

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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PM condemns firing on AJK speaker convoy

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif prayed for early recovery of those injured in the firing incident. He said that attack on the Azad Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly speaker and his convoy was a coward act. He directed the authorities concerned to arrest the attackers at the earliest.



PTI 'convenes' all parties conference to discuss law and order in KP

According to the political insiders, the all parties' conference will be held at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House at 11:00 on Monday. The title of the all parties' conference is National Unity.

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Black Day

ISLAMABAD: Activists of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) hold black flags and banners during an anti-India protest near Indian Embassy, in the Federal Capital, as they observe 'Black Day' on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Kashmiris across the world observe India's Republic Day as Black Day today

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and world over are observing India's Republic Day, as Black Day today to protest persistent denial of their democratic right to self-determination by India.

Call for the protest has been given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and other pro-freedom organizations.

The day is marked by a complete shutdown in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, along with anti-India rallies in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan, and key global cities.

These actions will send a clear message to the international community that India, as the occupier of Kashmir's fundamental rights, has no moral or legal standing to celebrate its Republic Day in the territory.

Meanwhile, heightened

restrictions in the name of security measures have compounded the already dire conditions faced by the Kashmiris.

In a message from New Delhi's notorious Tihar jail, incarcerated APHC Chairman Masarrat Alam Butt condemned India's military presence in Jammu and Kashmir as illegal, unconstitutional, and a violation of international law.

Meanwhile, Indian forces' personnel have intensified checking, frisking, surveillance and patrolling in the name of security measures in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, today, Indian Republic Day.

According to Kashmir Media Service, restrictions have been intensified in Srinagar and other places in the occupied territory as Indian forces have been deployed in large numbers around the venues of today's functions across the valley.

Mohsin Naqvi denies attending anti-China event in US

Spokesman Report

HOUSTON: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi denied attending anti-China event in United States (US), said and said that opponents are just spreading venomous propaganda.

Speaking to newsmen in Houston, US, Mohsin Naqvi clarified that he participated in a youth event, which was given a wrong impression through propaganda. "I did not attend any anti-China event in the United States," he added.

The interior minister said that such propaganda 'does not matter' as he did not attend any such event. He highlighted that the purpose of his visit was to develop an effective plan against terrorism through cooperation with American politicians.

Moshin Naqvi stressed that the war against terrorism is not just Pakistan's fight but a collective battle. He warned that anyone



who takes up arms against Pakistan will be dealt with iron hands.

The Interior Minister expressed concern that the members of US House of Representatives are being incited against Pakistan.

He advised politicians to refrain

from harming Pakistan's interests. He stated that the meetings with Congress members were very positive.

To a question regarding injury of Pakistani batter Saim Ayub, Mohsin Naqvi, who is also

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman, said he is in contact with batter on daily basis to get updates about the rehab.

"Saim Ayub is currently undergoing rehabilitation, and the cast on his foot will be removed in a

day or two." He said that Saim Ayub's recovery will take time.

"I do not want to jeopardize his future by rushing his return for the Champions Trophy 2025."

Earlier on January 22, the interior minister said that the US is Pakistan's most important economic and strategic partner.

Speaking to the US Congressmen Thomas Richard Suozzi and Jack Bergman, who belong to Democrat and Republican parties, respectively, in Washington, Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan greatly valued the assistance the US had provided it in various sectors. "Pakistan attaches special importance to its ties with the USA," he added.

Naqvi went on to say that Pakistan wanted to further expand collaboration with the USA.

He expressed the hope that the congressmen's visit to Pakistan would help further strengthen the relations between the two countries.

Parliamentarians meet PM, discuss issues of their constituencies



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Member of National Assembly (MNA) Abdul Ghaffar Wattoo and Member of the Punjab Assembly (MPA) Fida Hussain called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Sunday and discussed with him issues of their respective constituencies.

MNA Usman Awaisi also

met the premier, separately.

The parliamentarians also discussed with the prime minister overall political situation in the country.

Former federal minister Khawaja Saad Rafique and Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan also called on the PM and exchanged views on the political situation of the country.

Govt to lower electricity prices in April: Rana Tanveer



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain announced on Sunday that the government is set to decrease electricity prices in April, a move expected to benefit the agriculture sector significantly.

Speaking at a gathering at Muridke, the minister emphasized that the government is working tirelessly to develop the agricultural sector. He highlighted ongoing discussions with countries like Belarus

and China to foster agricultural advancements in Pakistan.

Rana Tanveer said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is striving to make Pakistan globally competitive in agriculture. As part of this effort, young Pakistani researchers are being sent to China to enhance their expertise in agricultural research, he added. Despite these efforts, the minister expressed concern that Pakistan's per-acre production remains stagnant at 30/maund, underscoring the need for transformative measures.

Criticizing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Rana Tanveer stated that the party has consistently focused on Pakistan's destruction, causing severe damage to the agricultural sector. He accused the party's founder of continuing to harm the nation. However, he asserted that the public has rejected the PTI, marking the end of its political relevance.

He reiterated the government's commitment to reviving both industrial and agricultural sectors, viewing them as critical components for Pakistan's economic progress.

Shameful for India to call itself a republic despite its illegal occupation of occupied Jammu and Kashmir: Amir Muqam



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam has said that it is shameful for India to call

itself a republic despite its illegal occupation of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In his special statement regarding the celebration of India's Republic Day as a black day, the Federal Minister said that on the one side, India is celebrating Republic Day today, and on the other side, it has usurped the fundamental rights of Kashmiris.

India is committing the worst atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. It is regrettable that India has been illegally depriving the people of Jammu and Kashmir of their right to self-determination for more than seven decades and is subjecting them to oppression, violence and barbarity.

Despite these atrocities, the spirit of the Kashmiri people is unbreakable and their struggle for freedom cannot be suppressed.

Pakistan on path to progress, all conspiracies failed: Rana Mashhood

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, has said that Pakistan is firmly on the path to progress and all conspiracies by opponents to derail this journey have failed.

Speaking at an event in Gulshan Ravi on Sunday, Rana Mashhood highlighted the positive outcomes of the government's efforts for economic growth, adding that Türkiye's President will soon visit Pakistan. He also assured the public of more good news in the upcoming budget.

Rana Mashhood credited the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the government's positive policies for Pakistan's achievements, including attracting

foreign investment, improving economic indicators, and setting new records in the stock market. He noted that the "Uraan Pakistan Program" will play a pivotal role in the country's development, as the Prime Minister works tirelessly to resolve national crises.

He further stated that the government is not only focusing on economic stability but also ensuring the provision of basic facilities to improve the quality of life for the common man. According to him, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has consistently led the country out of crises and toward prosperity. He emphasized that inflation control efforts are already benefiting the public and that the PML-N's tenure is marked by nationwide development projects aimed at public welfare and national progress.

President AJK Barrister Sultan called Speaker Legislative Assembly

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry's notice of firing on the convoy of Speaker Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar. President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry called



Speaker Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar and inquired about the details of the incident. President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, said that this incident is highly condemnable and effective steps should be taken to prevent and remedy such incidents so that such incidents can be avoided in the future.

President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said that I have always played my role in promoting the politics of tolerance and tolerance in Azad Kashmir and will continue to do so in the future. This incident of firing is highly condemnable and those responsible for it should be arrested immediately and brought to justice.

14-Year-Old Saniya Memon Leads District-Wide Campaign to Promote Education



Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

SUJAWAL: Since its creation in 2013, when it was carved out of the historically rich Thatta district of Sindh, the coastal district of Sujawal has been grappling with numerous challenges. One of the persistent issues plaguing Sujawal is its low literacy ratio, with alarmingly negligible efforts made by the concerned authorities to bolster the district's literacy rate. According to data available at the District Education Department, Sujawal has the lowest literacy ratio in Sindh, standing at 25.12%, while the female literacy ratio is a mere 6%. Despite these disappointing states there is a grim hope for the deprived district standing in the shape of Saniya Memon who made her way to the children's parliament and is now running a district-wide campaign to persuade young boys and girls for school. While talking to this correspondent, 14 year old Saniya Memon disclosed her wish to change the fate of Sujawal district through education. Talking about the significance of Children's Parliament she said that this is a joint initiative of the education department, UNICEF and Reform Support unit aiming to mobilize children from across Sindh to create awareness among them about the importance of education and train them to lead the society from the front. A student of Peoples School Sujawal managed by Sindh education foundation Saniya Memon is currently taking efforts to bring to school out of school children living in Sujawal city and its adjoining areas. "So far I have got around 12 children admitted to different schools of Sujawal four of them are my neighbours"; she disclosed and added that she was also leading the team of 5 members who have been elected to children's parliament from Sujawal.

TLP will continue to struggle for the protection of the honorable Prophethood



Abdul Majeed

FAISALABAD: Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan will continue its struggle for the protection of the faith, the finality of the Prophethood and the honor of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). We strongly condemn the blasphemy of the three companions in Faisalabad. Our unjustly arrested workers should be released immediately. Until the people and all Pakistani institutions abide by the constitution and law, political and economic stability cannot be achieved in the country. These views were expressed by Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan Ameer North Punjab Syed Inayatullah ul Haq Shah while holding a press conference at the Press Club along with Central Patron-in-Chief Pir Qazi Mahmood Awan, Divisional Ameer Faisalabad Mian Akmal, Divisional Nazim-e-Ala Qari Zameer, District Nazim-e-Ala Faisalabad Waseem Gujar, District Patron-in-Chief Naqem Paswal, Nazim for Organization Malik Ghulam Ali, Khizr Hayat Amini and others. He further said that incidents of blasphemy, insulting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and insulting the Companions have been occurring frequently in Pakistan for the past several years. Tehreek-e-Labbaik has always not only condemned it in a vehement manner but also called for the punishment of the blasphemers. We have also struggled to bring about a tragic incident of insulting the three Caliphs in Faisalabad, of which there are recordings, witnesses and complete evidence. The police have also arrested the insolent companions on the spot, but as always, a few specific forces are active in protecting such elements and mental imbalance and other excuses are used in the courts to save them from punishment, which strengthens those who commit such incidents.

ECC repeated hikes in gas tariffs leave industry uncompetitive, says BMP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: As the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet has decided to approve upward revision in gas tariff for the industry by upto 26pc to generate Rs847b during current fiscal year the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has observed that the repeated increase in the gas and electricity prices to an unbearable level has left the trade and industry uncompetitive. FPCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that the gas tariff hike has threatened the industrial sector, besides increasing unemployment.

Muqam condemns firing attack on AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker's convoy



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam on Sunday strongly condemned the firing attack on the convoy of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar. The minister expressed concern over the firing incident, which left two people injured. He extended prayers for their swift recovery and thanked God for the safety of the AJK Speaker. Calling for immediate action, Muqam urged authorities concerned to investigate the incident without delay and ensure the arrest of those responsible.

Protest

KARACHI: Members of civil society shouting slogans during protest in favor of their demands outside press club, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

AJK premier reiterated his government's commitment to strengthen Kashmir cause

Bureau Report

MUZAFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir State Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while branding India as a terrorist country, has urged the world community to intervene and prosecute India for its breach of the UN resolutions and war crimes in occupied Kashmir. He expressed these views while addressing a large protest demonstration held under the aegis of All Parties Hurriyat Conference to mark Indian Republic Day as Black Day.

Speaking on the occasion, the AJK premier reiterated his government's commitment to strengthen Kashmir cause. "A comprehensive strategy will be evolved vis a vis our right to defend ourselves and contribute significantly to ongoing liberation struggle in Kashmir", he said. Referring to India's traditional intransigence, the PM said, "The Kashmir issue will not be simply resolved through moral, political and diplomatic struggle, but we will have to take a step forward thereby following the footprints of our ancestors and the struggle of our predecessors". He said



that India has turned into a fascist State where religious minorities are being persecuted and their places of worship destroyed. He said that demolishing of the historic Babri Masjid and building a temple there and a ruthless slaughter of Muslims and other religious minorities at the hands of Hindu extremist speaks volumes about rising fascism in the country that unabashedly claims to be a secular state. Reiterating the Kashmiris' pledge

to take the ongoing freedom struggle to logical conclusion, the PM Haq said that the people of Kashmir won't hesitate to make any sacrifice to materialize the dream our ancestors had dreamed of decades ago. Urging the international community to play its much needed role to help resolve the longstanding dispute, he said that it was high time that the world community must shun its policy of indifference and redouble its efforts to resolve the

lingering dispute peacefully in accordance with wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The protest demonstration was attended and addressed by Convener All Parties Hurriyat Conference Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Secretary General Muslim Conference Madm Mehr-un-Nisa Ministers Mian Abdul Waheed, Diwan Ali Khan Chughtai, Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Ms. Intiaz Naseem, Javed Butt, and others.

India has no moral justification to celebrate republic day: DFP



Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has said that a country that has deprived Kashmiris of their fundamental rights has no moral justification to celebrate its Republic Day.

According to a statement issued in Srinagar, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal, while referring to India's imperialistic presence in

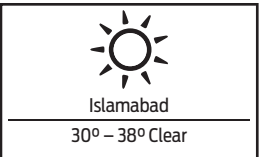
the region and relentless repression of Kashmiris political and human rights, said that "The country that is grossly involved in death and destruction in Kashmir and has held Kashmiris hostage for decades has no right whatsoever to observe Republic Day". He said adding that the whole world knows that India is a usurper that has always trampled Kashmiris' aspirations and their demo-

cratic rights down under the jackboots besides keeping them under illegal military occupation for the last over 77 years.

The spokesman while condemning the duality of the Indian rulers said that on the one hand Indian leadership makes lofty claims of being a largest democracy while on the other hand they have deprived Kashmiris of their basic rights. The spokesman also deplored

the search operations and frisking of commuters by Indian army in Srinagar and other parts of the valley.

Termining Kashmiris' struggle for right to self determination as a legitimate struggle he said, "Kashmiris who have offered matchless sacrifices during the past several decades would continue their struggle at all fronts unless they achieved their cherished goal of freedom from Indian occupation", he added.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr5:42 am
 Zohr12:20 pm
 Asr3:55 pm
 Maghrib5:33 pm
 Isha6:59 pm

EMERGENCY

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 Corporation9209224
 Potohar Town9209224
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 Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
 Sui Gas Complaint119, 9272249
 Wasa Water Tank
 Rawalpindi0331-5022125

Three-day Kashmir Cultural Festival kicks off in Muzaffarabad

By **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: A three-day Kashmir Cultural Festival, jointly organised by the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Pakistan Army,

has commenced in Muzaffarabad. The vibrant festival showcases Kashmiri culture, with an array of stalls set up by government and private organisations, highlighting the rich traditions of the region.



Kashmiri attire has particularly caught the attention of tourists, becoming a major attraction at the event. Families are actively participating in the festival, enjoying the blend of

cultural exploration and entertainment. Speaking on the occasion, Faizan Arif Mughal expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army for providing opportunities to promote Kashmiri culture

and recreation. The Director General of the Kashmir Cultural Academy stated that the Pakistan Army continues to play a pivotal role in uplifting the standard of living for Kashmiris.

Republic Day of India

ISLAMABAD: Dean of Diplomatic Corps in Islamabad, Atadjan Movlamov, Charge' d Affaires Indian High Commission to Pakistan Geetika Srivastava, and others cutting the cake during 76th republic day of India ceremony, at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistani student Rania Ali wins Best Delegate Award in Dubai



By **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani student Rania Ali won the Best Delegate Award at the Harvard Model United Nations Conference held in Dubai.

Rania Ali belongs to the Learning Alliance International School.

The conference was organised by Harvard University. The conference was attended by 1000 delegates from more than 35 countries.

Rania Ali showed outstanding performance due to her exceptional skills in diplomacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Rania Ali says that this award is more than her personal achievement but also a global recognition of the talents of Pakistani youth.

Empower Net Global-A Networking Platform to Bridge Industry and Academia

By **City Desk**

LAHORE: EmpowerNet Global, a visionary initiative led by Uzma Kamal, Founder, and Hamid Saeed, Co-founder, in collaboration with Khalid Associates Global proudly announced that this groundbreaking networking platform is designed to empower youth and enable women by addressing the critical gap between industry and academia. The network was launched at a ceremony in Lahore and was attended by important personalities from Lahore's civil society and business community.

EmpowerNet Global aims to provide a unique avenue for personal branding, allowing professionals to gain recognition and make a lasting impact through their efforts in youth empowerment and women's enablement.

The launch event was graced by the esteemed presence of Dr. Faisal Hashmi, Senior Director, Public Affairs, Communications & Sustainability The Coca-



Cola Company (Pakistan & Afghanistan Region) as the Chief Guest. Mr. Hashmi is widely recognized for his unwavering support of youth empowerment and women's enablement initiatives, making his participation a testament to the platform's commitment to these causes.

In this launching ceremony, Professionals from various companies and universities participated including, Khalid Hussain Zeeshan Ahmad, Usman Ishaq, Imran Shiekh, Wali Ahmad, Danish Sohail, Munaza Elahi, Samiyah Zeeshan, Palwasha Khan, Mian Jawed, Saad Zeeshan.

We all to play our positive role in the development of Pakistan: Asma Butt

By **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Asma Butt, Chairperson of Dolphin Communication, said that Journalists, artists, and politicians present a positive image of Pakistan domestically and internationally through their services. We all have to play our positive role in the development and progress of Pakistan without any discrimination.

She said this yesterday at a fish party held in honor of journalists and artists at Rawalpindi press club. On this occasion, Federal Parliamentary Secretary Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Patron-in-Chief of Sweet Home Khan Zamrud Khan, Member of National Assembly Malik Abrar, Member of Provincial Assembly Ziaullah Shah, Awam Pakistan Party leader Hafiz



Usman Abbasi, Former member of the National Assembly Raja Asim Nawaz, Mpa Affairs Abbasi,

Nasir Mir, transgender Almas Bobby attended as special guests, while Afzal Butt, Azhar Jatoi, Nayyar Ali, Salman Sunny Sapna Shah, Shabbir Shah, Arshad Khan, Anjum Habibi, and a large number of artists and journalists from Rawalpindi and Islamabad were present with them. The participants thanked Asma Butt for organizing the excellent event and said that today's event is the most unique of its kind. Where artists, journalists and politicians gather together on one platform. Holding such events promotes a spirit of sociability. To this, Asma Butt thanked everyone for coming and said that artists and journalists are companions in sorrow and happiness. On this occasion, artists also presented colorful programs, which greatly entertained the participants.

Ghulam Mustafa Malik appointed as the Focal Person of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis



By **Aziz Ur Rehman Mujahid**

ISLAMABAD: On the instructions of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Ghulam Mustafa Malik, the party's Central Secretary Information, has been appointed as the Focal Person for the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, as well as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony.

Formal notifications regarding Mustafa Malik's appointment have been issued by both ministries, confirming his role as a liaison and advisor under Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain emphasized the significance of this appointment, stating that Mustafa Malik's role will help address the concerns of workers and enhance the overall performance of both ministries. He highlighted that these ministries are a national trust, and every effort will be made to ensure their effective functioning for the development and prosperity of the country.

PIAF wants speedy work on Pak-Iran pipeline amid rising gas prices

By **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Amidst continuous rising gas prices in the country, the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has called for initiating speed work on 80-kilometer of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project within its borders after a long delay and hoped that it would proceed expeditiously, as the project is bound to bring an industrial revolution in Pakistan.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol in a joint statement along with senior vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and vice chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, said the businessmen had already been pressing the government hard for procuring the required energy resource from whatever source suits to it to relieve the country of the mounting shortage of gas.

Faheem Saigol said that the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project began in 2013, and several deadlines have already been missed due to long-standing US sanctions against Tehran. According to reports, Pakistan was trying to negotiate with Tehran to avoid a whopping \$20 billion in liabilities as the long-stalled project's deadline approaches this year. Last year, government also approached Washington, requesting a solution to the lingering imbroglio, but received no response.

Nasrullah Mughal said that we are convinced that Iranian source was the most feasible, financially as well as from the point of view of proximity. He observed the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline would serve Pakistan's national interests and go a long way in mitigating the energy issues, asserting that an early completion of this mega project of national importance would be a great favour to the business community as its very survival was at stake at the moment.

PRGMEA for urgent measures to strengthen OHS standards in industry

By **Commerce Desk**



the association has outlined key focus areas to enhance the nation's OHS framework.

Dr. Ayyaz Uddin said that the garment exporters have outlined key focus areas to enhance the nation's OHS framework, including the demand for a central database for OHS professionals, akin to the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), to ensure standardized registration and certification. The PRGMEA proposes establishing a national database of certified and registered electricians to ensure all industrial and business entities employ qualified professionals. This measure will mitigate workplace hazards associated with electrical installations and maintenance.

LAHORE: The Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) north zone chairman Dr. Ayyaz Uddin on Sunday called for taking urgent measures to strengthen Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards across Pakistan's industrial and business sectors.

While addressing a seminar, organized by the PRGMEA today, he recognized the importance of workers' safety and sustainable business practices, as

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

Book Review: Nisf Sadi ka Qissa (A Luminary in Journalism)

Shakoore Tahir: A Journey of Excellence in Print & Electronic Media Journalism wishes readers to delve into the extraordinary life and career of one of Pakistan's most celebrated journalists. With a legacy spanning over four decades, Shakoore Tahir has left an indelible mark on the nation's media landscape through his remarkable contributions to the Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV). His work has not only defined the standards of journalism but also profoundly influenced public discourse, shaping narratives that resonate across the country.

Born in Rai Kot, (Ludhiana) India, during the pre-partition era, Shakoore Tahir's early life was profoundly shaped by the challenges of migration and displacement following the partition of 1947. These turbulent experiences exposed him to the depths of human suffering, resilience, and the enduring power of hope. The hardships he and his family endured when he was just two years old shaped his character and fostered a deep understanding of social dynamics—an insight that became integral to his journalistic voice.

Shakoore Tahir's association with Pakistan Television Corporation began in 1968, marking the start of a transformative era for both him and the nation's media industry. His versatility allowed him to excel in various roles, including reporting, translating, scriptwriting, and producing. Through his work, he significantly expanded the scope of PTV's news coverage, bringing attention to critical national and international issues. The book recounts several pivotal moments in Tahir's career, including his impactful reporting during key historical events. It also delves into his personal and spiritual growth, particularly his transformative experience of performing Hajj. This journey not only deepened his faith but also enriched his perspective, influencing both his personal life and professional ethos.

Readers are invited to explore the triumphs, challenges, and lessons that defined Tahir's journey. From groundbreaking reporting to crafting compelling scripts, his experiences offer invaluable insights into the art and responsibility of impactful journalism. For anyone passionate about media, storytelling, or the history of journalism, this book is a must-read. It captures the essence of a man whose dedication to truth and excellence continues to inspire generations. Shakoore Tahir's legacy is a powerful reminder of the role media plays in shaping societies and the importance of pursuing one's calling with integrity and determination.



Analysis

Muhammad Saeed Chishti Nizami

Shakoore Tahir's autobiography is the result of a collaborative effort with Muhammad Rizwan Tabussam, a talented student from Riphah International University. Their partnership, supported by meticulous research and extensive use of PTV archives, ensures the book's authenticity and depth. Tahir's openness in sharing his experiences and lessons learned makes this book an invaluable resource for understanding the evolution of Pakistani journalism. More than just a chronicle of achieve-

ments, he serves as a guide and inspiration for future generations of journalists. The book emphasizes the challenges inherent in the profession while highlighting the importance of integrity, passion, and perseverance. Tahir's commitment to mentoring young journalists reflects his dedication to fostering ethical media practices and nurturing the next generation of storytellers. This book is more than a personal narrative; it is a celebration of the transformative power of journalism and the enduring impact of one of Pakistan's most accomplished media professionals. Tahir's career, marked by resilience, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to truth, has left an indelible mark on both print and electronic media.

Throughout his distinguished career, Tahir has illustrated journalistic integrity and creativity, combining resilience and dedication to craft compelling narratives that resonate deeply with audiences. His passion and hard work have set a benchmark for excellence, demonstrating how powerful storytelling can illuminate truths and inspire change.

From spearheading critical news coverage to introducing innovative reporting techniques, Tahir's influence extends across every facet of journalism in Pakistan. His legacy stands as a guiding light for both seasoned journalists navigating the complexities of the evolving media industry and aspiring storytellers seeking to leave their mark. By chronicling his journey, the book underscores the indispensable role of journalism in society and the profound impact one individual can have in shaping the future of media.

Tahir's path to journalism was not a mere coincidence but a natural progression fueled by an insatiable curiosity about the world. His empathetic nature and ability to uncover the untold stories behind every event established him as a paragon of authenticity in the field. The book highlights Tahir's extraordinary observational skills, a gift he regarded as a divine blessing. His innate ability to see beyond the surface and transform complex issues into compelling narratives earned him the trust and admiration of audiences across Pakistan. These qualities became the foundation of his illustrious career, establishing him as a pioneer in Pakistani media. His stories not only informed but also inspired, creating a unique bond between him and his audience.

Welcomes Chinese New Year with colorful celebrations

A group of overseas bloggers and foreign media journalists joined the locals in vibrant and colourful celebrations of the Chinese New Year held in Tangshan, Hebei Province.

Bloggers and journalists from Pakistan, Germany, South Korea, Philippines, Belarus, Latvia, and Iraq participated in the 2025 "Overseas Cultural and Tourism Ambassador" Tangshan Tour event.

During the tour, they visited Tangshan Nanhu Kailuan Tourist Scenic Area, Shadow Puppet Theme Park, Tangshan Nanhu Spring Festival Lantern Fair and three major themed lantern areas to experience Tangshan's festive vibe and lively charm.

They also visited the Shanli Gezhuang Scenic Area and experienced rural ice and snow tourism.

The Tangshan Nanhu Tourist Scenic Area is located in the city center of Tangshan and covers an area of 5.4 square kilometers. Originally a subsidence area of the Kailuan Coal Mine, it has been transformed into a beautiful "urban living room" after years of ecological restoration and management, creating an ecological civilization achievement that turns decay into magic.

The scenic area features ecological landscapes and characteristic business formats, complementing each other. Over 130 landscapes, including Danfeng Chaoyang, Longshan, Domestic Garden, Longquan Bay, Yunfeng Island, and Phoenix Terrace, showcase the beauty of ecological restoration. A leisure trip to this area offers visitors the opportunity to experience the pleasure of an ecological journey.

The Shadow puppet theme parks and the Plant Charm Pavilion's Wuxiang Forest, along with other cultural projects, are unique and heartwarming, offering visitors a truly memorable experience. The Tangshan Feast, Lake Side Stories, and the regional restaurants in the International Garden provide visitors with the opportunity to savour delicious cuisine and experience the unique charm of Tangshan.

The Nanhu scenic area serves as a remarkable example of the transition from an urban industrial civilisation to an ecological civilization, and it welcomes visitors from around the world to experience its unique beauty.

The Tangshan Shadow Puppet Theme Park represents a pioneering development in the field of shadow puppet parks, synthesising Tangshan's traditional shadow play culture with a focus on parent-child interaction, a distinctive feature in the Chinese cultural landscape.

The project encompasses an expansive design area of 350,000 square metres, featuring a diverse array of attractions including the Low-Carbon Living Pavilion, the Petting Zoo, the Black Forest, the Shadow Play Theater, and Real-life CS. The park's design prominently features shadow puppetry as its main element, thus bringing this intangible cultural heritage into everyday life. Its signature event, the Tangshan Shadow Puppet Theme Park Ice and Snow Festival, has also become a highlight of the Spring Festival tourism season.

The group visited Gezhuang Scenic Area and experienced rural ice and snow tourism. Located in a valley surrounded by mountains, it offers visitors the opportunity to walk through the rice fields and countryside in the early morning, accompanied by nature.



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

Black Day on January 26

India observes January 26 as its Republic Day, claiming to be a true republic. However, this assertion is at odds with the reality of the nation's situation and governance. To understand what constitutes a genuine republic, it's essential to grasp its true meaning and spirit. A republic, in its most authentic form, represents more than just a political system; it embodies the values and ideals that unite a society. At its core, a republic is a political structure in which the head of state is chosen by the people or their representatives, highlighting the importance of citizenship, the rule of law, and the safeguarding of individual rights. The essence of a republic is not just found in its framework, but in the principles that guide the relationships between the government and its citizens, as well as among the citizens themselves. It is about striking a balance between freedom and responsibility, and being dedicated to justice, equality, and the collective well-being.

The term "encounter killings" is commonly used to describe the unlawful killings of individuals suspected of being militants, although many of the victims are unarmed civilians or innocent bystanders. These killings are frequently carried out with impunity, and security forces are seldom held accountable. Numerous reports have indicated that the Indian Army, paramilitary forces, and police have employed extrajudicial killings as a tactic to suppress dissent and quell the insurgency. The region has also been the site of brutal massacres, such as the 1990s killings in the town of Sopore, where numerous civilians were killed by indiscriminate gunfire from security forces. More recently, incidents like the 2016 Burhan Wani protests, triggered by the killing of a prominent freedom leader by Indian forces, led to significant civilian casualties. Enforced disappearances remain another grave human rights issue in IIOJK. Reports from various human

rights organizations indicate that thousands of individuals, including political activists, militants, and ordinary citizens, have been forcibly disappeared by Indian security forces in IIOJK. Families of the disappeared often face significant challenges in seeking justice, as the security forces deny any involvement or responsibility for these disappearances. These abductions are frequently accompanied by physical and psychological torture, often intended to extract confessions or information. Torture remains a prevalent practice in IIOJK, used as a tool of intimidation or to obtain information from suspected militants. Survivors' testimonies, along with reports from human rights organizations, detail instances of abuse, such as beatings, electric shocks, and sexual violence. The lack of accountability for these crimes perpetuates a climate of fear and suffering in the region.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions of civilians have become widespread as part of India's counterinsurgency operations. Thousands of people, including activists, students, journalists, and politicians, have been detained without charge, often under the controversial Public Safety Act (PSA), which permits detention without trial for up to two years. After the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, Indian authorities arrested numerous prominent political leaders, including former chief ministers and members of separatist organizations. Many of these detainees have been imprisoned outside Kashmir, often far from their families, making it difficult for them to challenge their detention in court. The use of preventive detention, particularly against political opponents and activists critical of government policies, has been widely criticized as a violation of international human rights standards. The PSA is viewed as a tool of political repression rather than a legitimate measure against insurgency.

One of the most significant human rights viola-

tions in IIOJK, especially since the revocation of Article 370, has been the imposition of communication blackouts. Following the abrogation in August 2019, the Indian government imposed a strict lockdown in the region, which included shutting down internet services, limiting phone connectivity, and restricting media access. This communication blackout isolated the people of Kashmir and prevented journalists, human rights organizations, and the international community from obtaining accurate information about the situation on the ground. Journalists have faced harassment, detention, and censorship for reporting on ongoing human rights violations, and the suppression of media and communication channels has severely restricted freedom of expression and hindered the documentation of abuses.

Sexual violence, particularly rape and molestation, has been used by Indian security forces as a tool of repression in the region. Women in IIOJK have been subjected to horrific sexual violence, with the 1991 Kunan Poshpora incident being a particularly notorious case, where Indian soldiers reportedly gang-raped more than 30 women in a single night. Despite the incident being well-documented by local witnesses and human rights organizations, justice for the victims remains elusive. The climate of insecurity in IIOJK has left women particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, and many victims face stigma and rejection from their communities. Additionally, the suppression of dissent and the ongoing violence have further eroded societal structures, making it even more difficult for women to seek justice.

The harsh reality of human rights violations and atrocities committed by India, particularly in IIOJK, is evident to the global community, which firmly rejects India's claim to be a true republic. The observance of Black Day on January 26 symbolizes widespread anger and condemnation of India's human rights abuses. There is an urgent need to pressure India to cease its violations of human rights against minorities both within India and in IIOJK.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Rising Trend of Fake Journalism: A Threat to Press Integrity

Journalism is a noble profession, but the rise of fake newspapers and pseudo-journalists has gravely damaged its dignity and credibility. The unchecked proliferation of fake newspapers across cities and districts has tarnished the integrity of journalism. In Multan alone, numerous unauthorized newspapers like "Apna Akhbar," "Tahqiqat," "Asian News," and "Naya Rang" daily Parcham openly challenge the writ of government and administration. These entities operate without legal authorization, spreading false news, blackmailing individuals, and exploiting journalism for personal gains, undermining the core values of this respected profession.

"The silence of the government and district administrations on this critical issue is alarming." Despite existing laws like the Printing Press and Publications Ordinance 2002, there has been no significant action to curb these illegal operations. Without proper enforcement, these fake outlets continue to manipulate public opinion, disrupt social harmony, and erode trust in the press.

Businesspeople, government officials, and contractors often find themselves coerced into paying for advertisements or succumbing to unjust demands. Such exploitation must end. If newspaper owners lack sufficient resources to sustain their operations, they should cease publication instead of tarnishing the reputation of journalism with false reporting and unethical practices.

"The rise of fake journalism is not just a disservice to the profession; it is a disservice to society." Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is urged to take immediate notice of this pressing issue. A comprehensive crackdown is needed against fake newspapers and unregistered publications, ensuring strict compliance with existing laws. The Chief

Secretary Punjab is directed to issue orders to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for the prevention of fake newspapers in light of the Press Registrar's directives No.12/4(1)/2023-PR, dated September 27th, 2023.

Controlling fake newspapers will not only curb the activities of fake journalists but also eliminate the spread of false and misleading news. These unregistered newspapers and the fake journalists associated with them not only damage the dignity of journalism but also exploit government privileges and facilities unjustly. They enter the press club's voter list, gaining access to plots in journalist colonies, accreditation press cards, and other benefits, even though they do not meet the merit requirements.

The Government of Punjab and the Information Department should immediately remove the voters of unregistered newspapers from the press club's voter list and revoke the privileges granted to fake journalists. Furthermore, stringent laws should be implemented to improve the standard of journalism, ensuring that only individuals who meet the journalistic principles and standards are allowed to participate in the field. These measures will restore the integrity of journalism and help achieve the goal of providing the public with credible information. Moreover, without addressing the root cause of fake journalism, the enforcement of amendments like the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) will remain ineffective. The spread of false information and blackmailing cannot be curtailed unless decisive action is taken to eliminate unauthorized publications and restore public trust in credible journalism.

It is imperative to safeguard the sanctity of journalism, ensuring it remains a pillar of truth and public service rather than a tool for personal agendas and exploitation.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Women empowerment key to economic progress: Dr. Nigar Johar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Lt. Gen. Nigar Johar (Retd) has emphasized the crucial role women play in the economic development of Pakistan during her visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

Dr. Johar, while speaking with ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, highlighted that women, who mark up as half of the population, must be empowered to contribute meaningfully to the country's economic growth, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Dr. Johar stated, Pakistan cannot afford to neglect its women who are determined to serve the country.

Their empowerment is vital for the economic wellbeing of the nation.

She called for inclusive economic policies and greater participation of women in all sectors, asserting that empowering women is fundamental to building a stronger economy.

The discussion also focused on the importance of strong linkages between academia and industry.

Dr. Johar emphasized that educa-

tion should be business and industry-focused to help students transition from job seekers to job creators. She remarked, "Our youth must be equipped to become entrepreneurs, contributing to the economy rather than relying on traditional employment."

President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi welcomed Dr. Johar's visit and praised her as a source of inspiration for women across the nation.

He shared the ICCI's ongoing efforts to empower the youth, especially women and rural communities, by facilitating industry-academia collaborations and establishing more facilitation desks for the business community.

He stressed the importance of developing the potential of Pakistan's youth, especially in the rural areas, to achieve the country's economic goals.

Qureshi also pointed out that the ICCI is working closely with universities, signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to support youth entrepreneurship and skill development.

He proposed that universities tailor

their curricula so that students spend their final semesters working directly with industries, gaining practical experience to prepare them as future entrepreneurs.

Executive Member Fatima Azeem and Special Advisor to the ICCI President, Naem Siddiqui, also highlighted the importance of imparting skill training to the youth, empowering them to succeed in the workforce and contribute effectively to the nation's development.

Shumila Siddiqui, another ICCI Executive Member, along with other women entrepreneurs from Islamabad, attended the meeting and participated in the discussion, sharing their views on the challenges and opportunities for women in business.

The visit ended with a shared commitment to creating an environment that fosters economic growth through inclusive policies, strong academia-industry partnerships, and empowering women and youth.

Dr. Johar's visit reinforced the message that women's empowerment and youth development are essential for Pakistan's long-term prosperity.



Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail Criticize Pakistan's Political and Economic Situation in London

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and President of the Awaam Pakistan Party, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, along with the party's General Secretary and former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, held a press conference in London to address pressing political and economic issues in Pakistan.

The Press Conference, organized by Dr. Azhar Aslam with the assistance of Javed Sheikh, took place at Harley Street London and saw a large turnout from the media.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi emphasized the importance of overseas Pakistanis, calling them the strength of the nation. He acknowledged their unwavering support for Pakistan despite acquiring foreign citizenship and noted the increasing volume of remittances sent back to Pakistan.

Abbasi expressed deep concern over the lack of law and order in Punjab, highlighting incidents where citizens were killed in broad daylight. He



criticized the rampant corruption in Pakistan, stating, "The country is so

corrupt that even ministers demand money to get work done."

Condemning the controversial PICA Act amendment bill, Abbasi

warned that it would stifle freedom of expression and tarnish Pakistan's image further. He also criticized Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for breaking his promise to abolish NAB (National Accountability Bureau), stating that NAB's interference has only increased.

Abbasi asserted that the Awaam Pakistan Party is the true opposition in Pakistan, focusing on solutions rather than problems. He stressed that the rule of law is essential for the country's progress and called for institutions like the army to operate within their constitutional limits.

On his political journey, Abbasi revealed his disapproval of the PML-N's (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) current path, labeling their alliance with the PPP (Pakistan People's Party) as "unnatural" and based on self-interest. He clarified that he has no resentment toward Nawaz Sharif but expressed disappointment in the party's deviation from its principle of respecting the vote.

Speaking on economic issues,

Miftah Ismail criticized the rising inflation and declining purchasing power in Pakistan. He highlighted the dire situation of poverty, stating that 40% of Pakistanis live below the poverty line, with 70 million children suffering as a result.

Miftah dismissed calls by PTT's founder to stop sending remittances, emphasizing that overseas Pakistanis will continue to support their families in Pakistan. He pointed out Pakistan's economic mismanagement, stating, "The most expensive electricity and gas in the region is being sold in Pakistan."

He also criticized the lack of development under Shehbaz Sharif's government, comparing Pakistan to India, where graduates now head global companies like Google and Microsoft. Miftah expressed regret over the stagnant development mindset of Pakistan's leadership, saying, "Shehbaz Sharif is focused on saving his chair instead of thinking about the country's development."

Believe in politics of non-violence, joining PPP under Bilawal's leadership: AJK Speaker

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Assembly Speaker Ch Latif Akbar, whose convoy was targeted when he was going to join PPP along with his supporters, has said that he always believed in politics of violence in politics.

In a video statement after the attack, Speaker Ch Latif Akbar said his convoy was targeted with pre-planning. Ch Latif Akbar said he was joining PPP by following the vision and leadership of Bilawal Bhutto.

He said the resident of his constituency were followers of Zulfikar Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto.

Earlier, AJK Assembly Speaker Ch Latif Akbar's convoy was targeted when he was going to join PPP along with his supporters. According to Public Relations



Officer (PRO) of AJK Assembly Speaker, the firing incident took place in Charkpura Union Council area and resultantly two people got injured.

Police reached the site to control the situation, however, Muslim Conference's workers also opened fire at police party.

AC Rural Hammad Bashir told media that an armed group first opened fire at the convoy of Speaker Ch Latif Akbar and

later targeted police team. He said police was trying to control the situation.

AC Rural Hammad Bashir said one PPP workers has got injured with bullet fire while other suffered stone injury.

Speaker Ch Latif Akbar has said that no one can stop him from making key decision, adding that his enemies have got perturbed over his decision of becoming part of PPP.

Amanda Ingram congratulated to Sarfraz Malik for Award of Excellence

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Amanda Ingram, Country Exams Director of British Council Pakistan, congratulated Sarfraz Malik, Managing Director of the British Council's Gold Partner IELTS Institute, SLS College, on receiving the prestigious Award of Excellence for yet another consecutive year. She acknowledged SLS College's remarkable journey and its 25 years of excellence in education.

The award was presented at the IELTS Partners Meet 2024-25 event, held at PC Hotel Rawalpindi, where Amanda Ingram served as the chief guest. The event celebrated top-performing IELTS partners and their contributions to promoting the British Council's vision and international standards of excellence.

Sarfraz Malik, MD SLS College, received the Award of Excellence and a certificate for achieving the highest IELTS student volume in the region. The presentation was made by Mr. Muhammad



Fahim, Head of Geography, and Mr. Syed Ikram Akbar, BDM British Council Pakistan.

Amanda Ingram highlighted the British Council's mission of empowering learners through quality education and emphasized the global significance of the IELTS exam. Meanwhile,

Touseef Ur Rehman, Head of English Assessment, provided insights into IELTS' history and future innovations.

In his acceptance speech, Sarfraz Malik praised the dedication and hard work of his entire team, including BDO Mr. Sabeeh Ijaz and BDM Mr. Syed

Ikram Akbar, whose consistent efforts have played a crucial role in SLS College's success. He further stated, "This year is special for us as SLS proudly celebrates its 25th anniversary—a silver jubilee of excellence, innovation, and unwavering commitment to education."

Sehat Sahulat Program Needs Focused Efforts to Improve its Service Delivery: PIDE

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has unveiled an in-depth study on the Grievance Redressal (GR) system of the Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP). This landmark program, which provides health insurance to over 7.9 million families across 68 districts in Pakistan, has emerged as a crucial lifeline for Pakistan's marginalized communities. Supported by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, World Health Organization (WHO), the study high-

lights the program's successes, critical insights into strengthening grievance mechanisms to ensure its sustainability and greater efficiency.

Authored by Dr. Shujaat Farooq, Director Research PIDE, and Nabila Kunwal, Research Fellow PIDE, the report commends SSP's efforts in ensuring access to healthcare for marginalized populations and highlights its role in reducing the burden of catastrophic health expenditures. It acknowledges the program's strong foundation but notes that as it evolves, the grievance redressal system (GRS) must

also adapt to meet the growing needs of beneficiaries.

According to the Press Release issued from PIDE, the study underscores the importance of establishing a comprehensive and structured grievance redressal system to address challenges in service delivery and ensure timely resolution of complaints. Key observations include the need for a standardized framework to tackle issues such as enrolment difficulties, denial of services, and limited empanel hospitals.

Currently, there are limited options for a citizen to register a

complaint or acquire information about program. The sole source to register the complaint is the call center, and it requires consistent upgradation and adequate staffing. The program requires a centralized complaint management system (ICMS) to efficiently handle the complaints.

At the design level, the SSP needs to improve various areas, i.e., build a national consensus on the federal-provincial role and promote competition in service delivery as there is a single vendor right now (State Life Insurance Corporation). The government has to opt a principal decision on

financing inpatient financing to public hospitals as both the insurance and financing is not viable simultaneously. Ideally the public hospitals should compete with the private hospitals to finance their inpatient expenses. The program should not pay the premium for all citizens and opt some co-payment formulas to optimize public resources, i.e., the government should pay the premium of only poor households.

Currently, a limited number of hospitals are onboard for inpatient services, and many of them opt for a 'pick and choose behavior'. To incentivize the treat-

ment packages must be market-based, so every hospital feels an incentive to participate. Additionally, the provincial regulatory framework must ensure that every private and public hospital with inpatient health facilities is part of scheme.

The report also highlights the need to expand the program's regional presence. Establishing local offices and enhancing public awareness campaigns will improve engagement and accessibility for beneficiaries. An integrated and automated grievance system, equipped with dashboards for real-time monitoring,

is recommended to streamline complaint handling and enhance transparency. Linking this system with health management information systems (HMIS) will enable more effective service delivery.

Policy-level interventions are essential to address systemic gaps, including increasing hospital availability, streamlining enrollment processes, and implementing live data updates in collaboration with NADRA. These steps will help resolve recurring challenges and enhance the program's overall performance.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
114,880.48	114,037.79
Day's High	Day's Low
115,779.05	114,383.16
Index Value	Change
22,573,761,921	+842.69
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	24 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,502.35	-62.85
Percentage	Time
-0.73%	24 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
44,508.50	-56.57
Percentage	Time
-0.13%	24 Jan, 11:48 am GMT-5
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,931.98	-26.89
Percentage	Time
-0.067%	24 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	177.25	179.50
Bahrain Dinar	738.60	746.60
Canadian Dollar	194.60	197.00
China Yuan	37.59	37.99
Danish Krone	38.48	38.88
Euro	291.50	294.25
Hong Kong Dollar	35.43	35.78
Japanese Yen	1.81	1.87
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.30	905.80
Malaysian Ringgit	62.14	62.74
New Zealand \$	155.78	157.78
Omani Riyal	722.90	731.40
Qatari Riyal	75.78	76.48
Saudi Riyal	74.25	74.80
Singapore Dollar	206.5	208.50
Swedish Korona	25.01	25.31
Swiss Franc	303.71	306.51
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.20
U.A.E Dirham	75.90	76.55
UK Pound Sterling	346.00	349.5
US Dollar	279.80	281.30

Engro Fertilizers establishes Markaz Centres to provide quality fertilizers and services to farmers

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: To support the Government's efforts in ensuring the availability of high-quality fertilizers at official prices, Engro Fertilizers has inaugurated a Markaz Centre in Muridke. With this addition, the Company now operates four Markaz Centres in Muridke, Bahawalpur, Sargodha, and Sahiwal, benefiting farmers across these regions.

Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Industries & Production, and National Food Security & Research, graced the launch event of the Markaz Centre as the chief guest. The event was also attended by National Food Security & Research officials, provincial administrators, senior members of the farming community and Engro Fertilizers officials.

Addressing the gathering, Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain reiterated the Government's commitment to the growth of Pakistan's agriculture sector and improving the livelihoods of farmers. He said that the Government and fertilizer industry are working together to ensure uninterrupted availability of ferti-



lizers at controlled prices for the farmers. He appreciated Engro Fertilizers for supporting the Government's initiative of setting up

Markaz Centres in various districts to help curb hoarding and price manipulation by intermediaries.

Speaking at the occasion, Ali Rathore, CEO of Engro Fertilizers, lauded the Government's focus on development of the agriculture sector and well-being of farmers. "To benefit our hard-working farmers and enhance the food security of Pakistan, Engro Fertilizers has always partnered with the Government for initiatives that uplift the agriculture sector. These Markaz Centres will offer relief to the farmers by ensuring timely availability of high-quality fertilizers at official prices. Additionally, these Markaz Centres will serve as hubs for creating awareness about innovative products and technologies being offered by Engro Fertilizers that can help improve our crop yields and bring them in line with global benchmarks," he said.

He further highlighted the recent launch of the UgaAi app by Engro Fertilizers, Pakistan's first integrated agri e-commerce platform. Besides enabling direct purchase of fertilizers at official prices from the Company, the UgaAi app also integrates advanced drone technology and satellite imagery. These features allow farmers to monitor crops with precision, reduce input costs, and increase crop yields.

Gifts of winter

KARACHI: A vendor is displaying eggs attraction for costumers in his shop at Lines Area, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

PSH emerging as the most reliable and cost-effective technology for large-scale energy storage: Farhan Munir

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Muhammad Farhan Munir Sunday said pumped storage hydropower (PSH) is emerging as the most reliable and cost-effective technology for large-scale energy storage.

Speaking here today at a meeting of the industrialists he said as Pakistan continues to face challenges in balancing grid fluctuations and integrating renewable energy sources, PSH offers a sustainable solution with minimal risks and costs. He said PSH operates by storing excess energy during periods of low demand and releasing it during peak hours. This is achieved by pumping water from a lower reservoir to an upper reservoir when surplus electricity is available and releasing it back down through turbines to generate electricity when demand surges. This ability to quickly respond to fluctuations makes PSH an invaluable tool for grid stability.

He said with Pakistan's increasing focus on renewable energy sources like solar and wind, which are inherently intermittent, PSH serves as a complementary technology which can store surplus energy generated during sunny or windy conditions and provide backup power during periods of low generation. This ensures a consistent and reliable energy supply, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and minimizing environmental impact, he added.

Muhammad Farhan Munir said from a cost perspective, PSH has proven to be more economical over the long term compared to other storage technologies like batteries. The infrastructure has a long lifespan, low operational costs, and requires no significant technological overhauls. Furthermore, Pakistan's diverse topography, with its natural elevation differences, is highly suitable for developing PSH projects, he added.

By adopting pumped storage hydropower, Pakistan can enhance its energy security, stabilize its power grid, and support the transition to a greener energy mix. This strategic investment will not only reduce energy costs but also enable the country to meet its growing electricity demand sustainably, ensuring a resilient energy future, he concluded.

Bangladesh High Commissioner's visit to Mohmand Chamber strengthens bilateral trade relations

Spokesman Report

PESHAWAR: Bangladesh's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mohammad Iqbal Hussain Khan, visited the Mohmand Chamber of Commerce and Industry and held detailed discussions with the local business community to explore avenues for strengthening trade and economic ties between the two nations.

The High Commissioner expressed his gratitude for the warm reception, stating that visiting Pakistan, particularly Peshawar, was an honor. He emphasized the importance of fostering mutual love, respect, and cooperation to ensure a prosperous future for upcoming generations.

Addressing the gathering, Former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali remarked that this century is about trade, not conflict. He urged both nations to focus on a bright future and leave behind the grievances of the past. Mohmand Chamber President Ameer Mohammad Khan echoed similar sentiments, highlighting the



shared potential of Pakistan and Bangladesh, emphasizing that free trade could significantly transform the fortunes of both nations.

During the event, members of the business community presented proposals and shared insights on enhancing trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The High Commissioner assured the participants of Bangladesh's willingness to collaborate in sectors such as agriculture, mining, and industry, emphasizing that both nations have immense potential for

mutual growth.

The High Commissioner also underscored the importance of reestablishing land and air routes and simplifying visa processes to facilitate business and trade. He assured his full support to the business community in promoting bilateral cooperation.

The event concluded with the presentation of commemorative shields, a traditional shawl, and a symbolic ring to the High Commissioner as a gesture of goodwill and appreciation.

Iftikhar Ali Malik emphasised the need for strengthening regional trade

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday emphasised the need for strengthening regional trade that could be a more effective substitute for achieving comparative advantages in international trade and enhancing prosperity.

In a statement, the popular veteran octogenarian trade leader of South Asia said South Asian countries can take all the advantages of regional economic integration that will enhance their bargaining power in international trade by representing a market that accounts for approximately 25.29% of the world's popu-

lation. He said integration will also improve the region's attractiveness for foreign and local investments, similar to EU, ASEAN and USMCA. Unfortunately, South Asia is currently the least economically integrated region in the world, with regional trade accounting for only about 5% of total trade, he added.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said the potential for intraregional trade in South Asia is estimated to be two times its current level which indicates a significant 67% of unrealised trade opportunities. If potentials are exploited, the region could see a benefit of approximately 3% of its GDP. He said the primary barrier to increased regional trade is political issues. When polit-



ical considerations are prioritised over economic benefits, the costs can be

significant for the region. As a result, around 40% of the world's poor reside

PFC seeks budget proposals from stakeholders



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) has initiated the process of collecting budget proposals from stakeholders in the furniture industry for the upcoming fiscal year.

Chairing a board of directors meeting here Sunday its Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the aim is to present these recommendations to the federal government in a comprehensive and consolidated form, ensuring that the industry's concerns and priorities are addressed effectively in the national budget. PFC

emphasized the need for stakeholders, including manufacturers, exporters, and retailers, to contribute their insights and suggestions on key issues such as tax reforms, raw material availability, export incentives, and infrastructure development. The council highlighted that the furniture sector is a significant contributor to the national economy, with immense potential for growth and job creation.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq also stressed the importance of creating a favorable policy environment to enhance the sector's global competitiveness. It called for measures to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs), reduce production costs, and promote innovation through research and development.

Shahid Imran emphasized Balochistan's strategic importance as a global business gateway

Commerce:

LAHORE:-Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional committee on Food Shahid Imran Sunday emphasized Balochistan's strategic importance as a global business gateway, a hub for trade with Central Asia and Europe, facilitated by its geographical advantages and natural resources.

Talking to a delegation of traders from Quetta here today he highlighted FPCCI President Atif Ikram Shaikh dedicated focus on Balochistan's development, stressing that inclusive growth and robust economic planning are critical for the province's economic prosperity. "Without economic development, we cannot achieve sustainable pros-

perity in Balochistan. We need to move beyond superficial Public Sector Development Programs (PSDP) and initiate projects that benefit all," he said.

Shahid Imran pointed out the need for enhanced infrastructure in Balochistan's industrial zones, citing the lack of basic facilities like water, electricity, and gas as major obstacles to industrial growth. He noted that while Hub Industrial Zone near Karachi has flourished, others, such as the Quetta Industrial Zone and the Bostan Special Economic Zone, remain underutilized. He called for urgent attention to establish projects like expo centers, special economic zones, and border markets. "Balochistan holds immense transit potential and is a vital link for global trade routes.

in South Asia, making it the region with the second-highest poverty rate after Africa. He said Political leadership must recognise this reality and learn from the experiences of the EU and ASEAN understanding that economic development should not be sacrificed for political gain. He said US President Donald Trump and other populist leaders in the West share a common goal of industrial policy (IP) which are state-led government programmes - such as trade protection, subsidies, tax incentives and R&D funding - that support strategic industries or sectors that aim to promote the competitiveness of local industry, protect jobs and enhance growth, he concluded.

DG Sports distributes cash prizes to the winning players of Inter-District phase of Khelta Punjab Games

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry has distributed cash prizes worth Rs 4460,000 to the winning players of Inter-District phase of Khelta Punjab Games at a prize distribution ceremony held at the SBP E-library.

Director Admin M Kaleem, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum, Deputy Director Chand Parveen, Shaista Qaiser and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry congratulated all the players who performed well in the second phase



of this mega event. A documentary of Khelta Punjab Games competitions was also shown in the event.

While addressing the meeting, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that fresh talented players are emerging from the platform of Khelta Punjab Games. "These budding athletes will prove to be true asset of the country".

Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry informed that the final stage of the Khelta Punjab Games will kick off with a colorful opening ceremony on January 30. "The third and final phase Inter-Division competitions Khelta Punjab Games will continue till February 3," he added.

Army's Qasim wins 10th Lakson Investments SOP Unified Half Marathon

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Army's Qasim Bajwa won the 10th Lakson Investments SOP Unified Marathon 21.5 km half marathon, organized by Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP) with the support of Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori.

The event witnessed an impressive gathering and showcased solidarity with athletes with physical and intellectual disabilities. Held on Sunday morning, the marathon began at Governor House Karachi, passed through designated routes including Aiwan-e-Sadr Road, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed Road, I. I. Chundrigar Road, and Merewether Tower, before concluding back at Governor House.

The marathon featured multiple categories, including a 21.5 km half marathon, 10 km race, 5 km race, 1 km unified walk, and a wheelchair event. Participants from all walks of life, including dignitaries, students, men, women, and children, joined the event.

In the 21.5 km half marathon, Pakistan Army's Qasim Bajwa clinched the top position, completing the distance in 1 hour and 12 minutes, followed by WAPDA's Faizan Zulfikar in second place and Muhammad Sajjad in third. In the women's half marathon, Natasha Hassan secured first place, while Sehrish Khan and Kaukab Sarwar finished second and third, respectively.



The 10 km race was won by Shakir Usman in the men's category and Mahnoor Fatima in the women's category. The 5 km race saw victories from Qandeel Sultan from Gilgit and Muhammad Ziaullah in the men's division.

The event also included a 1 KM unified walk, joined by notable figures such as Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, Chairman of Lakson Investment, Faysal Bank President Yousuf Hussain, Olympians Arshad Nadeem and Haider Ali, diplomats from Qatar, Turkey, Malaysia,

Oman, and Iran, and SOP Chairperson Ronak Lakhani. Renowned personalities from various sectors, including Alyy Khan, Sarwat Gilani, Ramiz Sattar Tehmina Asif and Faisal Shafi also participated.

Speaking at the prize distribution ceremony held at Governor House, Governor Kamran Tessori emphasized Pakistan's image as a peace-loving and sports-friendly nation, highlighting that the doors of the Governor House are always open for sports activities. He appreciated SOP Chairperson Ronak Lakhani,

board members and the her team for their relentless efforts toward the welfare of special children and praised the continuity of the marathon.

Olympian Arshad Nadeem commended the special athletes, calling them role models, while Ronak Lakhani expressed gratitude and reaffirmed her commitment to supporting special children. The awards ceremony saw the distribution of prizes to the victorious athletes by Governor Kamran Tessori, Iqbal Lakhani, Yousuf Hussain, Arshad Nadeem, and Ronak Lakhani.

Balochistan clinch Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman Memorial Polo Cup trophy

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Team Balochistan defeated Team Army by 6-4½ in the thrilling final to clinch the trophy at the Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman Memorial Polo Cup, sponsored by JS Bank, concluded at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Sunday.

A large and enthusiastic crowd from Lahore gathered to witness the final match. The event's chief guest, Lt Gen Farooq Ahmed Khan, graced the occasion, accompanied by JS Bank Regional Head Majid Qureshi, Brig Badr-uz-Zaman (R), the son of Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman, and Maj Ali Taimur (R), the club secretary. Numerous polo players and enthusiasts were also in attendance.

Prior to the final, an exhibition two-chukker match between Young Girls and Young Boys teams was held, where the Girls' team outclassed their opponents with a 4-0 victory. The final match between Team Balochistan and Team Army was a gripping contest. Team Army maintained a lead through the first three chukkers. However, Team Balochistan showcased exceptional performance in the fourth chukker to secure the win.

For Team Balochistan, Raja Mikael Sami led the scoring with three goals, while Ahmed Bilal Riya, Mumtaz Abbas Niazi, and Lt Col Shalhan Abbasi contributed one goal each. On the other hand, Team Army's two goals were scored by Raja Samiullah, with an additional two and a half goal handicap advantage.

The award for the best pony was given to Tatli, owned by Ahmed Bilal Riya, while the best player of the final was awarded to Raja Mikael Sami. In the subsidiary final, Diamond Paints defeated DS Polo by 7-4 goals.

WI in commanding position to level series: Imlach

Sports Desk

MULTAN: West Indies batter Tevin Imlach has expressed confidence in his team's ability to secure victory in the second Test against Pakistan, stating that they are in a commanding position and fully focused on finishing strong.

Speaking at a press conference at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Sunday, Imlach outlined his team's strategy and praised their adaptability to challenging conditions. "We are in a good position and determined to win this Test match," Imlach said confidently. He acknowledged the challenging nature of the Multan pitch but highlighted how the team's preparation and patience have paid off. "This pitch has been difficult, but we trusted our defence and chose the right moments to attack. Playing three innings here gave us the opportunity to learn, and that learning has helped us handle the conditions better," he explained.

Imlach also emphasized the team's intent to wrap up Pakistan's innings swiftly. "Our priority is to take the remaining six wickets as quickly as possible. This pitch is very different from what we were used to back home. There is no grass, and the ball spins more here, but we have adjusted well and feel confident in our bowling attack to finish the job," he added.

Reflecting on his team's performance so far, Imlach credited their discipline and strategy. "We have worked hard to get into this position, and we will keep pushing forward. This is a crucial moment, and we are ready to give our best to seal the win," he concluded.

With Pakistan needing 178 runs and West Indies only six wickets away from victory, the match hangs in the balance. Tevin Imlach's confidence underscores the Caribbean team's belief in their ability to conquer the challenges and walk away with a memorable win in Multan.



Pakistan vs West Indies: World Cricket Championship

West Indies Cricket Team Near to Winning Position in 2nd Cricket Test Match in Multan Cricket Stadium

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan faced an uphill task to win the second Test and clinch the series 2-0 against the West Indies when play ended on the second day, a day that saw 14 wickets fall for 320 runs after 20 wickets fell for 317 runs on Saturday.

After securing slender nine runs first-innings lead, the West Indies delivered a much-improved performance in their second outing, posting 244 all-out in two sessions. Commencing their run-chase after tea with a target of 254, Pakistan recovered from five for two in 16 balls to finish the day at 76 for 4 in 24 overs.

When Pakistan resumes the run-chase on Monday morning, needing another 178 runs, all eyes will be on vice-captain Saud Shakeel, who was batting on 13 after contributing 32 in the first innings. With him was night-watcher Kashif Ali (0), while Mohammad Rizwan and Salman Ali Agha remain to follow.

Pakistan captain Shan Masood was the first batter to be dismissed when he missed a straight delivery and was adjudged leg-before off off-spinner Kevin Sinclair. Shan's opening partner Mohammad Hurraira soon followed, attempting a reverse sweep off left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie, only to be trapped in front of the stumps. Kamran Ghulam's uncomfortable 29-ball stay ended when he tried one shot too many off Jomel Warrican and was caught at cover.

Pakistan suffered a major setback shortly before stumps when Babar Azam was caught



at forward short-leg off Sinclair, leaving the team at 71 for 4. Babar, who had looked solid for his 67-ball 31, failed to control the spin and bounce from Sinclair, putting Pakistan in a precarious position.

Earlier, Pakistan's left-arm spinner Noman Ali followed up his six for 41 in the first innings with four for 80 in the second, finishing with match figures of 36.1-3-121-10. This was the second time Noman took 10 or more wickets in a match, the first being his 11 for 147 against

England at the same venue three months ago.

Noman's scalps included West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite, who top-scored with 52 from 74 balls, including four fours and two sixes.

After Noman spun out the top order, off-spinner Sajid Khan cleaned up the lower middle order, snapping up 4 for 76 after taking 2 for 64 in the first innings. Sajid's second-innings victims included Amir Jangoo (30), Kevin Sinclair (28), Gudakesh Motie (18), and Jomel



Warrican (18).

Scores in brief (Day 2 of 5)

West Indies 163 all-out, 41.1 overs (Gudakesh Motie 55, Jomel Warrican 36 not out, Kemar Roach 25; Noman Ali 6-41, Sajid Khan 2-64) and 244 all-out, 66.1 overs (Kraigg Brathwaite 52, Tevin Imlach 35, Amir Jangoo 30, Kevin Sinclair 28; Sajid Khan 4-76, Noman Ali 4-80)

Pakistan 154 all-out, 47 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 49, Saud Shakeel 32, Sajid Khan 16 not out, Kamran Ghulam 16; Jomel Warrican 4-43, Gudakesh Motie 3-49, Kemar Roach 2-15) and 76-4, 24 overs (Babar 31; Kevin Sinclair 2-41)

Pakistan batters buried on a spin pitch; West Indies close to a historic victory. The Pakistan cricket team is on the verge of a historically worst defeat against the West Indies. If the visiting team wins this Test in Multan, it will mark their first Test victory in Pakistan since 1990, a gap of 35 years. This would force Pakistan to draw the two-match Test series and bring a disappointing end to the 2023-2025 World Test Championship cycle. Pakistan's

ranking will remain at eighth.

The performance at the Multan Cricket Stadium has raised significant questions about head coach Aqib Javed's spin-friendly policy. He had claimed that preparing such pitches would make it nearly impossible for foreign teams to win in Pakistan, particularly against a team like West Indies, which he believed struggled against spin. However, the opposite occurred.

On the second day of the second Test, the West Indies batted brilliantly against Pakistan's spin attack, scoring 244 runs. When Pakistan was set a target of 254 runs, 24 overs of play remained after the tea break. Yet, the Pakistani team failed to play confidently, with senior players like Shan Masood and Babar Azam among four players dismissed and sent back to the pavilion within that time.

West Indies just 6 wickets away, Pakistan needs 178 runs to win

In the Multan Test, Pakistan requires 178 more runs to win with 6 wickets in hand. Chasing a target of 254, Pakistan lost 4

wickets, with Babar Azam scoring 31 and Kamran Ghulam contributing 19. A total of 91 overs were played on the second day.

On Day 2 of the second Test in the Pakistan vs. West Indies series, the visitors scored 244 runs in their second innings in 66.1 overs, setting Pakistan a target of 254. By the end of the day's play, Pakistan had managed 76 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in 24 overs.

Pakistan started its second innings poorly, losing its first two wickets for just 5 runs. Captain Shan Masood and Mohammad Hurraira scored only 2 runs each before falling to Sinclair and Gudakesh Motie, respectively.

The third-wicket partnership between Babar Azam and Kamran Ghulam provided some stability as they began cautiously. At 28, Babar was given a lifeline when Gudakesh Motie dropped an easy catch. Babar was on 13 at the time. However, Kamran Ghulam couldn't build a big innings and was dismissed for 19 by Warrican, caught by Ameer Jango. Babar Azam followed soon after, scoring 31 before being caught by Athanaze off Sinclair's bowling.

At stumps, Kashif Ali was unbeaten on 1, while Saud Shakeel was on 13. Sinclair took 2 wickets for the West Indies, with Warrican and Gudakesh Motie claiming one each.

Earlier in the Day:

The West Indies batted with confidence in their second innings, scoring 244 runs. Captain Kraigg Brathwaite top-scored with 52, supported by Tevin Imlach (35), Ameer Jango (30), and Sinclair (28).

The innings featured only 14 fours and 2 sixes, with the rest of the runs coming through running between the wickets.

The West Indies openers provided a cautious start with a 50-run partnership. McKenny Clarke was the first to fall for 7, caught by Shan Masood off Nauman Ali. Captain Brathwaite completed his 31st Test half-century before being stumped by Mohammad Rizwan off Nauman Ali for 52. Ameer Jango followed, scoring 30 with 3 boundaries before falling to Sajid Khan.

Nauman Ali was the standout bowler for Pakistan, taking 4 wickets. Sajid Khan claimed 3, while Abrar Ahmed and Kashif Ali picked up one each. The West Indies were bowled out for 244, with the last-wicket partnership adding 10 runs.

Post-Match Press Conference: Sajid Khan defended the spin-friendly pitches, suggesting that results are coming due to these conditions. He expressed optimism that Saud Shakeel and the remaining batters could still win the match. When questioned about the balance between pitches favoring spinners and batting challenges, Sajid emphasized that cricket is professional now and tail-enders also contribute.

West Indies batter Tevin Imlach admitted that while the pitch was challenging, their experience from previous innings helped them adjust. He expressed confidence in his team's ability to secure victory on the final day. The match hangs in balance, with Pakistan needing 178 runs and the West Indies requiring 6 wickets to achieve a historic win.

Burn illicit drugs

LAHORE: A woman customs official walks past in front of burn illicit drugs and liquor during a ceremony on the occasion of International Customs Day, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan can hit \$1 trillion Economy by 2035, says WB official

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser, has expressed optimism about Pakistan's economic potential, stating that the country has the capability to grow at an annual rate of 7% and become a \$1 trillion economy by 2035.

Speaking on a private TV show, Raiser acknowledged the challenges of long-term economic projections but emphasised that achieving this goal is possible if Paki-

stan seriously implements its domestic economic recovery plans.

He underlined the necessity of key reforms and robust policies for sustainable growth.

Raiser highlighted that the World Bank has pledged \$20 billion in support to Pakistan over the next 10 years.

However, he clarified that this funding is conditional and will depend on Pakistan's economic reforms and capacity to utilise resources effectively.

For a 7% annual growth



rate, Raiser stressed the importance of essential economic reforms, including attracting foreign investments

and improving trade relations.

He advised Pakistan to focus on factors within its control to unlock its economic potential.

The World Bank official revealed that consultations had been held with political parties and civil society in Pakistan to build consensus on economic plans.

He also commented on Pakistan's trade relations with India, urging the country to prioritise its resources and create favourable conditions for investment and trade.

Ji announces nationwide protest against IPPs mafia

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, leader of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan, has announced nationwide protests and sit-ins on January 31, targeting the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) mafia.

According to reports, Hafiz Naeem emphasised that electricity bills should be reduced, unfair taxes eliminated, and petrol levies lowered.

Hafiz Naeem also called for the initiation of a new movement to push for these changes. He stated that Jamaat-e-Islami will provide



the public with a clear roadmap for protests and sit-ins. The JI leader further

demanding the removal of government privileges, relief for salaried individuals, and the imposition of taxes on landlords.

He pointed out that the wealthy and powerful have historically exploited the system, while ordinary citizens bear the weight of economic hardship.

Hafiz Naeem also criticised the 140 percent salary hike for parliament members, calling it "shameful," and vowed that the nation would hold them accountable for this move.

In addition, Hafiz Naeem rejected the government's proposed amendments to

the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), labeling it an attack on freedom of speech and journalism."

In other news, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman met with Hamas leader Hasan Darwish in Doha on January 22, 2024.

According to reports, during the meeting held in Qatar's capital, JI supreme praised the strong resistance of the people of Gaza and Hamas, acknowledging their steadfastness and struggle.

He also stated that the ceasefire agreement was a victory for Hamas, as Israel had failed to achieve its military goals.

IHC to hear Khawar Manika's petition against acquittal of Bushra and Imran in Iddat case today

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court is set to hear Khawar Manika's review petition on Monday against his ex-wife Bushra Bibi and Imran Khan's acquittal in Iddat case.

The newly-appointed additional judge Justice Azam Khan will hear the case. Maneka challenged Additional Sessions Judge's order who had given relief to Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi on July 13, 2024.

In his appeal, Khawar Manika has requested IHC to annul the decision of the Additional Sessions Judge. On July 13, 2024, the Additional Sessions Judge acquitted PTI founder and Bushra Bibi in the Iddat Nikah case

Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar: Punjab govt shares more update on loan programme

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government shared more updates on the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' programme and said that more than 5,000 homes are quickly approaching completion under the scheme.

In a statement issued here, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said that loans under the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' programme are being given only on the basis of merit.

The construction of more than 50,000 homes are almost completed with loans given to 3,000 people in Phase II.



Maryam Nawaz said that that borrowers who receive a loan of up to Rs 1.5 million will only have to repay principal amount in installments over a nine-year period in installments of 14,000 rupees per month.

The "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" programme is the first major interest-free housing project in the country's history.

Earlier in October last year, the Punjab government started cheque distribution

among eligible families to construct their houses under the programme.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended the cheque distribution ceremony of Apni Chhat Apna Ghar programme as the chief guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Maryam Nawaz said that She said that the Punjab government in fulfilling the dream of Nawaz Sharif by enabling the needy persons to build their own houses. Maryam Nawaz said that around 500,000 applications were received for the programme.

Pakistan Navy is All Set to Host 9th AMAN Exercise and Maiden AMAN Dialogue



7 - 11 FEB 25

9 - 10 FEB 25

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy is set to host AMAN-25; the ninth edition of multinational AMAN exercise from February 7 to 11. A key feature of this year's exercise will be the AMAN Dialogue, where Chiefs of Naval Forces, heads of Coast Guards, and senior leaders from around the world will convene to discuss regional maritime security and devise joint strategies to counter evolving maritime threats.

Around 60 countries will participate in AMAN-25, contributing with ships, aircraft, Special Operations Forces (SOF), Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, Marines, and observers. Delegations from across the globe will also attend the inaugural International AMAN Dialogue, which will take place alongside the exercise.

The AMAN series has been a hallmark of the Pakistan Navy's efforts to promote regional peace and cooper-

ation. Launched in 2007, the inaugural exercise saw the participation of 28 countries. By 2023, the number of participating nations had grown to 50, including major naval powers. The motto of the AMAN series, "Together for Peace," reflects its core mission, while this year's theme, "Secure Seas; Prosperous Future," emphasizes the importance of maritime security for global prosperity.

AMAN exercise consists of harbour and sea phases. During the harbour phase, activities such as seminars, operational discussions, counter-terrorism demonstrations, and pre-sail planning of evolutions at sea will be held. The sea phase would include tactical maneuvers, exercises related to maritime security such as anti-piracy and counter terrorism, search and rescue, gunnery firings and air defence exercises. Highlight of the sea phase will be the International Fleet Review, which will be witnessed by national and foreign dignitaries.

PTI founder's call to halt remittances will fail: Miftah



Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has stated that Overseas Pakistanis will continue to send money to their families, despite the appeal by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan.

In a press conference held in London with former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Miftah Ismail expressed his views, stating that the appeal to stop remittance by Imran Khan is inappropriate.

Miftah Ismail pointed out that even after the Imran Khan's request, Overseas Pakistanis have not halted their remittances. He also stated that, while inflation in Pakistan has reduced, the cost of living has continued to rise.

Miftah Ismail also highlighted that the purchasing power of the public has decreased, and Pakistanis are becoming poorer each year. He mentioned that 40 percent of Pakistan's population is living below the poverty line, and 7 million children are growing up in poverty.

Atif Khan opens up on his meeting with PTI founder



Correspondent

MARDAN: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Atif Khan denied discussion regarding the replacement of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur during his meeting with the party's founder. Speaking to media Atif Khan revealed that PTI founder Imran Khan had sought recommendations for the provincial presidency during his meeting at Adiala Jail, and he proposed Junaid Akbar for the role. The PTI leader added that any

changes within the provincial party structure are now at Junaid Akbar's discretion.

Addressing concerns about corruption allegations, Atif Khan said the founder underlined the importance of verifying these claims. "The PTI founder stated that if the allegations against ministers are proven true, they will be removed from their positions," the former minister explained.

The remarks come amid speculations of internal changes within PTI's provincial leadership.