

Nadia Hussain's husband arrested in 'fraud' case

PM for effective awareness drive to enhance outreach of Rs 20bn Ramazan Package

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the relevant ministries, State Bank of Pakistan and private partners to revisit the ongoing awareness drive on the Rs20 billion Ramazan Package to enhance its effectiveness and outreach and address the gap between the disbursement and withdrawal.
 The prime minister, during his visit to the National Telecommunication Corporation Headquarters to monitor the execution of the program, was told that the around 2.8 million entitled



program and accepting the challenge of supporting the entitled deserving people during the holy month of Ramazan. "This was a new concept to say goodbye to

the Utility Stores forever due to the massive complaints of "worst" corruption of public money, which was also an injustice to the poor man. The issue of poor quality and corruption have been done away with through a new modern digital wallet," he remarked.
 The prime minister said that four million families comprising over 20 million people from across the country would benefit from the program which was the first ever such initiative by the government to disburse the cash amount through a transparent mechanism without any issues of quality or transparency.

Women judges play a key role in justice delivery: CJP Yahya Afridi

HUMA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi has lauded the contributions of women judges in ensuring justice, emphasizing their growing role in the judiciary.
 In his message on International Women Judges Day, CJP Afridi stated that the increasing representation of women in Pakistan's judiciary is a positive development. He stressed that recognising the contributions of women judges is a collective responsibility.
 He further highlighted that gender equality and the inclusion of women in the judiciary mark significant progress. "Women judges play a commendable role in delivering justice, ensuring transparency, and strengthening the judicial system," he said, adding that a more conducive environment will be provided for female lawyers and judges.
 The Chief Justice reaffirmed the commitment to making justice accessible to all, noting that the perseverance and integrity of women judges serve as a guiding light for future generations.

Aurangzeb reaffirms govt's commitment to supporting insurance sector

SAMRA ATHAR
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb here on Monday reaffirmed government's commitment to supporting the insurance sector, recognizing its potential for significant private sector investment.
 During a meeting with a delegation of chief executive officers from Pakistan's leading insurance companies, the minister said government wanted to diversify lending beyond the banking sector, urging the insurance industry to step up and meet the growing demand.
 This includes expanding the sector by focusing on innovation, enhancing productivity, and driving further growth, he added.
 The discussion focused on the growth of the insurance sector and its contributions to the national economy, with a particular emphasis on its impact on the health system, investments in Pakistan Investment Bonds (PIBs), capital markets, and long-term investment opportunities.
 The minister assured the delegation that the government would con-



tinued to work closely with industry leaders and stakeholders to ensure the long-term prosperity of the insurance sector, which is a vital component of Pakistan's economic landscape.

He highlighted that the consultative process for the upcoming federal budget had been deliberately advanced this year. Over 90% of the process has already been completed, with recommendations, proposals, and suggestions received from various stakeholders, including the insurance sector.
 He emphasized that a team of experts at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) was diligently reviewing each proposal submitted by different sectors, ensuring that the impact on the economy

and revenue is thoroughly evaluated.
 This process aims to develop realistic and actionable policy interventions that will foster the growth of the industry and critical sectors of the economy. Earlier, the delegation presented to the Minister and his team the key proposals and suggestions aimed at boosting the growth and productivity of the insurance sector. The presentation also highlighted the current statistics of the industry, which boasts assets worth Rs 2,900 billion, alongside 2,000 direct and 234,000 indirect employments.

Two KP CTD personnel martyred at Tanda Dam in Kohat

PEAK POINT
KOHAT: Two officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) were martyred at Tanda Dam in Kohat district in a gun attack carried out by unidentified assailants, officials said on Monday.
 Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terrorist activities over the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan, after the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.
 Kohat District Police Officer (DPO) Zahid Khan told the media persons, "Two CTD personnel, named Zahid and Mustafa, were martyred in a gun attack at Kohat's Tanda Dam." He said that the suspects fled from the scene, adding that a heavy police contingent was dispatched to the area.
 The motive behind the incident was unknown and an investigation was underway, he added. According to KP Inspector General of Police (IGP) Zulfiqar Hameed, authorities have taken notice of the "target killing" of the police officers.
 The CTD additional ICP has been directed to form special investigation teams ... to immediately arrest the miscreants involved in the attack and bring them to justice," he said.

China's prosperity benefits Global South: Ambassador Hashmi

PEAK POINT
BEIJING: China's economic growth and prosperity would deliver more benefits to countries in the Global South when China prospers, the Global South does as well, said Pakistan Ambassador to China Khalid Hashmi said. In a recent interview with Xinhuanet, the ambassador shared his perspectives on the hot topics discussed during China's "two sessions".
 He emphasized the positive impact of China's economic ascendancy on the developing world.
 China's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 5 percent year on year in 2024, meeting the annual target and contributing about 30 percent to global economic growth.
 The ambassador stressed that China's economic growth has brought more opportunities for developing countries. He also lauded China's unwavering commitment to sharing its development benefits with other countries.
 He emphasized the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, along with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Global



Development Initiative, are concrete manifestations of China sharing development opportunities with the world.
 The ambassador also highlighted China's continuous drive for high-standard opening-up. This policy was attracting foreign investment into China and creating new opportunities for mutually beneficial

trade, he said. The ambassador underscored the crucial role of technology. Referring to new quality productive forces, he explained that technology, especially in the realm of green and digital advancements, would be pivotal in shaping future policies and discussions. Regarding bilateral relations, Hashmi hailed the strong partnership between Pakistan and China, describing them as all-weather, friendly and unique partners.
 He pointed out that in recent years, the two countries have scored remarkable achievements

in aerospace cooperation and within the framework of the BRI. In particular, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of the BRI, has undergone significant progress in transportation and energy infrastructure construction. Noting that next year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan, the ambassador called on the two sides to deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation in various fields and for an even closer relationship in the foreseeable future.

PML-N restores CPEC, ML-1 Project to boost economy: Hanif Abbasi

AYESHA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: Federal Railway Minister Hanif Abbasi said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has revived the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through hard work and a clear vision.
 Talking to a private news channel, he said that the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government stopped CPEC overnight. He claimed that PTI halted every project that could contribute to economic growth. He said that as part of CPEC's restoration, nine industrial zones are being developed through which the industrial revolution is about to begin.
 The minister added that ML-1 will help Pakistan take full advantage of its location in regional economic corridor advancements. The High Commission for economic stability and growth. Replying to a query about railways issues, he said that Pakistan Railways has great potential.

Rwanda's high Commissioner prioritizes to boost economic and trade ties with Pakistan

KOMAL BUTT
ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Fatou Harerimana Monday said the focus of his visit to the business centres of Punjab was to promote bilateral economic and trade relations between the two countries in various sectors. His visit to Pakistan's business chambers of Central Punjab including Sialkot, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Lahore is part of his mission to expand bilateral relations in various sectors in the future.
 High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Fatou Harerimana said in release issued here on



Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Fatou Harerimana visited business Chambers and industries of Central Punjab for five days and initiated dialogue with the business community for the promotion of bilateral economic and trade relations. The delegation led by the High Commissioner of Rwanda started from the Industrial city Sialkot and visited a manufacturing and supplying industry for surgical equipment, manufacturing and exporting

prospects for increasing bilateral ties in these sectors. —APF
 She visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and met with the senior leadership of the business community to negotiate for increasing bilateral trade.
 This tour resulted in enhancing trade ties, the possibility of extending/expanding to Rwanda; Collaborations in education and possible exchange of students and other collaborations in the education sector, She said.
 She said the major sectors like surgical and medical factories as well as soccer ball makers were among the areas of interest identified. The High Commissioner also visited Gujranwala city and visited and started negotiations with the business community in Gujranwala

Business Centre and Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) to strengthen trade ties.
 She also visited the rice industry and mills in Chiora ka plant, wherein Caustic Soda and Chlorine Gas are produced out of common salt through an electrolysis process). Prominent textile manufacturers that are specializing in the production of woven fabrics and garments also centre of interest during the visit. On a visit, High Commissioner of Rwanda

to Pakistan, Fatou Harerimana had a meeting held with the governor of Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and discussed the bilateral economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Rwanda.
 Rwanda's high Commissioner prioritizes to boost economic and trade ties with Pakistan.
 Rwanda's governor Punjab said that Pakistan's private sector and business chambers can expand bilateral economic and trade ties and Rwanda can be a gateway for Pakistan business for potential African regions.
 The High Commissioner also made a trip to Lahore and visited the Sundar Industrial Estate (a significant industrial hub housing numerous manufacturing units).
 The industrial estate offers modern infrastruc-



PCB to lodge protest with ICC over CT presentation ceremony 'snub'

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: A fresh controversy has emerged over the International Cricket Council's (ICC) decision to exclude a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) representative from the closing ceremony of the Champions Trophy in Dubai.

According to sources, PCB Chief Operating Officer Sumair Ahmed, who also served as the tournament director, was present at the venue but was not called on stage during the ceremony.

"PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi was unable to travel to Dubai due to his commitments as the federal interior minister,



"India won the Champions Trophy, but I noticed no PCB representative was present at the post-match ceremony. Pakistan was the host nation—why was nobody from the PCB there? I don't understand it," Akhtar remarked in a video posted on social media platform 'X'.

ence felt. It's disappointing to see this happen," he added.

During the ceremony BCCI President Roger Binny presented the traditional white jackets to the Indian team, while ICC Chairman Jay Shukle awarded the Champions Trophy to Rohit Sharma and distributed medals among the Indian players.

The incident came after India refused to play its matches in Pakistan, citing security concerns. As a result, the PCB agreed to a hybrid model that allowed India to play its games in Dubai.

Now, the PCB is expected to seek answers from the ICC regarding this apparent snub.

Hamza Khan and Noor Zaman to prepare for PSA Pro Tour Battles and U23 World Championships

KOMAL BUTT
ISLAMABAD: In a bold bid to reinvigorate Pakistan's longstanding squash legacy, renowned coach Zahid Gul is spearheading the training of two emerging talents—Hamza Khan and Noor Zaman—as they gear up for a series of high-stakes tournaments on the PSA Pro Tour, including the prestigious U23 World Championships. A Master at WorkZahid Gul, whose expertise has long been recognized in national squash circles, has built a reputation for nurturing promising players and transforming raw talent into formidable contenders on the international stage.

His methodical approach, focusing on technical precision and mental fortitude, has made him one of Pakistan's most sought-after coaches. With major tournaments looming, Gul's commitment to honing the skills of his proteges underscores a strategic vision to rekindle Pakistan's dominance in the sport.

Rising Star: Hamza Khan, already celebrated for his aggressive play and remarkable agility, has made a name for himself in the junior circuit. His breakthrough came with a standout performance at the World Junior Squash Championship in 2023, where his impressive tactical awareness and relentless drive led him to clinch the title—a feat that marks him as a future leader in Pakistan's squash renaissance.

Under Gul's meticulous guidance, Khan is expected to refine his game further, ensuring he is well-prepared for the rigors of the PSA Pro Tour. Upholding a Proud Legacy: Noor Zaman, who carries the weight of a storied family heritage in squash, has consistently demonstrated the skill and determination reminiscent of his forebears. A notable highlight in his budding career was his strong showing as a finalist at the British Junior Open, coupled with commendable performances in several PSA Challenger events. Zaman's blend of power and precision on the court, enhanced by his disciplined training



ing under Gul, positions him as a key contender in the upcoming U23 World Championships. The Road Ahead:As the PSA Pro Tour schedule intensifies, both Khan and Zaman are embracing a rigorous training regimen designed to sharpen their competitive edge. Zahid Gul's innovative coaching strategies are not only focused on physical conditioning and technical drills but also on cultivating mental resilience—an essential attribute for success in high-pressure international tournaments. With the U23 World Championships and other PSA events on the horizon, all eyes will be on this dynamic duo. Their journey, backed by the expertise of Zahid Gul, promises to deliver thrilling performances and potentially restore Pakistan's revered status in the global squash arena. For supporters and aspiring athletes alike, the emerging narratives of Hamza Khan and Noor Zaman under the tutelage of Zahid Gul symbolize a new chapter of hope and excellence in Pakistani squash.

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Mohsin Naqvi lauds teamwork behind Champions Trophy 2025 success

MUHAMMAD USMAN
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has successfully hosted the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, marking a historic achievement in the country's cricketing journey. In a heartfelt message, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), law enforcement agencies, provincial governments, ICC officials, and participating teams for their role in making the tournament a resounding success.

Naqvi praised the seamless execution of the event, attributing it to the collective efforts of all stakeholders. He described the tournament as a proud moment for Pakistan, reinforcing the host nation's capability to host global cricketing events.



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Shoaib Akhtar questions PCB's absence at ICC Champions Trophy presentation

RIZWAN HAIDER
ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has raised concerns over the absence of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials at the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy presentation ceremony, despite Pakistan being the official host of the tournament. The issue came to light after India's victory over New Zealand in the final, sparking questions about the PCB's role in the event. In a video posted on X (formerly Twitter), Akhtar expressed his surprise at the lack of PCB representation during the ceremony.

"India has won the ICC Champions Trophy, but one odd thing stood out—no one from the Pakistan Cricket Board was present during the presentation," he said. "Pakistan was the official host of the tournament, yet there was nobody from Pakistan at the stage."

His remarks have ignited debate among fans, with some questioning whether his criticism was aimed at the PCB for not attending or the ICC for not including representatives from the host nation.

An ICC spokesperson later addressed the issue, explaining that PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi could not attend the ceremony due to prior commitments as the federal minister for the interior, preventing him from travelling to Dubai for the final.

Further reports indicated that PCB CEO Sumair Ahmed, who also served as the tournament's director, was present in Dubai for the closing ceremony but was not invited to the presentation event, a "communication error" between PCB officials and the ICC.



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Inzamam fires back at Gavaskar's 'B team' comments, defends Pakistan

JAVED KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Former captain of Pakistan cricket team, Inzamam-ul-Haq fired back at legendary Indian batter Sunil Gavaskar, over his recent remarks on the Green Shirts' below par performance in the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025.

In a recent interview, Gavaskar remarked that Pakistan's current squad led by Mohammad Rizwan is not strong enough to even face India's B team. "I think even India's B team would give Pakistan a tough challenge. It would be very hard for Pakistan's current team to beat them," Gavaskar stated.

Sunil Gavaskar's remarks certainly did not sit well with Inzamam-ul-Haq, who warned the legendary batter to use his words carefully in a "slightly harsh" tone. "Gavaskar should see that stars. He is an elder and senior; we respect him. But when talking about someone's country [...] your team has played well. You have the right to praise your team. But it's not right to say about another team like this. Please be careful with your words, I am saying this in a slightly harsh tone," the former cricketer stated.

"Mohammad Rizwan hit the first ball of his innings for a four, and I thought we were in for something different. However, the batters soon started blocking deliveries instead of rotating the strike. The Indian spinners completed their overs quickly, and it was surprising that Pakistan's batters didn't show any urgency," he said. Gavaskar further criticised Pakistan's failure to develop bench strength over the years. "Pakistan has talented players, but they haven't been able to build a strong backup. It's surprising that they have struggled to produce batters like Inzamam-ul-Haq."



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Pakistan team reach Malaysia for Davis Cup

HUMA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan team has reached Kuching, Malaysia, to participate in the ITF tournament (Davis Cup Juniors—Boys 16 & Under Category), scheduled from March 10 to 15.

Pakistan has been placed in Group C alongside Turkmenistan and Iraq. The tournament is divided into seven groups, said a press release.

The national squad for the tournament includes Shahzad Khan (Captain), Mikaeel Ali Baig, Abubakar Talha and Hamza Roman.

Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President, Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), has extended his best wishes to the team. He highlighted the significance of the Davis Cup Juniors as an annual ITF event and expressed confidence in the team's abilities. "Our team is strong this time, with exceptionally talented players. We are hopeful of winning the tournament and qualifying for the next stage," he said. Col. (R) Zia-ud-Din Tufail, Secretary General of PTF, also expressed his best wishes, emphasizing that the team has undergone rigorous preparation and is expected to deliver a strong performance in the tournament. The matches will kick off on Monday.



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KHA will be organizing kHA Ramzan Inter Club Hockey Champions Trophy 2025

PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Karachi Hockey Association will be organizing kHA Ramzan Inter Club Hockey Champions Trophy 2025 from 15th Ramzan ul Mubarak at Olympian Hanif Khan & Dr Junaid Ali Shah Sports Complex Gulshan e Iqbal Karachi. Top Clubs and Players of Karachi will be participated in the Eleven a Side Inter Club Hockey tournament. Matches will be played from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm daily. Registration will be open till 13th Ramzan and

participated clubs are advised to submit the names of their Players, Coach and Manager to Mr Gulfaraz Ahmed Khan - Chairman KHA and Dr SA Majid - Senior Vice President KHA at S.T. 17 Block 5 Gulshan e Iqbal, University Road Karachi. Announced by Olympian Hanif Khan - Honorary Secretary General Karachi Hockey Association.





PM efforts have restored the devastated economy, Samina Fazil

SUDHIR AHMAD KIVANI

ISLAMABAD: Samina Fazil, founder president of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI), said on Monday that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's tireless efforts have restored the devastated economy. She said the PM has now started the process of the country's development with a focus on women's empowerment, which is praiseworthy. Samina Fazil said that the prime minister's efforts to empower women are commendable, as it is imperative for rapid national development. Addressing a meeting of businesswomen, she said that the Prime Minister has decided to include women associated with cottage industries and small businesses in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector, which is a gift to the women entrepreneurs. She said



that the PM recently emphasized the need for women's economic empowerment and directed authorities to provide essential capital and facilities to businesswomen as a priority, which is a laudable move. "The PM has also announced measures to offer low-cost loans to women under the Youth Loan Scheme, enabling them to expand their businesses," said Samina Fazil. She said that the PM has also ordered the establishment of facilitation centers and training institutes to support women engaged in small-scale businesses

and ensure their easy access to these resources. The PM has announced the formation of a special committee tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for empowering women. The committee will soon present its recommendations to the PM. Samina Fazil noted that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif believes that women's empowerment can only be achieved through equal access to education, skill development, and employment opportunities. The prime minister is also collaborating with provinces to enhance women's participation in economic programs and has announced the establishment of a Working Women's Endowment Fund to support women in overcoming challenges. The PM also wants to facilitate working women by establishing daycare centers in public and private departments across Islamabad and plans to expand these facilities

further. Samina Fazil said that many highly qualified women in the country quit professional careers because they struggle to balance work and family, resulting in a huge loss of skilled human resources. She said that last year, the ministries and departments were tasked with ensuring women-inclusive policies, which led to increased women's representation in departmental boards, which was a positive move. However, she noted that women's representation in government bodies remains below the targeted 33 percent, stressing the need for greater inclusion in governance and policymaking. Samina Fazil stated that if the government provides equal opportunities, then 50 percent of the female population can become productive workers, which can make Pakistan a developed nation.

Tucker Play ground inaugurated by Provincial Assembly member Iftikhar Ali Mashwani



MUHAMMAD HARI

ISLAMABAD: Provincial Assembly member Iftikhar Ali Mashwani inaugurated the Tucker Playground in a ceremony attended by District Sports Officer Sajid Khan Afridi and a large number of area elders. Iftikhar Mashwani, a member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly from PK-54 (Mardan-VII)

emphasized the importance of constructing new sports grounds, stating that it will promote sports and is a top priority of the provincial government. The inauguration of the Tucker Playground is a significant step towards promoting sports development in the region. Mashwani's efforts to establish new sports grounds are likely to have

a positive impact on the local community, providing opportunities for young people to engage in sports and develop their skills. Mashwani is a politician from Gujrat. Garhi Mardan has been a member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly since 2013, representing the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf party.

Pakistan made progress to empower women amid major structural, cultural barriers: Experts

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Experts on Monday at the International Women's Day Seminar here highlighted that Pakistan has made progress in meeting gender equity and women's empowerment goals amid persisting major structural, legal, and cultural barriers.



Panelists urged accelerated efforts in gender-responsive budgeting, stronger law enforcement, and active community engagement to ensure that the commit-

mentary progress on Pakistan's progress on gender equality, particularly in light of the Beijing Declaration adopted 30 years ago.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Shaqat Munir Ahmed, Deputy Executive Director of SDPI, emphasized that Pakistan has been an active participant in the Beijing-30 forum, striving to uphold women's rights and drive global commitments to gender equality. He highlighted that patriarchal and

structural mindsets remain major barriers, embedding a system that continues to sideline women.

He added that to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, the government has launched, all of which concluded that the world had failed to meet its targets and remains far from achieving SDG-5 (Gender Equality). However, UN Women, UNICEF, and UNITAD** contributed to these reports, stressing that

while women's participation in various sectors has increased, their overall status remains unsatisfactory.

Dr. Munir noted that gender inequality is not just a developing world issue, as countries like the United States are also grappling with similar challenges.

Gender and Women's Expert, SDPI, Sadia Satti in her technical keynote analyzed the nine progress on the key targets of SDG-5, which include ending discrimination, eliminating gen-

der-based violence, and abolishing harmful practices. She warned alarming statistics which revealed that nearly 19 million children in Pakistan fall prey to early child marriage. Women under 10 years old mostly remain unpaid for their work. Women's representation in politics stands at 20.5% of parliamentary seats and female labor force participation fluctuates between 21-26%, the lowest in South Asia with a 38% gender gap in mobile phone ownership and internet usage.

Satti mentioned that Commission on Status of Women (CSW) 2020-23 review will be conducted at national and international levels. While Pakistan has enacted several gender-focused legislations from 2020-23, implementation gaps persist, she added. She also pointed out that during the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 floods, women and children were 14 times more likely to die than men, and 69% of girls dropped out of school in flood-affected areas.

Principles and Editorial



 Arif Mehmood Khan

 Group Editor: 0333-5366814

 Contact us For Daily News, Advertisements

 Correspondent and News Agency

 Samra athar Kakakhel

 Resident Editor

 Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com

 www.peakpoint.pk

Reckless rhetoric

ONCE again, the Indian leadership gave in to their worst impulses, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar making dangerous remarks about Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Speaking at Chatham House in London, Mr Jaishankar said that the "stolen part of Kashmir" (AJK) must be "returned" to India for the issue to be "solved." Mr Jaishankar has not only displayed an utter disregard for historical facts but has further poisoned the well of potential dialogue between the two nuclear neighbours. As the Foreign Office pointed out, Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally recognised disputed territory. The FO's settled issue, despite clear evidence of continued repression. The BJP's attempts to force demographic changes, suppress dissent, and stifle journalism in the region have only served to deepen Kashmiri alienation. Reports from international watchdogs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented the grave human rights abuses in the held territory, including arbitrary detentions and crackdowns on press freedoms. No amount of rhetorical grandstanding can erase these realities. Pakistan has repeatedly offered offers of dialogue to India, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent remarks in the AJK Legislative Assembly, in which he invited India to the negotiating table while emphasising that Pakistan would not compromise on its national interests.

Do we need a Tehreek-e-Aligarh 2.0 now?

Ethasham Anwar
It was the year 1859 and the War of Independence had just ended. Since Muslims were in a position of power before the British took over, they were suddenly being seen with deep suspicion. And now they were being blamed fairly and squarely for initiating the revolt as well. They were virtually down and out, and were being marginalised in every aspect of life.
Earlier in 1836, English had been declared the official language in place of Persian, a step that had virtually turned the Muslims illiterate overnight. Muslims did have their madrasahs but those institutions had become largely irrelevant as they imparted religious education only. Worse still, Muslims were averse to learning modern disciplines such as science and mathematics. Hindus, on the other hand, were quick to catch up and were acquiring modern education and, as a result, increasingly entering into the service of the British. Muslims lagged behind on the latter account too.
Bengal, for example, was a Muslim majority province, yet the share of Muslims in the higher government services as late as the 1890s was hardly 10 per cent as com-

pared to 89 per cent for Hindus. Quite understandably, Muslims were thus wary of the 'Christian' British and the Hindus alike. In other words, the rift between religions, at least from the perspective of Muslims, was widening with every passing day. Muslim societies were suffering from moral and ethical degradation as well. In short, Muslims were groping in the dark and there seemed no light at the end of the tunnel.
The situation back in the mid-19th century might have been much grim yet quite ripe for the rise of a reformer. Enter Sir Syed Ahmed Khan - an educationist-reformer. He attended to the moralities part first and started publishing 'Tehzeeb-ul-Ikhtlaq', a magazine meant for improving the moral values of the Muslims.
Establishing the Scientific Society in 1870 was a step towards equipping Muslims with knowledge of modern subjects. Setting up the MAO College at Aligarh in 1876 was an endeavour aimed at opening the doors of higher education on Muslims. It later became a cradle of future leadership of Muslims. So much so that even the Muslim League was founded during the annual meeting of the Muhammad

Educational Conference at Aligarh in 1906. The entire effort eventually culminated into the creation of Pakistan - the land of the pure.
All of the above happened - rather in a miraculous manner - because the person of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had been able to diagnose the ills afflicting the Muslims of the Subcontinent correctly. He had then gone on to provide the requisite remedy - education. However, the job had been half done only. Pakistan had come into being but more than 77 years down the lane had failed to take the shape and form Sir Syed and his associates - and those who came after them - had aspired for.
Among other fronts, the country is failing in education too in a big way yet again. Today Pakistan houses the largest number of out-of-school children in the entire world - 226 million to be more specific. Those in school are not learning either. The padlocks on science laboratories in public and private schools across the country are catching rust and dust. No wonder we are the fifth largest nation on earth but hardly any recent invention or discovery or theory can be attributed to us.
Courtesy: The News

Digital dangers

Maleeha Lodhi
AMONG the paradoxes of our era is that globalisation has been connecting the world and also fragmenting it. The world is more interconnected than ever before but also atomised. This has been accentuated by the ever-growing but complex and crowded media landscape. In the information age, trivia and falsehood compete with information to engage our attention, challenging us to separate the two and focus on what is factual and really important. Moreover, profusion of information does not necessarily mean an accretion in knowledge.
There is now a growing body of literature that deals with information and communication technology. Some books extol its benefits and virtues while others express scepticism and point to its dangers and detrimental consequences. A compelling new publication Superboom: How Technologies of Connection Tear Us Apart by Nicholas Carr, belongs firmly to the latter category. Carr has written several books on the impact of technology on people's lives and thinking. His previous work, 'The Shallows', analysed what the internet was doing to our brains - which he argued it was seriously affecting our ability to think deeply even as it was opening new vistas for us. His new book takes that conversation forward and expands on it by examining how digital communication technology - information systems, online platforms and tools that include smartphones, the internet, computers, social media and artificial intelligence - are influencing and changing the lives of people and societies.
All these connections that enable people to receive so much information and messages at unprecedented speed and scope should broaden minds, enlarge empathy and create more understanding and harmony. It is often assumed that by making communication more efficient and accessible a lot of problems can be fixed. Carr, however, has turned out this way. In fact, it has unleashed unforeseen and unintended consequences, which have had a contrary effect, undermining understanding and trust and contributing to strife and social disharmony. Speed and intensity in the flow of information and stimuli force people to rely on intuitive thinking based on biases. It robs them of the ability to tap into deeper analysis. It has undermined careful reading, reasoned analysis, methodical evaluation and contemplative inquiry. "Attention splinters, understanding grows thin," he posits, adding "rather than leveling barriers to knowledge, it becomes a barrier itself". This results in mental shortcuts and shallow thinking. Carr takes readers on a fascinating journey through the history of technological advancement, starting with the invention of the telegraph to present-day large-scale communication networks along with the profits made by giant, unaccountable tech companies. He draws on psychology and sociology to buttress many of his observations.
Courtesy: Dawn

Women's empowerment critical for national progress

Kanwal Khan
Every year, on March 8th, we observe International Women's Day, a globally recognized occasion dedicated to honoring and empowering women from all walks of life. This day holds profound significance as a tribute to the countless women who juggle the responsibilities of managing their households while passionately pursuing their personal and professional aspirations. International Women's Day celebrates the hard work, resilience, and dedication that women exhibit daily, often facing formidable challenges. It brings to light the countless roles women fulfill in society - as caregivers, leaders, innovators, and nurturers - each contributing

to the fabric of our communities. While this day is indeed a celebration, it also serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggles for gender equality. It prompts us to reflect on the pressing issues that continue to affect women worldwide, such as domestic violence and societal discrimination. In many cultures, the birth of a girl can still be viewed as a challenge, highlighting the deeply rooted biases that persist. Despite these obstacles, women continue to stand firm, embodying the roles of wife, daughter, sister,

and friend, providing unwavering support to their families and communities. On International Women's Day, we pay tribute to all the incredible women in our lives - our wives, daughters, and sisters - acknowledging their invaluable contributions and the uphill battles they face. This day encourages us to unite in support of one another, advocating for a future where every woman has the opportunity to realize her dreams and aspirations, free from the shackles of inequality and violence. Together, we can foster an environment that celebrates women's achievements and champions their rights, ensuring they are recognized and valued for everything they do.
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Govt's unilateral policies causing grave strain on federation, says President Zardari

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday warned lawmakers in a joint session of parliament that the government's one-sided way of taking decisions was causing a "grave strain" on the federation.

The differences between the PML-N, which heads the ruling coalition, and the PPP have been simmering for months as the key ally has expressed frustration over unfulfilled promises. A meeting in December between the top leaders from both sides, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Zardari, seemingly failed to put an end to the disagreements. Even after that meeting, PPP Senator Saleem Mandivwala claimed that directives issued by the Presidency

were not being helped by the PM's Office.

The PPP has also repeatedly voiced concern over the construction of controversial canals in Punjab's Cholistan area. It has called for the immediate meeting of the Council of Common Interests, which has been pending for 11 months, and called for the canal issue to be raised there. The Sindh government claims the new canals would reduce the province's share of water and may turn the cultivable land barren.

Addressing the matter in today's joint parliament session, President Zardari said: "It is ... my constitutional duty as your president, my personal obligation as a patriotic Pakistani, to caution this house and the government, that

some of your unilateral policies are causing grave strain on the federation. In particular, the government's unilateral decision to carve out more canals from the Indus River System, despite strong opposition from federating units.

"A proposal that I as your president cannot support. I urge this government to abandon this current proposal and work together with all stakeholders to come up with viable, sustainable solutions based on unanimous consensus among the federating units. The president said he would like to invite the attention of the present lawmakers to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to parliament and play their role in nation-building, strengthening institutions and improving governance.

Commodore Kamran, Commodore Kashif promoted to rank of rear admiral

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Commodore Kamran Ahmed and Commodore Kashif Munir of Pakistan Navy have been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral.

Commodore Kamran, Commodore Kashif promoted to rank of rear admiral.

According to a news release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy), Rear Admiral Kamran Ahmed was commissioned in Construction Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1993.

The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore and National Defence University, Islamabad.

He has also done Master's in Naval Architecture from the United Kingdom. The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments including



Navy Engineering College, Chief Naval Overseer (Pakistan)

HANGOR project, Deputy General Manager (Ship Design) at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works, Managing Hull Engineering at PN Dockyard, Director Naval Construction (Marine Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Projects) at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

Rear Admiral Kashif Munir was commissioned in Marine Engineering Branch of the Pakistan Navy in 1993.

The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore, and National Defence University, Islamabad. The Admiral

has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments including Commandant PNS KARSAZ, Marine Engineering Officer EPSNS SHAHJAHAN, Manager (Marine Engineering) at PN Dockyard, Director Ships Maintenance and Repair at Naval Headquarters, Chief Inspector of Naval Stores, Chief Staff Officer to Commander Logistics and Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Maintenance) at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

In recognition of their meritorious services, both Flag Officers have been awarded Sitara-i-Mintiaz (Military). The Admiral

IHC suspends arrest warrants against Salman Akram Raja

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A division bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday suspended the arrest warrants of PTI leader Salman Akram Raja against whom comments from respondents within two weeks.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Sardar Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Asif heard the case along with the objections of registrar office. Salman Akram Raja appeared before the court in personal capacity. At the outset of hearing, the acting chief justice inquired about the allegations against PTI leader to which Salman Akram Raja said that a police station has been attacked and he is included in that case.

He said that he has been appearing before court despite it arrest warrants are issued. He was also previously



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the joint session of the Parliament at the beginning of the 2nd Parliamentary Year, at Parliament House.

Sardar Yousaf, Kheal Das assume charge as federal, state ministers for religious affairs

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf and Minister of State Kheal Das Khabistani on Monday officially assumed their responsibilities at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony.

Upon their arrival, they were warmly received by Secretary of Religious Affairs Mr. Imran Khan, former Minister of State Kheal Das Khabistani along with senior officials of the ministry. The ministers were briefed on the ministry's ongoing activities and the preparations for Hajj Operations 2025.

Sardar Yousaf, Kheal Das assume charge as federal,



state ministers for religious affairs After formally assuming charge as the Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Yousaf emphasized the importance of upholding the rights of non-Muslim communities in the country as in light of the Quran and Hadith, it is

the responsibility of every Muslim to ensure religious and personal freedom for all citizens. He stressed the need for comprehensive training of Hajj pilgrims ensuring that they fully comply with Saudi regulations and face no difficulties in performing the sacred rituals.

PILDAT issues yearly review of NSC performance for 2024-25

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The annual performance evaluation of the National Security Committee (NSC) conducted by PILDAT for the time-frame from March 5, 2024, to March 4, 2025, highlights a disturbing trend in Pakistan's governance structure. The NSC, which was established in 2013 as the primary forum for national security decision-making, did not convene a single meeting during the entire year, 2024-25, therefore, became the first year since its formation that the NSC did not meet even once. While the federal cabinet is regular meets, there is no indication either that the Cabinet Committee on Defence which provided such a forum before the creation of NSC, has been re-operationalised. Former PM

Nawaz Sharif, during his tenure from 2013-17, convened only eight NSC meetings, while Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi during his tenure of August 2017-May 2018 significantly increased the frequency, averaging nearly 10 meetings per year.

Mr. Imran Khan, former PM (2018-22) averaged approximately three NSC meetings annually, whereas Mr. Shehbaz Sharif, in his previous tenure from 2022 to 2023, convened an average of five per year. However, in the past year (2024) of the current PML-N led coalition government which took office in March 2024, the NSC has not met a single time. The absence of NSC meetings is also reflected in the government's responses to security incidents. Instead of convening the NSC, the government seems to have relied on military-led forums such as the

Corps Commanders Conference and the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan. This has further sidelined the NSC's role in structural policymaking. Another critical absence of the continued presence of a National Security Council (NSC), leaving a strategic vacuum in Pakistan's security policy framework. In contrast, countries with established national security mechanisms, such as the United Kingdom, ensure regular NSC meetings, often on a weekly basis, to proactively manage security risks.

PILDAT believes Pakistan's lack of an institutionalized national security approach weakens democratic oversight and limits the country's ability to respond effectively to security threats through structured consultations.

Planning minister urges for action to tackle health challenges

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal here on Monday emphasized the urgent need for comprehensive action to tackle the rising health challenges in Pakistan, particularly in light of alarming statistics related to diabetes, hepatitis, polio, and stunting.

Chaired a Project Steering Committee meeting on the Prime Minister's Programme for the Prevention and Control of Diabetes Mellitus, the minister

highlighted that Pakistan ranks third globally for diabetes, first for hepatitis, and is among the leading countries in terms of polio and stunting.

The meeting was attended by Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal, the Secretary of Health, the Member of the Social Sector Planning Commission, the Member of Development

Communications Planning Commission, chief health Ministry of Planning and senior officials from relevant departments, according

to press release issued by planning ministry.

During the meeting, the health department briefed the committee on the objectives of the Prime Minister's Programme for the Prevention and Control of Diabetes Mellitus.

The department explained that the program aims to strengthen the provision of essential health services, including diabetes-related services, across all provinces. Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The pro-

gram's goal is to reach over 70% of the targeted population in various districts for preventive and promotive diabetes services through primary health care facilities, lady health workers, and population-level interventions.

"I am confident that through coordinated efforts, we can address these pressing health challenges effectively," said Ahsan Iqbal. "Over the past sixteen months, work has already started on this project to address the country's growing health concerns.

IGP Rizvi visits various areas of capital

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, inspected various areas of the city to inspect security arrangements at masjid and imambarahs during Iftar, Sehri, and prayer times.

A public relations officer told APP on Monday that during the visit, IGP Rizvi with police officers on duty, commending them for their dedication. He lauded their vigilance in ensuring the safety of citizens and maintaining security during Ramadan.

IGP Rizvi emphasized that securing masjid and imambarahs is of paramount importance during the holy month. He directed senior officers to personally supervise security arrangements in the area and ensure that personnel on duty are provided with all necessary facilities for Sehri and Iftar.

"Despite the harsh weather, our officers remain alert to protect public life and property," IG said. "All officers should consider their duties an act of worship. Because of your efforts, citizens can pray in peace and sleep soundly. Any negligence in security duties at masjid and imambarahs will not be tolerated."

IG Rizvi further stated that his officers are away from their families, standing vigilant day and night for public safety. "Each officer is like my own family, and it is my responsibility to care for them," he added.

Law and Order, Crime, and Anti-Narcotics Measures Reviewed

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Standing Committee on Interior and Narcotics Control, chaired by Senator Faisal Saleem, convened to discuss the deteriorating law and order situation in Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Expressing grave concern over rising crime and violence, Senator Faisal Saleem Rehman emphasized that the crisis has escalated to a national issue. He criticized the reference to the 18th Amendment as an excuse for inaction and reaffirmed the committee's commitment to a thorough discussion on the matter. Secretary for Interior, Muhammad Khuram Agha, assured his department's support in facilitating provincial-level meetings to address security concerns. The committee also addressed the

increasing crime rate in Islamabad, Capital Territory (ICT) and incidents of fraudulent calls targeting Senators. Inspector General ICT, Syed Nasir Ali Rizvi, informed the committee that a gang involved in making fake calls had been apprehended.

Investigations revealed that the gang used multiple applications such as 'True Caller' and 'Eyoen' to impersonate officials. The committee acknowledged the swift action taken by law enforcement in resolving the issue. During the session, two key legislative proposals were unanimously passed. The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2024, moved by Senator Mohsin Aziz, and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2024, proposed by Senator Farzida Arshad. Additionally, the Societies Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2025, moved by Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar on behalf of the Interior Minister, and the Shamlat Land Protection Bill, 2024, introduced by Senator Palwasha Muhammad Zai Khana, remained under discussion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, chairing a Project Steering Committee meeting on the Prime Minister's Programme for the Prevention and Control of Diabetes Mellitus.