



Saim Ayub injured during fielding in second Test match

Pakistani star batter Saim Ayub got injured during the second Test match between Pakistan and South Africa in Cape Town on Friday. The national team's physician came in the field and started Saim Ayub's physical check-up and decided to shift him to hospital for further check-up and treatment.



Pakistan issues visas to 94 Indian Pilgrims for visiting Shadani Darbar

Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has issued 94 visas to Indian pilgrims for their visit to Pakistan to participate in the 316th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Shiv Aurtari Stguru Sant Shadaram Sahib, at Shadani Darbar Hayat Pitafi, Sindh from January 5th to 15th.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Apex Committee Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz chairs the meeting of Apex Committee of National Action Plan on Friday.



Photo: PID

PM vows to combat challenge of misinformation, fake news on social media

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday vowed to tackle the growing challenge of digital media including the fake news and misinformation on social media platforms, calling it inevitable for elimination of terrorism and extremism from the country. "On digital front, the venom against Pakistan is being spitted through social media from some elements abroad. This is also a big challenge, which is supported by distorted facts and twisted reality,"

the prime minister said while chairing the meeting of the Apex Committee of National Action Plan. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, the federal cabinet members, chief ministers of all provinces, Chief of Army Staff and other high officials. The prime minister said that certain questions were being raised by distorting facts and twisting the reality on social media that were denting the state's image.

"If we don't counter this challenge, all efforts (to eliminate terrorism and extremism in the country) will go waste," he said expressing the confidence that the government would overcome such challenges. The prime minister recalled how fake news were spread with regard to martyrdom of personnel of Rangers on November 26. The sacrifices of the Armed Forces are immense which would not go waste and Pakistan will continue its journey towards peace, stability and prosperity, he added.

PM Shehbaz Sharif on the occasion congratulated the nation as Pakistan assumed non-permanent membership of United Nation Security Council. He emphasized that some Khawarij intruders were living in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to disturb the country's peace. The prime minister pointed out that the agenda of prosperity and development was discussed in the previous day's meeting where it was agreed that without bringing peace and stability in the country, economic development, was not possible.

The government, he said was determined to completely eliminate Fitna Al-Khawarij from the country to ensure socio-economic development of the country. The prime minister stressed that the federal government, the provinces and all relevant stakeholders in collaboration with the Pakistan security forces should make a comprehensive plan in this regard. He pledged that with unity of thought and action, the government will implement such plans in letter and spirit, to resolve all challenges faced by the country.

Mohsin Naqvi vows to convert National Police Academy into int'l organization



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday morning visited National Police Academy (NPA) Islamabad and held a meeting with under-training officials and inquired about facilities being provided to them. On the occasion Mohsin Naqvi personally visited officer's mess, academy and hostel of the under-training officials. He also checked quality of food being provided to officials. Mohsin Naqvi directed to provide all necessary facilities to under-training officials in their rooms of hostel.

Mohsin Naqvi also summoned a comprehensive master plan for National Police Academy and directed to prepare new master plan through consultant of international repute. He assured that funds release by National Police Foundation (NPF) amounting to Rs250 million will be transferred to National Police Academy soon. He said that best officials as per stands of Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul will be deputed in National Police Academy. Mohsin Naqvi said that all necessary facilities and allowances will be provided to these officials.

'Uraan Pakistan' programme to achieve sustainable economic growth: Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said that each and every project would be evaluated in line with the standards and targets, set under the 'Uraan Pakistan' programme to achieve sustainable economic growth before it became part of the Annual Development Plan (ADP). "Uraan Pakistan is not fiction or merely a book, but a reality, and its implementation has already begun. In the next development budget, only the projects that comply with the set growth targets will be included," he said. The minister made these



remarks during a media briefing on the recently unveiled 'Uraan

Pakistan' - the homegrown National Economic Plan (2024-29), a journey to a trillion-dollar economy by 2035. Considering the scarcity of resources, he said that only projects linked with national development would be executed under the annual plans in the future, adding that the new programme had set priorities for a future journey toward progress and prosperity. He urged all segments of society to play their due role in the journey of national economic development, offering new hope for a brighter future for the nation. "Success in the 21st century can only be achieved through economic development.

Pakistan's identity in the world is that of a hardworking and brilliant nation; it must be upheld and further consolidated." The minister spoke in detail about the 5Es (Exports, Equity and Empowerment, E-Pakistan, Environment & Climate Change, and Energy and Infrastructure) framework and the strategy for its successful implementation. Commenting on 'Exports,' the minister said the biggest challenge Pakistan faces is directing its focus from domestic business to exports with value addition to products, achieving the target of \$60 billion in exports by 2029, and eventually attaining the capability of \$100 billion in the next eight years.

Amir Muqam criticizes at Imran Khans 'self-centered' politics



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs and States and Frontier Regions, Engr Amir Muqam Friday strongly criticized PTI founder Imran Khan, stating that Khan prioritizes self-defense over the country's interests, questioning his commitment to the nation's well-being. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, he urged the PTI to engage in dialogue with the government

to address pressing economic issues and work towards the country's betterment, rather than pursuing self-centered politics. While responding to a query, Muqam clarified that the government's negotiation committee does not have the authority to decide on the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, adding, instead, the decision will be made by the courts, emphasizing the importance of upholding the rule of law and allowing the judicial process to run its course. He encouraged PTI to take the legal route, allowing the courts to determine Khan's fate. Muqam also urged PTI to seize the negotiation opportunity and make the roundtable discussion a success as this approach can only lead to a mutually beneficial outcome, where both parties find common.

PML-N sacrifices political interests to rescue Pakistan's economy: Rana Sanaullah



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Special assistant to PM on political affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan Friday stated that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has sacrificed its political interests to rescue Pakistan from default and revive the country's economy, which was in a state of emergency. In a recent interview with a private news channel, Rana Sanaullah stressed the importance of collective effort to strengthen Pakistan's economy, urging all stakeholders to work together with the government to achieve a better economy. By working together all stakeholders including PTI can pool their resources, expertise and knowledge to drive economic

growth and development, he added. In a firm response to PTI's upcoming demands, he declared that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will table a 'Charter of Demands' in the next round of talks with the government, adding, once PTI submits its formal, written demands we will convene with our legal experts and deliver a decisive rebuttal. Responding to a question about the military court's decision on individuals involved in the May 9 incident, Rana Sanaullah commended the Army Chief's balanced approach. He advised PTI to refrain from making provocative statements, acknowledging that the military has its own system of accountability and justice.

Peace committees constituted in Kurram: first convoy will leave for Parachinar tomorrow

Umer Wazir

WANA: In line with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government-led Grand Jirga's agreement, local elders and political leaders of Kurram district have set up peace committees comprising members of both sides. On the assurance of peace committees, first convoy of vehicles carrying edibles and daily use items will leave for Parachinar from Peshawar on Saturday (tomorrow). Police will escort the convoy. Under the peace agreement, the local people on both sides

have promised to hand over their arms to the local administration within 15 days, while the bunkers will be eliminated in a month. In Lower Kurram peace committee comprises 27 members, including Pir Haider Ali Shah (former MNA), Abi Faizullah, Hussain Ali Shah and Haji Noor Ali and others. In Upper Kurram, 48 members peace committee comprises Sajjad Hussain Turi (former Centre), Ali Hadi (MPA), Muzamil Shah, Syed Kazim Hussain and others.

Sharjeel Inam Memon orders immediate resolution of Red Line BRT Project delays

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KARACHI: Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has once again issued directives to expedite work and swiftly resolve obstacles in the Red Line BRT project. An important high-level meeting was held in Karachi under the chairmanship of Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon.

The meeting was attended by Transport Secretary Asad Zaman, Planning and Development Chairman Najam Shah, Karachi Commissioner Hassan Naqvi, TransKarachi CEO Tariq Manzoor Chandio, DIG Traffic Ahmed Nawaz Cheema, and other relevant officials. Representatives from the Asian Development Bank, including Lloyd Wright and international consultants, also participated online.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding the immediate resolution of issues hindering the progress of the Red Line BRT. Key concerns included delays due to



the relocation of utility infrastructure, such as water supply lines, K-Electric, National Telecommunication Corporation, and Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited.

The progress of ongoing construction in Lot 1 and Lot 2 was also reviewed, with contractors providing

updates on the work. TransKarachi CEO Tariq Manzoor Chandio briefed attendees on the challenges faced in implementation, highlighting that utility providers had not taken adequate steps for relocation.

In response, Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon issued a strict five-day dead-

line for all stakeholders to resolve the issues and ensure uninterrupted progress. He also directed coordination with Civil Aviation Authority officials to commence work near Karachi Airport.

The K-IV water supply project and K-Electric's infrastructure adjustments were identified as major causes of project delays. Speaking at the meeting, the senior minister emphasized that further delays in the Red Line BRT project were unacceptable. He instructed that construction should be carried out in three shifts—morning, evening, and night—to ensure 24-hour work continuity and completion ahead of schedule.

Sharjeel Inam Memon reiterated that the Red Line BRT is a flagship project for Karachi, aimed at providing a modern, efficient, and eco-friendly mass transit system that will revolutionize the city's transportation network. He further stated that once completed, the project would facilitate thousands of daily commuters, significantly improving urban mobility.

KPK Assembly hosted a comprehensive educational visit for the students

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly hosted a comprehensive educational visit for the students of the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Peshawar. This initiative aimed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of parliamentary affairs, legislative processes, and the historical and operational significance of the Assembly.

The delegation was warmly welcomed and given an extensive tour of the Assembly's key sections. They were introduced to various aspects of its functioning, including the legislative framework, procedural rules, and administrative structure. The Assistant Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly delivered a detailed briefing, shedding light on the institution's history, the legislative process, and its critical role in governance.

Following the initial briefing, the Special Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Syed Waqar Shah, engaged with the students, addressing their queries with detailed explanations. He emphasized the vision of Speaker Babar Saleem Swati, who initiated such educational programs to cultivate awareness among the youth regarding parliamentary functions and their importance in the democratic system.

CBD Punjab unveils 2025-Year of Sar Bulandi Documentary Highlighting Successes and Future Aspirations

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA) also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), Pakistan's leading urban development authority, proudly launched the logo and documentary for the "Year of Sar Bulandi 2025." This initiative celebrates the remarkable achievements of 2024 while paving the way for an ambitious and transformative future.

The documentary was unveiled by CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin and COO CBD Punjab Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, capturing the extraordinary progress made by CBD Punjab. It highlights the groundbreaking ceremonies of flagship projects such as NSIT City and Lahore Global Village, the unveiling of transformative ventures like Zameen ARX and High-Q CBD Tower, and the opening of the Grand Souq Lahore, complete with its marketing and administrative rights. These accomplishments reflect CBD Punjab's commitment to innovation, growth, and sustainable urban development.

In addition to these landmark projects, the documentary also celebrated significant infrastructural milestones achieved in 2024. The completion of the Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Flyover and the opening of CBD Route 47 have significantly enhanced urban mobility and regional connectivity. The near completion of Walton Road's upgrade, including the conversion of ADA Nullah, further underscores CBD Punjab's focus on sustainable and inclusive development.

The event also recognized the exceptional leadership and dedication of the CBD Punjab team. Departments such as Commercial, Legal & HR, Technical, Operations & Admin, Land & Estate, and Finance played an instrumental role in delivering these achievements under the stewardship of leaders including Waseem Siddiq, Riaz Hussain, Barrister Bilal Khokhar, and others.

Banega Pakistan convention will be held on January 12: SG Muslim Conference

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI/MUZAFFARABAD: Preparations are underway for the Muslim Conference's January 12th Kashmir Banega Pakistan Convention. Muslim Conference workers have started a door-to-door campaign in Muzaffarabad and Bagh to make the convention a success. Yesterday, senior Muslim Conference leader former government minister Shamim Ali Malik, Chairperson Women's Wing Samia Sajid Raja, Syed Yasir Naqvi Advocate, Chairperson Students' Wing Maimuna Kiani Advocate, Saleem Awan, Sheikh Maqsood, Sajjad Amor Abbasi, Tsavur Moosavi, Raja Waqar, Colonel (ret'd) Arif Abbasi said that the Muslim Conference is organizing a successful convention at Kohala on January 12th in which workers should ensure their participation. Realizing the recent unpleasant events in Azad Kashmir, the Muslim Conference has decided to organize the Kashmir Banega Pakistan Convention in Kohala, which aims to present a clear proof of Kashmiris' love and solidarity with Pakistan. The propaganda being spread against Pakistan today is anti-national and action should be taken against such people. We condemn the creation of chaos and anarchy in the state. He said that the workers of the Muslim Conference will participate in this convention in full on the instructions of the President of the Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan and will present practical proof of national awareness.

In the meeting, Additional Secretary General of the Muslim Conference Raja Muhammad Latif Hasrat, Finance Secretary Sardar Manzoor Hussain Khan, Senior Vice President of Punjab Province Rana Liaquat Ali, President of Rawalpindi Islamabad Circle Sardar Asim Zahid Abbasi, Raja Muhammad Zarin Khan, Deputy Finance Secretary Sardar Ajmal Nakyalvi, Abdul Majeed Tahir Member CEC, Commander Naseer Khan, Office Secretary Rana Ghulam Hussain, Jalil Ahsan Abbasi, Dr. Abid Abbasi, Raja Shahid Ahmed Khan, Kashif Usmani, Abdul Ghaffar Abbasi, Fiza Sajid Raja, Aamir Abbasi, Dawood Abbasi, Faizan Abbasi and others participated.

Punjab to establish province-wide simulation centers: Health minister

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has announced plans to establish a simulation center across the province following the successful implementation of a simulation center at King Edward Medical University (KEMU) in collaboration with the American Heart Association (AHA).

Presiding over a meeting on simulation training at KEMU on Friday, the minister stated, "This training will significantly enhance the skills of doctors and paramedics. Regular simulation training will be initiated at KEMU and Services Institute of Medical Sciences (SIMS), while Rescue 1122 paramedics will also benefit from these programs."

KEMU Vice Chancellor Professor Mahmood Ayaz assured full support for expanding simulation training programs at the university. Dr. Anjum from the University of Washington provided a detailed briefing on the effectiveness of simulation labs, showcasing their role in improving medical education and practice.

Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique appreciated Dr. Anjum's presentation and stressed the importance of introducing simulation training in all medical schools in Lahore. He highlighted that departments such as gynecology, orthopedics, and surgery would greatly benefit from this modern approach.

Professor Abrar Ashraf and Professor Ahmed Uzair Qureshi echoed the need for simulation-based learning in medical education. The meeting was attended by prominent medical professionals, including Professor Muhammad Moin, CEO Mayo Hospital Professor Faisal Masood, Professor Saima Iqbal, Dr. Irfan Asmat Butt, and others.

Shortage of drinking water

KARACHI: A boy is on his way to fill water cans for daily usage faraway from his house due to water shortage at Ranchore Line area of the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Protest held in WANA for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release

Umer wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Demonstration was held outside the Wana Press Club for the release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui. The demonstration was attended by Jamaat-e-Islami General Secretary Abdul Wahab, senior leader Saif-ur-Rehman Tayyab, Ejaz Wazir, Mumtaz Khalil Ghazi, and Dr. Aafia Siddiqui Team South Waziristan Lower President Shah Hussain Wazir, among other dignitaries.

The protesters chanted slogans against the government and demanded Dr. Aafia's immediate release. The placards and banners in the protesters' hands carried impactful slogans related to Dr. Aafia's release.

Addressing the gathering, Saif-ur-Rehman Tayyab said Dr. Aafia Siddiqui has been languishing in American captivity for 21 years, enduring unbearable



hardships. This situation is a blatant violation of human rights. He

appealed to the government to utilize diplomatic channels to secure her release. The protesters emphasized the need to highlight Dr. Aafia's case globally to ensure justice. They demanded effective and serious diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue.

The protest was attended by political workers and social leaders who collectively raised their voices for Dr. Aafia's release and demanded immediate action from the government.

Dr. Aafia Siddiqui Team South Waziristan Lower President Shah Hussain Wazir termed Dr. Aafia's prolonged detention as the worst human rights violation. He said it's a matter of national pride and honor, demanding the government to utilize its diplomatic power effectively.

The protesters also appealed to the international community to play its role in ensuring justice.

'Family Festival and Expo' held at Zamong Park Mardan

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

MARDAN: A 2-day "Family Festival and Expo" on the arrival of New Year at Zamong Park Mardan organized jointly by Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and City Local Government Mardan, in which Chief Guest Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mardan Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, Mayor Mardan Himayat Allah Mayar, Central Organization of Traders Provincial General Secretary Zahir Shah cut the ribbon and inaugurated it. The members of Mardan Chamber and the business



community participated in large numbers on this occasion. On this occasion, more than 30 stalls were set up by local traders which included various brands of local food,

clothing, decoration, culture and others, as well as detergent and soap items. On this occasion Deputy Commissioner Mardan Azmatullah Wazir while addressing the event said that the district administration will do its best for the development and prosperity of Mardan and all the problems of the businessmen will be solved at their doorstep. The Deputy Commissioner assured full cooperation with all the business community. He said that investors are being brought to this district so that the local people will benefit from the economic activities.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:44 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 3:34 pm
Maghrib 5:12 pm
Isha 6:41 pm

EMERGENCY

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

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 921334-43
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

COMPLAINTS

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

AIOU launches four-year BS program in International Relations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD, 3RD JANUARY: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has launched a four-year (ODL) BS program in International Relations (IR), keeping in view the market needs and the growing demands of the students.

To enhance interpersonal skills and cater to the needs of the contemporary market, the university has also introduced four-year BS programs in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science under face-to-face mode.

Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Professor Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir stated that the Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, had directed the introduction of academic programs that align with market demands. Acting on these instructions, the university has launched these programs, which promise



ample career opportunities both within the country and abroad for the graduates.

The applicants have been asked to apply online only before February 17, the stipulated date.

Admissions in these programs will be strictly on merit, as per the directives of the Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood.

To see the eligibility and other requirements, the applicants could visit the University's official website (aiou.edu.pk).

Government to make the tax system more transparent and efficient to restore public confidence: Ahsan Bakhtawari



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, Member Central Core Committee UBG (FPCCI), and former President ICCL, Ahsan Bakhtawari, expressed happiness over surpassing the IMF-agreed target for the tax-to-GDP ratio by December 2024. He termed this achievement a significant

step toward Pakistan's economic recovery. In a statement, he said achieving the 10.8% ratio is evidence of the hard work and dedication of the FBR and related institutions behind this success. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari suggested to the government that instead of further burdening taxpayers, it is essential to expand the tax net to include more individuals. He highlighted that numerous

people in the country are capable of paying taxes but remain outside the tax net. Bringing these individuals into the tax system is crucial for further economic improvement. He stated that expanding the tax net would not only increase tax collection but also contribute to stabilizing the economy, boosting investment, and enhancing government resources.

Furthermore, including new individuals in the tax net would be a significant success for the government, aiding the nation's progress. Ahsan Bakhtawari advised the government to make the tax system more transparent and efficient to restore public confidence and encourage more people to join the system voluntarily. He emphasized the need for public awareness

programs to educate people about the importance and benefits of paying taxes. He also underscored the necessity of utilizing technology and formalizing the informal sector to expand the tax net. This would simplify the tax collection process and curb tax evasion. These measures would bring further stability to the economy and provide additional resources for public welfare.

Dryness

ISLAMABAD: A boat rider rides a boat at dry Rawal Dam, in Federal Capital, as the water level at Rawal Dam has fallen considerable due to the prolonged dry spell in Islamabad.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Faisalabad University and IPC hold photography workshop

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Gold Medalist of International Photojournalist Muhammad Tahir Educated Students about the importance of Digital photography And How digital Photography can be Done in a Practical way And told About The Camera For The New Student in Photography Three Things are Very important in a Camera ISO-Aperture-Shutter Speed-Types of Photography, Landscape, Wildlife, Portrait, Briefing on this Occasion, Muhammad Tahir Told the Students That in the Modern Era, in The Form of Photography, you Can Make a Name for yourself Rather, you can also Show The Positive Face of your institutions and Pakistan Through Photography.



During the workshop, Students also Asked Muhammad Tahir Various Questions. How can the Camera be Used And how can Students Use the Angle of Digital Photography to Create Their own new and innovative Digital Photography On this Occasion, Muhammad Tahir Told the Students what News Photography is and how it can be Done, And how to Photograph Which Events. And How And at what angle can a news photo be taken Awas Sattar and other lecturers from the Department of Communication, University of Faisalabad were also present on the occasion

2% Admission Quota for minorities, Kalash Marriage Bill KP

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: A Provincial Stakeholders Seminar was held in Peshawar, organized by Blue Veins in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Rights Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Director General of Law and Human Rights, Government of KP. The seminar brought together diverse voices to discuss significant legislative and policy developments concerning minority communities, i.e. the 2% admission quota for minorities in higher education and the KP Kalash Marriage Bill. These discussions highlighted the importance of ensuring equitable access to education for minority groups and safeguarding the cultural and legal rights of the Kalash community.

The seminar was attended by a panel of stakeholders,



demonstrating a collective commitment to inclusivity and progress. Notable participants included the Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, the Commissioner of the Right to Public Services Commission, Director General Law and Human Rights, the Provincial Coordinator of the National Commission for Human Rights, the Director of Operations from the Local Government and Rural Development

Department, and the Chief Khateeb KP. Representatives from the Right to Information Commission, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women, various civil society organizations, and media personnel also actively contributed to the dialogue.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology stated, "While legislative reforms are important, attitudinal and behavioral changes are far more effective tools for promoting harmony and inclusivity in society. True progress begins with a shift in mindset."

The Director General of Law and Human Rights emphasized, "Minority rights are an entitlement, not a privilege, and The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is unwavering in its commitment to protecting and promoting these rights through progressive policies and meaningful engagement."

The Provincial Coordinator of the National Commission for Human Rights remarked, "The 2% admission quota for minorities in higher education in KP is a step in the right direction toward creating equal opportunities. We wholeheartedly support this initiative and will continue to advocate for policies that uplift marginalized communities."

Syed Adil Shah is suitable and strong candidate: Abrar Ahmed Khan

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association North Punjab President Abrar Ahmed Khan said that Syed Adil Shah is a very suitable and strong candidate for the seat of Member for Boards of Governors College in the Federal Board of Education. All the associations included in the Joint Action Committee have announced their full support. If he is successful, then he will play a key role in solving the problems of the private education sector.

He expressed these views at a certificate distribution ceremony organized by Apsama along with Muhammad Furqan Chaudhry, Central Senior Vice President of All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association, Member Boards of Governors Federal Board of Education and President Apsama Rawalpindi Division for Women Mrs. Sakina Taj, Col. R. Murtaza Ali Shah, Col. R. Fawad Hanif, Amir Anwar, Abrar Ahmed Advocate, Abrarul Haq Shakir and others. The ceremony was attended by male and female members in large numbers. Among them were Agha Shahab Maqsood, Abdul Rashid Awan, Syed Adil Shah, Hafiz Muhammad Yasin, Kamran Saif Qureshi, Dr. Ijaz, Raja Noman Qamar, Adnan Nisar, Shahid Yousof, Obaid-ur-Rehman Hazarvi, Raja Waseem Saifi, Naeem Akbar, Sheikh Nadeem, Raja Asif Mahmood, Hassan Javed, Mrs. Yasmin, Mrs. Ezra, Mrs. Shafiq, Muhammad Rehan, Dr. Najaf, Asif Qureshi, Lubni Rashid, Muhammad Shahbaz Advocate, Raja Sanaullah, Qazi Zia, Qazi Naveed and others present. Muhammad Furqan Chaudhry said that APSAMA is the largest and oldest organization of private educational institutions across the country. The services of President North Punjab Abrar Ahmed Khan for private educational institutions are commendable. The members associated with APSAMA for a long time are our valuable asset. As a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Board of Education and President of APSAMA Women's Wing Rawalpindi Division, Mrs. Sakina Taj's services to the education sector are exemplary. Now Syed Adil Shah, President of Chaklala Cantonment Board Rawalpindi, is participating in the election of Member Boards of Governors for a college seat in the Federal Board of Education. Adil Shah has the support of academic circles across Pakistan. President North Punjab Abrar Ahmed Khan and Mrs. Sakina Taj said that the role of private educational institutions in the welfare and promotion of education cannot be forgotten. They said that all the associations included in the Joint Action Committee have announced their unconditional support for Adil Shah, for which we are grateful to them. All the members present at the ceremony were awarded certificates and prayers were offered for the demise of the loved ones of the members associated with APSAMA.

Rescue 1122 Toba Tek Singh Responds 43,690 emergencies in 2024. DEO. Mian Faraz Munir

Zafar Chishtii

TOBA TEK SINGH: Rescue 1122 Toba Tek Singh responded to 43,690 emergencies in 2024, maintaining an impressive average response time of seven minutes, according to District Emergency Officer (DEO) Mian Faraz Munir disclosed that Rescue 1122 received a total of 151,606 calls, including 43,690 emergency calls, 18,180 informational calls, and 89,736 disturbing calls. Rescue 1122 assisted 45,248 patients, providing on-site medical aid to 18,865 individuals, and transferring 25,482 patients to hospitals. Unfortunately, 901 fatalities were recorded, including 94 victims of road traffic accidents and 807 deaths from other emergencies. Through the Patient Referral Service, 3,689 patients were transferred to major healthcare facilities, including DHQ Hospital Toba Tek Singh 1,583, THQ Hospitals in Gojra, Kamalia, and Pirmahal 2,088 RHCs in Arouti, Sindhilhanwali, and 18 Rajana. DEO Mian Faraz Munir emphasized the dedication of Rescue 1122 staff, who worked tirelessly to save lives and assist the community. He urged citizens to refrain from making prank calls, which disrupt emergency operations, and reiterated the service's commitment to public welfare. "May 2025 bring peace, prosperity, and safety for Pakistan and the people of Toba Tek Singh. He added that Rescue 1122 will continue its efforts to enhance emergency services and ensure a safer environment for all.



Rain and snow forecast for Upper regions; dense fog to persist in plains: PMD

ISLAMABAD, JAN 03 (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Friday forecasted rain with snowfall over the hills in Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northern Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, and adjoining hilly areas.

Dense to moderate fog is likely to persist during morning and night in the plains of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Upper Sindh.

A frontal weather system is currently influencing the upper parts of the country and is expected to persist until the morning of January 6, according to PMD.

Rain and snowfall were recorded in several regions, including Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northern Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir. Other parts of the country experienced cold and partly cloudy weather, while moderate to dense fog continued to blanket most districts of Punjab and Upper Sindh. Rainfall in millimeters was recorded in Chitral (22), Kalam (20), Drosh (17), Pattan (16), Mir Khani (15), Upper Dir (14), Saidu Sharif (2), and Malam Jabba (1) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while in Balochistan, Dalbandin received 18 mm and Kalat 1 mm.

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Remarkable Growth of Asian Economies: China and Pakistan

Among news of an economic slowdown in China and economic challenges in Pakistan, I was surprised to notice the outstanding ratings of both countries on the economic front based on the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) method. According to the World Bank, China, with an economy of \$34.66 trillion, assumed the first position, outperforming the US, which stood in second place with a PPP GDP of \$27.72 trillion. According to the World Bank, Pakistan ranked 25th globally with a PPP GDP of \$1.50 trillion, outperforming countries like the Netherlands, Argentina, Malaysia, South Africa, Singapore, Switzerland, Israel, Denmark, and many others.

The performance of both China and Pakistan was even more impressive according to data released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). According to the IMF, China's GDP (PPP) was projected at \$39.44 trillion, positioning it as the world's largest economy by PPP, while the United States trailed behind at \$30.34 trillion, making it the second-largest economy by PPP. These projections highlight China's significant economic lead over the United States in PPP terms, with China's economy expected to be about 30% larger than that of the U.S. in 2025.

This adjustment accounts for Pakistan's substantial informal economy, which includes unrecorded and untaxed transactions that significantly contribute to economic activity. By incorporating this informal sector and updating the base year for GDP calculations, the

revised figure provides a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of Pakistan's economic size. This re-evaluation strengthens Pakistan's position in global rankings, highlighting its untapped potential and opportunities to formalize and expand its economic base for sustainable growth.

China's economic prowess in 2025 is expected to solidify its position as the world's largest economy by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), with a projected GDP (PPP) of \$34.66 trillion (WB) and \$42.817 trillion (IMF) and \$42.817 trillion (WE). This dominance is driven by its vast population of over 1.4 billion, providing a significant labor force and consumer market. As the "factory of the world," China continues to excel in manufacturing, particularly in electronics, machinery, and textiles, while advancing its technological capabilities in robotics, artificial intelligence, and smart manufacturing. President Xi Jinping's ideology to transition China's industries toward quality-oriented production and fundamentally upgrade its industrial infrastructure ensures that the economy remains competitive and innovative. This vision counters predictions of a slowing growth trajectory, highlighting China's resilience and adaptability in a rapidly evolving global economy. Moreover, initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) expand China's trade networks, solidify geopolitical influence, and strengthen economic ties across Asia, Africa, and Europe.

China's leadership in renewable energy, urbanization, and infrastructure develop-

ment further boosts its economic clout. It leads the world in solar and wind energy production, aligning with global sustainability goals and ensuring energy security. The development of smart cities and the world's most extensive high-speed rail network enhances connectivity and trade efficiency. Financially, China's efforts to internationalize the yuan and its massive foreign currency reserves reinforce its global monetary influence. The inherent political stability and continuation of policies within China's governance system serve as a

foundational strength, enabling consistent long-term planning and execution of economic strategies. While challenges such as slowing population growth, economic rebalancing, and geopolitical tensions persist, the combination of forward-thinking industrial reforms and stable governance positions China to maintain its upward growth trajectory and dispel concerns about economic deceleration.

Pakistan's economy demonstrates inherent strengths and resilience that have enabled it to secure rankings of 24th to 26th globally in GDP (PPP), outperforming many major economies. Its young and dynamic population, with over 60% under 30, drives economic growth and expands a rapidly urbanizing consumer market. The substantial contribution of its informal economy, which includes unrecorded and non-taxed transactions, reveals a larger economic footprint than official figures suggest. Strategically located at the crossroads of South Asia,

Central Asia, and the Middle East, Pakistan serves as a critical transit route for regional trade, bolstered by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Its strong agricultural base, abundant natural resources, and emerging industries like IT services and textiles diversify its economy and enhance global competitiveness. Additionally, remittances from its large diaspora provide a steady inflow of foreign exchange, supporting economic stability. Despite global challenges, Pakistan has demonstrated resilience through structural reforms, adaptive governance, and efforts to attract foreign investment. These factors, coupled with its untapped potential and strategic initiatives, position Pakistan as a rising economy with opportunities for sustained growth and an improving global economic stature.

The claim that Pakistan's GDP (PPP) is 5% of China's GDP (PPP) is nearly accurate, with the actual figure being approximately 4.86%. Here's the corrected statement:

China is the economic leader of the world on a PPP basis, and it is only a matter of time before it becomes the world leader in terms of nominal GDP growth. While Pakistan's GDP (PPP) is approximately 4.86% of China's GDP, it has the potential to achieve an influential economic role provided it brings political stability, sets the right direction, invests in research and development, and fosters innovation and creativity in its industrial, services, and agricultural sectors.

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

China to boost funding for key projects, broaden trade-in programs in 2025

China will increase investment in major projects and expand the scope of trade-in programs in 2025, according to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China's top economic planner, on Friday.

In 2025, China will increase the issuance of ultra-long special treasury bonds to implement major national strategies and enhance security capacity in key areas, according to the NDRC.

The commission said that it will continue to prioritize key initiatives such as ecological and environmental protection, advancing green growth in the Yangtze River Economic Belt, the new western land-sea corridor, the public service system for the urbanization of rural migrants, and the quality improvement of higher education, Global Times reported.

The scope of water conservancy support will be broadened to encompass medium and large irrigation zones and major water diversion projects nationwide. Additionally, intercity railway construction projects in key metropolitan areas will be included in the support framework, and nationwide measures will be adopted to effectively reduce logistics costs for society as a whole.

The NDRC said it will fast-track progress on ongoing projects. Building on last year's early issuance of a project list worth approximately 100 billion yuan (\$13.69 billion) for this year, we will soon issue another batch of project lists to ensure swift and tangible outcomes, the NDRC said.

The NDRC also said that China will increase the issuance of ultra-long special treasury bonds to broaden coverage and raise subsidy levels for large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-ins this year.

Subsidies will be implemented for the purchase of new digital products such as mobile phones, tablets, and smartwatches, offering financial incentives for individual purchases of these devices.

Furthermore, the incentive levels for replacing new-energy city buses and upgrading power batteries, the updating of agricultural machinery, and the replacement of household furnishings and decorations are set to rise.

Looking ahead to 2025, China's expansive consumer market advantages remain steadfast and the consumer market is projected to sustain steady growth, the NDRC said.

To boost consumption, the government will aim to raise residents' incomes, diversify the supply of consumer products and services, identify new consumption growth areas and improve the overall consumption environment, the NDRC said.



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

General Secretary Kim Jong Un's Revolutionary Activities

Spokesman Report

General Secretary Kim Jong Un made a concluding speech on the first agenda item.

He gave an assessment by the Party Central Committee of the implementation of the policies of the Party and state in 2024, recorded as a year of fortune and transformation for the Party and the people of the DPRK, and made a review of the major successes achieved this year.

This year, too, we have channelled continuous efforts into the development of the political and military fields, further raising the absolute prestige of the country and firmly guaranteeing the defence of its sovereignty and development of socialism.

An all-Party campaign has been intensified to develop the patriotic enthusiasm of all the people based on the single-minded unity unique to us into creating the Chollima spirit in the new era, and this process resulted in further increasing the politico-ideological might, with which we are working miracles by braving any difficulties.

This year another unprecedented record was made in our Party's history of people-first politics.

Our women footballers won in the Asian Cup and World Cup finals and won the Asian and world championships in various sports events including weightlifting, table tennis, boxing and Taekwon-Do. This is a success noteworthy in the review of this year.

Kim Jong Un said with pride that our Party, having identified the Regional Development 20x10 Policy for a simultaneous and balanced development of the regions and the substantial improvement of the living standard of the people across the country, and presented

its first perfect fruit, instilling hope and courage into the people of the whole country and doubling their creative enthusiasm and self-confidence.

Kim Jong Un set it as the general orientation of the work for 2025 to successfully complete the five-year plan and push forward with the preparations for the next stage of development in a substantial way, and clarified the policy-oriented tasks for its implementation.

He said that the main efforts should be directed to putting spurs to the growth and development of the overall national economy, indicating the goals to be attained by the key industrial sectors including metal, chemical, electric-power, machine-building and coal-mining industries and rail transport.

The concluding speech stressed the need to wage a massive construction struggle in the new year, too, and, through this, make another leap forward to realize our ideals.

He gave an outline of the remarkable successes achieved this year in enhancing the international position of our state and consolidating its external position and of the features of the present international situation, in which the growth and rapid progress of the circles of the independent forces are conspicuous and the position of the circles of supremacy-seeking forces is rapidly weakening and declining.

Our Republic reliably defended its inviolable sovereign rights and achieved successes of strategic significance from the viewpoint of prospective growth of the interests and enhancing the prestige of the state while responding promptly and smartly to the harsh regional situation and the unsteady structure of the international relations, and firmly maintained its principled foreign policy stand and orientation of struggle. In this way, it has firmly occupied the international posi-

tion as a representative and powerful independent force that dynamically pushes forward the building of a righteous multi-polar world.

The concluding speech put forward the strategic and tactical tasks for bringing about a more favourable external phase for the Korean revolution through proactive and offensive external activities in line with the Party's external strategic plan and intentions.

The U.S. is the most reactionary state that regards anti-communism as its invariable state policy, the alliance between the U.S., Japan and ROK has expanded into a nuclear military bloc for aggression, and the ROK has turned into an out-and-out anti-communist outpost of the U.S. This reality clearly shows to which direction we should advance and what we should do and how.

The concluding speech clarified the strategy for the toughest anti-U.S. counteraction to be launched aggressively by the DPRK for its long-term national interests and security.

It indicated the tasks for the field of external affairs to wage a dynamic struggle for defending the national sovereign rights on the principle of enhancing the prestige and defending the interests of the state and to positively promote the development of relations with the friendly countries that respect the dignity and interests of the DPRK.

Next year is a significant year marking the 80th founding anniversary of our Party and at the same time the year for the Eighth Party Central Committee to review its work before the times and the people, he said, pointing to the need to make 2025, the last year of its term, a historical watershed which occupies the most brilliant position in the history of leadership of our Party with extraordinary wisdom, courage, responsible efforts and strenuous exertion transcending the four years of pioneering and leap forward.

Role of social media in shaping modern diplomacy in Pakistan

Manahil Saqib

Social media acts as a powerful tool in framing various aspects of International Relations and Modern Diplomacy. In the era of digitalization, social media acts as an effective way for determining contemporary diplomatic relations. In the digital age, social media functions as a strong tool in building modern-day diplomatic relations. This concept of diplomacy has undergone sundry changes through the centuries, and the whole idea of diplomacy has evolved with time. Like any other state, Pakistan has witnessed the profound impact of digitalization of media and its impact on diplomacy. This article covers the major role of social media in determining the modern diplomatic relations in Pakistan.

Social media has played a vital role in eliminating the communication barrier between the state and its people. Government officials and Pakistani diplomats have now resorted towards social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to communicate with their audience domestically and internationally. These platforms offer a crucial role in shaping the overall dynamics of the state. Through these sites there's a connection between the state and its citizens. For instance, government officials issue various statements via twitter to bridge the gap between the public and the state and to engage and update their audience on different matters and current affairs.

Apart from that, the idea of public diplomacy through social media can contribute towards shaping an optimistic image of Pakistan and can be significant in tackling socio-economic challenges, political chaos and can contribute towards global issues, like terrorism and climate change.

With the assistance of social media, it's easier for the government officials to update about the current dynamics of the situation in case of a

crisis and it serves as real-time diplomacy. The concept of real-time diplomacy is important because it prevents the spread of false information and propaganda. Furthermore, it prevents chaos among the citizens and is preferable for updating about the current crisis.

Regardless of the various advantages social media offers in terms of modern diplomacy, it still has its setbacks. For instance, the constant spread of misinformation and fake news, results in socio-political chaos and acts as a hurdle for diplomatic relations. It creates unrest and confusion between citizens of the state as propaganda spreads through social media and is a major problem for diplomacy. Furthermore, the digital division across the state also results as a barrier in the way of modern diplomacy. The digital divide in the country is one of the major problems for modern diplomacy. Unequal Access to the internet in the country is a major problem and needs to be looked upon by the state officials. Rural areas are often an easy target for spread of misinformation and propaganda and it causes a major setback in modern diplomatic practices.

Though social media is an important aspect for leveraging diplomatic practices in Pakistan, its use is still critical in terms of foreign policy practices. Social media has become a powerful tool for Pakistani diplomats. It has empowered them to conduct real time diplomacy, resolve crises, provide accurate information and work on enhancing the aspects of soft power of the state. Even though diplomatic practices are beneficial for the state, it still has its own challenges. By overcoming these challenges, Pakistan can be successful enough to obtain a powerful position across the globe and strengthen its foreign policy practices and it can lead towards stability and prosperity of the state.

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Pakistan flag installed at UNSC, as the country assumes non-permanent membership for 8th time

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: The Pakistani national flag was installed in front of the United Nations Security Council chamber on Thursday, as Pakistan began its eighth term as a non-permanent member (2025-26) of the 15-member body.

As part of the joining ceremony, flags of the five new incoming non-permanent members — Pakistan, along with Denmark, Greece, Panama and Somalia — were installed at UNSC's stakeout 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's Alternate Permanent Representative, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, installed the national flag as part of the impressive ceremony.

In his brief remarks, he said that Pakistan will continue to be guided by the purposes and principles of the

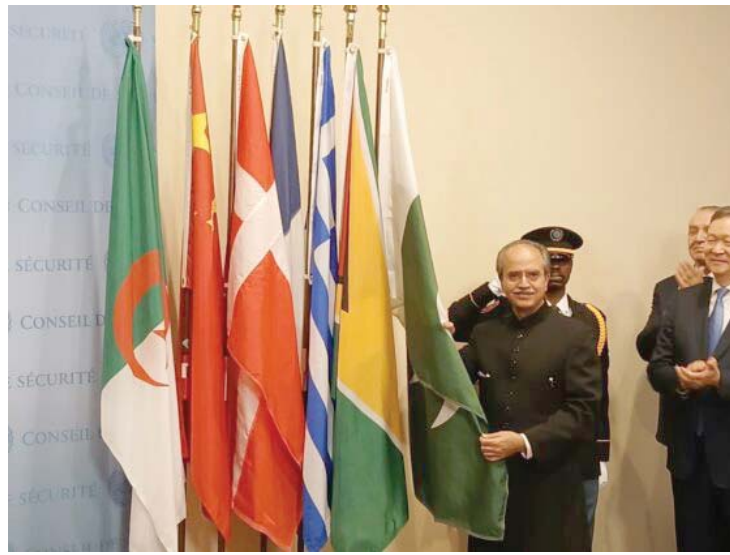
UN Charter including maintenance of international peace and security and development of friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination.

"Pakistan will always remain a strong voice for peoples under foreign occupation and oppression and for the realization of their right to self-determination," Ambassador Ahmad said.

Pakistan, he said, was convinced that cooperative multilateralism — with the UN at its core — was the best way of tackling today's multifaceted challenges.

"We need to earnestly address the root causes of long-outstanding and new conflicts, prioritize dialogue and diplomacy, and support confidence building at regional and global levels — to reduce tensions, arrest the arms race, and enable an environment conducive for peace, stability and development," the Pakistani envoy said.

Pakistan, he said, will partner with fellow members to actively pursue just



and peaceful solutions to the issues on the Council's agenda, and strive to make optimal use of the tools at our disposal — from conflict prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding — to achieve durable peace.

"Our success lies in upholding the UN Charter and international law under all circumstances, and in ensuring effective implementation of

the Security Council's own decisions," Ambassador Ahmad said.

"Never forgetting our solemn duty towards the millions of men, women and children suffering in conflicts, Pakistan is assuming this responsibility, fully resolved to our collective endeavour for a more peaceful and secure world."

Pakistan will 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.

The Security Council has 15 members, five of which — Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States — are permanent ones. The 10 non-permanent seats of the Council

are allocated by geographic region, with five replaced each year.

The Security Council is considered to be the most powerful body of the United Nations. The council, which is tasked to maintain international peace and security, can make legally binding decisions and has the power to impose sanctions and authorize the use of force against states.

The tradition of the flag installation ceremony was introduced by Kazakhstan in 2018.

Kazakhstan's permanent representative, Kairat Umarov, who presided over the ceremony, voiced confidence that the five new council members will bring much depth and focus to the pressing issues of global peace and security.

"As we begin a new year, it is clear that the global situation continues to be marked by numerous challenges and crisis, from ongoing conflicts and humanitarian calamities to the negative impacts of climate change and the pandemic."

ISSI holds Roundtable on 'Latest Discriminatory U. S. Sanctions and Assertions about Pakistan's Missile Program – Implications and Challenges'

Spokesman Report

The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), hosted a Roundtable Discussion on "Latest Discriminatory U. S. Sanctions and Assertions about Pakistan's Missile Program – Implications and Challenges." Eminent speakers included Ambassador Zamir Akram, Advisor to the SPD; Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Dean of Social Sciences and Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, QAU; and Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, DG ACDIS, MOFA. The event brought together senior diplomats, renowned scholars, and practitioners to reflect on the nature of the U. S. sanctions and their implications.

In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the recent U. S. sanctions against Pakistani entities and the surprising statement by a senior U. S. official, Jon Finer, about Pakistan's long-range ballistic missiles. Highlighting the Foreign Office's response to these developments, he noted that the alleged threat perception from Pakistan was characterised as "unfortunate" and U. S. allegations as "unfounded, devoid of rationality and sense of history." The Foreign Office had also underlined that U. S.'s discriminatory policies accentuated military asymmetries in South Asia and undermined strategic stability in the region. The Foreign Office had also affirmed that Pakistan's strategic program and capabilities were a 'sacred trust' of the people, it enjoyed complete consensus in the country,

and was not subject to any outside intrusion or compromise.

Earlier, in his introductory remarks, Malik Qasim Mustafa Director ACDC ISSI, highlighted the continuing challenges posed by the U. S.'s inconsistent approach towards Pakistan. He stated that by imposing these discriminatory sanctions the U. S. has ignored the fragile dynamics of strategic stability in South Asia.

Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi argued that the parameters of the U. S. sanctions need to be understood. He stated that sanctions were not new but there has been a visible spike in the last two years. He noted that the sanctions are a manifestation of geopolitical contestations.

Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal discussing the implications of the sanctions, stated that these are part of a political

chessboard and represent a practical measure to discredit Pakistan. He stated that essentially the U. S. was advocating that Pakistan must accept India as a major power in the region, which is not acceptable to Pakistan.

Ambassador Zamir Akram stated that the U. S. sanctions go back a long time. When India conducted a nuclear test in 1974, the U. S. imposed sanctions on Pakistan to prevent it from developing its nuclear programme. Pakistan-specific sanctions were also imposed after the 1998 Indian nuclear tests. He underscored that there has always been U. S. discriminatory treatment against Pakistan vis-à-vis nuclear and missile programs.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, concluded that this is not the first time sanctions were imposed and will not



be the last. However, sanctions will not affect Pakistan's strategic program. He

stated that the U. S. is not cognizant of Pakistan's threat perceptions.

A Memorable Poetry Evening Organized by Kababish Arts Council

Special Correspondent

JEDDAH: In collaboration with the literary organization Halqa Fikro-Fan, the Kababish Arts Council hosted a grand poetry evening that provided literature enthusiasts with a memorable experience. The event was gracefully hosted by the renowned poet Aftab Ahmed Tarabi, while Qari Shabbir recited verses from the Holy Quran to begin the session. Dr. Syed Taqi Abidi and Iqra Saleem beautifully presented Na'ats, which were highly appreciated by the audience.

The event was presided over by the eminent scholar and poet Dr. Syed



Naecm Hamid Ali Al-Hamid, with Dr. Syed Taqi Abidi, a distinguished poet and writer, as the chief guest.

Prominent poets including Aftab Tarabi, Syed Tashfeen Mujahid, Faisal Tufail, Imran Awan, and Waheed-ul-Qadri Arif captivated the audience with their unique and enchanting poetry, earning heartfelt applause from attendees. The verses recited during the evening left a deep impression on the listeners.

Dr. Taqi Abidi shed light on various aspects of Iqbal's philosophy, highlighting the intellectual and cultural richness of Urdu literature. Dr. Naecm Hamid Ali Al-Hamid formally launched the book Bahare-Hajdi Bedil by renowned poet Hamid Ali Hamid, elaborating on the philosophical dimensions of

Bedil's poetry. Speakers at the event emphasized the importance of Urdu language and literature, praising the efforts of the Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia for promoting literary activities. They acknowledged that such programs in Jeddah play a crucial role in the advancement and appeal of the Urdu language.

At the conclusion of the evening, Kababish Arts Council President Ali Khurshid Malik expressed his gratitude to all guests, poets, and participants. He assured that the council would continue organizing such events to promote Urdu literature in the future.

Pakistan Aerospace Council Charts Course for High-Tech Export-Oriented Future

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Aerospace Council (PAeC) convened its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 28th, 2024, at Trojans Head Office in Islamabad. The gathering brought together prominent figures from Pakistan's burgeoning aerospace and high-tech sectors, fostering a dynamic environment for discussions, collaborations, and strategic planning to propel the industry forward.

Focus on High-Tech Export & Private Sector Empowerment
Air Marshal (Rtd) Farhat Hussain Khan, CEO of ADIC, NASTP Kamra, and the event's Chief Guest, underscored the critical need to empower the private sector and minimize reliance on government-led initiatives to ensure sustainable growth within Pakistan's aerospace sector. He emphasized the importance of:

- Professionalizing the Civil Aviation Authority: Streamlining regulations and fostering a conducive environment for private sector participation.
- Indigenous Avionics Development: Prioritizing R&D in cutting-edge avionics technologies to enhance aircraft performance and competitiveness.
- Streamlining Bureaucratic Processes: Reducing administrative hurdles and fostering a more agile and responsive

ecosystem for innovation. Drawing inspiration from successful models like Turkey and China, Air Marshal Khan highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships and leveraging global best practices to accelerate the growth of Pakistan's aerospace and high-tech industries.

Outgoing President Emphasizes Export-Oriented Strategy
In his farewell address, Dr. Haroon Javed Qureshi, outgoing President of PAeC, expressed gratitude for the support and trust of the executive members. He urged aerospace and defense companies to aggressively pursue export markets to overcome challenges and showcase Pakistan's advanced manufacturing capabilities to the world. Dr. Qureshi extended his best wishes to the incoming executive committee and reaffirmed his commitment to supporting PAeC's continued growth and success.

"Power of the Flock" – A Call for Unity and Shared Vision
Mr. Imtiaz Rastgar, Founder Convener of PAeC, emphasized the "Power of the Flock" – a collective approach that prioritizes unity, shared vision, and collaborative efforts as cornerstones for advancing Pakistan's aerospace and high-tech sectors. He advocated for a dedicated platform for dialogue with policymakers to address industry-specific challenges and foster



a supportive regulatory environment. Mr. Rastgar stressed the importance of transitioning to system-driven business models to achieve global recognition and sustainable growth.

Leveraging Human Capital and Public-Private Partnerships
Convener of PAeC, Mr. Mansoor Malik, expressed gratitude for Mr. Rastgar's foundational role in establishing PAeC. He emphasized the critical importance of leveraging Pakistan's pool of highly skilled aeronautical engineers and technicians to drive private sector growth. Mr. Malik outlined PAeC's vision to utilize existing

public sector infrastructure and skilled human resources to foster a thriving aerospace ecosystem. He urged the new leadership to ensure a smooth generational transition to ensure the continued progress and sustainability of the industry.

Key Industry Leaders and Stakeholders in Attendance
The AGM was attended by several prominent figures, including Dr. Mohammad Mujahid, Rector of PAF-IAST; Mr. Ilyas Malik of Fazal Steel; Air Cdr Waqar Haider; Mr. Noman Waseem; Ms. Sarah Qureshi; Mr. Iftikhar Yezdani; Mr. Asif Ahmed; and Mr. Umair Aslam

of Global Defence Insight. The PAeC leadership team, including Dr. Haroon Javed Qureshi, President; Mr. Asif Jah, Secretary General; Engr. Tanveer Ahmed, Treasurer; Mr. Imtiaz Rastgar, Founder Convener; Engr. Mansoor Malik, Dr. Javaid Ahsan Bhatti, Mr. Inayat Ali Shah, Javaid Anwar, and representatives from Teresol and AKSA Solutions, were also present.

Looking Ahead: A Vision for 2025 and Beyond
The meeting provided a comprehensive review of PAeC's significant achievements and milestones throughout the year.

It also served as a platform for members to share innovative proposals and strategies for advancing the aerospace sector. The council outlined a strategic vision for 2025, focusing on:

- Accelerating Collaboration: Fostering stronger partnerships between industry, academia, and government.
- Resolving Industry Challenges: Addressing critical issues such as access to finance, skilled workforce development, and regulatory hurdles.
- Driving Innovation: Promoting R&D in cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence,

unmanned aerial vehicles, and space exploration.

New Leadership and Advisory Board Appointed
The AGM concluded with the election of Mr. Shahid Rafiq as President, Mr. Inayat Ali Shah as Vice President, and Dr. Javiad Ahsan Bhatti as Secretary General of PAeC. The establishment of an Advisory Board further strengthens the organization's leadership. These appointments and developments augur well for the future of Pakistan's aerospace community as the sector continues its dynamic growth and ascends to new heights.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
117,586.98	117,119.65
Day's High	Day's Low
117,891.62	115,580.01
Index Value	Change
27,785,927,939	+467.33
Percentage	Time
+0.4%	3 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,228.83	-31.26
Percentage	Time
-0.38%	3 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
42,652.04	+259.77
Percentage	Time
+0.61%	3 Jan, 11:33 am 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	173.75	176.00
Bahrain Dinar	735.90	743.90
Canadian Dollar	194.10	196.50
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	37.94	38.34
Euro	287.25	290.00
Hong Kong Dollar	35.48	35.83
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.78	1.84
Kuwaiti Dinar	893.35	902.85
Malaysian Ringgit	61.61	62.21
New Zealand \$	154	156.00
Norwegians Krone	24.2	24.50
Omani Riyal	720.25	728.75
Qatari Riyal	75.86	76.56
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.45
Singapore Dollar	204	206.00
Swedish Korona	24.7	25.00
Swiss Franc	307.08	309.88
Thai Bhat	7.95	8.1
U.A.E Dirham	75.50	76.15
UK Pound Sterling	347.00	350.5
US Dollar	278.35	279.85

Minister for IT and Huawei launches Pakistan ICT Training Portal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MOITT), in collaboration with Huawei Technologies Pakistan, is proud to announce the launch of the ICT Training Portal, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at equipping young Pakistanis with advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. The portal serves as a unified platform connecting recent graduates with IT companies, offering valuable hands-on experience with the state-of-the-art technologies. ICT Training Portal leverages cutting-edge technology to deliver an interactive and engaging learning experience. The portal includes modules on the latest ICT trends such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data analytics.

Talking to the audience Ms. Shaza Fatima Minister for IT and Telecom Said it is with great pride that we gather here today to celebrate the launch of Huawei's Pakistan ICT Training Portal, a groundbreaking program designed to empower students across Pakistan with advanced ICT skills. Under the visionary



leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, this program seeks to enhance digital literacy and prepare the youth for the challenges of the modern digital landscape.

"By investing in the future of our youth, we are paving the way for a skilled workforce that will drive Pakistan's economic growth and technological advancement," said Ahmed

Bilal Masud Deputy CEO Huawei Technologies Pakistan.

Huawei's extensive training resources and global expertise will be leveraged to provide comprehensive training to educators and students, fostering skill development and innovation.

This strategic partnership underscores the commitment to advancing Pakistan's technical education landscape and supporting the nation's digital transformation.

This program is a testament to our commitment to fostering digital literacy and preparing our youth for the challenges of the modern digital landscape. By equipping trainers with the latest knowledge and skills, we are creating a multiplier effect that will significantly enhance the quality of ICT education nationwide. This initiative not only aligns with our vision of improving ICT education but also plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements.

Together with Huawei, we are paving the way for a skilled workforce that will drive Pakistan's economic growth and technological advancement.

IPO Visit

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador H.E Irfan Neziroglu with Chairperson Ambassador (R) Furkh Amil and Director General Ms. Shazua Adnan at the IPO-Pakistan Headquarters on Friday.



Photo: PID

Uzbek Ambassador vows to increase bilateral trade with Pakistan

Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: The Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, highlighting the progress in bilateral trade with Pakistan, Friday stated that the Uzbek Embassy is aiming to increase bilateral trade to US\$1 billion in the coming years as per leadership level agreement of both countries.

Bilateral trade has been progressing well, with mutual trade between Uzbekistan and Pakistan increasing from US\$122 million in 2019 to US\$387 million in 2023, he added speaking at a meeting at Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

Economic and Trade Counsellor Bakhrom Yusupov, KCCI President Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, SVP Zia ul Arfeen, VP Faisal Khalil Ahmed, Former KCCI Presidents Majyd Aziz and Junaid Esmail Makda, along with the Managing Committee Members, were present at the meeting, said a statement issued here.

Referring to the recent commencement of direct flights between Tashkent and Lahore, the Uzbek Ambassador hinted launch of direct flights from Karachi to Uzbekistan this year and mentioned soft visa regime for Pakistani citizens, for both business and tourist visas, making it easier for people to visit each other and build stronger connections.

Noting the long history of brotherly relations, strengthened by cultural and religious affinities as well as continuous growth in



strong ties of Uzbekistan and Pakistan he said, "Today, our two countries are closer than ever, thanks to the realization of the vision of regional connectivity between our countries." He added that tireless efforts of both countries to enhance economic cooperation and strategic collaborations have reinforced the vision.

He highlighted the investment opportunities in Uzbekistan, which offers a safe, conducive, and liberal environment for investment and invited Pakistani businessmen to explore opportunities in sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, leather, tannery, food processing, agro-businesses.

Extending his support for promoting B2B connectivity for exploring and materializing trade and investment opportunities he asked KCCI to send a business delegation to Uzbekistan for exploring investment opportunities in key Uzbek regions.

Earlier, while welcoming the Uzbek

Ambassador, KCCI President Jawed Bilwani stated that Pakistan and Uzbekistan share deep-rooted religious, historical, and cultural ties, and both countries are keen to further deepen and strengthen these bonds by exploring new horizons for mutual prosperity and connectivity.

He emphasized on diversification of trade to enhance bilateral exports and promote economic cooperation and said that both the significant cotton growing countries can pursue collaboration in Research & Development to develop high-yield and disease-resistant cotton varieties, improve cotton processing into quality yarn and fabric and thereby promoting sustainable cotton production.

He also encouraged Uzbek investors to collaborate in agriculture by setting up food processing units, storage facilities, and advancing the livestock sector. Joint ventures in high-yield farming and agro-food trade in wheat, rice, oil seeds, frozen foods, dates, figs, pineapples, potatoes, vegetables, and bovine animals could boost bilateral agro-food trade, he added.

Bilwani highlighted potential to enter into joint ventures in transportation, logistics, IT, textiles, leather, sports, housing and construction, and dairy and livestock sectors and suggested cultural exchange programs and scholarships as well as language programs and joint research initiatives for reinforcing mutual understanding brotherly ties between people of Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

EcoStar revolutionizing laundry care with the latest One-Touch washing machines

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: EcoStar, a flagship brand of DWP Group, has introduced its latest innovation in home appliances—the one-touch washing machine with real capacity—designed to deliver unmatched performance with its spacious drum and high-performance motor.

Setting itself apart from the current market practices, the One-Touch Washing Machine features a genuine drum capacity, ensuring users get the full size they pay for. While claims about capacity are often exaggerated in the market, EcoStar ensures it delivers on its promises. Designed with 'Real Capacity' in mind, their

machines easily accommodate larger laundry loads, making them the perfect choice for households with substantial laundry needs.

"The One-Touch Washing Machine delivers on two key priorities for our customers—real capacity and superior cleaning power," said Rizwan Butt, COO DWP Consumer Electronics. "With this product, we aim to offer a reliable solution that simplifies laundry while providing excellent value."

The EcoStar one-touch washing machine with real capacity is now available nationwide through authorized dealers, redefining laundry care for homes across Pakistan.

'Uraan Pakistan: A Vision for Economic Growth and National Prosperity'

Zain Khan

MULTAN: Chairman of SM Group of Industries, Member of the National Export Development Board, and Member of the Board of Investment, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, shared

his thoughts on the Uraan Pakistan program, stating, "First, I want to explain to Pakistanis what this program is about."

Uraan Pakistan is a revolutionary program designed under the 5Es framework to provide a strategy and pathway for making Pakistan strong, stable, and prosperous. The program aims to increase Pakistan's economy to \$1 trillion by 2035 and \$3 trillion by 2047. It is based on five key pillars: Exports, e-Pakistan, Environmental Protection, Energy and Infrastructure, and Equity, Ethics, and Empowerment.

Under this program, the goal is to transform Pakistan into an export-based economy, raise annual exports to \$60 billion,

promote IT, agriculture, creative industries, minerals, and the blue economy, establish "Made in Pakistan" as a mark of trust, and stabilize the Pakistani rupee. Regarding this, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, a prominent industrialist

and member of the National Export Development Board, emphasized, "If the business community is provided with a better environment,

these targets can be achieved. Exports in 2023-24 stood at \$23 billion, meaning we need a 27% annual increase in exports to reach the target."

He added, "In my view, this plan is excellent. The Finance Minister's statement that the private sector must take a leading role in this program is significant." Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum remarked that the private sector is already striving to increase exports and bring dollars into the country. However, the government must also reduce its expenditures.

ADB and SECP Collaborate to Enhance Gender Diversity in Non-Banking Microfinance Sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) conducted a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on Dec 17-18, 2024, to enhance gender diversity in Non-Banking Microfinance Companies (NBMFCs). Representative of all NBMFCs regulated by SECP had attended this session.

The initiative prioritized promoting gender inclusivity within organizations and enhancing services tailored to women, who constitute over 70% of the sector's clientele.

The workshop trained participants to identify gender biases, implement inclusive policies,



and tailor financial products for women, encouraging a customer-centric approach. SECP's Executive Director, Khalida Habib, highlighted the importance of the initiative, stating, "This workshop is a step forward in promoting gender diversity in Pakistan's financial ecosystem, equipping companies to address gender-related challenges and contribute to national goals of

inclusion and equity." ADB's Deputy Country Director, Asad Aleem underscored ADB's commitment to gender equity, adding, "Gender diversity is vital for sustainable development."

This collaboration reflects our shared vision of inclusive financial systems that empower women and drive economic resilience in Pakistan.

Defence Savings Certificates: Profit rate update, January 2025

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Savings also known as Qaumi Bachat decreased the profit rates of Defence Savings Certificates (DSCs) in December 2024 due to declining inflation rate.

The Defence Certificates (DSCs) were introduced a decade ago to assist long-term investors in meeting their financial obligations. To ensure that investors get the most out of their money, the Qaumi Bachat provides maturity plans for up to ten Year.

The National Savings or Qaumi Bachat Bank had earlier announced a new profit rate for Defence Savings Certificates in effect from December 10, 2024.

The Defence Savings Certificates are available for investment by both Pakistani citizens and Pakistanis living abroad. These certificates are available in values of Rs. 500, Rs. 1,000, Rs. 5,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 50,000, Rs. 100,000, Rs. 500,000, and Rs. 1,000,000, and they have a 10-year maturity term.

SBP injects Rs2.43 trillion in the market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs2,429.65 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) on Friday.

The SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on January 03, 2025 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and, as per results issued, accepted an amount of Rs2,245.65 billion offered through 23 bids.

The central bank received 10 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs1,455.8 billion at the rate of return ranging between 13.04 to 13.09 percent while 13 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs1,145.65 billion at the rate of return ranging between 13.04 to 13.08 %.

Karachi Marathon set to take the city by storm on January 5th

Sports Desk

KARACHI: In a bid to promote a culture of fitness and community engagement, the Karachi Marathon is all set to take place on January 5th at Seaview. This eagerly awaited event promises to bring together running enthusiasts, fitness aficionados, and members of the community from all walks of life.

Shoaib Nizami, CEO of Sports in Pakistan, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "The Karachi Marathon represents a pivotal moment in the city's sporting calendar, underscoring the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle and community engagement. We are delighted to be part of this initiative and eagerly anticipate a spectacular event."

He further stated that our marathon route has been officially certified by World Athletics, ensuring a world-class experience for participants.



Additionally, we have invested in state-of-the-art timing equipment to accurately record finish times, eliminating any possibility of human error and guar-

anteeing fair and transparent competition.'

Karachi Marathon 2025 gets the global seal of approval honored to be officially validated

by the World Rankings Competition, recognizing our commitment to excellence and sportsmanship. Every winner of the Karachi Marathon can claim

international champion status, paving the way for participation in any international marathon.

The forthcoming marathon will feature an array of categories, including the Full Marathon, Half Marathon, 5K, and Relay, ensuring that participants of all ages and fitness levels can partake in the excitement.

This year's event has attracted a diverse pool of participants from around the world, with athletes from Germany, Japan, Australia, Poland, and many other countries confirming their participation. Notably, the event has seen a significant surge in female participation, with a remarkable increase in women's registration compared to the previous year.

This overwhelming response is a testament to the growing popularity of the Karachi Marathon and its ability to bring people together, fostering a sense of community and promoting a culture of fitness and wellness.

Pakistan hosts first mega event of boxing championship on Jan 25, World Youth Champion

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Pakistani boxer and World Youth Champion Usman Wazir termed the first-time organization of the World Boxing Championship on Jan 25 in Pakistan a good initiative that helps to promote boxing.

The players from five countries, including Indonesia, Iran, Thailand, and France, will compete in ten matches for the title.

As the event will be held in Lahore, he requested the Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, and the Governor of Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, to support and sponsor this event.

He further said that, unlike cricket, the other sports got less popularity, while other sports also promoted the image of the country at the international level.

He claimed that youth were getting



inspired by boxing and joining this sport.

Khushal Khan, going to represent the country in this event, will face the Indonesian boxer, said the youth champion, adding that he was undefeated in the last fourteen fights.

He also showed his commitment to the organization of such an event in Islamabad.

"I want to promote the country internationally in boxing; I am trying to organize such a mega event in Islamabad in the future," he said.

Emerging Pakistani boxer Khushal Khan, who will represent Pakistan in the coming boxing championship event, said that he got inspiration from Usman Wazir and started boxing.

He was also determined to win the event and promote the image of Pakistan nationally and internationally.

Rickelton, Bavuma tons put South Africa in strong position

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ryan Rickelton and Temba Bavuma hit centuries and batted South Africa into a strong position on the first day of the second Test against Pakistan at Newlands on Friday.

South Africa were 316 for four at the close of play.

Rickelton (176 not out) and South African captain Bavuma (106) put on 235 for the fourth wicket after the pair came together with the total on 72 for three.

At that stage South Africa were in danger of wasting the advantage of winning the toss on a good batting pitch.

But Rickelton and Bavuma were seldom troubled as they posted a fifty partnership off 66 balls and scored consistently at better than four runs an over throughout their stand.

It was the left-handed Rickelton's



second Test century in three matches, following a shaky start to his Test career in which he had failed to register a half-century in his first 12 innings. He was in commanding form, striking 21

fours and a six off 232 balls.

Bavuma recorded the fourth Test hundred of a career in which he has made 24 half-centuries. He was out 15 minutes before the close, caught behind off occa-

sional off-spinner Salman Agha. He hit nine fours and two sixes in a 179-ball innings.

Despite taking three wickets before lunch, it was a lacklustre performance by Pakistan, who only managed to bowl 80 overs in six-and-a-half hours and seldom looked threatening.

Pakistan opening batsman Saim Ayub suffered an ankle injury when he fell awkwardly in the outfield in the seventh over of the day. He was taken to the dressing room on a mobile stretcher and did not return to the field.

Pakistan's hopes rose when Aiden Markram was caught behind off Khurram Shahzad for 17 after he and Rickelton put on 61 for the first wicket.

Wiaan Mulder (5) and Tristan Stubbs (0) followed in quick succession shortly before lunch, caught behind off Mohammad Abbas and Agha respectively. But the rest of the day belonged to South Africa.

Alnoor Gymkhana, Alamgir Gym, Sun CC and Rehber Sports secure victories in Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

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

The highlights of the days play was brilliant 119 by Pakistan U-19 Captain Mirza Saad Baig and Fine batting by Kashif Ali 94 and Test Cricketer Fawad Alam 71.

Scores in Brief:

In the first Match Alnoor Gymkhana beat Karachi Eaglets by 179 runs at RLCA(G). Alnoor Gymkhana 275/7 in 40 overs. Test Cricketer Fawad Alam 71 6x4 1x6, Hafiz Asad Baig 65 6x4 9x4, Saifullah Bangash 51 3x4 1x6, Zakir Malik 35, Yafey Ali 22, Rafiq Khattak 2/48, Jahanzaib Khan 2/71.

Karachi Eaglets 96 all out in 20.2 overs. M. Yaqoob 30, Rafiq Khattak 22, Wahid Ali (mf) 4/21, Ghous Shah (sla) 3/28, Farhan Anwar 2/20.

In the 2nd Match Alamgir Gymkhana beat Modern Gymkhana by 229 runs at KCCA Stadium. Alamgir Gymkhana 352/7 in 40 overs. Mirza Saad Baig 119 12x4 4x6, Kashif Ali 94 7x4 5x6, Ashar Ahmed 56 4x4 1x6, M. Taha 29, M. Aamir 21, Arshad Sohail 2/58.

Modern Gymkhana 123 all out in 26.2 overs. Mansha 37, Arshad Khan 33, Ashiq Ali (ob) 4/32, Basam Sohail 2/24.

In the 3rd Match Sun Cricket Club beat Oriental Cricket Club by 21 at Young Fighter Ground. Sun CC 165 in 30.2 overs. Rehmat ullah 60 6x4, Atta Khan 25, M. Hunain (sla) 4/24, Luqman Shah 3/39.

Oriental CC 144 all out in 38.3 overs. Majeedullah 39, Ahmed Hassan 29, Talal Mehmood (rlb) 4/19, Azeem Khan 2/29, K. M. Hafeez 2/43.

In the Fourth Match Rehbar Sports beat Malir Cantonment Gymkhana by 22 runs at Student Ground. Rehbar Sports 224 all-out in 29 overs. Sunair Ali Khan 67 5x4 1x6, Malik Karar 56 4x4 4x6, Roman Ali 33, Najeebullah 27, Ishtia ur Rehman 3/43, Owais Siddiqui 3/45, M. Salman 2/34.

Malir Cantonment Gymkhana 202/9 in 40 overs. Ishtia ur Rehman 89 12x4 1x6, AfaqAhmed 36, Syed Imran (sla) 4/30, Rana Abdul Rafeq 2/30.



Tennis tournament heats up: National Championship enter semifinal

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 10th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships continued 3rd day at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, showcasing intense competition across multiple categories.

According to press release issued here on Friday, in men's singles quarter-finals, Yousef Khalil staged a remarkable comeback, defeating Muhammad Abid 4-6, 7-5, 6-2. Other notable victories included Muzammil Murtaza's 7-5, 6-2 win over Barkatullah and Aqeel Khan's 6-3, 6-4 triumph against Shahzad Khan.

The women's tournament saw dominant performances, with Noor Malik delivering a stunning 6-0, 6-0 victory over Lalarukh Sajid. Malik had previously upset first-seed Sheeza Sajid 6-4, 6-4 in yesterday's match.

Men's doubles semi-finals produced close matches, with Barkatullah/Yousaf Khalil narrowly defeating Abdullah Adnan/Herra Ashiq 7-5, 7-6(5).

Junior categories also provided exciting play, with Bilal Asim and Abubakar Talha advancing in the Boys 18 under category.

Tennis fans can catch the semifinal matches live tomorrow on the Pakistan Tennis Federation's YouTube channel.

The tournament continues to honor the memory of Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan, celebrating tennis excellence in Pakistan.



Ravi Shastri suggests Rohit Sharma may retire from Test cricket

Former India coach Ravi Shastri said Friday he expected skipper Rohit Sharma to "pull the plug" on his red-ball career after being left out of the fifth Test against Australia in Sydney.

The 37-year-old opener has had a poor series and the writing was on the wall when he failed to show up for India's eve-of-match press conference.

Coach Gautam Gambhir instead fronted the media and declined to throw his support behind him.

Stand-in captain Jasprit Bumrah insisted at the coin toss Friday that Rohit had "opted to rest" for the good of the team rather than being forced out.

Australia in charge as Boland rips through Rohit-less India

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: A relentless Scott Boland and Mitchell Starc sliced through an Indian batting line-up missing Rohit Sharma on Friday to put Australia in a commanding position after day one of the fifth and final Test.

The visitors were all out for 185 after Jasprit Bumrah - captaining the side with Rohit "rested" - sent his team in at a sold-out Sydney Cricket Ground.

Boland with the chief destroyer with 4-31 while Starc took 3-49.

In reply, Australia lost Usman Khawaja for two on the last ball before stumps with Bumrah doing the damage, leaving them at 9-1 with Sam Konstas on seven.

"It was disappointing losing a wicket on the last ball of the day but it's a pretty good position after they won the toss," said Boland.

"I felt like I bowled pretty good... a bit stiff still from Melbourne but happy with the

way the day went.

"Hopefully the sun's out and we can bat all day (on Saturday). There's still a nice covering of grass on the wicket and hopefully another good day for us tomorrow."

None of the Indian batsmen fired, with kingpin Virat Kohli again falling cheaply while Nitish Kumar Reddy, who made a brilliant century in the previous Test at Melbourne, was out for a golden duck.

Kohli had a huge left-off on his first ball and finally departed for 17, following KL Rahul (4), Yashasvi Jaiswal (10) and Shubman Gill (20).

Rishabh Pant made a battling 40, but that was as good as it got for India.

Regular captain and opener Rohit was rested, India said, after failing to get past 10 runs in any of his five innings during the series, which Australia lead 2-1.

It was a significant move and

could spell the end of the 37-year-old's 67-match Test career.

Australia will regain the Border-Gavaskar trophy for the first time since 2014-15 if they win or draw.

Fellow veteran Kohli, 36, has similarly been under pressure since an unbeaten 100 in the first Test at Perth, with his inability to again build a big score set to intensify the scrutiny.

Rahul reverted to opener alongside Jaiswal, with Gill returning at three.

But the ploy backfired with Rahul out softly with Starc tempting him to clip a full delivery to Konstas at cover.

There were concerns ahead of the Test over star seamer Starc's fitness but he showed no discomfort and routinely troubled the batsmen.

Big call
Boland came on after an opening barrage from Pat Cummins and took the big wicket

of in-form Jaiswal in his first over, collected smartly at slip by debutant Beau Webster, in the side for the axed Mitchell Marsh.

The hosts were convinced Boland had Kohli out next ball.

The Indian star edged to Steve Smith at second slip and diving low to his right he got his hand under the ball and scooped it up for Marnus Labuschagne to complete the catch.

But in a big call by third umpire Joel Wilson, he ruled that part of the ball feathered the ground and Kohli survived.

India seemed destined to reach lunch without further loss, but Nathan Lyon drew an outside edge from Gill and Smith took the catch.

Australia tightened the screws when they returned with Kohli adding just five more before Boland struck again with a ball that nipped away, taking an edge to Webster at slip.

The ebullient Pant was criti-



cised for throwing his wicket away in the fourth Test at Melbourne, which Australia won, and he was far more conservative this time.

Peppered with bouncers that repeatedly hit his body, he worked

hard for 40 before Boland again weaved his magic.

Pant miscued a short ball with Cummins holding the catch at mid-on, then Boland sent Reddy packing on his next delivery to

send the crowd wild.

Ravindra Jadeja made the most of being dropped twice to compile 26 before Starc trapped him lbw, with the tail briefly wagging before the end came.

Signing Ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam witnessing signing ceremony of Letter of Understanding (LoU) as Secretary MoCC, Aisha Humera Moriani and CEO of AKF in Pakistan Akhtar Iqbal are signing LoU on Friday.



Photo: PID

NA Speaker calls Pakistan's UNSC seat a diplomatic milestone

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq extended congratulations to the nation as Pakistan assumed its position as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, describing it as a testament to the country's diplomacy and dedication to global peace.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a statement emphasized that Pakistan has been an active and proactive participant in the United



Nations, consistently contributing to global peace, human rights protection, and the promotion of the rule of law.

He expressed optimism that Pakistan's membership in the Security Council will be instrumental in advancing worldwide peace and stability.

The speaker portrayed non-permanent member of the UN Security Council as a major diplomatic achievement. He praised Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and

Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, and Pakistan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations for their commitment and efforts that led to this remarkable success.

He remarked that this accomplishment brings pride to the Pakistani nation and serves as a testament to Pakistan's positive and constructive engagement on the global stage. The speaker extended his heartfelt wishes for Pakistan's continued success and future achievements.

Sara Sharif's father attacked in prison, throat slashed with tuna can lid

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Urfan Sharif, who was jailed last month for the murder of his 10-year-old daughter Sara Sharif, has been attacked in Britain's Belmarsh Prison.

Urfan Sharif was ambushed by two inmates in a cell at the prison armed with the jagged lid of a tuna tin on New Year's Day.

A Prison Service spokesperson said: "Police are investigating an assault on a prisoner at HMP Belmarsh on January 1. It would be inappropriate to comment further

while they investigate."

The 43-year-old had suffered cuts to his neck and face and received medical treatment inside the prison. It is understood Urfan Sharif did not need to be taken to hospital.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police said officers are probing "an allegation that a prisoner was assaulted at Belmarsh", adding that "the 43-year-old suffered non-life-threatening injuries".

Sharif and Sara's stepmother, Beinash Batool, were jailed for life in December



for years of horrific "torture" and "despicable" abuse that culminated in the 10-year-old's murder.

The court heard that Sara suffered "unimaginable

pain, misery and anxiety" as she was repeatedly beaten, burned, bitten and restrained at the family home in Woking, Surrey.

Urfan Sharif was handed

a minimum term of 40 years and Batool was given 33 years. Sara's uncle, Faisal Malik, 29, who was found guilty of causing or allowing her death, was jailed for 16 years.

In a televised sentencing at the Old Bailey, Mr Justice Cavanagh said Sara's death "was the culmination of years of neglect, frequent assaults and what can only be described as torture", mainly at the hands of Sharif.

The senior judge said her "despicable treatment" took place in "plain sight and in front of the rest of the family".

Chinese company pledges investing US\$700m in Punjab's IT, smart city projects



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chinese company Chengdu announced to invest 700 million US Dollars in Information and Technology and smart city projects in Punjab.

The announcement was made during a meeting of a high-level Chinese dele-

gation with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad on Friday. The delegation included the Chengdu General Coordinator for the ICT Hub Ms Scarlett and Deputy CEO of Huawei Mr Yu Ray.

The chief minister assented for the investment, paving the way for several initiatives in

the province.

An e-taxi service will be introduced while cloud and data centres will also be established at the Nawaz Sharif IT City in Lahore.

The Punjab government will provide land and buildings for the project.

The first e-commerce platform in Pakistan will be estab-

lished, providing training to Pakistani youth on online worldwide trading.

Furthermore, the smart city initiatives in Lahore will include a smart control room, smart traffic management, smart transport, and a smart sanitation center.

The meeting also discussed establishing an AI industry

center in Phase Two of the project to train youth in artificial intelligence technologies. The Chinese government is committed to capacity-building for platform services in Punjab. Speaking on the occasion, Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed the resolve to make Punjab as the 'IT hub of the region'.

Deputy PM Dar set to visit Bangladesh, Malaysia next month



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is set to visit Bangladesh, the first such trip by a Pakistani foreign minister since 2012, signalling warming ties between Dhaka and Islamabad after Sheikh Hasina's ouster in August last year. This will reportedly be the first visit by a Pakistani foreign minister to Bangladesh since 2012, when Hina Rabbani Khar travelled to Dhaka to invite then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid for the D-8 summit.

Deputy Prime Minister will also visit Malaysia next month. Ishaq Dar will visit Malaysia from February 3 to February 5. The Foreign Office has started finalizing matters regarding the visit to Malaysia. Dar has been invited to visit Malaysia by Malay-

sian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Ishaq Dar's Malaysia visit aims at promoting trade, investment and economic cooperation. During the visit, there will be discussions on Pakistan-Malaysia relations, trade, connectivity, energy and agriculture.

Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad on Thursday, Pakistan foreign minister Ishaq Dar said he would visit Dhaka in February at the invitation of his Bangladeshi counterpart. He also confirmed that Bangladesh interim government chief adviser Muhammad Yunus has accepted Pakistan's invitation to visit Islamabad on mutually agreed dates.

Bangladesh has also lifted restrictions on Pakistani exports, leading to a rise in bilateral trade. Additionally, the two countries have commenced direct trade via sea routes.

CJP calls JCP meeting for high courts judges' appointment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi has convened four separate meetings of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) for the appointment of additional judges in high courts.

According to the 24NewsHD TV channel, CJP will convene a meeting on January 17 to review appointments of additional judges for Islamabad and Balochistan High Courts.

The commission will consider nominations for four positions in the Islamabad High Court and three in the Balochistan High Court.

The Sindh High Court's session is



set for January 23 to deliberate on 12 additional judge nominations.

Similarly, the Peshawar High Court will hold its meeting on February 1, focusing on nine nominations.

The Lahore High Court will conclude the series with a meeting on February 6, discussing 10 additional judge appointments.

Islamabad ATC grants bail to over 250 suspects from Nov 26 protests

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court in Islamabad has approved bail for more than 250 suspects linked to the protests that occurred on November 26, amid a total of thirteen registered cases.

In a recent ruling, the court rejected bail applications for 150 suspects.

The District and Sessions Judge Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain delivered a reserved decision on a total of 436 bail requests

submitted in connection with the protests.

Bail was granted to 18 suspects from the Bani Gala police station, 43 from the Kohsar police station, 9 from the Shalhzad Town police station, and 17 from the Nowshera police station.

Additionally, the court approved bail for 70 suspects from the Aabpara police station, 30 from the I-9 police station, 13 from the Margalla police station, 25 from the Sihala police station, and 30 from the Shams Colony police station.

PTA probe report says bandwidth issue causing disruptions in internet

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) investigation report said that excessive use of VPN by consumers has put extra burden on the bandwidth and it was need of the hour that bandwidth should be increased for smooth and uninterrupted flow of internet in the country.

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has completed its investigation regarding slowdown in internet after due consultations with telecom companies.

PTA inquiry report said telecom companies Jaz and Telenor identified that they were face blocking issues on X however, they reported no issue with web browsing and data services.

Telecom operator Zong reported a drop in data traffic across all major applications. Zong claimed 16 percent drop in TikTok traffic on its network.

According to PTA, Ufone pointed out lack of performance of OITF platforms, however no problem was reported in web browsing.

PTA investigation said fixed line operators also pointed out problems in internet speed, however, PTCL identified disruption in social media services.

PTL said the services of TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram were affected, however, no problem was found in web browsing. Cybernet also identified disruptions to social media and web browsing on its network. NewTel said services on its network were not affected at all. Transworld confirmed slow speeds in video streaming, calls and web browsing.

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has sent its investigation report regarding slowdown in internet to Ministry of Information and Technology.