy Director, Mr. Khalid Mahmood and Field Officer Ifkhar Ahmed were also present on the occasion. During the inauguration ceremony, books, copies and other educational materials were distributed among the illiterate prisoners in the jail so that they could start their education. The steps taken by the NCHD administration for the welfare of the prisoners and the cooperation extended to help them in their education were appreciated. The aim of establishing this Literacy Center is to provide educational opportunities to the prisoners so that they can not only improve academically during their imprisonment but also play an active role in social life. This initiative proves that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and related institutions are making full efforts for the reform and welfare of prisoners. This is an important step by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, the National Commission for Human Development and other related institutions, which is important for improving the future of prisoners and their social rehabilitation.

## AIOU inks MoU with Rural Development Foundation



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A signing ceremony for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and the Rural Development Foundation (RDF) was held yesterday. The Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and the President, Rural Development Foundation, Brigadier (R) Muhammad Aslam Khan, signed the MoU.

The event was presided over by Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. In his address, he emphasized that in this era of information technology, acquiring skills alongside education holds great importance. This partnership will greatly benefit students from the Department of Computer Science and the Department of Agriculture at Allama Iqbal Open University. They will gain opportunities to work and learn in areas such as artificial intelligence and modern sustainable agricultural practices.

Brigadier (R) Muhammad Aslam Khan, the President of the Rural Development Foundation, shared his views, stating that rural development is their top priority to empower individuals. He further mentioned that their organization has been serving various regions of Pakistan since 1978 in areas including education, health-care, and agriculture.

The ceremony was attended by the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and humanities, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi, former Vice-Chancellor of Virtual University, Dr. Muhammad Nawaz, faculty members, officers, and students.

## Serena chowk interchange near completion

ISLAMABAD: Another public welfare project in Islamabad is nearing completion at an incredible pace. The work on Serena Chowk Interchange project which comprises of three underpasses is being carried out day and night.

Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visited the project site and directed its completion within the deadline.

Minister reviewed the beautification plan of Serena Chowk and accorded its approval. He highlighted that the underpass will be completed in the next 5 days but it will be opened for the traffic after the completion of work on sewer.

He directed to complete the work on sewer immediately. He said that the work on the project started with a delay of 10 days but it should be completed within the stipulated time by making all out efforts.

Interior Minister also inspected the ongoing construction work of the project, directing that all possible resources be utilized for the timely completion of the project.

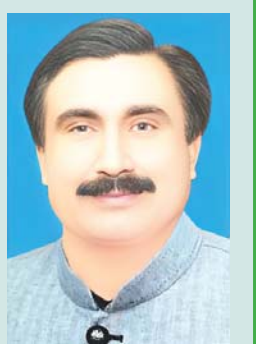
Mohsin Naqvi directed that the surroundings of the project should be decorated with plants and flowers. He added that all possible efforts should be made to save the trees around the project.

On the occasion, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa gave a briefing about the construction activities of the project.

## Illegal Constructions do not Deserve any Exemption: CO Anwar Baig

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the details, Mahar Anwar Sial Baig Chief Officer District Council Toba Tek Singh, Talking to Daily The Spokesman said that any illegal housing society, commercial buildings, those who construct, markets and petrol pumps do not deserve any concession because these people cause a loss of crores of rupees to the Government of Punjab by not passing the map. He added that our teams work in the field on a daily basis and during checking, if any such constructions are found without approvals, immediate action is taken against them and they are sealed. Anwar Baig Sial said that I warn such people that if any such constructions are found from the Government of Punjab which are not approved. FIR will be filed against them along with full action. On this occasion, District Officer Planning Hafiz Shoaib, Inspector Muhammad Muzaffar, Inspector Ali were also present.



## Visit

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visiting Serena Chowk Interchange Project.



Photo: APP

## Inaugurated of Digital Agriculture Census

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: The seventh and first digital agriculture census of Pakistan was inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih.

District Sens Officer Shahzad Raza Ansari and other relevant officers were also present in the opening ceremony. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih said Speaking on the occasion, that the digital agriculture census is a milestone in obtaining accurate and comprehensive information about the agricultural sector



in the country through modern technology.

The census will continue from January 1 to February 16, 2025. He added that this initiative will help develop better strategies for agricultural sector development, policy making, and farmers' welfare.

The District Sens Officer also highlighted on the occasion the Procedure and its benefits.

In the end of the function, the Additional Deputy Commissioner General directed the Census Staff to carry out this national duty honestly and hard work so that accurate data is collected.

## Multan are considered one of the oldest cities in the world

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Former Provincial Minister Chaudhry Abdul Waheed Arain. Former VC Zakaria University Professor Dr. Tariq Mahmood Ansari. Coordinator Chief Minister Punjab Umar Farooq Bhatti and Malik Asif Rafique Rajwana said Multan are considered one of the oldest cities in the world in terms of culture, civilization and history. Its construction and development benefits everyone. Now the need is that the priority development goals of the city are to be completed. This is the need of the hour, especially the Constructed Nishtar Medical College 2 and Cancer Hospital (Minar II) and District Jail Multan Shifting to the Mattital Road Multan. Punjab Forensic Lab in Multan. In order to secure the export products of Multan agricultural commodities, it is also very important



to build a cold storage unit at Multan International Airport and a meat processing unit in Multan's slaughterhouse. Similarly, ensuring public cooperation for the promotion of traffic safety public awareness campaigns to prevent traffic accidents is also the need of the hour.

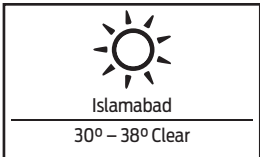
He expressed these views at the

Multan Development Seminar titled "Targets for Solving Priority Problems" organized by the Shaoor Development Organization and District Civil Society Network. While presenting the vote of thanks, the host of the event, Shahid Mahmood Ansari, said that we, as a civil society, should implement the Minar-2 Cancer Hospital in Multan.

The District Jail should be shifted to Mati Tal Road and Nishtar Medical College-2 and Nursing University should be established in the place of the District Jail. We are running a public awareness campaign for the establishment of Punjab Forensic Lab. Cold storage in the cargo terminal at Multan Airport. On this occasion, former MPA Sultana Shaheen. MOMCM Haneen Arshad.

DO Education Sheikh Muhammad Rafique. Professor Abdul Majid Wattoo. Mian Naqem Arshad. Malik Amir Nawaz. Professor Riaz Hussain. Chaudhry Mansoor Ahmed. Syed Khalid Gilani, Dr. Zahid Zulfiqar. Fatima Ejaz. Yasmin Khakwani. Mrs. Rizwan. Kausar Shaheen. Haji Aslam Khan. Syed Naqem Kazmi. Syed Imtiaz Shah. Adil Mahmood. Iqbal Baloch. Sajjad Malik. Tawasr Hayat. Abdul Salam Sindhu also spoke.





**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:44 am
Zohr	12:12 pm
Asr	3:33 pm
Maghrib	5:11 pm
Isha	6:40 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**CDA to revive Shakarparian Cultural Complex**

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Board on Thursday decided to revive the Cultural Complex at Shakarparian and transform it into a state-of-the-art hub for cultural activities.

The decision was taken in a meeting held under the chairmanship of CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

It was told that the complex will feature a modern cultural hall, showcasing both national and international cultures.

The CDA Board also decided to fully operationalize the Arts and Crafts Village site.

The CDA Board approved a policy to make payments under rate running contracts conditional upon third-party validation, ensuring transparency and accountability.

To ensure fairness and inclusivity, the CDA Board decided to seek feedback from all stakeholders before increasing subdivision and amalgamation charges for commercial and residential properties.

The revised rates will only be implemented after public hearings and stakeholder input.

Acknowledging the need to align regulations with modern requirements, the Board decided to consult all stakeholders for revising regulations of Space for setting up Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) towers in Islamabad.

# Ethiopian Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Commends 'Uraan Pakistan' Initiative

**Spokesman Report**

H. E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, the Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has commended the "Uraan Pakistan" programme, launched by the Government of Pakistan for achieving higher economic growth and national prosperity.

He lauded the initiative during a meeting with H. E. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, at his office on Thursday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including trade and investment cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

On the occasion, the Ambassador briefed the Minister about the transformational change brought about in Ethiopia by the Prosperity Party which is led by Prime Minister H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed who introduced and implemented major reforms in political, economic and social spheres.

He highlighted the political and economic liberalization achieved by the FDR Ethiopia which had not only strengthened its democracy but also

the national economy which has been in consistent growth with the political, economic, social and legal reforms.

The Ambassador said the Home Grown Economic Reforms is also an outcome of these reforms in the country which focused on addressing macroeconomic imbalances, increasing domestic production and attracting the foreign direct investment that led to a major boost in job creation.

Ethiopia and Pakistan can learn from each other's experiences and strengthen their trade and investment relations by fostering economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries, the Ambassador remarked.

The Ambassador also invited the Minister to grace the Single Country Exhibition of Pakistan scheduled for May 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

On the other hand, the Minister said he looked forward to visiting FDR Ethiopia which enjoyed brotherly relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

He noted the growth in the bilateral relations of the two countries with the opening of the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, exchange of official and business delegation, and the commencement of the Ethiopian Airlines operations in Pakistan.



The FDR Ethiopia is one of the success stories in Africa which has turned around the economy through pluralistic economic policies, the Minister remarked while terming Ethiopia a beacon of prosperity in Africa.

**Protest**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Christians minority leader an former Member of Parliament J. Salik addressing during Sanitation workers of Capital Development Authority hold a protest in favour of their demands outside National press Club, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Asma Butt expressed best wishes for country and nation on New Year

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Recognized director, writer and social activist Asma Butt said that beautify your next world with kindness and service to humanity, because this world and its works will remain here, helping them according to your ability is a continuous siddiqah. I pray that 2025 will prove to be a year of progress, success and safety for Pakistan, institutions and people connected to different schools of thought.

Renowned director, writer and social activist Asma Butt expressed her best wishes for



her country and nation on the beginning of the new year, and said that after performing

the Nawafil, I prayed to the ALLAH PAK that 2025 will prove to be a year of success

and safety for everyone. I pray that I may always be of use to all the people associated with my life with a healthy life. Amen. I get peace of mind by helping others.

Asma Butt said that last night, I received information that Bashir Shad, a senior photographer of a newspaper, was undergoing treatment at the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology.

I called upon Allah and went to visit him. Later, I met with RIC Medical Superintendent Dr. Ayaz Haider. I requested him to take special care of our colleague, Bashir Shad. I am here wherever my help is needed.

## Zafar Bakhtawari's Visit to the Pakistan Academy of Letters



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of the United Business Group and Chairman of the Pakistan Cultural Forum, Zafar Bakhtawari, visited the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in Islamabad, where Chairperson Dr. Najeeba Arif, Director General Sultan Nasir, and the Academy's staff warmly welcomed him.

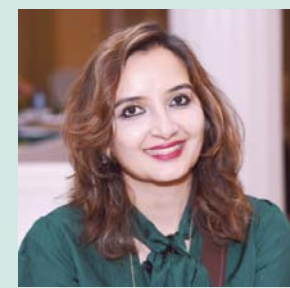
During his address, Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized the need for institutions to establish international literary and cultural relations with various countries in the modern era. He highlighted that such efforts can promote diverse cultures, global harmony, peace, and brotherhood.

Chairperson Dr. Najeeba Arif spoke about the Academy's contributions and shared that it has published books in the languages of five different countries, including China, Portugal, Azerbaijan, and the United States. This initiative not only introduces Pakistan's literary achievements to the world but also strengthens cultural ties with other nations.

Director General Sultan Nasir gave Zafar Bakhtawari a tour of the Academy's auditorium and explained that it holds a unique status as it represents Pakistan's 74 languages.

## Nutshell Group Appoints Maheen Usmani as Chief-Media Relations & Storytelling

**City Desk**



ISLAMABAD: Nutshell Group, Pakistan's leading integrated PR, communications, and public affairs firm, has appointed Maheen Usmani as its Chief-Media Relations & Storytelling.

Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Founder & Chairman, and Rabia Shoab Ahmad, Director & CEO, Nutshell Group, while expressing their views on this induction said "We are thrilled to have Maheen join our team. Her extraordinary talent and proven track record of success will undoubtedly enhance the delivery of our service offerings to our clients and partners and contribute significantly to Nutshell's growth and diversification goals."

Maheen is a transformative and proactive leader with over 18 years of experience across digital, electronic, and print communications. In her most recent role as the Corporate Communications Lead for the Africa and Middle East region at Reckitt UAE, Maheen specialized in developing and executing integrated communication strategies for both internal and external audiences. Her expertise spans strategic content creation, creative storytelling, compelling audiovisual presentations, and narrative building.

## Urs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz Chishti Ajmiri will be held on the 4 January

**City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: The Urs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz Chishti Ajmiri is held every year on the 4th, 5th and 6th of the month of Rajab in Dargah Maali Gulshan-e-Sultan-ul-Hind Ajmiri. In Pakistan, the Urs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz Chishti is celebrated with great respect by his devotees at various places across the country. The biggest celebrations of the Urs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz Chishti Ajmiri in Pakistan will be held at Astana Alia Gulshan-e-Sultan-ul-Hind Ajmiri, which will be held on Fateh Jang Road. All the affairs of the Urs will be supervised by Pizada Syed Al-Wajhiya Moini Ajmiri, the Crown Prince and Successor of Sajjada Nashin Ajmiri Sharif. The arrival of pilgrims from all over the country has started, in which great Mashaihs, scholars, Naat Khawans, political and social figures and people from all walks of life from all over the country will participate. On 6 Rajab-e-Murjab, Tuesday, January 7, the Mehfil Qul Sharif ceremony will begin at 9 am at the Dargah. The ceremony will be held under a veil, followed by Quran recitation, Naat gathering, speeches and listening. At 1 pm, Sheikh Mashaihk Hazrat Khwaja Diwan Syed Aal Habib Ali Khan, the Supreme Sajjada Nashin of Ajmer Sharif, will offer special prayers for the stability of the Muslim Ummah and the Kingdom of God, Pakistan. After the Zuhr prayers, langar will be distributed among the pilgrims.

## Human Rights Day with Resilient Voices of Pakistan

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The European Union Delegation to Pakistan and the Embassy of Ireland, in collaboration with Olomopolo Media, marked International Human Rights Day with a powerful evening of poetry, titled 'One to All: Voices of Resilience'.

The event highlighted Pakistan's rich literary tradition of poetry by bringing together ten emerging poets from diverse regions, including Turbat, Quetta, Wana, and Peshawar, alongside Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi. These voices of resilience shared their stories, struggles and artistic expressions through the power of poetry.

The EU Ambassador H. E. Riina Kionka said in her opening remarks, "Poetry is a powerful form of artistic expression that resonates across the



world. Poets have long raised their voices for the advancement of human

rights, both globally and in Pakistan. Icons like Habib Jalib and Faiz Ahmad

Faiz embody this tradition, inspiring generations to stand for justice and equality through their words."

Recognizing the importance of Human Rights, the ambassador of Ireland to Pakistan H. E. Mary O'Neill said, "Human rights and poetry are two matters that are close to the hearts of all Irish people. The Irish Embassy are therefore very pleased to co-host a wonderful evening of creative expression and celebration of both poetry and human rights. Human rights are at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy, just as poetry is at the heart of our literary history, so having the opportunity to support discussions and performances on these issues in Pakistan is a privilege. We look forward to deepening our partnerships in order to further promote and protect human rights together in the years to come."



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**  
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**  
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**  
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)  
**Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Head Office: **AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.**  
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com  
 Phone: +92 51 2227123,  
**WhatsApp +92 346 5008408**  
 Karachi office: **A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,**  
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390  
 Email: **spokesmankarachi@gmail.com**  
 Lahore Office: **7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.**  
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

# A Bloody New Year in the USA

The New Year celebrations in the USA were marred by tragedy when a barbaric act of terrorism in New Orleans claimed the lives of at least 10 holidaymakers and injured 30 more. This heinous attack serves as a stark reminder that terrorism, driven by intolerant and extremist ideologies, can strike anywhere in the world and kill innocent citizens or individuals who, by any measure, had no connection to any conflict or issue that could justify such violence. There is no justification for such barbarity, regardless of the motive or alleged rationale.

derive a twisted sense of pleasure and satisfaction from inflicting wounds, causing suffering, or even taking lives—targeting anyone they can.

It is deeply unfortunate that some societies and countries assume for themselves the authority to destroy nations, obliterate communities, demolish homes, and carry out drone strikes around the world—all without judicial oversight or accountability. Operating with a self-assumed license to kill, they often escape scrutiny or consequences for their actions.

Even more deplorable is the fact that those who make these decisions to use force and wreak havoc on countries, societies, and communities remain untouched and unaccountable. Meanwhile, innocent citizens—who played no role in these decisions and had no direct or indirect involvement in any acts of violence—become the victims of such kinetic actions.

Pakistan has been one of the worst victims of terrorism—domestic, regional, and international. Since the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, the country has lost over 80,000 lives, including members of its security forces and countless innocent citizens. Even today, there is no respite, as acts of terrorism continue to claim lives almost daily, involving security forces, terrorists, separatists, and innocent civilians.

Unfortunately, the world will remain entangled in the grip of this multi-headed, deadly python until we fundamentally change our strategies and tactics for dealing with unfavorable regimes or governments. Without a shift in approach, the cycle of violence and suffering will persist, leaving nations wounded and societies fractured.

The use of non-state actors to achieve kinetic and political objectives—most notably during the effort to push back the USSR from Afghanistan—marked the inception of hateful, religiously tainted ideologies. The United States led the conceptualization and execution of this strategy, which involved spreading the lethal and poisonous ideology of “Islamic Jihad.” Muslims from across the globe were encouraged to join the fight against the “Russian infidels.”

To bolster this movement, sociological engineering was employed, including altering school curricula to emphasize the importance of Jihad and recruit fighters. Various militant outfits were created to serve as role models, with figures like Osama Bin Laden being elevated as heroes under a carefully crafted strategy. This approach proved immensely successful in repelling and ultimately dismantling the USSR.

However, the success of this model set a dangerous precedent. It was later employed to destabilize and destroy societies in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, and beyond. These militant assets—equipped with weapons, fueled by ideology, and funded by seemingly unlimited resources—became forces intoxicated by power and violence. With unrestrained authority over their domains, these groups perpetuated conflict and sought new wars to sustain their insatiable appetite for chaos and terror.

The use of unconventional, unethical, and informal war tactics is perhaps the root cause of much of the pain and suffering endured by innocent people around the world—individuals who have no connection to acts of brutality or violence. These tactics have inflicted

untold sorrow, tears, and anguish on innocent citizens in countries like France, the UK, the USA, Pakistan, and India. Thousands of lives have been shattered, leaving countless people with lifelong wounds—whether physical, emotional, or both—suffered by themselves or their loved ones.

While this may not be the sole cause, it is undoubtedly a significant factor among the many reasons behind these heinous and abhorrent acts of violence. Terrorism indiscriminately harms people of all religions—be it Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, or others. It takes the lives of individuals across racial lines—white, Black, Asian, or others—and targets people of all ethnicities, philosophies, and perspectives, without distinction or discrimination.

The global community must address this issue with urgency. At the national, regional, and international levels, laws and protocols should be established to prohibit the use of non-state actors as kinetic assets. Nations must desist from arming such groups with ideological and kinetic tools of destruction. The world must return to conventional and formal warfare, to be used only as a last resort in cases of extreme necessity or compulsion.

By ceasing the practice of empowering contractors or raising militant organizations to achieve strategic or ideological objectives, the international community could take a significant step toward preventing the indiscriminate killing of innocent people. This shift could help reduce the pain, agony, despair, and helplessness that so often plague innocent citizens across the globe.

Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Detroit, Michigan



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Pakistan formally begins 2-year term at UNSC, pledging to promote peoples' self-determination right

Pakistan on Wednesday officially began its two-year term (2025-26) as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, the world body's power centre.

“As a non-permanent member of the UNSC, Pakistan will play its active role in promoting the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, including the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation,” Ambassador Munir Akram said in a post on X platform on Wednesday.

“We will work with other Council members to promote peace & security,” the top Pakistani envoy added.

A formal flag raising ceremony for the new members of the Council—Pakistan, Denmark, Greece, Panama and Somalia—will take place on January 2 (tomorrow) at the UN headquarters in New York.

The new members replaced Japan, Ecuador, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland whose terms ended on December 31, 2024.

Pakistan will also preside over the 15-member Council in July when it assumes its presidency according to alphabetical rotation of the member states' official names. This will allow Islamabad to set the Security Council's agenda.

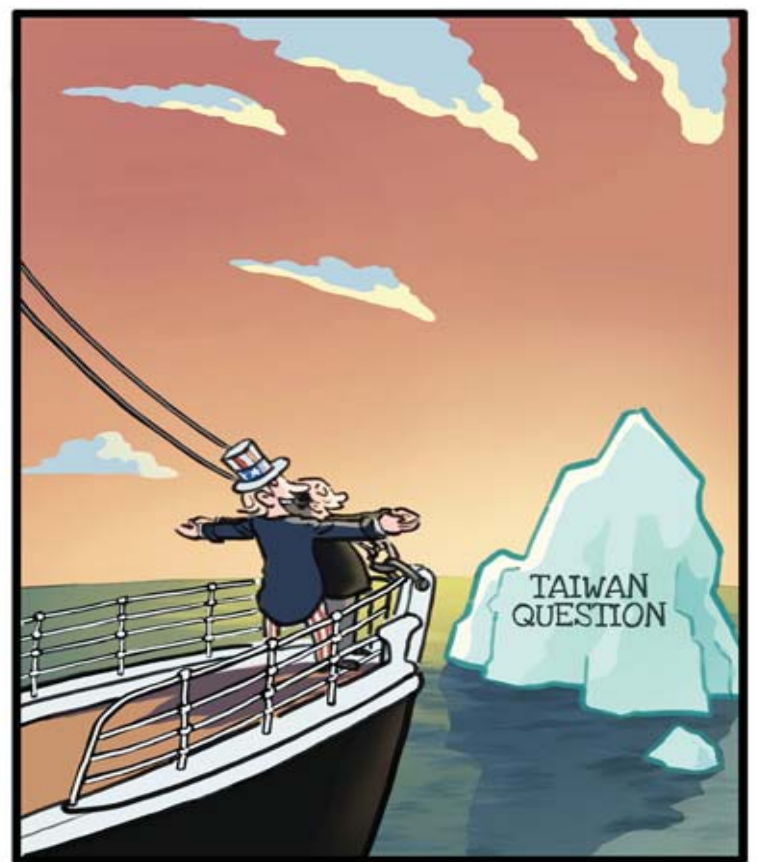
In addition to this, Pakistan will get a seat on the Islamic State (ISIS) and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee, which is responsible for designating individuals and groups as terrorists and imposing sanctions.

This is Pakistan's eight term on the Council. The country's previous terms on the UNSC were in 2012-13, 2003-04, 1993-94, 1983-84, 1976-77, 1968-69, and 1952-53.

Over the decades, Pakistan has played an active role in promoting the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and made significant contributions to international peace and security, including its role as one of the leading troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions across the world.

Pakistan, which was elected to the UN Security Council by the General Assembly in June 2024, has replaced Japan on the Asian seat.

Ambassador Akram reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to strengthening international peace and security during its tenure on the Council, pledging to actively participate in addressing both global and regional challenges.



Courtesy by China Daily

## Galyat's forests, a national asset in danger

Mehtab Abbasi

Pakistan is an arboreally deficient country, with merely 0.04 hectares of forest per person, compared to the global average of 1.0 hectares. According to official statistics, the republic's aggregate arboreal expense is 4.2 million hectares, or 4.8% of its aggregate terrestrial expense. However, these statistics are subject to contention.

Data procured from Global Forest Watch suggests that Pakistan's tree-covered terrain was a mere 648,000 hectares in 2010, constituting 0.74% of the total land area. Between 2001 and 2023, Pakistan witnessed a diminution of 9,940 hectares of tree cover, a 1% retrogression since 2000, which contributed to 2.88 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Pakistan's deforestation rate of 2.37% per annum is the most elevated amongst Asian nations. Illicit intrusions and pervasive forest conflagrations are the principal factors precipitating deforestation.

Historically, the safeguarding of Murree's forests and the preservation of their natural splendor held a position of paramount importance for governing authorities. During the British colonial period, stringent measures were enacted to forestall deforestation and conserve indigenous wildlife. Subsequently, in 1964-65, President Muhammad Ayub Khan undertook substantial initiatives to protect the forests of Murree and the Galyat region. These endeavors encompassed the provision of complementary kerosene oil and stoves to local inhabitants to mitigate reliance on firewood

as a fuel source. Furthermore, he established the Soil Conservation Department and inaugurated horticultural nurseries in every Union Council to promote afforestation efforts. Thousands of fruit-bearing plants, such as apples, apricots, and plums, were distributed amongst local communities to incentivize horticultural practices. Ayub Khan himself conducted personal visits to the area to supervise the progress of these projects.

In 2006, former military head of state General Pervez Musharraf inaugurated a multi-million rupee gasification project with the objective of mitigating deforestation. Regrettably, this facility serves only a limited urban demographic within Murree, leaving the majority of the population reliant on firewood due to the prohibitive cost of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

The recurrent fire incidents plaguing Murree's forests cannot be simply dismissed as natural occurrences. The preponderance of these fires are instigated by either the timber mafia or local residents seeking fresh grazing land for their livestock. The forest department's evident inability to prevent such conflagrations underscores their negligence and dereliction of duty. Despite possessing a substantial workforce and adequate financial resources, the department demonstrates a marked inefficiency. Forest guards and staff, predominantly recruited from local communities, are frequently absent from their designated posts, while officers exploit their postings to indulge in Murree's agreeable climate. A suspected collusion between the timber mafia and

members of the forest department often eludes scrutiny by higher authorities.

The rapid propagation of fires within these forests is exacerbated by arid conditions and the abundance of desiccated pine needles, known locally as “Chimpothal,” which serve as readily combustible fuel. The forest staff, hampered by inadequate equipment and insufficient training, find themselves struggling to effectively control these rapidly spreading blazes.

To safeguard Murree's forests and preserve their inherent natural beauty, the government must undertake immediate and decisive action. This necessitates educating local communities regarding fire prevention strategies, actively engaging them in monitoring and early warning systems, and initiating comprehensive reforestation projects. Strengthening existing legislation against illicit logging and rigorously enforcing these laws is crucial to protect the area's invaluable natural resources. Forest personnel must receive training in contemporary techniques and be furnished with advanced equipment to facilitate continuous surveillance, particularly during the vulnerable dry summer months.

Furthermore, the governing bodies should investigate the potential utilization of pine needles as a viable energy source and for the production of stationary articles, thereby transforming a potential fire hazard into a sustainable and economically valuable resource.

The author is an Islamabad-based journalist that can be reached through [mehtab.abbasi847@gmail.com](mailto:mehtab.abbasi847@gmail.com)

## Art of Gifting in Africa: Past and Present

When you step into 2025, the tradition of gift-giving lives on around the world and crosses over all cultural and societal walls. What started as sharing and goodwill has become a complicated business, not only affecting personal relationships but international policy as well. Gifting from its early human survival strategies to contemporary manifestations in philanthropy and political patronage, has been central to how humans interact.

### Cultural Adaptations and Historical Trajectory:

The roots of gift-giving can be traced back to ancient Africa, where early human societies used gifting to survive and to keep themselves together. Giving was a deeply ingrained part of societies where people were mainly hunter-gatherers, the act helped forge alliances, maintain social order and help get resources. Even gifts, in the form of cattle or food, acted as a catalyst to cement horizontal ties between equals and vertical bonds to the person of authority laying the groundwork for a complex social grid.

As human societies expanded and diversified, so did the gifting practice. When concepts of charity and communal giving were introduced to Africa, as well as the introduction of Islam and Christianity, brought about a large-scale change. Islamic zakat and Christian Caritas institutionalized giving through their religious teachings and reiterated the importance of giving to the stability of the society and the welfare of the whole community. African societies were disrupted and foreign systems were introduced during the colonial era. But then gifting adapted to this new reality, a tool of resistance and of life.

### Gifting in the contemporary context in Africa:

As we glide into 2025, Africans are again engaging in the art of gifting differently as the continent transforms. The Cold War and postcolonial period between 1960 and early 2000 continued the tradition as new states in Africa grappled with boundaries imposed by colonial powers. Borisov noted that leaders leaned on vertical gifting, where the state used its resources to control tensions within the society. As much as it was helpful in centralization of power, it aggravated patronage structures that are in practice to date.

However, the modern century has bid this tradition adieu and a new style of gifting has emerged in Africa. When people became uncomfortable with the conventional ways of providing support toward development and charity opera-

tions in foreign countries, innovations appeared. Others have turned to models of trust-based philanthropy, philanthrocapitalism, and effective giving, all of which value rationality and data to hold organizations accountable for demonstrable impact. These innovations stand out from the one-directional charity model, delegate the power to local communities, and allow people to address social problems.

In addition, diaspora remittance flows as a source of funding for development have assumed even greater significance in Africa. With the focus to tap on domestic resources, the continent has started to cut on aid dependency, in his majesty of locally-driven plans. It is social change because it underlines the emerging process of identifying and empowering from within.

Charity also continues to be one of the important instruments of Africa's diplomacy abroad. In foreign relations, the gifts that presidents or prime ministers share during a state visit or during multilateral summits are meant to improve relations. This characteristic of open-handedness, as a key instrument of soft power in the Africa Resilience Forum (ARF) demonstrates that gift-giving continues to play a vital role in contemporary diplomatic relations.

Lessons from Gift-giving in Africa as we look toward the future of 2025. The culture of gifting has a deep-rooted history of being used as a tool to determine the interaction between people and countries, which has not only survived but also has prospered through time and is an essential tool in present-day diplomacy. It will therefore be the task in the future to find how to maintain the novelty of gifting while strengthening the specific cultural characteristics that allow the practice to promote social cohesion, political responsiveness, and development that is perennial.

Africa has a lot to learn from history and today's uses of gifting, and in turn, use them as a tool to improve the existence of human communities, the governance, and, generally, to work on claiming its position on the world stage. As we begin this new year, we are reminded that the practice of giving, both within our communities and across borders, has the power to bring the continents closer to their desired future—a more generous, interconnected, and sustainable world.

Assistant Editor at Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR)



Analysis

Asadullah Qamar

### Conclusion:



# Chinese premier calls for ensuring good start to 2025 economic development

Xinhua

JINAN: Chinese Premier Li Qiang has called for efforts to ensure the effective implementation of policies and secure a good start for this year's economic development during his inspection in the city of Jinan in east China's Shandong Province.

While conducting this inspection tour on Thursday, Li also stressed the need for efforts to implement policies as early as possible, seek fast progress with projects and ensure that measures yield tangible results.

During a visit to a home appliance store, the premier said the government's consumer goods trade-in scheme is of great significance to meet the needs of people for high-quality life, unlock consumption potential, promote industry upgrades and facilitate economic circulation.

China will continue to implement this initiative with greater support, Li said, adding that procedures will



be optimized to facilitate consumer spending.

Li also visited a charging and battery-swapping station in Jinan.

Noting that the number of intelligent connected new-energy vehicles has continued to grow in the country, Li

encouraged exploratory and innovative efforts in developing charging and battery-swapping services and related areas.

Measures should be taken to deepen reform of the energy management system, transform the energy sector and

foster new drivers of growth, Li said.

While inspecting local infrastructure projects, he stated that stadiums and modern water networks are not only significant infrastructure projects, but also important for public welfare, and called for efforts to strengthen supply of resources such as funds and land.

Concerning urban renewal, it is important to stress the planning and layout of drainage networks and maintain strict oversight throughout the entire construction process to ensure that the project quality is able to stand the test of time, Li added.

Efforts should be made to attract more private investment to participate in the construction of infrastructure and public services, he said.

As a major economically-developed province, Shandong should promote various policy measures and work arrangements to take effect as early as possible, thereby contributing more to the overall development of the country, Li said.

## U.S. imposes new sanctions on Iran and Russia for election interference

Reuters

The U.S. Treasury Department has announced fresh sanctions against Iranian and Russian entities accused of attempting to interfere in American elections.

These sanctions are part of ongoing efforts to protect the integrity of the electoral process and counter disinformation campaigns aimed at sowing division among the U.S. populace.

According to U.S. officials, these campaigns have sought to undermine democratic institutions and manipulate public opinion through targeted misinformation.

The sanctions are intended to hold accountable those responsible for these actions and to deter future interference in U.S. elections.

The move underscores the U.S. government's commitment to safeguarding its electoral system from foreign influence as it prepares for upcoming elections.



## Turkish group bids below minimum fee for Islamabad Airport operations

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A Turkish consortium, the sole bidder to take over the operations of Pakistan's Islamabad airport, has offered a concession fee below the minimum threshold, the chairman of the bid evaluation committee said on Thursday.

The cash-strapped South Asian country is looking to generate revenue by speeding up a privatisation push, including outsourcing the running of three major airports.

The consortium, comprising Terminal Yapi, ERG Insaat and ERG UK, bid to pay the government 47% of its revenue from operations in the form of a concession fee, short of the 56% minimum set by the government, the aviation and airports authority said.

The matter will now be referred to the International Finance Corporation (IFC)—a member of the World Bank Group, which is advising Islamabad on the outsourcing—before Pakistan takes a decision on whether the bid can go through.

"The details of the financial proposal will ... be presented and forwarded to the IFC for further evaluation and submission of final reports," said Sadiq ur Rehman, the chairman of the bid evaluation committee and deputy director general of Pakistan Airports Authority.

Pakistan is also looking to offload a 60% stake in debt-ridden airline PIA to raise funds and reform state-owned enterprises as envisaged under a \$7 billion International Monetary Fund programme.

A failed attempt to privatize the national flag carrier in October also received a single offer, well below the asking price.



# Bangladesh rejects bail for Hindu monk on sedition charges

AFP

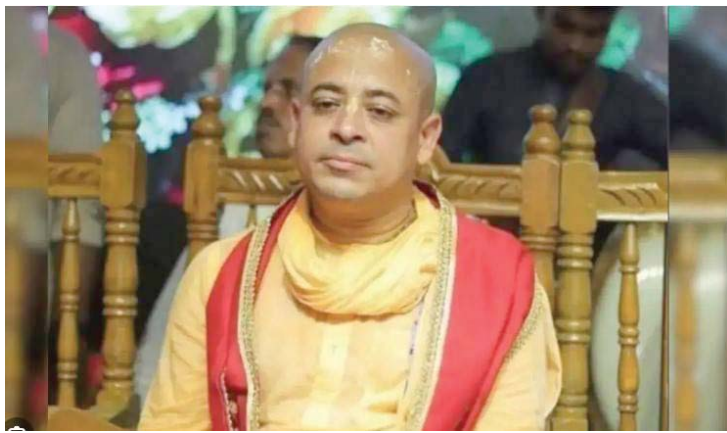
A Bangladeshi court on Thursday again denied bail to an outspoken Hindu monk advocating for the protection of the minority after religious strife in the mainly Muslim nation.

Chinmoy Krishna Das was arrested in November for allegedly disrespecting the Bangladeshi flag during a rally and faces charges of sedition.

Security forces ringed the court in the southern port city of Chittagong, wary after violence erupted following a previous bail hearing — with the monk's followers accused of killing a public prosecutor.

Das rejects the sedition charges, his lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattacharjee said Thursday.

But public prosecutor Raihanul



Wajed Chowdhury said they had opposed bail because there was "much more to investigate".

The prosecution and defence both

said the court had denied the bail application.

The family of the lawyer murdered in November, Saiful Islam Alif, has filed

two separate cases against those they say are linked to his death.

That includes 58 Hindu lawyers accused of vandalism and carrying explosives.

Religious relations have been turbulent in Bangladesh since a student-led revolution toppled autocratic prime minister Sheikh Hasina last year.

New Delhi's Hindu-nationalist government were key supporters of Hasina, and the 77-year-old has been in exile in India since she fled protesters as they stormed the prime minister's palace on August 5.

Bangladesh in December requested India send Hasina back to face charges of "massacres, killings, and crimes against humanity". India confirmed it had received the request but declined to comment further.

## Important events in Kazakhstan in 2025

# A year of national and international significance

Spokesman Report

Kazakhstan is set to commemorate a range of significant national anniversaries, historical milestones, and international events in 2025. The upcoming year will not only be marked by Kazakhstan's own important dates but also by global celebrations that have special relevance to the nation. Kazinform News Agency provides an overview of key events and notable anniversaries scheduled for 2025.

### 560th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate

In 2025, Kazakhstan will celebrate the 560th anniversary of the founding of the Kazakh Khanate, an event that holds great historical significance. In 1465, Sultan Kerei and Zhanibek established the Kazakh Khanate, a crucial step in uniting the Kazakh people, solidifying the territory of the nation, and fostering the growth of its multi-century culture. This formation marked the beginning of a unified Kazakhstan, and its legacy continues to shape the country's national identity today.

Historian Muhammad Haidar Dulati's work Tarikh-i Rashidi gives an insightful account of the establishment of the Khanate, and its importance was recognized by prominent scholars such as Shokan Ualikhanov.

The creation of the Kazakh Khanate set the stage for the foundation Kazakhstan's statehood, influencing its history throughout centuries of hardship, including invasions, famines, and political upheavals, culminating in Kazakhstan's independence in 1991.

2025 will also mark the 105th anniversary of Kazinform News Agency, one of Kazakhstan's oldest and most authoritative media outlets. Established in 1920, Kazinform News Agency has played an integral role in disseminating information on politics, economics, healthcare, sports, culture, and public life for over a century. Originally founded as part of the Orenburg-Turgai branch of ROSTA, the agency evolved over time,



70th anniversary of Baikonur cosmodrome



International events and Kazakhstan's role



80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War

changing names and expanding its reach. In 1997, it became the Kazakh Information Agency, and by 2014, it gained the status of the country's first international news agency. In 2022, the agency became part of the Television and Radio Complex of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

With office in Astana and correspondent networks not only in all regions of Kazakhstan, but also in countries including Russia, China, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, the UK and Jordan, Kazinform News Agency remains a vital source of information, offering news in multiple languages, including the Kazakh, Russian, English, Chinese, Uzbek, and Arabic script for the diaspora.

### 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's Constitution

The year 2025 also marks the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's current Constitution, adopted on August 30, 1995. The country's Constitution represents a critical milestone in the nation's development, as it laid the foundation for Kazakhstan's legal framework as an independent state. It has been amended several times since its adoption, most recently in 2022, when significant changes were made to shift from a super-presidential system to a parliamentary republic. These reforms aimed at decentralizing power and strengthening the role of Parliament, further consolidating democratic governance and citizen participation.

As President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted, the Constitution

also includes provisions to protect the country's natural resources for the benefit of its citizens, with initiatives like the "National Fund - for the children" program aiming to ensure the prosperity of every citizen.

### 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War

In 2025, Kazakhstan will join the international community in commemorating the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. The war, which began in 1941 and lasted until 1945, saw the loss of approximately 27 million Soviet lives, including 600,000 from Kazakhstan. President Vladimir Putin has invited President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to attend large-scale celebrations in Moscow on May 9, 2025.

The war had a profound impact on Kazakhstan, which contributed significantly to the Soviet war effort by supplying vital resources, including minerals, coal, and food. Many Kazakhstani, such as Aliya Moldagulova, Baiyrtan Momyshuly, Manshuk Mametova were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and the country continues to honor their legacy.

### 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War

Collage credit: Canva

### 70th anniversary of Baikonur cosmodrome

Baikonur, the world's first and largest spaceport, will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2025. Since its establishment in 1953, Baikonur has been a center of space exploration, launching the

first artificial satellite in 1957 and sending Yuri Gagarin into space in 1961. Over the decades, it has been the launch site for numerous historic missions, including manned missions to space and the development of space technology.

### Baikonur

Photo credit: Sara Sabikyzy/ Kazinform

Baikonur remains an important hub for international space programs, with Kazakhstan's own cosmonauts, including Toktar Aubakirov and Talgat Mussabayev, contributing to global space exploration efforts.

### 30th anniversary of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan

On March 1, 2025, Kazakhstan will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan (APK), an organization established to promote interethnic harmony and unity. Founded in 1995, the APK has grown from a consultative body to a constitutional institution with significant political and social influence. With over a thousand ethnocultural organizations and active participation from youth, media, and mothers' councils, the APK has been instrumental in fostering a peaceful and inclusive society.

In addition to local celebrations, more than 150 events will take place both within Kazakhstan and abroad, with an estimated 1.5 million people expected to be engaged in the festivities.

### International events and Kazakhstan's role

Kazakhstan will also partici-

pate in several important international events in 2025. One of the most notable is the EXPO 2025, which will be held in Osaka, Japan. Kazakhstan will have its own pavilion in the "Saving Lives" cluster, showcasing innovations related to healthcare and society's future.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan will host the Central Asia-China summit in 2025, building on the momentum from the inaugural summit in 2023. This event underscores Kazakhstan's growing geopolitical role in the region and its commitment to fostering cooperation with neighboring countries.

Additionally, Kazakhstan will host the World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Astana. This marks the first time the congress will be held in Central Asia, reflecting the region's increasing influence in the global library and information sector. The event is expected to boost Kazakhstan's profile in the international MICE tourism industry and highlight its growing role in global cultural and educational exchanges.

### Anniversaries of Prominent Figures

Kazakhstan will celebrate the 180th anniversary of the birth of its beloved poet and philosopher Abai, as well as the 190th anniversary of the birth of Shokan Ualikhanov, a renowned scientist and ethnographer. These anniversaries will be marked by a series of cultural and academic events aimed at honoring their contributions to the country's heritage.



Anniversaries of Prominent Figures



Important events in Kazakhstan in 2025

Other notable anniversaries include the 100th birthdays of composer Nurgisa Tlendiev and writer Berdibek Sokpakaev, as well as the 95th birthdays of Shamsi Kaldayakov, the composer of Kazakhstan's national anthem, and artist Yevgeniy Sidorokin.

The year 2025 promises to be a year of reflection and celebration for Kazakhstan. From significant historical anniversaries to international collaborations, the

country is poised to highlight its cultural achievements, reaffirm its national identity, and strengthen its position on the global stage. Kazinform will continue to cover these important events and provide updates on how they shape the nation's future.

Earlier Kazinform News Agency reported that President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev extended his New Year's congratulations to the people of Kazakhstan.



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

**Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index**

Current	Prev. Close
117,119.65	117,008.08
Day's High	Day's Low
118,367.81	116,857.61
Index Value	Change
30,037,175,281	+111.57
Percentage	Time
+0.1%	2 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm

**Europe: FTSE 100 Index**

Index Value	Change
8,260.09	+87.07
Percentage	Time
+1.07%	2 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

**USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average**

Index Value	Change
42,647.22	+103.00
Percentage	Time
+0.24%	2 Jan, 12:16 pm GMT-5

**Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average**

Index Value	Change
39,894.54	-386.62
Percentage	Time
-0.96%	30 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	173.30	175.55
Bahrain Dinar	735.15	743.15
Canadian Dollar	194.60	197.00
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	35.45	35.85
Euro	288.20	290.95
Hong Kong Dollar	35.44	35.79
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	894.49	903.99
Malaysian Ringgit	61.63	62.23
New Zealand \$	154.77	156.77
Norwegians Krone	24.22	24.52
Omani Riyal	719.50	728.00
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.85	74.40
Singapore Dollar	202.82	204.82
Swedish Korona	24.99	25.29
Swiss Franc	307.08	309.88
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.45	76.10
UK Pound Sterling	348.75	352.25
US Dollar	278.20	279.70

**Investor Confidence**

# Veon Group invests USD 15 million in Mobilink Bank to fuel growth and tech advancement

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Global digital operator VEON Group reaffirms its confidence in the growth potential of Pakistan's microfinance sector and Mobilink Bank by investing USD 15 million in fresh capital to drive the bank's strategic ambitions. The capital investment will empower Mobilink Bank to expand its offerings in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) financing, explore Islamic banking, and accelerate its ongoing transition into a technologically advanced, future-ready digital bank.

Welcoming the investment, Chairman Mobilink Bank & CEO Jazz, Aamir Ibrahim said, "This capital infusion of USD 15 million

by VEON underscores their steadfast confidence in Mobilink Bank's vision and trajectory. It empowers us to further expand our portfolio, driving growth in MSME financing, Islamic banking, and technology-driven operations. Together, we are fostering digital readiness and financial inclusion, ensuring that MMBL continues to play a pivotal role in shaping a progressive and inclusive financial landscape in Pakistan."

Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Interim CEO Mobilink Bank, shared, "Veon's investment signifies the solid confidence our parent company places in Mobilink Bank's capability to lead the fintech revolution in Pakistan. The timing of this strategic investment is fitting



as Pakistan's economy is in a revival phase, and the banking industry anticipates enhanced activity in the wake of a significant reduction in policy rates by the SBP.

This investment will be pivotal in further advancing our strategic goals, promoting MSME growth, expanding into Islamic banking, and enhancing our digital capabilities to

strengthen our position as a future-ready digital bank."

VEON's investment heralds a transformative era for Mobilink Bank, reinforcing its mission to advance financial inclusion and social mobility. With over 20 million monthly active users and a vast network of 400,000+ touch-points, the bank champions inclusivity, technological innovation, and customer-centricity, besides a robust commitment to socio-economic and environmental progress.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population.

## Citrus Festival

ISLAMABAD: A view of Kinnow displayed on traditional handcrafts during 5-day Citrus Festival at a local shopping mall, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Former Governor Punjab meets LCCI Leadership



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Former Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman visited the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry and have a detailed discussion with LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry on the nation's economic

growth, trade, and political stability.

Former Governor Punjab said that the role of business community is crucial in the economic development of Pakistan. He appreciated ongoing efforts of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry for economic uplift of the country.

On the occasion, LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice President

Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry informed the former Governor about the efforts being made by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the cause of trade, industry and the economy. They gave a detailed briefing to the Muhammad Blaigh ur Rehman about the LCCI upcoming Lahore Shopping Festival being held from January 31st to 2 February.

## Mashreq becomes First Bank to launch pilot operations as Digital Retail Bank

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Mashreq Pakistan, part of leading financial institution in the MENA region, Mashreq, becomes the first to receive restricted license from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to commence pilot operations as a digital retail bank in Pakistan. This milestone highlights Mashreq's commitment to driving financial inclusion and delivering innovative digital banking solutions tailored to the country's evolving needs.

As a global pioneer in digital banking, Mashreq aims to launch a digital banking model with best-in-class Islamic Banking solutions that sets new standards for financial services in Pakistan.

Fernando Morillo, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mashreq Pakistan & Group Head of Retail Banking at Mashreq, expressed his enthusiasm

about this milestone, stating, "As a global leader in digital banking innovation, we are thrilled to bring Mashreq's cutting-edge solutions to Pakistan and work alongside SBP to further its financial inclusion goals."

Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO of Mashreq Pakistan, added, "We are fully ready and excited to begin this journey in Pakistan. At Mashreq, our 'Bank for All' philosophy drives everything we do, ensuring that all Pakistanis have access to essential financial services."

Mashreq's entry into Pakistan aligns with its 'Rise Every Day' philosophy, emphasizing growth and innovation. With a presence in 14 countries and a strong track record of global success, Mashreq is poised to play a pivotal role in advancing Pakistan's financial ecosystem through modern, efficient banking solutions.

## EFP delegation visits Turkish Embassy to discuss trade development initiatives



**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: A high-level delegation from the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP), led by Mehmood Arshad, Board Member and Chairman of the EFP Economic Council, visited the Turkish Embassy in Islamabad to discuss trade development initiatives. The delegation, which also included Syed Hasnain Mazhar, Board Member

Ahmed & Shaban Khalid, Members of the EFP Economic Council, was warmly received by H. E Dr. Irfan Neziroglu, the Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, and key embassy officials, including Enes Malik CETIN, the Commercial Counsellor, and Ali Omer, the Financial Affairs Counsellor.

During the meeting, both sides expressed a strong interest in collaborating to boost bilateral trade.

## Kaspersky detected 467,000 malicious files daily in 2024 with Windows as primary target for cyberattacks

**Commerce Desk**

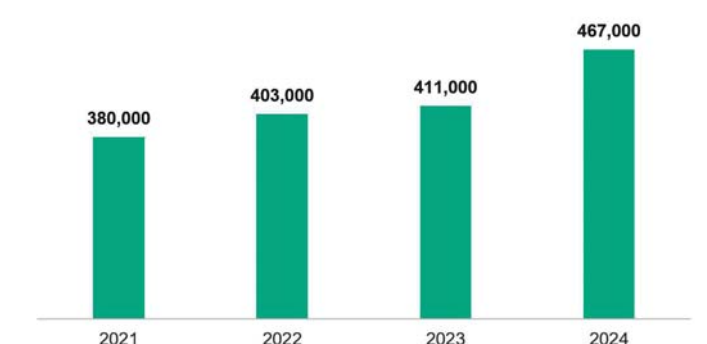
ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky's detection systems discovered an average of 467,000 malicious files per day in 2024, marking a 14% increase compared to the previous year. Certain types of threats saw significant growth with experts reporting a 33% surge in Trojan detections compared to 2023. These and other findings are described in the

Kaspersky Security Bulletin (KSB) – an annual series of reports analyzing major developments in the cybersecurity landscape.

Windows continued to be the primary target for cyberattacks, accounting for 93% of all malware-filled data detected daily. Malicious families disseminated through various scripts and different Microsoft Office document formats ranked among the top three threats, accounting for 6%

of all malicious files detected daily.

Kaspersky's detection systems discovered a significant increase in Windows malware – 19% from 2023 to 2024. The most widespread type of malware continues to be Trojans – malicious programs that disguise themselves as legitimate software – with a surge of 33% from 2023 to 2024. There has also been a 2.5-fold (150%) increase in the use of Trojan-droppers – programs



designed to deliver other malware to a victim's computer or phone without the victim noticing.

These discoveries are based on Kaspersky detections of malicious files from January to October and are

part of Kaspersky Security Bulletin (KSB) – an annual series of predictions and analytical reports on key shifts within the cybersecurity world. Follow this link to learn more about other KSB reports.

## Saqib Fayyaz Magoon Elected Chairman of BMP Progressive

**City Desk**

KARACHI: The Businessman Panel Progressive Core Committee has elected Saqib Fayyaz Magoon as the Chairman of BMP Progressive. Other elected office-bearers include Senior Vice Chairman Dr. Jasu Mal Leemani, Secretary General Khurram Ijaz, Treasurer Shakeel Ahmed, Coordinator Sindh Chambers Ghulam Mustafa Solangi, Joint Secretary Aman Paracha, Vice Chairman Women's Wing Nazli Abid Nisar, Coordinator All Pakistan Women Chambers Sahibzadi Maheen, Acting Chairman Karachi Asif Sakhi, Vice Chairman Karachi Abdul Samad, Vice Chairman Karachi Muhammad Yousuf, and Media Coordinator and Spokesperson Yasir Iqbal Malik.

The important meeting of the BMP Progressive Core Committee was held in Karachi and was attended by mentors Khalid Puri, Sheikh Shafiq, senior leaders Adeel Siddiqui, Mian Shabbir Mansha, Izhar ul Haq Qamar, Sham Lal Manglani, Rizwan Ehsan, Khurram Ashfaq, and other office bearers and members of BMP Progressive from across Sindh.

During the meeting, the performance of BMP Progressive within the Federation over the past year was reviewed, and the future course of action was discussed in detail. BMP Progressive leaders also presented suggestions to improve the federation's performance and enhance support for the business community going forward.

The meeting also focused on the challenges faced by the business community and potential solutions. Emphasis was placed on the need to serve traders, including promoting new startups.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, the leaders highlighted that FPCCI's efforts for the traders are well-known. They affirmed that steps are being taken to bring the issues of traders to the attention of authorities and resolve them.

They further stated, "FPCCI will continue to play its role as a bridge between the government and the business community, making every possible effort, while reiterating its commitment to maximizing exports and working together to achieve this goal."



# South Africa makes three changes to Playing XI for second Pakistan Test

**A Sports**

CAPE TOWN: Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Thursday revealed their Playing XI for the second Test against Pakistan, scheduled to be played here at Newlands from 3 January.

South Africa are leading the two-match series after a thrilling two-wicket victory in the opening Test in Centurion. With this victory, they confirmed their berth for the final of the World Test Championship (WTC), scheduled in June.

The Proteas have made three changes to the Playing XI as Wiaan Mulder, Keshav Maharaj and uncapped Kwena Maphaka came into the side for Tony de Zorzi, Corbin Bosch and Dane Paterson.

Bosch made his debut in the first Test, replacing injured Maharaj, and played a key role in South Africa's victory with



his all-round performance. Meanwhile, Paterson bagged a five-wicket haul in the

first innings.

In De Zorzi's absence, Ryan Rickelton will join Aiden Markram at the top of the order, followed by returning Mulder. The middle order will feature skipper Temba Bavuma, Tristan Stubbs, David Bedingham and wicketkeeper batter Kyle Verreynne.

Meanwhile, teenage pacer Maphaka, who impressed during the white-ball series against Pakistan, will join senior pacers Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen as well as returning spinner Maharaj to form South Africa's bowling attack.

South Africa Playing XI for the second Test against Pakistan

Aiden Markram, Ryan Rickelton, Wiaan Mulder, Tristan Stubbs, Temba Bavuma (c), David Bedingham, Kyle Verreynne (wk), Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kagiso Rabada, Kwena Maphaka.

# Pakistan likely to make one change for second South Africa Test: reports

**Sports Desk**

CAPE TOWN: Pakistan team management is likely to exclude all-rounder Aamir Jamal from their Playing XI for the second Test against South Africa, scheduled to start here at Newlands on 3 January.

Pakistan suffered a two-wicket defeat in a thrilling first Test of the two-match series against South Africa at SuperSport Park.

Reports suggest that the team management is considering including left-arm fast bowler Mir Hamza in the lineup instead of Aamir Jamal.

During the first Test, Jamal recorded scores of 28 and 18 with the bat. With the ball, he took two wickets in the first innings, however, he bowled only nine overs across two innings.

Although the pitch at Newlands typically offers favourable conditions for spin bowlers, it appears that Pakistan's management is not considering the inclusion of any specialist spinner in their playing XI.

Noman Ali, a left-arm spinner who made a significant impact by claiming 20 wickets at an impressive average of 13.85 during two Test matches against England in October 2024, is expected to stay on the sidelines.

Instead, the team's management is



likely to place their trust in all-rounder Agha Salman, who will take on the role of the sole spinner.

Pakistan squad for Test series against

South Africa

Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Haseebullah (wk),

Kamran Ghulam, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha

# Taskin Ahmed takes 7-19 to break Mohammad Amir's record

**Sports Desk**

MIRPUR: Right-arm pacer Taskin Ahmed returned with bowling figures of 7-19 to break the record of Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir during the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match here at Shere Bangla National Stadium on Thursday.

The 29-year-old pacer, who is playing for Durbar Rajshahi, took three wickets in the final over against Dhaka Capital to record the best bowling figures in the history of BPL.

His record spell restricted Dhaka Capital to 174-9 in the first innings. In response, Durbar Rajshahi successfully chased the target in 18.1 overs at the loss of three wickets, thanks to skipper Anamul Haque's unbeaten 73.



Prior to Taskin Ahmed, the record for best bowling figures in BPL was held by Mohammad Amir. The Pakistan pacer recorded the figures of 6-17 while playing for the Khulna Tigers against Sylhet Royals, in the 2020 edition of the league.

It's worth noting that Taskin's bowling figures are the third-best figures in T20 cricket across the globe.

The record for the best bowling figures in T20 cricket is currently held by Malaysia's talented Syazrul Idrus. He astoundingly took 7 wickets after conceding only 8 runs in a T20I match against China in 2023.

Meanwhile, Netherlands' Colin Ackermann is in second position with his figures of 7-18 while playing for Leicestershire in England's Vitality Blast against the Birmingham Bears.

# Shane Watson voices disappointment over India's refusal to tour Pakistan

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Former Australian all-rounder Shane Watson has voiced his deep disappointment over India's refusal to travel to Pakistan for the highly anticipated ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

The eight-team tournament was originally set to be hosted exclusively by Pakistan. However, the Indian government decided not to send its team to the neighbouring country due to ongoing political issues between the two nations.

Consequently, the International Cricket Council (ICC) adopted a hybrid model for the Champions Trophy, with Team India playing all their matches in Dubai.

Watson expressed that it was "unfortunate" for the fans in Pakistan that they would not be able to witness India playing live on their home soil.

"It's unfortunate things have turned out this way, but everyone loves watching



India-Pakistan games," he said during the ICC Champions Trophy Tour in Sydney.

The former all-rounder shared his experience of playing in Pakistan, stating

that it was 'incredible.'

"I got a small opportunity to play in the PSL in 2019, the first time after playing there in 2005. It was one of the highlights

of my career," he added.

"To go to Pakistan after a long time and see the love and joy they have for cricket was incredible. They were starved of world-class live cricket."

Shane Watson acknowledged the importance of hosting such a prestigious event, recognizing how it resonates with the passionate cricket fans in Pakistan.

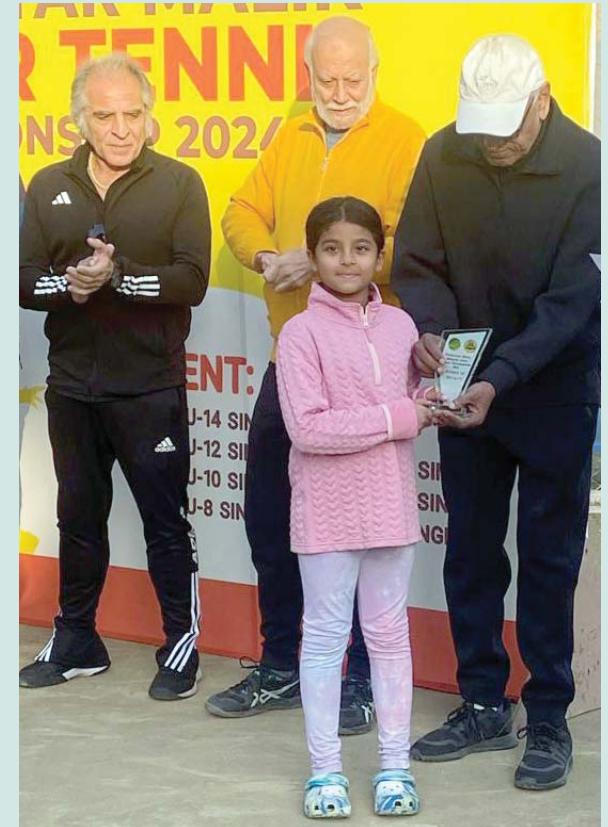
"It's going to be huge for Pakistan cricket fans to watch world-class players in their country," he said.

"This tournament will light up Pakistan. It's going to be a special event for the country and its cricket fans."

It's worth noting that the ninth edition of the ICC Champions Trophy will kick off on 19 February with host and defending champions Pakistan taking on New Zealand in the curtain-raiser in Karachi.

Meanwhile, the season finale is scheduled on 9 March in Lahore, unless India qualify, in which case it will be played in Dubai.

## Sheheryar Malik Tennis Tournament 2024-25 Successfully Concludes



**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Cheezious, a leading fast-food chain and proud Pakistani brand, successfully conducted the Sheheryar Malik Tennis Tournament 2024-25 at the Sir Syed Cheezious Tennis Academy. The event concluded with great enthusiasm and impressive participation. The opening ceremony was inaugurated by Mr. Manzar Riaz, Executive Director of Cheezious, alongside Mr. Rashid Malik (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz), former Pakistan No.1 and Davis Cup player.

The tournament attracted over 50 entries across multiple categories, including U-14 Boys, U-12 Boys, U-12 Girls, U-10 Boys, U-10 Girls, U-8 Boys, and U-8 Girls. Players from various regions of the country participated, including those who have previously represented Pakistan internationally.

Zohaib Hasan, Head of Marketing at Cheezious, commented, "At Cheezious, we believe in empowering young talent through sports. The overwhelming response to the Sheheryar Malik Tennis Tournament reaffirms our commitment to fostering a vibrant sports culture in Pakistan. We are proud to support these young athletes and look forward to more such initiatives in the future."

Despite being a local event, the tournament garnered a response comparable to a National Championship, reflecting the growing passion for tennis among young players. Winners and runners-up were awarded trophies and gift vouchers by Cheezious.

## Dawood Sports moved into Final of Jamshed Omar Invitation Cricket Tournament

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Dawood Sports moved into Final of Jamshed Omar Invitation Cricket Tournament after beating Strong Alamgir Gymkhana by 8 Wickets in the 2nd Semi Final at KCCA Stadium.

Battling First Alamgir Gymkhana were all out for 160 in 35 overs. Muhammad Usman 53 1x4 1x6, Habibullah 27, Kashif Ali 23, Saad Baig 18. Slow left arm spinners Jawwad Ahmed and Taha Waqar bowled well captured 3 Wickets each for 23 and 43 runs respectively.

In reply Dawood Sports 165/2 in 26 overs. Zakir Malik scored unbeaten 60 with the help of 4 boundaries and 6 sixes, Wahaj Riaz also unbeaten with 44 with 4 boundaries and a six, Mubashir Nawaz 39 4x4 1x6, Sohail Khan 18.

The Final of the Tournament will be played between Pakistan Cricket Club and Dawood Sports.

The Tournament is being organized by Pakistan Cricket Club with the Permission of Pakistan Cricket Board.

## Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament



**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant unbeaten 72 by Rana Areeb Aftab and 53 by by Aun Abbas Zone-IV Whites defeated Zone-VII Whites by 9 Wickets in their last Group "D" match to secured 1st Position and Zone-VII Whites secured 2nd Position to moved into Quarter Final of the Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at various Grounds.

**Scores in Brief:**

Zone-IV Whites beat Zone-VII Whites by 9 Wickets at KCCA Stadium. Zone-VII Whites 142 all out in 36.5 overs. Hammad Zaidi 44 4x4, Maaz Khan 29, Shiraz Ali (mf) 3/37, Aun Abbas 2/3, Farzhan Ghani 2/24.

Zone-IV Whites 144/1 in 30.5 overs. Rana Areeb Aftab 72 8x4 1x6 not out, Aun Abbas 53 2x4.

Later Mazhar Ali Awan President Zone-VII give the Medicam Man of the Match Award to Aun Abbas of Zone-IV Whites.

In the 2nd Match played at Young Fighter Ground Zone-II Blues beat Zone-V Green by 157 runs. Zone-II Blues 273/6 in 40 overs. Muhammad Siddiqui 71 2x4 1x6, S. M. Basit Naqvi 68 10x4, Umer Jadoon 48 3x4, M. Farooq 27, Salman Khan 23. M. Usman Ahmed 2/39, M. Anus 2/4. Zone-V Green 116 all out in 30.2 overs. M. Usman Khan 24, Usyd 22, Sameer Baig (lls) 4/31, Hanzala Fazal (lls) 3/10. After the end of the Match Sameer Baig received the Medicam Man of the Match Award.



## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing the 3rd meeting of the Revenue Mobilisation, Investment, and Trade Programme (REMIT) Steering Committee at the Finance Division on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Efforts underway to make nuclear Pakistan an economic power: Dar

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday said that the government was making all-out efforts to accomplish Pakistan's journey from nuclear to economic power and regain its lost stature in the world.

The deputy prime minister, addressing a news conference, gave a roundup of the government's efforts to bring economic stability and enhance Pakistan's diplomatic footprint through bilateral and multilateral engagements with the latest one being the beginning of country's two-year term as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for years 2025-26.

Highlighting the high-level exchanges and Pakistan's participation in and hosting of international events, he said



the incumbent government had strived to enhance Pakistan's diplomatic footprint during its first 10 months, which led to the burying of the impression of an "isolated Pakistan."

The deputy prime minister said that the PML-N-led coalition government inherited huge challenges of around 25 percent policy rate, slow GDP growth and skyrock-

eting inflation. However, the government's prudent economic policies downed the policy rate to 13 percent, inflation below 5 percent, and remittance, foreign exchange reserves and exports on the rise.

Ishaq Dar told the media that following Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visits and effective engagements with the leadership of the UAE, Saudi

Arabia, Kuwait and Azerbaijan, there were indications of around \$29 billion investment in coming to Pakistan.

He highlighted Pakistan's participation in the Nuclear Energy Summit, World Economic Forum in Saudi Arabia, OIC summit in Gambia, the visit of Saudi foreign minister, Iran's president late Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister, and that during all interactions Pakistan effectively raised the issue of Kashmir and ongoing Israel's genocide of Palestinian population. Pakistan's consistent efforts at the OIC summit in Gambia led to the appointment of OIC envoy on Islamophobia.

He said Pakistan was among the very few countries that strongly advocated the implementation of UN resolutions on Palestine and ICJ ruling on the issue, besides condemning Israel's barbarism against innocent people.

He said that besides hosting Palestinian medical students, Pakistan also dispatched relief aid to Gaza, Syria and Lebanon.

The deputy prime minister's presser also encompassed Pakistan's participation in D-8 summit and appointment of Ambassador Sohail Ahmed as its secretary general, PM Shehbaz's visit to China and Kazakhstan, participation in UN General Assembly session, where he highlighted Kashmir and Gaza issues besides interacting with dozens of world leaders.

Regarding his multiple interactions with UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, he said that a UK monitoring team was about to visit Pakistan in January which may follow the resumption of PIA flights to the UK, as the EU had already lifted the ban on the national flag carrier.

## Political stability and export-led growth key to economic prosperity: Qaiser Sheikh

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Maritime Affairs Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh emphasized the importance of political stability and export-led growth for Pakistan's economic development.

Talking to Pakistan Television, he highlighted the government's efforts to set a



clear path for sustainable progress.

He shared that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently launched the Uraan Pakistan program, a five-year plan aimed at achieving 6 percent growth and boosting exports to \$60 billion.

Sheikh noted that the government achieves success in curbing inflation, which has

dropped from a staggering 38 percent to single digits.

"The other economic indicators are also improving, and we're managing to repair the damage to the economy," he added.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to implementing effective policies to stabilize the economy and drive growth.

## Pakistan concerned over Indian extra-territorial killings in country

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office has expressed serious concern over Indian extra-territorial and extra-judicial killings inside Pakistan.

At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday day, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said this is not just limited to Pakistan. India's network of extra-territorial killings and abductions has now gone global and other countries are also concerned about India's extra-territorial activities.

Mumtaz Baloch said Pakistan desires friendly relations with all its neighbours including Afghanistan. She said Pakistan has a robust mechanism of dialogue with Afghanistan and it will like to continue dialogue with the neighbouring country on all aspects of bilateral relations including the issues related to secu-



city and border management

The FO spokesperson said Pakistan is fully capable of defending its national security and sovereignty



against any internal or external threat.

Responding to a question, Mumtaz Baloch said Gwadar port, developed with the support of China, is for the

development of Pakistan.

She categorically stated Pakistan has no designs whatsoever to offer military bases to any foreign government or entity.

## PM lauds Pakistan Navy for successful anti-narcotics operation

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday extended appreciation to Pakistan Navy for conducting successful anti-narcotics operation in Northern Arabian Sea.

During the operation, the Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Moawin confiscated a drug shipment worth around US\$1 million.

This is a very significant milestone in the anti-narcotics campaign, the prime minister said in a press statement issued by the PM Office.

He said the Pakistan Navy played a central role in preventing drug smuggling on the country's maritime defense and sea routes.

The nation is proud of the



personnel of the Pakistan Navy, the prime minister added.

## Pakistan Navy ships visit Iran during overseas deployment



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: During an overseas deployment to the Arabian Gulf, Pakistan Navy ships RASADGAR and AZMAT, along with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency ship DASHI, visited Port Bandar Abbas, Iran. The flotilla was led by Commander 14th Destroyer Squadron, Commodore Muhammad Umair.

Upon arrival at the port, Pakistan Navy ships were warmly received by representatives of Pakistan Embassy and officials from the host Navy. The Mission Commander, along with the Commanding Officers, held meetings with naval leadership of Iran. During

these interactions, matters of mutual interest, Navy-to-Navy engagements, and cooperation in maritime security were discussed. The Mission Commander also conveyed well-wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, for the people of Iran.

Following the port call, both PN and PMSA ships conducted a Passage Exercise with an Iranian Navy ship. The exercise at sea aimed to enhance interoperability between the two navies and promote shared learning through coordinated activities.

The visit of the PN flotilla to Iran is expected to further strengthen existing diplomatic ties and cordial relations between the two nations.

## Shafqat Ali Khan appointed FO spokesperson



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Additional Foreign Secretary Shafqat Ali Khan has been appointed spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to the Foreign Office, Shafqat Ali Khan will replace Mumtaz Zahra Baloch.

The FO added that Mumtaz Zahra Baloch will take over as Pakistan's Ambassador to France.

## Actress Nargis withdraws domestic violence case against husband

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistani actress Nargis has withdrawn a domestic violence case against her husband, Inspector Majid Bashir, announcing to forgive him.

The case was filed in November 2024, after Nargis alleged that her husband had physically abused her. Nargis had lodged the case at Defence police station, but her husband was granted bail.

In a recent development, the actress also submitted an affidavit in court, confirming the reconciliation. She maintained that she has forgiven her husband after the intervention of

family elders.

As part of the reconciliation, the couple has agreed not to live together for three years.

It is to be noted that Nargis, known in the entertainment world as Ghazala



Idris, stepped away from the industry years earlier after marrying Inspector Bashir. Following her marriage, she bid farewell to the entertainment industry and now manages her beauty salon in Lahore.