



President Asif Zardari pays visit to Holy Sites in Najaf, Kufa



DPM Dar directs implementation of govt policies for GSP Plus continuation



Govt plans to auction 600 MHz Spectrum by first week of Feb 2026; Shaza Fatima

Founded By: (Late) Rehmat Khan ABC CERTIFIED Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com Executive Group Editor Arif Mehmood Khan
 Website: www.peakpoint.pk

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Wednesday 24 December 2025 Rajab Al-Murjab 03, 1447 A.H VOI No: 05 Issue No. 339 Pages 4 Rs.20

PM invites UAE investments in Pakistan's key sectors for economic growth

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, emphasized Pakistan's strong and abiding commitment to further strengthening its relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and invited increased UAE investments in key sectors to support Pakistan's economic growth and stability. The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan Salem Mohammed Salem Al Bawab Al Zaabi who paid a courtesy call to him at the PM House.

The prime minister was assisted by SAPM Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister expressed Pakistan's deep appreciation for the longstanding and brotherly relations between Pakistan and the UAE, highlighting the strong bonds of friendship, mutual respect, and close cooperation that have defined Pakistan-UAE bilateral ties for the past many decades. Expressing his satisfaction at the volume of bilateral trade between the two sides, he further highlighted the need for both sides to focus on enhancing economic ties, trade, investment opportunities, and collaboration in areas such as energy, minerals, IT, railways and aviation. He also acknowledged the UAE's consistent support for Pakistan in times of need.



ISLAMABAD: H.E Salem Mohammed Salem Al Bawab Al Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Commander Bahrain Naval Force calls on Defence Minister Khawaja Asif

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Commander of Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohamed Ebrahim Al Bin Ali called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif here on Tuesday. The Defence Minister highlighted long-standing brotherly relations between the two nations and expressed Pakistan's continued support for Bahrain in all domains, said a press release.

The meeting focused on key areas of mutual interest and exploring avenues of enhanced cooperation, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to sustained bilateral engagements, it further said. Both sides expressed satisfaction over ongoing collaboration between two countries.



Field Marshal Asim Munir flags multi-domain security challenges during NDU visit

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, visited the National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad on Tuesday, where he was briefed by civil and military participants of the ongoing National Security and War Course on their academic assessment of national security challenges and the imperatives for addressing them.

During his interaction with the participants, the Field Marshal outlined the increasingly complex global, regional and internal security environment, underlining that Pakistan continues to face broad and persistent challenges all elements of national power. According to him, effective national security responses now require an integrated approach that brings together military, diplomatic, economic and other non-traditional domains.

He emphasised that the evolving nature of these threats demands comprehensive, multi-domain preparedness, continuous adaptation and close synergy among conventional military threats but extend into sub-conventional, intelligence, cyber, information, economic and other non-traditional domains.

He said these challenges are no longer confined to conventional military threats but extend into sub-conventional, intelligence, cyber, information, economic and other non-traditional domains.

He emphasised that the evolving nature of these threats demands comprehensive, multi-domain preparedness, continuous adaptation and close synergy among conventional military threats but extend into sub-conventional, intelligence, cyber, information, economic and other non-traditional domains.

He said these challenges are no longer confined to conventional military threats but extend into sub-conventional, intelligence, cyber, information, economic and other non-traditional domains.

He emphasised that the evolving nature of these threats demands comprehensive, multi-domain preparedness, continuous adaptation and close synergy among conventional military threats but extend into sub-conventional, intelligence, cyber, information, economic and other non-traditional domains.



Five policemen martyred in Karak attack

PEAK POINT

KARAK: At least five cops were martyred after a police mobile van was targeted in a gun attack in Karak district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday. Karak District Police Officer (DPO) Saud Khan confirmed the toll, saying the police van was on routine patrol when assailants opened fire on the officials. He said the incident took place in limits of Surguri police station. Security officials have cordoned off the area to collect the evidence while a search operation has also been launched to arrest the perpetrators.

Earlier this month, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) police revealed.

Islamabad court extends pre-arrest bail of Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi in multiple cases

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A district and session court on Tuesday has restrained authorities from arresting PTI founder Imran Khan in five cases related to May 9 and others.

The court has also extended the pre-arrest bail of both Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi until January 27, 2026.

During the proceedings, the court clarified that Imran Khan must personally appear in court or attend via video link at the next hearing. The court also stated that the hearings for these cases.

Arif Habib consortium emerges victorious in PIA auction with Rs135bn bid

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A successful bid of Rs135bn by Arif Habib won the auction for Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Ltd (PIAC) after the process moved to an open auction round at a ceremony in Islamabad, marking the country's first major privatisation in nearly two decades.

Initially, pre-qualified bids were submitted by Lucky Cement, private airline Airblue and investment firm Arif Habib in the morning. Airblue exited the race after the first round of bidding, with a proposition lower than the reference price of Rs100bn.

In the first round, Lucky Cement put up a bid of Rs101.5bn, Airblue Rs26.5bn, and the Arif Habib consortium bid Rs115bn, after which the reference price was by Arif Habib. Both bidders engaged in a brief competition to outbid each other during the round.

However, when Lucky Cement raised its bid to Rs134bn, Arif Habib countered with Rs135bn, forcing Lucky Cement to bow out and congratulate Arif Habib.

The whole process was telecast live and streamed across all TV channels as well as the respective social media handles of the government.

Adviser to the prime minister on privatisation, Muhammad Ali, will also hold a press conference after the conclusion of the bidding process.

Aurangzeb hopes PIA sale will bring investment Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, speaking at the bidding ceremony, thanked the PM's aide and his team for their efforts and hailed the bidding process in terms of transparency.

"It takes a lot of time and effort to get to a good place where we are today," he said. "All of the bidders today are from Pakistan. I used to say that no matter which team wins, Pakistan would win." He lauded Pakistan's biggest conglomerates for "vying for the best airline".



Trump pulls 30 envoys in 'America First' push, critics say it weakens US abroad

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration is recalling nearly 30 ambassadors and other senior career diplomats to ensure embassies reflect its "America First" priorities, a move critics said would weaken US credibility abroad. The State Department declined to provide a list of the diplomats being recalled. A senior department official said on Monday the move was "a standard process in any administration" but critics said that was not so. "An ambassador is a personal representative of the president, and it is the president's right to ensure that he has individuals in these countries who advance the America First agenda," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Nearly 30 senior diplomats were among those ordered back to Washington, people familiar with the matter said. They were posted to smaller countries where the top US representative has traditionally been from the Foreign Service, which is made up of career officials not aligned with a political party.





SPORTS



Big Bash League: It's pressure when you play against Pakistan team-mates, says Shadab Khan



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: For Shadab Khan, the ongoing Big Bash League (BBL) season has been about more than form and fitness. It has also meant facing familiar faces — friends and long-time Pakistan team-mates — now turned rivals in Australian colours.

"Yeah, losing to friends is hard to digest," Shadab said in The Surge Podcast on Tuesday. "In our culture, your friends don't forget it for years.

We already play against each other in the PSL (Pakistan Super League), and whatever happens there gets talked about for the

whole year.

"So there's always pressure when you play against mates."

The season has carried particular significance for the Sydney Thunder all-rounder, marking his return to competitive cricket after a lengthy layoff. Shadab last played for Pakistan in a T20 international in June before a shoulder injury and subsequent rehabilitation ruled him out. The BBL has been his first appearance on the field since. So far, his return has been encouraging. Across three matches, Shadab has taken six wickets and scored 75 runs in two innings at a strike rate of over 136,

averaging more than 37.

His most impressive performance came against Brisbane Heat, where he returned figures of 4 for 24, signalling a welcome return to bowling form after a prolonged absence. This BBL season has also seen an unprecedented number of Pakistan players in action, drawing increased attention from fans back home. "It's very significant," Shadab said. "Big names like Babar [Azam] are here, and fans back home are excited. "Earlier, we didn't have many players in the BBL, but now six or seven are playing. Everyone has their own fan base, and people

love watching them in one of the top leagues in the world. You can feel the buzz back in Pakistan."

While Shadab has found momentum, other Pakistan stars are still finding their feet. Babar, despite scoring a half-century for Sydney Sixers, has yet to fully live up to the hype surrounding his BBL debut. Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi have also struggled to make a consistent impact so far in the tournament.

Shadab believes Australian conditions, particularly the larger grounds and extra bounce, suit spinners and allow greater tactical freedom.

Pakistan to move ICC over Indian players' unethical behaviour in U19 AC final



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to raise concerns about the biased and unethical behaviour of Indian players during the final of the Under-19 Asia Cup with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi stated that throughout the final match, Indian players persistently provoked the Pakistani team, an act that violated the spirit of the game and cricket's fundamental principles.

He emphasized that such actions were not in line with the expected conduct of sportsmanship.

Naqvi further stated that a formal complaint would be lodged with the ICC regarding the Indian team's conduct, stressing the importance of separating politics from sports.

He stated that cricket should serve as a platform for mutual respect and healthy competition, not for provoking or inciting others.

A day earlier, Pakistan team's mentor, Sarfaraz Ahmed, had condemned the behavior of the Indian players as unfortunate and unethical. Sarfaraz stated that while the Indian players' actions were inappropriate, the Pakistani team had displayed great.

Sportsmanship by celebrating their victory in a dignified manner.

Win, but with 'tameez': Sarfaraz Ahmed's dugout lesson steals the show in U-19 Asia Cup final



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: For Pakistan cricket fans, the scoreboard from the U-19 Asia Cup final was already deeply satisfying. A thumping 191-run win over India, a record-breaking century, and a bowling performance that folded a previously unbeaten side in under 27 overs. But long after the numbers stopped doing post-match handshakes, a single

line from the dugout — delivered by mentor Sarfaraz Ahmed — has captured the internet's attention.

As Pakistan cruised towards victory at the ICC Academy Ground, a moment of ugliness briefly intruded. An Indian batter made a 'shoe-pointing' gesture after his dismissal, and once again, there was no power to the handshake between the

sides — a pattern that has become depressingly familiar in recent India-Pakistan contests. With his Redemption was complete after a of emotional release, Sarfaraz's voice rang out clearly on the broadcast: "Tameez ke dairay mein rehna, jahilun ki tarah jahil nahi ho jana (Remain civil. Don't meet foolishness with more foolishness)."

According to fans, that intervention was pure Sarfaraz — competitive to the core, but fiercely protective of cricketing values.

The match itself barely needed drama. Sameer Minhas smashed a monumental 172, the highest individual score in a U-19 Asia Cup final, though it was a new reply never got going, collapsing for 156 as Ali Raza tore through the batting order. Pakistan lifted the trophy with authority. On X, 'Sarfaraz, the mentor', has dominated threads. One user called his words "perfect advice for the Ind v Pak rivalry," praising him for insisting on "winning with class" rather than indulging in "uchhal-kood overdrive."

Another declared his dugout words a chef's kiss moment, while several fans gleefully repeated the phrase "tameez ka dairay mein" as U-19 Asia Cup final, though it was a new

ITA hosts reception for Islamabad women tennis team



Five wickets, one over: Gede Priandana scripts historic T20I moment for Indonesia

PEAK POINT

BALI: Indonesia fast bowler Gede Priandana scripted a historic moment in international cricket on Tuesday by becoming the first player to take five wickets in a single over in a T20 international, across both men's and women's formats.

The 28-year-old right-arm seamer achieved the landmark during the opening T20I of an eight-match series against Cambodia at the Udayana Cricket Ground in Bali, where Indonesia registered a commanding 60-run victory. Chasing a target of 168, Cambodia appeared to be in contention at 106 for 5 after 15 overs. Priandana was introduced into the attack for the first time in the 16th over, and the match turned decisively within minutes.

He struck with his opening three deliveries to complete a hat-trick, dismissing Shah Abrar Hussain,

Nirmaljit Singh and Chanthoeun Rathanak in succession. After delivering a dot ball, Priandana removed Mongdara Sok and Pel Vannak on either side of a solitary wide, completing an extraordinary five-wicket

where fall-of-wicket data is officially recorded. Prior to this, there had been 14 instances of four wickets falling in an over in T20Is, the most notable being Lasith Malinga's four wickets in four balls against New Zealand in 2019.



The five-wicket-over feat had previously been achieved only twice in domestic men's T20 cricket. Bangladesh's Al-Amin Hossain accomplished it during the 2013-14 season, while India's Abhimanyu Mithun replicated the achievement in the 2019-20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

Pakistan cricketer Sidra Nawaz ties the knot with Ghayas Khan



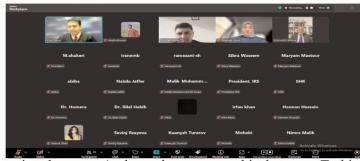


“Turkiye, Iran can’t be excluded from regional proceedings”, Experts

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: “Turkiye and Iran are natural partners because of their close proximity to each other”, marked Ms Fatemeh Asadi, a foreign affairs specialist based in Tehran. She was speaking at an event organized by Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad to discuss the prospects of Turkiye and Iran collaboration in the Middle East. Speaking to a wide range of audience, Ms Asadi viewed that Syrian situation was volatile and required attention by regional stake-

holders. She was of the opinion that no country could influence Syria completely and therefore, it was in the interest of regional stakeholders to find common grounds. She rejected the notion of Iran’s weakness and instead opined that Iran’s priorities had changed vis-à-vis the region and that Iran now sought pragmatism in its relations. Since Israel seeks the division of Syria which could cause instability in the entire region, Turkiye finds in Iran a feasible partner to keep Syria unified, Ms Asadi



pointed out. Ambassador Edmund Fitton-Brown, Senior Fellow at Foundation for Defense of Democracies (USA), argued that despite having upper hand in its relations with Iran, Turkiye sought to manage the bilateral relations. However, the

partnership between Turkiye and Iran is limited since Turkiye desires to keep the US on board as well, Ambassador Brown noted. He also viewed the increased fragmentation in the geopolitical landscape with the possible emergence of KSA-

UAE arrangement that could be detrimental to Turkiye’s interests in Syria. Finally, Ambassador Brown highlighted that if Syria fails to form an inclusive government, it could lead to renewed sectarian tensions which might force the US to disengage from the Turkiye-backed setup in the country. Mr Ferahim Eliyev, Research Fellow at Crescent Research Center, Azerbaijan, described Turkiye-Iran partnership as tactical based on realpolitik instead of any ideology. Turkiye views Israeli actions

as destabilizing in the region and therefore, is willing to cooperate with Iran to manage the Syrian crisis, he added. Mr Eliyev also outlined that Turkiye wanted to present itself as a credible mediator between the new administrator in Syria and Iran and that’s why, the partnership between the two is situational. Furthermore, Turkiye is adamant to continue cooperating with Iran in economic sphere despite sanctions which makes their bilateral partnership in Syria even more crucial.

From snatching to violence: NA Committee tightens criminal laws to restore public safety

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive move to curb the rising wave of street crimes across the country, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Interior and Narcotics Control on Monday unanimously approved amendments to the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) aimed at fast-tracking prosecution and imposing stricter punishment on offenders involved in violent street crimes. The committee endorsed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2025,

concluding that tougher legal provisions would create a strong deterrent against crimes involving violence, intimidation, and coercion in public spaces. The bill is now set to be presented before the National Assembly for passage. The meeting, held at Parliament House, was chaired by Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz, MNA. Presenting the bill, Khawaja Izhar ul Hassan, MNA, told the committee that the proposed amendments seek to respond to the alarming increase in street crimes by strengthening Sections 382A of the PPC and 181 of the CrPC. He

said the legislation would apply not only to those directly committing crimes but also to individuals involved in facilitating or concealing such offences. “The objective is to ensure public safety, streamline prosecutions, and send a clear message that street crimes will not go unpunished,” he said. Committee members agreed that procedural reforms under the PPC and CrPC were essential to improve conviction rates and reduce delays in criminal trials. In a separate but significant development, the committee decided to summon officials of the Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in its next meeting to deliberate on the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Members raised serious concerns over the delimitation of local government constituencies in Islamabad, urging the ECP to ensure that future delimitations are based strictly on population data and geographical realities. The decision was supported by the Minister of State for Interior. The committee also took a firm stance against legislative overreach, deciding not to recommend two private members’ bills — the

ICT Dowry Restraint Bill, 2025 and the Islamabad (Preservation of Landscape) Bill, 2025 — for passage. Members noted that laws on both subjects already exist and stressed that strict enforcement, rather than additional legislation, was the real need. The committee observed that Islamabad is already over-legislated, and duplication of laws would serve little purpose. Discussion on the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2025 (a government bill) was deferred to the next meeting. The committee directed the Ministry of Law to consult

relevant Bar Councils and present their feedback before further deliberation. Taking up a calling attention notice regarding delays in compensation payments for land acquired by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in sectors E-12, C-13, C-14, C-15, C-16 and H-16, the committee directed CDA to present a workable compensation plan in its next meeting. The committee made it clear that all landowners whose property was acquired must be adequately compensated without further delay.

Opinion & Editorial

Arif Mehmood Khan
Group Editor: 0333-5366814
 Samra Athar Kakakhel
 Resident Editor
 Nadim Tanoli
 Joint Editor: Mob-0301-777874
 Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
 www.peakpoint.pk

Mutating cancer cells of hatred

JAWED NAQVI

TWO Muslim men, apparently a father-son duo of Indian origin, went on a shooting spree at Australia’s legendary Bondi Beach last week where they targeted Jews, killing 15 and injuring dozens. Another man who bravely grabbed and disarmed one of the shooters, and got critically wounded in the bargain, was also a Muslim. The selfless hero saved Jewish lives and thereby also saved the day for a very reviled idea of secular bonhomie and religious harmony. This man needs to be celebrated in every country and every home that faces racist or religious slight from and against their estranged communities.

In his heroism the man — reportedly a Syrian fruit seller — spoke up for Muslims by putting his body on the line regardless of who the terrorists were and who the victims were. It was not too different from Norman Finkelstein or Ilan Pappé and so many others who represent an intellectual but well-grounded resistance that has inspired young and old Jews to thwart Benjamin Netanyahu’s bloodlust for Palestinians. Had Ahmed al-Ahmed not stuck his neck out in the nick of time, rest assured Netanyahu would be digging his fangs into the carotid artery of Anthony Albanese, the Australian prime minister who recently dared to speak up for a two-state solution for Palestine.

Netanyahu had warned Albanese in August against Australia’s decision to recognise a Palestinian state. It “pours fuel on the antisemitic fire ... emboldens those who menace Australian Jews and encourages the Jew hatred now stalking your streets”. Albanese was weak and appeased Palestinians. Thus growled Netanyahu after the carnage. “You did nothing to curb the cancer cells that were growing inside your country. You took no action. You let the disease spread and the result is the horrific attacks on Jews we saw today.” Cancer cells! Albanese ignored the sly harangue, kept his calm and declared that it was “a moment for national unity. This is a moment for Australians to come together. That’s precisely what we’ll be doing.” Albanese displayed humanism that’s alien to the likes of Narendra Modi, Donald Trump, Friedrich Merz, Keir Starmer and those others who stood in support of genocide in Gaza actively or by turning a blind eye to the unspeakable horror. Had Ahmed al-Ahmed not stuck his neck out in time, Netanyahu would be digging his fangs into the carotid artery of Anthony Albanese. Religious parochialism or racial bigotry happen to be evenly spread, however. Islamophobia is as much a racist slur as the less-discussed but revolting description of Jews by Martin Luther in 15th century

Germany and down to the Nazis and their closet supporters across Europe over centuries. Shakespeare too relapsed into the singular prejudice of his time against Jews and Moors. Far too many followed Luther in arguing that Jewish synagogues and schools be set on fire, prayer books be destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, Jewish homes burned, and property and money confiscated. Hindutva gang leaders are so unoriginal in their bigotry. Europe’s Protestants recast themselves as the Ku Klux Klan in America, targeting Jews and Blacks alike. There’s a gripping scene in Mississippi Burning, a major cinematic commentary on white supremacist resistance to America’s quest for racial equality and civil liberties in the 1960s. Two Jewish boys, both civil rights activists, are driving their black friend to safety in a Mississippi county when they are accosted by the KKK and a police officer. Three shots ring out and the dead boys locked in their car are dumped in a swamp. The story was one of unrelenting reminders that humanism and bigotry are not the monopoly of any single people. It’s only too well known that KKK is the thinly veiled spirit behind Donald Trump’s assault on coloured immigrants. The KKK’s hatred for Jews notwithstanding, Trump’s MAGA movement performs an ideological calisthenic to court his Zionist base. Courtesy Dawn

No more boomers

ZORAIN NIZAMANI

The World Inequality Report of 2026 shows that Pakistan’s 1% of the total population holds 24% of the entire wealth of the country, with the other 10% holding 59% of the total wealth, with increasing gender disparity, where female labour participation has declined from 9.8% to 8.5%. The space for women is shrinking day by day. Welcome to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Make it make sense.

Write. Write. Write. In times where human rights are a mere idea and dialogue is mere rhetoric, the only way to garner and incubate new thought (not bring change) is to initiate dialogue. Change is a long road, as Tom Petty said. But he said it about love. That’s a different debate.

Change in Pakistan is not achievable unless immunity makes way for common sense. Unfortunately, sense is not so common.

I have lost all hope in boomers, and I am not scared to admit that. Call me a pessimist or a third-class citizen (we’re already third-class citizens), but I don’t think the current lot of boomers is bound to bring about any change whatsoever. People who believe that expressing free speech is equivalent to questioning national security are a group of people who will never be able to provide a space for debate. Back in the day, when the Greeks were producing the best of minds, they were doing so by reading and thereafter debating their ideas. Bouncing ideas off of each other, engaging in thoughtful, engaging discourse. For debate and conversation, you need people who are true to their country, who welcome fresh ideas. You can’t have a conversation with someone who doesn’t recognise that there is a problem. Post amendments, it has become clear that everyone recites the same script, and they all have one thing in common: to stay in power. Nothing else. When your kids live abroad, you hold property abroad, your bank accounts are abroad, so why are you here? Courtesy Tribune

Juniors’ achievement

WHAT the seniors couldn’t achieve, the juniors have done with aplomb — and provided a shot in the arm for Pakistan cricket. The Pakistan Under-19 cricket team followed in the footsteps of the Shaheens by clinching the Asia Cup crown this year, thrashing India by a massive 191 runs in the final in Dubai on Sunday. Led by opener Sameer Minhas’ breathtaking 172, Pakistan posted a daunting 347 before bundling their arch-rivals for 156 in a one-sided showpiece match of the One-day tournament. The Under-19 team’s title triumph comes after Pakistan Shaheens, the country’s ‘A’ side, won the Rising Stars T20 Asia Cup last month. While the Shaheens beat India on their way to the final, where they prevailed against Bangladesh, the Under-19 side rebounded after a harrowing loss to India in the group stage before outclassing them in the title clash. The victory had echoes of Pakistan’s Champions Trophy triumph in 2017, which they won in similar style and remarkably the Under-19 team had the winning captain of that side, Sarfaraz Ahmed, as their mentor. The successes of the junior teams also come after the men’s team endured three defeats to India, including the final, in the T20 Asia Cup in September.

ECC approves recommendations for upcoming spectrum auction: Aurangzeb



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has approved key recommendations for the upcoming spectrum auction, terming it a major step toward promoting digital and financial inclusion in the country.

Addressing a news conference after the ECC meeting, alongside Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, the finance minister said that the digital transformation

was central to Pakistan's economic growth agenda. "When we talk about digital, it is very simple, it is faster, cheaper and better," Aurangzeb said, adding that digital inclusion and financial inclusion were critical components of the country's growth paradigm.

He said that spectrum was a vital enabler of this process and warned that unsold spectrum directly translated into economic loss.

The minister said a special committee, which he chaired and included the IT minister and the chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), had worked extensively over the past year on the spectrum auction framework.

He said the committee engaged a renowned international consultant, National Economic Research Associates (NERA), to conduct in-depth analysis and stakeholder consultations.

Aurangzeb said NERA carried out detailed engagement with telecom

operators, user focus groups and the PTA, while also

reviewing international and regional benchmarks of spectrum auctions.

"They studied how auctions have been conducted globally, on what terms and conditions, and based on that analysis provided comprehensive recommendations," he added.

He said the recommendations covered critical aspects such as spectrum pricing, payment terms and auction design, and were carefully reviewed with Pakistan's economic and market realities in view.

"Today, the ECC has approved those recommendations, which we adopted as Pakistan's first lens for the upcoming spectrum auction. With this approval, we now look forward to a successful auction," Aurangzeb added.

The finance minister expressed confidence that the approved framework would help unlock the full potential of the telecom sector.

President Asif Zardari pays visit to Holy Sites in Najaf, Kufa



PEAK POINT

NAJAF: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday visited the holy cities of Najaf and Kufa, where he paid respects at key religious sites and offered prayers.

In Najaf, the President visited the shrine of Hazrat Ali (RA), where he offered Fateha and prayed. He later proceeded to Kufa, where he offered Nawafil

prayers at Masjid-e-Kufa and visited the house attributed to Hazrat Ali (RA).

During his visit, President Zardari prayed for peace, unity, and harmony among the Muslim Ummah. The president also met with administrators and religious scholars in Najaf and Kufa.

The meetings were attended by the Governor of Najaf and other senior officials.

Commander Bahrain Navy meets CNS Admiral Naveed Ashraf



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohamed Ebrahim Al Bin Ali on Tuesday visited Naval Headquarters and called on Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M).

Upon arrival, the dignity was received by the CNS. A

smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Navy presented Guard of Honour to Commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force, said a news release by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy).

Later, the dignitary laid floral wreath at Shuhada Monument to pay homage to the martyrs of Pakistan Navy.

Govt plans to auction 600 MHz Spectrum by first week of Feb 2026: Shaza Fatima

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Tuesday that the government was planning to auction 600 MHz of spectrum, for which efforts were underway to complete the auction process by the first week of February 2026. Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb here, she said that all processes would be finalized within the next four to six months. The auction would not only strengthen 3G and 4G networks in the country but would also help facilitate the rollout of 5G in the



next five months, she added. Shaza said that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) had approved the Spectrum Advisory Committee's recommendations for the auction, which would soon be submitted to the cabinet for approval. The minister said that Pakistan currently has access to only 274 MHz of telecom spectrum, which is among the lowest globally.

DPM Dar directs implementation of govt policies for GSP Plus continuation



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday directed all the ministries and departments concerned to implement the government policies in letter and spirit for the continuation of GSP Plus status.

The deputy prime minister, chairing a meeting to review strategy for continuation of GSP Plus status, sought implemen-

tation status from all federal and provincial departments regarding their assigned tasks to meet the criteria for GSP Plus status.

The Secretary Commerce gave a detailed presentation, apprising the committee about the steps taken by the government to meet the criteria prescribed by the European Union (EU) for continuation of GSP Plus status.

He also shared details relating to the recent visit of the EU Review Mission to Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by ministers of law and commerce; SAPM Tariq Bajwa; federal secretaries of foreign affairs, commerce, human rights, law, climate change and overseas Pakistanis; other heads of federal and provincial departments and senior government officials, including Pakistan embassy in Brussels which attended the meeting via Zoom.



LAHORE: Acting President of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani addressing the medical conference of the Association of Physicians of Pakistan from North America (APPNA) as chief guest, at Governor House.

LHC upholds dismissal of vocational institute director in workplace harassment case

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court, while upholding the decision of the Provincial Ombudsperson Punjab in an important case of workplace harassment against women, has declared the dismissal of the director management of a vocational institute from service to be lawful. Justice Raheel Kamran Sheikh, in a 17-page written verdict issued on the petition of Umar Shehzad, observed that women often do not immediately report incidents of harassment due to concerns about honor, family dignity, and social pressure. However, such silence cannot be interpreted as consent, nor can it be used to deprive them of their right to report.

The court clarified that the scope of workplace harassment is not limited to the office premises alone. If an officer uses his position or authority to threaten a woman or coerce her into illicit relations, it also constitutes harassment.

According to the judgment, the complainant female teacher alleged that the petitioner used to look at her with ill intent, sent messages seeking.

Pakistan stands at defining moment of its demographic change: UNFPA Country Representative Rana Mashhood for using Youth Development Index as strategic instrument for policy reforms

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan stands at the defining moment of its demographic change where it can seize this opportunity or miss it, said Dr Luay Shabaneh, the Country Representative of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in his opening remarks here at the inaugural session of a two-day symposium on Tuesday. The National Data for Development (D4D) Symposium 2025 was organized by the UNFPA in part-

nering with Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), and with the support from the Government of the Netherlands. Dr Luay Shabaneh described the symposium as a moment to reflect on two years of the D4D initiative and renew commitments to using data for development. "Data is not just numbers but it reflects dignity, accountability and lived realities of people," he said, adding: "data tells the story of how people survive and what they need to survive." He

termed the Youth Development Index (YDI) tools a "mirror" that highlights both national averages and hidden disparities. The index, he said, covers critical areas, including health & wellbeing, civil & political participation, peace & security, and other key aspects central to youth development. Speaking on the occasion as chief guest, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, the Chairman of Prime Minister's Youth Programme, said the YDI would provide a robust evi-

dence base for designing and evaluating youth-focused policies at federal, provincial and district levels. He noted that the index, aligned with global standards, measures youth development across key domains, including education, employment, health, equality, peace and security, and civic and political participation. Rana Mashhood suggested that with a majority of population comprising the youth, the index should be treated not merely as a statistical exercise but as a strategic

instrument for policy reform, institutional strengthening and long-term youth empowerment. He acknowledged the support of UNFPA and SDPI in developing the index and underscored the need to link youth outcomes with national priorities and Sustainable Development Goals. Dr Shamshad Akhtar, the former governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, said data-enabled development planning is no longer an option but a critical imperative for effective governance. Drawing on her

experience at the United Nations, where she oversaw statistical systems and contributed to the design of the SDGs, she stressed that reliable, repeatable and timely data is essential to distinguish between immediate priorities, medium-term interventions and long-term strategic planning. Dr Akhtar warned that weak data systems, particularly at provincial and local government levels, undermine policy impact, especially in areas such as climate resilience, urban planning,