



Melbourne defeat brings fresh calls for Rohit, Kohli to exit test arena

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

NEW DELHI: Speculation that India captain Rohit Sharma and batting stalwart Virat Kohli are set to call time on their test careers has snowballed as the veteran pair continue to struggle in the five-test series in Australia. India, who won their last two test tours in Australia, went 2-1 down in the series after their stunning defeat in Melbourne on Monday, with the hosts needing only a draw in Sydney to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy (BGT). Opener Rohit has just one fifty and 10 single-digit scores in his last 15 test innings, and even a move down the order failed to pay dividends for the 37-year-old. Under his captaincy, India have lost five tests this season, equalling their unwanted record from 1999-2000 under Sachin Tendulkar. Kohli, one of the greats of the modern game, has not fared much better. The 36-year-old struck a century in the opening test in Perth but had a wretched season overall with 17 single-digit scores in 19 innings this season.

Both New Zealand and Australia have exploited his vulnerability to left-arm spin and outside the off-stump line, rendering him a walking wicket at times. "Is it time to take a call on seniors Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli?" the Hindustan Times newspaper asked on its front page after the defeat in Melbourne, where India lost seven wickets after tea on day five.



That sentiment was echoed among fans in the cricket-mad country where Rohit and Kohli are practically worshipped, with the term "happy retirement" trending on Monday. Both players quit Twenty20 Internationals immediately after guiding India to their second 20-overs World Cup title in June. "Is the Rohit-Kohli retirement announcement round the corner?" asked the Indian Express. "The curtain is beginning to slide down from above; will they give themselves one more test at Sydney with BGT still open and out there for the taking or..." The Times of India called for an immediate changing of the guard, saying the senior batters were "in danger of being

termed as liabilities". The Melbourne defeat not only dented India's chances of retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, it effectively ended their hopes of reaching the World Test Championship final for the third time in a row. Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said another failure in Sydney could prompt Rohit to quit test cricket and that India should draft in new faces for their England tour next year. "The next cycle of the World Test Championship will be the cycle for 2027. You should see new faces for that," Gavaskar told an Indian Digital Media Channel.

Rohan Noori Clinches Double Titles at Gun and Country Club Open Tennis Championships



KOMAL BUTT

ISLAMABAD: The Gun and Country Club Open Tennis Championships came to a thrilling conclusion, with Rohan Noori emerging as the champion in both the Men's Singles and Boys' Singles events.

In the Men's Singles final, Rohan Noori defeated Adil Farooq from Islamabad Police in an exciting match, securing the title with a score of 8-5. Noori's double triumph was sealed when he won the Boys' Singles final, beating Mahd Mehmood with a score of 8-4. In the Ladies' Singles event, Shiza Sajid took the title by defeating her younger sister, Lala Rukh, in a thrilling final with a score of 8-6.

The three-day tournament featured over sixty players competing in various events. The finals were attended by distinguished guests, including Mr. Nadeem Irshadkiyani, Secretary IPC, who distributed prizes and certificates among the winners and runners-up. Other notable attendees included Mr. Tariq Mehmood Murtaza, Chairman ITA; Col Tufail Iqbal Din Zia, Secretary PTF; Mr. Tufail Cheema, Secretary ITA; and Mr. Imran Afriz Khan, Secretary Gun Club. Hamidul Haq, Davis Captain Mr. Qureshi, Senior Vice President ITA, congratulated the organizers, particularly Mr. Nauman Afzal, Tournament Director, on the success of the event.

22 foreign players sign up for PSL 10 player draft

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced that 22 international cricketers have registered for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 draft, scheduled to take place in Gwadar, Balochistan, on January 11, 2025. The latest additions to the list are New Zealand's experienced players Martin Guppitt and Tim Southee. The PCB opened the registration and trade window for foreign players earlier this month. According to the draft pick order, Lahorealanders will have the first pick in the platinum category, followed by Karachi Kings, Quetta Gladiators, Peshawar

Registered Foreign Players:

- New Zealand:** Tim Southee, Martin Guppitt, Colin Munro, Daryl Mitchell
- South Africa:** Rassie van der Dussen, Rilee Rossouw, Corbin Bosch
- Australia:** Maxwell Short, Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Usman Khawaja
- England:** Alex Hales, Luke Wood, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Tom Curran, David Willey, Dawid Malan, Jason Roy
- West Indies:** Gudakesh Motie
- Bangladesh:** Shakib Al Hasan, Mustafizur Rahman
- Zimbabwe:** Sikandar Raza

The PSL 10 draft is eagerly anticipated as teams prepare to finalize their squads for the upcoming season.

Arif Saeed elected President, Khalid retains Secretary General role in POA elections



SEHRISH NAZ

LAHORE: The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) held its elections for the next four-year term at a local hotel in Lahore, ushering in a new leadership team. Arif Saeed was elected as the President, while



Fatima Lakhani secured the position of Senior Vice President and Muhammad Khalid Mahmood was re-elected unopposed as Secretary General. The election results were announced by Parvez Iqbal Mir, Chairman of the Election Commission.



Vinod Kumar Tiwari, representing the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Council of Asia, observed the process online. The newly elected office-bearers include Aamir Jan, Majid Wasim, Ishrat Ashraf, and

Olympic sports representatives Hafiz Imran Butt, Muhammad Arshad Sattar, and Sadaf Akram were also elected. Additionally, Samira Sattar, Sana Ali, and Amna Tanveer were inducted as members of the Executive Committee. Outgoing President Syed Abid Qadri was commended for his contributions to Pakistan's Olympic movement. Newly elected President Arif Saeed emphasized that his history was a collective achievement for the entire Olympic family. He reaffirmed his commitment to promoting Olympism and fostering collaboration to enhance sports development in Pakistan.

Kamran Akmal hails Abbas' performance, slams three-year exclusion

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan wicketkeeper-batsman Kamran Akmal has hailed Mohammad Abbas' exceptional performance in the Centurion Test against South Africa, calling it a "slap in the face" of those who excluded him from the national team for three years. Akmal commended Abbas' six-wicket haul in the second innings, describing it as a "lifetimes achievement." "His bowling has answered his critics emphatically," Akmal said. He added that Abbas' performance showcased his resilience and proved wrong those who sidelined him, deeming it unforgettable. While appreciating



Pakistan's competitive spirit, Akmal noted the team's misfortune in narrowly losing the match by two wickets. He remarked that better support from other bowlers could have turned the game in Pakistan's favor. Former pacer Mohammad Amir also voiced his frustration over Abbas' exclusion. Taking to the social media

platform X, Amir condemned the past coaching decisions, stating, "It took Abbas three years to make a comeback—a slap in their faces." Despite Abbas' stellar efforts, Pakistan fell short as South Africa chased a modest target of 121 runs, and Heera Ashiq, among others.

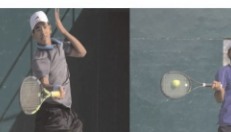
Day two of Begum Kulsum Saifullah Tennis C'ships witnesses standout performances

MUHAMMAD HARI

ISLAMABAD: The second day of the 10th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships 2024 witnessed some standout encounters at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Tuesday.



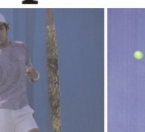
In the Men's Singles first round, M. Hamza Asim claimed a commanding win over M. Huzafa Khan (6-0, 6-4), while Uzair Khan outlasted M. Talha Khan in a grueling three-setter (6-4, 5-7, 6-2). Abdullah Adnan delivered a strong performance against Bilal Asim (6-2, 6-3) and Muhammad Abid displayed impeccable form, defeating Asad Zaman (6-0, 6-0). Shahzad



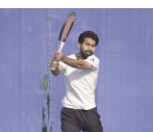
Khan, Heera Ashiq, and Yousof Khalil also registered convincing wins to advance to the next round. In the Boys 18 &



Under category, Azan Shahid eased past Muhammad Dawood (6-2, 6-2), and Ruhaf Faisal triumphed over Ismail Aftab (6-3, 6-3). M. Salar



and Bilal Asim also secured victories, with the latter delivering a flawless double bagel performance against Hazrat Ali (6-0, 6-0). In



the Boys 14 & Under competition, Rayyan Khan defeated M. Hamza Khan (4-0, 4-0), while Ahsan Imran overcame Rajam Taha (4-0, 4-1). Mozam Babar advanced through a walkover.

The event, organized annually by the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), commemorates the late Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan, mother of PTF Patron Senator Salim Saifullah Khan. It has attracted Pakistan's top-ranked players, including Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoab, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, and Heera Ashiq, among others. As one of the most prestigious events in the national tennis calendar, the tournament provides a platform for seasoned athletes and rising stars to compete at the highest level.



PILDAT Democracy Report: Democracy in Pakistan Facing Persistent Systemic Issues: PILDAT

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: PILDAT in its annual report of state of democracy in Pakistan, has outlined critical challenges identified in the health of Pakistan in 2024. As democracy around the world faced crises, Pakistan's democracy also remained under significant strain. PILDAT's report 'Quality of Democracy in Pakistan 2024' highlights following key issues which impacted democracy in Pakistan in 2024: The 12th General

Election held in February 2024 after a considerable delay was a largely free and fair election that served to fracture popular mandate and to provide citizens only with a modicum of political and electoral choice. Apparently to safeguard its razor-thin majority in the Parliament, the federal government embarked on a mission to restructure higher judiciary, 26th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan and changed appointment pro-

cess for leadership in higher judiciary and bifurcated the judiciary into two branches dealing with constitutional and other matters. Thanks to the resistance offered by JUIP's Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman, the sharp edge of the proposed amendments was blunted to some extent. Parliament also hurriedly passed amendments to the acts governing three defence services to extend service tenures of respective service chiefs from existing three

(3) to five (5) years. This is the first time in the history of the country that such a term increase has been legally introduced without a martial law in place and during peace time. Pakistan's leading political parties have continued to display a sad and familiar proclivity to assist the establishment against a political opponent of the time in return for short-term selfish political gains. Such a regular political pattern has parties reaping politico-electoral benefits at a steep cost of weakening of democratic performance in Pakistan. The current political set-up emerged through 12th GE in the centre and provinces is no different. To manage and silence political dissent, the current set-up has stepped up efforts to manage the use of internet and social media platforms by blocking certain applications and controlling the flow of information through others. With growing centralization of decision-making significantly

their unifying public image from tarnishing - there is no public testimony of acceptance of this advice and roll-back from political role. This remains an urgent clarion call for Pakistan. Against this bleak horizon, the improving economic stability and the stated willingness and initiation for political dialogue between the PTI and the government offer the only silver lining. Despite grandstanding by the government and its backers and tough bargaining and threats of civil disobedience by the PTI, it is our belief that a comprehensive dialogue must be sustained to find politically negotiated solutions for the country's dire-needed political and economic stability. PILDAT's report stresses the importance of addressing these systemic issues and calls for a renewed commitment to democratic principles by all institutions and stakeholders.

Anti-Corruption to Investigate Irregularities in Punjab Arts Council

BY NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: Five officers of the Punjab Council of Arts have formally lodged a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Establishment, alleging large-scale embezzlement and fraudulent promotions within the Council. The officers claim that these irregularities have resulted in billions of rupees in losses to the public exchequer. The complaint, dated November 26, 2024, was filed by Zahid Iqbal (BS-18, Deputy Director), Muhammad Luqman (BS-17, Assistant Director), Asad Ahmad (BS-18, Deputy Director), Zahid Ali (BS-17, Assistant Director), and Sher Baz (BS-17, Assistant Director). The officers have requested the Director General of the Anti-Corruption Establishment to conduct an in-depth probe into the matter. The complaint outlines allegations of fraudulent regularizations and unlawful promotions. According to the complainants, thirty-two officers and officials were allegedly regularized retroactively to their initial appointment dates through bogus orders dated November 16, 2017. Furthermore, six officers were promoted from BS-17 to BS-18 just one month after

their regularization through a falsified Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) meeting on December 6, 2017. These officers were later promoted again to BS-19 on March 3, 2022, along with nine other officers promoted from BS-16 to BS-17, based on another bogus DPC meeting held on February 28, 2022. The complainants argue that these actions violated PUCAR regulations, which require seven years of service in BS-17 for promotion to BS-18. They allege that neither the Executive Committee minutes nor the promotion orders were properly signed or approved, rendering them unlawful. The complainants further state that the fraudulent promotions have placed junior officers above them in seniority, effectively blocking their own promotion opportunities. They assert that the fraudulent actions have caused billions of rupees in pecuniary losses to the public exchequer, and they believe recovery of these funds is possible if an inquiry is initiated. Sources within the Punjab Council of Arts informed that the matter regarding regularizations and promotion of the employees of Punjab Council of Arts is also sub-

ject before the Lahore High Court, and the court has granted a stay order in the matter. Furthermore, sources also informed that the officers who have filed the complaint to the Anti-Corruption Establishment are also accused of getting regularization unlawfully contradictory to the provisions of Punjab Regularization of Service Act 2018 dually admitted by the S&GAD & Law department Punjab in their advice. The objection upon their regularization is also pending before the Punjab Executive Committee, Punjab Council of the Arts, Lahore. The Punjab Council of the Arts (PUCAR) is an autonomous body established under the Punjab Council of the Arts Act, 1975, for the promotion of art and culture in Punjab. It operates under the administrative control of the Information & Culture Department, with its Executive Committee acting as the competent forum for promotions and other service matters. The complainants allege that former Director (Operations) Misbah Sharif played a central role in issuing the substituted and fraudulent regularization orders without proper approval. The Chief Secretary

of Punjab declared these orders bogus on September 21, 2023, a decision later endorsed by the PUCAR Executive Committee. The complainants have requested that all records related to the alleged embezzlement and fraudulent promotions be seized. They urge the authorities to initiate a regular inquiry to identify and penalize the culprits, recover the embezzled funds, and prevent further losses to the public exchequer. This case underscores the critical need for transparency and accountability in public institutions. The investigation's findings could have far-reaching implications for governance and integrity within the Punjab Council of the Arts. Sources with the Punjab Council of Arts informed that the matter regarding regularization and promotion of the employees of Punjab Council of Arts is also sub judice before the Lahore High Court and the court has granted stay order in the matter. Furthermore, sources also informed that the officers who have filed complaint to the Anti Corruption Establishment are also accused of getting regularization and promotion unlawfuly.

CDA, SNGPL join hands to address gas woes in Islamabad

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Anwar Randhawa, here on Tuesday held a meeting with General Manager (GM) of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) in a bid to resolve long-standing gas-related issues in the federal capital. The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation between the two organizations and implementing solutions for Islamabad's gas infrastructure and supply challenges. The GM SNGPL announced that work on replacing the city's aging gas pipeline network was set to begin soon in key sectors. To expedite the process, Chairman Randhawa instructed the CDA's Engineering and Environment Wings to promptly issue No Objection Certificates (NOCs). He also assured full cooperation from the Authority to facilitate the replacement project. To alleviate winter gas shortages, SNGPL shared its plans to ensure uninterrupted supply during peak meal times. Additionally, steps are being taken to enhance gas pressure across the city. Highlighting priority projects, the Chairman CDA emphasized the urgency of providing a gas connection for the Gandhara Citizen Club in Sector F-9. He also praised SNGPL for its swift work in relocating service lines to accommodate mega projects in Islamabad.

Principles of Meritocracy

Why Pakistan faltered

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Ameenah Bابر
S a child, I often wondered why Pakistan was so different from the developed world. My trips abroad struck by how vastly different our country seemed from the orderly, prosperous societies we visited. Later as a student of Pakistan's history, this innocent curiosity gave way to a deeper question: Why did Pakistan initially perform so well economically, only to falter in later decades?
The first question led me towards a book last year by British American economists Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. A couple of months ago, they also won the 2024 Nobel Prize for this work. But more relevantly, it studied upon a book by Dr Ishrat Husain, a renowned Pakistani economist, that answered my second question as well. Both works, in their influential approach, point to the same answer: the quality of institutions is the decisive factor in determining whether and when nations succeed or fail.

geographically contiguous and culturally similar yet starkly different in their standards of living. In our case, the institutions governing these regions. South Korea and Arizona built inclusive institutions, while their counterparts did not.
Acemoglu and Robinson's findings challenge simplistic explanations for development, such as geography or culture. Their groundbreaking research uses natural experiments to identify causation, with a particular focus on the colonial past. For example, they show that colonies where European settlers established inclusive institutions, such as the US or Australia, thrived. In contrast, colonies where extractive institutions were set up to exploit resources and labour, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, remained underdeveloped. This empirical approach helps isolate institutional quality as the driving force behind a nation's success. Dr Ishrat Husain attributes this success to 'Un governable' applies a similar institutional lens to Pakistan's development. However, his methodology differs significantly. While the Nobel laureates use natural experiments that happened at some point in history to prove causation, Husain adopts a process of elimination, systematically disproving alternative explanations for Pakistan's initial economic successes and later struggles. From 1947 to 1990, Pakistan achieved an impressive average annual growth rate of 6.0 per cent. Husain attributes this success to strong governance structures and a competent civil service that operated with a degree of meritocracy and professionalism. However, this institutional strength was not sustained. Husain argues that the decay began in the 1970s, during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's tenure when the civil service was politicised and meritocracy was replaced with nepotism and cronyism. This erosion of governance structures coincided with a decline in economic performance. Husain meticulously evaluates other explanations for Pakistan's economic struggles -

such as overreliance on foreign aid, military dominance, and geographical challenges - and finds them lacking. He disproves these hypotheses one by one, he concludes that institutional decay is the root cause of Pakistan's challenges. One of the most striking aspects of Husain's work is his rejection of popular but flawed explanations for Pakistan's struggles. For example, he challenges the notion that Pakistan's prosperity is linked to receiving foreign aid. While aid has played a role in certain periods, such as during the 2009 Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act, its absence during critical moments like the 1965 war did not prevent the country from achieving growth. Husain also dismantles the argument that military dominance has stifled economic progress. He points out that periods of high-growth spending, such as from 1950 to 1990, coincided with robust economic growth.
By contrast, when defence spending declined to 2.7 per cent of GDP in 2017, the economy experienced a significant slowdown. These examples reinforce his central thesis: The root of Pakistan's challenges lies not in external factors but in the internal decay of its governance structures, he argues.
The way forward, as Husain argues, is to prioritise institutional reform. This includes strengthening the civil service, ensuring transparency in governance, and creating a system that operates independently of political interests. He emphasises the need for a depoliticised and meritocratic bureaucracy that can function effectively regardless of who is in power.
While both Husain and the Nobel laureates highlight the importance of institutions, a key difference lies in how they view democracy's role. Acemoglu and Robinson argue that inclusive institutions are synonymous with democratic governance, weaving a strong political message into their findings. This framing aligns with Western liberal values, likely resonating with entities like the Nobel Committee.
Courtesy The News

Age of anger

Arifa Noor
IN the days and weeks of 'peacemaking', there is advice aplenty for what the PTI and Imran Khan can or have to do. The government is ready to talk and has lots to offer.
One assumes it will offer relief from the various cases against the PTI leadership and freedom for those in jails though there may not be much in terms of the resolution of the election controversies.
But for this to happen, the wise old and middle-aged men (whose cars are on the ground in Pine) explain that Khan and the PTI will have to wave the white flag, in no uncertain terms. The social media team will have to be reined in and Khan will also have to take a 'chill pill'.
This means he will have to accept the set-up which resulted from the 2024 results for the time being - there is some vague talk of the two sides coming to an agreement on an early election but the chat about this is as promising as new year resolutions. Concrete decisions and dates will have to wait till the PTI displays good behaviour and is then allowed to emerge from the corner it was banished to.
All this back and forth, important as it sounds, is missing the wood for the trees. Indeed, discussions on Pakistani politics can be so focused on personalities that they seem to matter. So at times the clash is between the military chief and a politician and at other times it is about political leaders. And these days, any political crisis is seen to be the result of Imran Khan's clash with one or the other player and hence the resolution depends on the PTI head honcho making peace with the others.
But this diagnosis and its prescription seems to ignore the real crisis - of the people.
The focus on personalities that can be so focused on personalities that little else seems to matter.
In fact, it is important to emphasise that Imran Khan, in some ways, is the symptom and not the cause of our political crisis. The crisis is the result of a stagnating economy, democracy and a rapacious elite, which has turned the populace angry and anti-status quo, where it now identifies with Khan or identifies Khan as someone who will change the status quo because everyone else happens to be in power. So the question to be asked is: what will happen to this support and the people's anger once Khan too is inside the tent? If the voters can dump Nawaz Sharif after his change of strategy, why will they not turn their back on the PTI and Khan? More importantly, how will they then channel their anger? In the long term, this is of far more importance than any party or leader. As it is, there is a growing sense of hopelessness among the people at large. Take a recent outburst by noted actor Waseem Abbas in a clip that went viral. Or the comments by celebrated author Mohamud Khan in a talk show where he said the 'peacemaking (tragedy)' had already happened as he described the despondency among young people that he encountered at educational institutions.
Courtesy Dawn

Charter of economy

FINANCE Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has called upon "stakeholders" to evolve a broader consensus on key economic issues facing the country to ensure sustainable stability and growth. Talking to the media over the weekend, he said "everyone" should join hands in the national interest and agree on a common "charter of economy" for the economic path forward. Back in 2014, a similar call was issued by the then finance minister Ishaq Dar. Shehbaz Sharif followed up as opposition leader in 2019, offering his party's support to the PTI government on a common agenda to stop the economic slide. He reiterated this desire for a charter of economy in February this year, days after one of the most controversial polls. But none of these calls have drawn an active response from the other parties. The lukewarm response is understandable even though we have endorsed the need for such a charter in these columns. To start with, the PML-N leadership needs to develop an agreement on the broader economic goals within the party. For instance, we have previously seen different centres of power in the party pulling in different directions on such crucial matters as tax reforms and the privatisation of SOEs. Likewise, the PML-N's allies in the present set-up do not see eye to eye on various issues since every party has its own economic agenda. Without a unified stance on the economy within the party and among coalition partners, how can the PML-N convince those it is competing with directly in the political sphere to sit across and develop an agreement on economic programme? Secondly, such calls must be accompanied by specific issues and themes that the ruling party and its ministers want support for from the other parties to give a clear idea of what it means by a charter of economy.

The Nobel laureates' work is grounded in powerful case studies. They compare countries like North and South Korea, which share the same geography, culture, and history but are economic opposites. In 2023, South Korea's GDP stood at \$2,401 trillion, while North Korea's was a paltry \$40.2 trillion. Similarly, they highlight the disparities between Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Mexico - two regions

geographically contiguous and culturally similar yet starkly different in their standards of living. In our case, the institutions governing these regions. South Korea and Arizona built inclusive institutions, while their counterparts did not.
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Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan, ADB sign \$200 mln loan agreement to strengthen power distribution

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Asian Development Bank (ADB) here on Tuesday signed a \$200 million loan agreement for Power Distribution Strengthening Project.

The agreement was signed by Secretary Economic Affairs Division Dr. Kazim Niaz and ADB Deputy Country Director, Asad Aleem, according to the press release issued by ADB.

The project will initially support three distribution companies—Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO),

and Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO)—through advanced metering infrastructure, data management systems, and asset performance management system (APMS).

On this occasion, Secretary Dr. Kazim Niaz emphasized timely and efficient utilization of ADB loan and urged all concerned, in particular the DISCOs, to ensure completion of the project within the stipulated timeframe.

The secretary further expressed appreciation for ADB's role as a reliable development partner, and its continued support in Pakistan's critical power

sector. He said, the project was designed to upgrade and modernize power distribution system with a focus on minimizing substantial energy losses during distribution.

On the occasion, Asad Aleem expressed gratitude for government of Pakistan's proactive engagement and support towards this project.

He assured that ADB would continue to work closely with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and other stakeholders to ensure its support aligns with Pakistan's development priorities.



ISLAMABAD: Dr Kazim Niaz, Federal Secretary Economic Affairs, and Asad Aleem, Deputy Country Director of Asian Development Bank, signing an agreement.

Efforts underway for lasting resolution of Kurram dispute, says Barrister Saif

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Information, Barrister Saif, stated that the provincial government was committed to finding a sustainable and long-term solution to the Kurram issue.

In his statement, Barrister Saif mentioned that the Grand Hija in Kohat would resume on Tuesday after a two-day break granted for consultations with one of the parties.

He expressed optimism about the likelihood of an agreement between both sides during today's discussions. Both parties have reached a consensus on almost all points.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, with the efforts of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, is nearing a lasting resolution of this century-old dispute," Barrister



Saif noted.

He added that the elimination of bunkers and weapons would bring lasting peace to the area, as the region would be disarmed following the Apex Committee's decisions.

Additionally, positive developments regarding the reopening of roads are expected after the agreement is finalised.

Earlier, the KP Chief Minister Advisor Barrister clarified that the federal Minister Ata Tara's allegations

against the provincial government are baseless.

He receives salaries from multiple sources, and there is no truth to the allegations made against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government."

Meanwhile, the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) continued its sit-ins at various locations across Karachi for the eighth consecutive day on Tuesday, protesting the Parachinar crisis despite warnings.

The number of protests has though started declining in the metropolis after disrupting substantial disruptions for travellers.

The authorities failed to clear pathways for commuters for more than a week, inflicting financial damage upon the megalopolis as working and business classes were unable to travel freely.

Nation all set to celebrate arrival of new year 2025

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the world, the country would celebrate the arrival of 2025 in tomorrow (Wednesday) with joy, music, and spectacular fireworks displays lighting up the skies.

In Pakistan, the festivities are more private and subdued compared to public events.

New Year's Eve remains one of the symbolic occasions in key Pakistani cities like Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi where tens of thousands enjoy fireworks, music and light

show.

Some people begin the New Year by offering special prayers for health, prosperity and peace in the coming year.

Mosques often hold sermons emphasizing gratitude and goal-setting for the year ahead.

Other popular destinations include hilly areas like Murree or the Northern Areas for those who prefer scenic getaways. The New Year messages and wishes flood WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, connecting people across the country.



Govt prioritizes climate change with proactive measures: Romina Khurshid

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, emphasized on Tuesday that Pakistan was facing significant threats and challenges from climate change.

Speaking to the private news channel, she stated that a proactive approach is being adopted to address this critical issue.

"Whenever the prime minister attends international events, the climate change agenda remains a top priority. The government is working to collaborate and coordinate with provincial authorities to



ensure Pakistan fulfills its

international environmental commitments, she said.

Romina highlighted that, under the Prime Minister's instructions, a comprehensive mechanism has been established to meet environmental targets. This includes setting clear guidelines to strengthen provincial coordination, she added.

She said that a three-point strategy to combat

and prevent smog, focusing on pollution control, energy transition, and environmental regulation.

"This strategy will guide every government in achieving long-term environmental goals," she added.

Romina applauded the media to play a pivotal role in educating the public about environmental challenges. "A wider awareness regarding climate change through engaging campaigns on multiple mediums is needed," she added.

Deputy Chairman Senate calls for awareness campaign to promote education in Balochistan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan on Tuesday emphasized the need for creating an awareness campaign to promote educational activities for the youth of Balochistan.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Ms. Anroosh Jan, according to a news release issued by the Senate Secretariat.

During the meeting, the Federal Secretary briefed the Deputy Chairman on the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's overall performance, operational procedures, and



strategic policies.

She also briefed the Deputy Chairman about new initiatives and detailed road map for enhancing public information and media outreach.

Lauding PTV's efforts in covering Senate activities, Syedaal Khan said, "PTV is a national asset, and it is our responsibility to address its challenges."

Acknowledging PTV's efforts, the Deputy

Chairman praised the broadcaster for its responsible coverage of the upper house proceedings and its longstanding role in delivering reliable news to the public.

"Pakistan Television is a national asset, and resolving its issues is our collective responsibility," he said.

He urged PTV to collaborate with experts in developing programs that address the challenges faced by remote communities, thereby raising awareness and facilitating actionable solutions.

The Deputy Chairman noted that PTV's extensive network ensures seamless connectivity across the country, including its most distant regions.

"Uraan Pakistan" poised to ensure sustainable economic growth: Finance Minister

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that the five-year homegrown national economic plan, "Uraan Pakistan" (2024-29) would help achieve sustainable economic growth through competitiveness and productivity.

This comprehensive five-year economic plan (2024-29) has three main pillars including stimulating the Private sector, stimulating exports; and optimizing the public

debt, the minister said while addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of the plan.

He said the main focus of the plan was to achieve 6 percent annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth by 2028.

Finance Minister said tax reform is the hallmark of this five-year program through which the government wanted to achieve 13.5 percent tax-to-GDP ratio. He said, the transformation of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and separation of tax policy from tax collection was a gov-

ernment priority.

He highlighted that the government would ensure continuity of policies and enhancement of productivity to revive economy adding exploration of new markets; diversification of exports; lowering the exchange rate were the key for sustainable export-led economic growth.

The minister termed export-led growth and main role of private sector to run economy as pivot of this five-year national economic plan.

He said, this was sec-

ond homegrown five economic plans after the first comprehensive economic plan presented by the Leader of Pakistan Muslim League-N and former Prime Minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's government in 1991, which laid the foundation for economic growth. The finance minister said that the government has achieved economic stability and now the journey has started for sustainable economic growth, adding all the economic indicators were showing positive results.

Tariq Fazal praises heap over gov't economic reform agenda

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's five-year homegrown economic reform package will strengthen the country, attract investment, promote prosperity, and accelerate national progress, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said Tuesday.

In a statement, he said that economic indicators are improving thanks to the swift actions taken by the incumbent government shortly after assuming office. These measures have improved people's lives, and Pakistan's economy is expected to achieve a takeoff soon.

He stated that the country's population and emphasized that the PM's package would help secure a bright future for them. In a veiled reference to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had already hired foreign lobbyists after obtaining funding from foreign countries to create law and order situation and anarchy in the country.

He said that Pakistan's atomic programme is the main target of our enemy. He went on saying that those persons who definitely face trial in military courts who attacked military installations on May 9, 2024.

Sharjeel Memon said that KP government is responsible for Parachinar situation because these kind of incidents happened during

PTI using foreign funding against Pakistan, says Sharjeel Memon

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister for Information and Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon on Tuesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had already hired foreign lobbyists after obtaining funding from foreign countries to create law and order situation and anarchy in the country.

He said we should chant slogan of "No to aerial firing" while Asifa



PTI's government tenure.

He also extended his warm wishes to the nation on the start of New Year. He prayed to Almighty Allah for end of war between Israel and Palestine.

He advised people to avoid taking part in aerial firing. Sharjeel Memon said that these kind of acts disturb other people and on the other hands sometime aerial firing resulted in loss of precious lives.

He said we should chant slogan of "No to aerial firing" while Asifa

Bhutto Zardari also started a campaign in this regard.

Sharjeel Memon said that some persons issuing different statements on Red Line and BRT project.

He said that we are trying to remove hurdles in way of BRT project. He said that no progress was made during tenure of interim government set-up. He said that we already addressed the issue of biogas plant while Jam Sadiq Bridge will be completed in 2025.

Sharjeel Memon said that we appreciated talks between PTI and the government.

He said that on one side we are negotiating while on the other hand they were hatching conspiracies against Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holds a meeting with Mr Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China, who called on the Minister at the Finance Division Mr Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, is also seen.