

DAILY PEAK ISLAMABAD

Fans speculate as Ananya Panday reveals marriage plan

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Finance Minister meets with Servis Long March leadership on eve of AFF

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held an important meeting with the leadership of Servis Long March, including Chinese Chairman Jin Yongsheng and CEO Omar Saeed, on the eve of the Asian Financial Forum in Hong Kong, according to press release issued by finance ministry here Sunday, during the meeting, Minister Aurangzeb emphasized the importance of establishing a favorable policy framework to enable Pakistani businesses to explore opportunities in international equity capital markets. He appreciated Servis Long March's intention to list on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and assured the government of Pakistan's support not only for this listing but also for other companies pursuing international equity capital raising. Chairman Jin Yongsheng and CEO Omar Saeed highlighted Servis Long March's growth trajectory and the potential benefits of listing on an international platform to access global capital markets. The discussions also focused on the broader implications of this collaboration, emphasizing the need to enhance



Pakistan's presence in international financial markets and attract foreign investment. The meeting concluded with a mutual understanding of the need for continued dialogue and cooperation to address the complexities of international listings and capital raising. The interaction between Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and the Servis Long March leadership reflected a shared commitment to developing Pakistan's capital markets and strengthening the country's position in the global financial landscape.

Gandapur meets Imran Khan in Adiala Jail to discuss negotiation matters

KOMAL BUTT

RAWALPINDI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur arrived at Adiala Jail on Sunday, with full government protocol, where crucial consultations are underway with the former prime minister Imran Khan regarding ongoing discussions with the government. The PTI's negotiation committee would also meet Imran Khan shortly. Opposition leader Omar Ayub, Asad Qaiser, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, and Salman Akram Raja are part of the negotiation team. Asad Qaiser expressed joy at receiving permission for the meeting, stating, "Thank God, I am pleased to meet our leader today." According to the spokesperson of the National Assembly, opposition leader Omar Ayub, and Asad Qaiser contacted National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq by telephone, formally requesting a meeting with Imran Khan.

CM Punjab Marayam Nawaz implements performance-based governance model for Provincial development

PEAK POINT

SIALKOT: Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Punjab, Bilal Yasin, stated that Chief Minister Punjab Marayam Nawaz was tirelessly working to promote the development of the province and enhance public welfare. Addressing a joint meeting of the District Administration of Sialkot and Narowal at the DC Office Committee Room, Sialkot, the minister highlighted the introduction of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the first time in Punjab's history to evaluate the daily performance of officers, including deputy commissioners. This innovative, automated system, monitored through digital technology, ensures transparency and efficiency in governance. Additionally, provincial ministers have been assigned to each division to improve governance and deliver tangible results to the public. Commissioners Gujranwala Division Syed Naveed Haider Shirazi, Deputy Commissioner Sialkot, Muhammad Zulqarnain Langrial, and several Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, along with local officials, attended



the meeting. Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin said that in order to improve governance and monitor development projects, the Deputy Commissioner should make a joint tour with the members of the assembly so that their help can be sought in resolving problems. He affirmed that his top priority as assigned by CM Punjab, is to enhance law and order and governance in the Gujranwala division. He urged Deputy Commissioner and the members of the Provincial Assembly to remain active in improving municipal services including education, health and sanitation to bring meaningful change to the lives of the common people. The minister highlighted key initiatives including Sufra Punjab that was focused on sanitation and cleanliness and Apni Chhat Apna Ghar scheme that fulfilled the dreams of low-

income families by providing affordable housing. Bilal Yasin also announced plans to beautify entry and exit routes to provide relief to citizens' aesthetic appeal. He stressed that public representatives and government officials are working under a unified strategy to address systemic shortcomings and implement timely corrective measures, ensuring that the benefits of these initiatives reach the common people. He further emphasized that projects under the PPP model are not only successful but also exemplify good governance in Pakistan. He urged to the business community across Karachi and the country to participate in Sindh government's Public-Private Partnership projects.

Pakistan rejects Afghan FM's allegations as baseless

AVESHA REHAN

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has rejected allegations as baseless and concocted levelled by Afghan acting foreign minister against Pakistan. The defence minister said leveling allegations against Pakistan is actually an attempt to hide their failures. Afghanistan has been the centre of hiring Da'ish militants and facilitating terrorists in 2024. UN Monitoring team has issued a report on terror groups active in Afghanistan. These groups included terrorists of banned TTP, Daish and al-Qaeda, Khawaja Asif said. Over two dozen terror groups are operating in Afghanistan. Now, it is the responsibility of the Afghan acting government to prevent these groups from using its land against other countries. The defence minister said while reacting to the statement of Afghan acting foreign minister.

Bilawal inaugurates first phase of Shaheed ZA Bhutto expressway

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari praised the enduring contributions of his party and Bhutto family's three generations to the development of Karachi, underscoring that the city's advancement is vital for the nation's overall progress and prosperity. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of Phase-1 of the newly constructed Shaheed Zulfiakar Ali Bhutto Expressway under the Public-Private Partnership mode by the Sindh government, the



employment for the city's residents. My mission is also to ensure public progress and carry forward the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Bilawal Bhutto, Bilawal stated. Bilawal Bhutto also praised President Asif Ali Zardari's initiatives for Karachi, saying, "Ask former Karachi Mayor Mustafa Kamal, and he

will confirm that President Asif Ali Zardari provided the most funds for Sindh." He said that the Shaheed Z A Bhutto expressway project would not only connect the city and the province to the rest of the country but also create employment opportunities for the residents. "My favorite project, 'Shahra-e-Bhutto,' is being built under the Public-Private Partnership mode," he remarked. The PPP Chairman shed light on the positive outcomes of the Public-Private Partnership initiative, saying it yielded excellent results in sectors like education, healthcare, and power infrastructure. "Water issues in Sindh will also be resolved through this PPP model, and energy parks should be established under Public-Private Partnership," he urged. He further emphasized that projects under the PPP model are not only successful but also exemplify good governance in Pakistan. He urged to the business community across Karachi and the country to participate in Sindh government's Public-Private Partnership projects.

Orders to demolish all bunkers in Kurram issued

HUMAREHAN

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive move to maintain peace in Kurram, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kurram has issued a notification for the demolition of all bunkers in the highly disturbed area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The order follows a provincial apex committee decision aimed at restoring peace in the region. The DC directed the executive engineer (C&W) for Upper, Lower, and Central Kurram to take immediate action. Specific instructions were given to begin dismantling bunkers in Balishkhel and Khar Kall without delay, with orders to extend operations to other areas as necessary. Work on bunker removal in Balishkhel and Khar Kall is set to commence today. The demolition of these structures, often associated with sectarian conflict, marks a significant step toward de-escalating tensions in the region. The decision to remove the bunkers was finalised during a recent meeting of the provincial apex committee.

Taliban don't consider women as human being: Malala

SAMRATAHAR

ISLAMABAD: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai has said that Taliban government has deprived Afghan girls of their basic right to education, adding that Taliban don't even consider women as human being, reported 24NewsHDTV channel. Addressing the two-day "International Conference on Girls Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities" in Islamabad, Nobel laureate said that Taliban have made legislation seeking ban on girls' education. Malala said, "If we don't talk about deprivation of educational right for Afghan girls, the mission of this moot will not be completed. She said it was the basic right of every girl that she is allowed to attend school for at least 12 years". She said worldwide 120 million girls fail to attend schools and in Pakistan 10 million girls are out of schools. According to AFP, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai urged Muslim leaders on women and girls' education. "Do not legitimise them," she said at a summit on girls' education in Muslim nations being held in Pakistan's capital Islamabad. "As Muslim leaders, now is the time to raise your voices, use your power. You can show your Islam. I am 27-year-old Yousafzai. The two-day conference has brought together ministers and education officials from dozens of Muslim-majority countries, backed by the Muslim World League. Since sweeping back to power in 2021, the Taliban government has imposed an austere version of Islamic law that the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid". Their curbs have shut women and girls out of secondary school and university education, as well as many government jobs, and seen them sequestered out of many aspects of public life.



Taliban government has imposed an austere version of Islamic law that the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid". Their curbs have shut women and girls out of secondary school and university education, as well as many government jobs, and seen them sequestered out of many aspects of public life.

Delegates from Afghanistan's Taliban government did not attend the event despite being invited, Pakistan Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui told AFP on Saturday. "Simply put, the Taliban do not see women as human beings," Yousafzai told the conference. "They cloak their crimes in cultural and religious justification." Yousafzai was shot in the face by the Pakistani Taliban when she was a 15-year-old schoolgirl in 2012, amid her campaigning for female education rights. Her activism earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, and she has since become a global advocate for women and girls' education rights. "The Taliban are explicit about their mission: they want to eliminate women and girls from every aspect of public life and erase them from society," she told the conference. While there is outcry in much of the international community over the Taliban government curbs, nations are divided over how to engage with Kabul's rulers on the issue. Some countries argue they should be frozen out of the diplomatic community until they backtrack, while others prefer engagement to coax them into a U-turn. No country has officially recognised the Taliban authorities, but several regional governments have engaged on the topics of trade and security. Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai on Sunday said she would continue to call out Israel's violations of international law and human rights in Gaza. The education advocate was speaking at a global summit on girls' education in Muslim nations hosted by Pakistan and attended by representatives from dozens of countries. In Gaza, Israel has decimated the entire education system," she said in an address to the conference. "They have bombed universities, destroyed more than 90 percent of schools, and indiscriminately attacked civilians sheltering in school buildings. I will continue to call out Israel's violations of international law and human rights." Yousafzai was shot when she was a 15-year-old schoolgirl by Pakistani militants enraged by her education activism. She made remarkable recovery after being evacuated to the United Kingdom and went on to become the youngest ever Nobel Prize winner at the age of 17. "Palestinian children have lost their lives and future. A Palestinian girl cannot have the future she deserves if her school is bombed and her family is killed," she added. The war in Gaza was sparked by Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023, which resulted in the deaths of 1,208 people on the Israeli side, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official Israeli figures. During the attack, Palestinian militants took 251 people hostage of whom 94 remain in the Gaza Strip, including 34 the Israeli military has declared dead. Israel's retaliatory military offensive on Gaza has killed 46,573 people, the majority civilians, according to figures from the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory considered reliable by the United Nations.



Pakistan to finalise Champions Trophy squad 'after Saim Ayub's recovery'

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN ISLAMABAD: Following the recovery of left-handed batsman Saim Ayub, who is dealing with a serious injury, Pakistan will finalise their Champions Trophy 2025 squad, Geo News reported citing sources, however an initial draft of the national team members will be forwarded to the International Cricket Council (ICC) today (Sunday).

According to the protocol for ICC events, which requires participating nations to submit names one month in advance, today is the deadline for submitting the initial squad for the tournament.

However, changes can be made to the draft and sent to the ICC till February 11.

Sources further said



that though the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had no intention to announce a preliminary squad, the board would send players' names to the ICC to meet the procedure requirements.

It is pertinent to mention that the eight-team mega tournament, comprised of 15 matches, will run from February 19 to March 9, across three venues — Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi — in Pakistan and Dubai in UAE.

Ayub's participation in the Champions Trophy is conditional to his fitness. The explosive left-handed opener limped off the field on January 3 after twisting his ankle while fielding during the second Test match against South Africa at the Newlands, Cape Town.

Meanwhile, the

sources said, there would not be many changes to the team, that played South Africa recently, for the tri-nation series. The series will be held from February 8 to 14 in Pakistan and played by New Zealand and South Africa apart from the hosts.

The sources said left-handed batsman Fakhar Zaman is most likely to get the opportunity to play in the ODI series.

It should be noted that the Champions Trophy will be played by eight teams, divided into two groups. Group A features Pakistan, India, New Zealand, and Bangladesh, while Group B is comprised of Afghanistan, South Africa, England and Australia.

Hosts Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the curtain raiser on February 19 in Karachi, while the blockbuster clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India is scheduled for February 23 in Dubai.

Champions Trophy Schedule:

- 19 February, Pakistan v New Zealand, Karachi, Pakistan
- 20 February, Bangladesh v India, Dubai
- 21 February, Afghanistan v South Africa, Karachi, Pakistan
- 22 February, Australia v England, Lahore, Pakistan
- 23 February, Pakistan v India, Dubai
- 24 February, Pakistan v New Zealand, Rawalpindi, Pakistan
- 25 February, Australia v South Africa, Rawalpindi, Pakistan
- 26 February, Afghanistan v England, Lahore, Pakistan
- 27 February, Pakistan v Bangladesh, Rawalpindi, Pakistan
- 28 February, Afghanistan v Australia, Lahore, Pakistan
- 1 March, South Africa v England, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2 March, New Zealand v India, Dubai
- 4 March, Semi-final 1, Dubai
- 5 March, Semi-final 2, Lahore, Pakistan
- 9 March, Final, Lahore (unless India qualify, when it will be played in Dubai)
- 10 March, Reserve day.

Pakistan overhaul squad for historic West Indies Test Series in Multan

JAVED KHAN ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced a revamped 15-member squad on Saturday for the two-match Test series against the West Indies, set to commence in Multan on January 17. This marks the first Test series hosted by Pakistan against the West Indies since 2006, adding historical significance to the encounter.

The selectors have made seven changes to the squad that toured South Africa and suffered a disappointing 2-0 whitewash. Key alterations include the inclusion of spinners Sajid Khan and Abrar Ahmed to support left-arm spinner Noman Ali, bolstering Pakistan's spin attack.

Batting reinforcements come with the return of opener Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Huraiba, replacing the injured Saim Ayub and the out-of-form Asim Akhter. Imran Khan featured in a Test match against Australia in 2023, and his return

PAKISTAN SQUAD FOR WEST INDIES TEST SERIES

- Shan Masood (c)
- Saud Shakeel (vc)
- Abrar Ahmed
- Babar Azam
- Imam-ul-Haq
- Kamran Ghulam
- Kashif Ali
- Khurram Shahzad
- Mohammad Ali
- Mohammad Huraiba
- Mohammad Rizwan (wk)
- Noman Ali
- Rohail Nazir (wk)
- Sajid Khan
- Selwyn All Agha

wicketkeeper-batter Rohail Nazir, replacing Haseebullah, who suffered an injury during the Cape Town Test.

Captain Shan Masood, alongside vice-captain Saud Shakeel, will lead a mix of experience and emerging talent in a series that holds immense importance for Pakistan's red-ball cricket aspirations. The two-match series starts on January 17, with the second Test commencing on January 25, both at Multan Cricket Stadium.

The rivalry between Pakistan and the West Indies spans 54 Test matches, with Pakistan holding a narrow edge with 21 wins compared to the West Indies' 18. The most recent Test series between the two sides in 2021 ended in a 1-1 draw in the Caribbean.

TEST SERIES SCHEDULE

- 1st Test Multan Stadium
- Jan 25-29 2nd Test Multan Stadium

Naqvi reviews Gaddafi Stadium's renovations ahead of Champions Trophy

SAMRA ATHAR ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday visited the Gaddafi Stadium to review the ongoing upgrades, renovations, and finishing work.

He directed officials to expedite the completion of the renovation project ahead of the Champions Trophy.

During the visit, Naqvi emphasised the importance of promptly completing the drainage work and expressed satisfaction with the progress. He stated, "Gaddafi Stadium, equipped with all modern facilities, will be ready this month. The work is progressing at a swift pace."

He further added, "We are installing brand-new, comfortable seats to enhance the fans' experience, along with new LED lights on the towers. Fans can also look forward to laser light shows during night games. The installation of new scoreboards is underway as we aim to make the ICC Champions Trophy a truly memorable event in Pakistan."



Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi visits China Window Peshawar

PEAK POINT PESHAWAR: Renowned Pakistani tennis star Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi recently visited the China Window, a cultural and information center in Peshawar dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of Pak-China relations.

Secretary General of Pakistan Tennis Federation Col R Zia Ul Din, Col R Gul Rehman, and Secretary KP Tennis Association Umar Ayaz were also accompanied.

During his visit, Aisam praised the efforts of the organizers in promoting bilateral ties and highlighted the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China. The visit serves as an optical link to explore the various

aspects of the China Window, which showcases China's rich history, culture, technology, and contributions to global progress. The center also emphasizes the strength and depth of the Pak-China friendship, which has been an example of mutual respect and cooperation on both diplomatic and public levels.

Aisam-ul-Haq expressed admiration for the initiative, noting that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and similar projects represent the unwavering commitment of both nations to progress and development.

He commended the China Window team for creating a space that not only educates visitors about China's achievements but also strengthens people-to-people connections. In his remarks, Aisam lauded the decades-long friendship between the two nations, referring to it as a "shining example of trust and collaboration."

He also appreciated the center's efforts in educating the youth about the benefits of this relationship and how it contributes to Pakistan's socio-economic development. The event was attended by a diverse audience, including students, academics, and media scholars, who were inspired by Aisam's words.

add depth to the top order. To manage the workload of the fast-bowling unit, Aamir Jamal, Mohammad Abbas, Mir Hamza, and Naseem Shah have been rested. Their absence paves the way for Khuram Shahzad, the recalled Mohammad Ali, and uncapped pacer Kashif Ali. The squad also sees the addition of

Sarfraz Ahmed parts ways with Quetta Gladiators

PEAK POINT KARACHI: Ahead of the upcoming 10th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), former Pakistan skipper and renowned batter Sarfraz Ahmed on Sunday announced quitting Quetta Gladiators.

He made the announcement on microblogging website Instagram by sharing a picture of himself with franchise owner Nadeem Omar.

"Today I want to tell you that my time with Quetta Gladiators has come to an end and I feel very proud that my journey of 9 years with this amazing team has been wonderful and beautiful," wrote Sarfraz.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank Nadeem Bhai for giving me the opportunity to play for his team and for providing everything that I needed as a player and captain and will always remember your support throughout this time.

"My best wishes will always be with your team and lastly I would like to thank your team management who have been great. Special thanks to Azam Bhai."

Sarfraz, who was associated with Quetta Gladiators since the inception of the league, was released by the former champions earlier this month and thus will be a part of the players since the first time in 2016.

The wicketkeeper batter played 86 PSL matches for the Gladiators and scored 1,525 runs at 39.37 with the help of seven half-centuries. He also led the Gladiators to their maiden and only PSL title in 2019.

Notably, Sarfraz captained the Gladiators for eight PSL seasons until he was replaced by South Africa's Rilee Rossouw in the previous edition.



RWFL: Empowering Pakistan's youth through combat sports

SEHRISH NAZ LAHORE: The Real World Fight League (RWFL), Pakistan's premier white-collar fighting platform, hosted electrifying combat competitions at Brave Gym on Saturday. The event brought together young adults from the nation's leading schools and universities, inspiring participants to build resilience, confidence, and life skills through combat sports.

RWFL Co-founder Qaim Abbas highlighted the league's mission. "Real World is South Asia's largest Gen Z movement, providing an accessible platform for kids and adults to train in combat sports. It equips them with

skills and a mindset to conquer life's challenges, improving both physical fitness and mental health. This is for everyone." Former participant and medical student Saameer Mahmood shared his journey of transformation: "Real World

taught me to overcome challenges both in and out of the ring. From losing my first fight to becoming a champion, I've learned grit, resilience, and hard work. Combat sports have also strengthened me academically and physically, helping me face life's hurdles with a solid mindset." Adil Azhar, another participant, praised RWFL for breaking stigmas around MMA. "The league has made MMA accessible for recreation, offering a safe and inspiring environment where participants grow in confidence and embrace empowerment. It's about far more than fighting—it's about personal development."

Imam ul Haq makes comeback as PCB announces test squad against West Indies

KOMAL BUTT ISLAMABAD: Left-handed opening batsman Imam ul Haq made a comeback as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced a 15-member squad for the two ICC World Test Championship Tests against the West Indies, scheduled to be played from January 17 to 29 at Multan Stadium Multan. The squad features seven changes from the 15-member Test team that toured South Africa. The retained players are: Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-cap-



tain), Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Rizwan, Noman Ali, and Salman Ali Agha. To strengthen the spin department, off-spinner Sajid Khan and mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed have been recalled to partner with left-arm spinner Noman Ali. Openers Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Huraiba have also been brought back, replacing the injured Saim Ayub and the out-of-form Abdullah Shafique.



ISLAMABAD: Family members of employees of old Munal restaurant hold placards during protest in favor of their demands at Pir Sohawa, in the Federal Capital.

ITP officer martyred in attack; a suspect arrested

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) officer, Zubair Shah (1994/C), was martyred on duty when unidentified suspects opened fire outside the headquarters while he was on duty, an official confirmed to APP on Sunday.
He said three individuals on a motorcycle approached the location and were stopped by Zubair Shah, who

attempted to prevent them from entering the premises. In response, they opened fire, fatally wounding the officer. Shah was rushed to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) but succumbed to his injuries.
Police official said one of the suspects was apprehended by traffic officers immediately after the incident, while the other two managed to flee the scene. The arrested suspect was shifted to the I-9 Police Station for further investigation.
DIG Afti Raza took immediate notice of the incident and directed the formation of special teams to apprehend the fleeing culprits. "Raids are being conducted at multiple locations based on intelligence inputs. Evidence collected from the crime scene is undergoing forensic analysis to trace the suspects," he said.

MSO commemorate 24th anniversary at NPC

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Muslim Students Organization (MSO) marked its 24th founding anniversary with a seminar titled "Hayya 'Ala Al-Quran" (Come to the Quran) at the National Press Club.
The event attracted a significant number of students from universities, colleges, and

madrasas, alongside political, religious, and student organization leaders, said a press release. Arsalan Kiyani, Central President of MSO and the chief guest of the seminar, underscored the importance of understanding and adhering to the Quran's teachings.
He emphasized that the Quran serves as a comprehensive guide for success in both this world and the hereafter.
Citing Hazrat Ayesha (RA), he noted that the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a reflection of Quranic principles. Key speakers included former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Dr. Maulana Tanveer Ahmed Alvi (Naib Muhtamim of Jamia Muhammadiyah).

Panel discussion highlights community engagement for improving girls' school enrollment rates

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a panel discussion titled "Women's Education and Social Gains" on Saturday emphasized the need for community engagement to improve girls' school enrollment rates.
The panelists on the sidelines of 'International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities' highlighted the importance of women's education for development, peace, security, and justice, calling on religious scholars, media, and all stakeholders to play a pivotal role.
The panel discussion, moderated by Jasna Celesic, EU Envoy to the Republic of Tajikistan,

shed light on the critical role of collective efforts in addressing educational challenges faced by girls.
UNICEF's Deputy Representative in Pakistan, Sharmila Rasool, stressed the importance of improving school enrollment rates through community involvement.
She welcomed Pakistan's recent efforts in hosting the global conference and noted the significant progress made over the past two decades in increasing school enrollment.
She also mentioned that the Prime Minister's Educational Emergency Program has started yielding substantial results, though broader societal support is needed to sustain these

efforts.
Other speakers in the discussion underscored the necessity of involving all segments of society, stating that no ministry or international organization can achieve these goals alone. A cultural shift in mindset is crucial to ensuring sustainable improvements.
Dr. Gulnara Janiyeva, Head of the Research Department at Uzbekistan's Center for Islamic Civilization, highlighted the need to correct misconceptions about Islam, emphasizing that Islam advocates for equal education.
She stated that girls' education is essential for achieving development, peace, security, and justice, but community-

wide participation is vital for achieving enrollment goals for out-of-school children.
David Fernandez Payuna, Permanent Observer for the University of Peace in Switzerland to the UN and UNESCO, pointed out that addressing challenges in women's education requires eliminating gender discrimination. He lauded Pakistan's efforts in promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and girls' education, acknowledging the progress made but emphasizing the need for further improvement. —APP
He also called for the implementation of the Islamabad Declaration, which could bring significant advancements.

IGP Islamabad reviews performance, sets goals for crime-free 2025

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired a series of high-level meetings on Friday at the Central Police Office (CPO) late at night, attended by senior officers including DIG Syed Ali Raza, DIG

Muhammad Jawad Tariq and DC Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar. A police spokesperson told APP that during these meetings, the IGP Rizvi reviewed the performance of all divisions and the progress reports of various units. He also set new targets issued orders to the officers to make Islamabad crime-free in 2025, ensuring the full protection of its citizens. IG emphasized that officers should embrace modern technology to safeguard the public and eliminate criminal elements in accordance with contemporary requirements. IGP also set new targets to enhance the performance of the Dolphin Squad.

Opinion & Editorial

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Rome's 'behishti darwaza'

Chazi Salahuddin
M any in my generation had seen Rome for the first time with Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn. And they fell in love with the Eternal City. 'Roman Holiday', of course, was first released in Karachi in the mid-fifties, ages ago when I was a teenager. In fact, it remains high on my list of feel-good movies even now. That story of romantic love in black and white shot in Rome never fails to cheer you up.
I had to wait almost thirty years to visit Rome in person, on a journalistic assignment. There were a few more occasions to throw a coin in the Trevi fountain and sit on the Spanish Steps and think of John Keats. ('A thing of beauty is a joy forever'.) Essentially, though, Rome projects the past glory of the Roman Empire and is the centre of the Catholic Church.
Anyhow, I am writing this column to share some thoughts and experiences of being in Rome in the first week of the New Year. Because our younger daughter lives in Italy, near Milan, my wife and I have been going to Italy almost annually for more than a decade. But Rome had slipped out of the radar because of the easy access to so many interesting places from northern Italy.
This time, when our elder daughter, with her own daughter, decided to join us for just one week during our over three weeks' stay in Italy she found an easy connection to Rome from Los Angeles and not Milan. Somehow, the idea of getting together in Rome and dividing the week between Rome and Naples came up and we grasped it enthusiastically.
Enough of this personal digression; the idea is to talk about Rome. In the first place, there was something special about the city at this time that I was not aware of. When we made our plans, we did not know that this was the Jubilee Year — a fact of Roman life every 25 years. How important this religious occasion is may be judged by

the fact that the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo's depiction of the 'Creation of Adam', was built for a Jubilee. It opened in August 1483.
But what is the significance of the Jubilee year? This is the year when the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica is opened for the pilgrims. Actually, the year begins when the Pope inaugurates a Jubilee year on Christmas Eve with the opening of the Holy Door. This is what Pope Francis did on December 24, 2024. Hence, 2025 is the Jubilee Year. It is a Christian tradition dating to 1300.
It will be interesting to see how this year will change Rome or, in other words, how the city will cope with a surge of pilgrims — and the usual tourists — during the year, particularly during the summer months. The figures being quoted are astounding. Rome has 2.75 million residents. As many as 32 million visitors are expected during the year. This would be 10 million more than in 2024 which, incidentally, was a record high. As one newspaper said, a visit to Italy in 2025 might not be the brightest idea.
We saw the rush even in the first week of this month, amid an icy winter. Apparently, it was more of a domestic tourism. The sales began on January 4 and walking on the streets in the pedestrian areas was troublesome.
This was some indication of how tourism, particularly in Europe, has surged after the pandemic. There are stories of public demonstrations of local residents against the influx of tourists in their towns.
I have talked about how Rome would change after the Jubilee experience. But Rome has already changed to be ready for this year's celebrations. The Jubilee has motivated Rome's biggest facility since the 1960 Olympic Games. In recent months, Rome looked like a giant construction site.
The national government has invested five billion dollars in various projects. I was very impressed by a newly created pedestrian area

near the Vatican.
The officials have a tough task on their hands. The Spanish Steps are already very crowded. There are plans to limit visitors to Trevi Fountain. When we visited it on Friday last week, queues had to be formed to step down to the edge of the monument, the very sight of which evokes memories of what one has seen in movies, heard in songs and read in fiction. As an aside, an estimated 3,000 euros are thrown into the fountain on a normal day.
We are told that comparisons are odious and they should be particularly so in religious matters. But I could not help recalling the rituals associated with the shrine of Baba Fariduddin Gang Shakar in Pakpattan when I learnt about the Holy Door of St Peter's. The significance of the two, in many respects, certainly varies.
However, there is this 'Behishti Darwaza' in the Pakpattan shrine that is held on the death anniversary of Baba Farid. It is open only for five days. There are those who believe that all the sins are washed away when one passes through the door. Many politicians are known to have frequented the shrine. Does a name spring to mind?
Regarding the Jubilee year, pilgrims who come to Rome seek spiritual renewal and a stronger connection to their faith. It gives every generation a chance to experience this spiritual time of grace. Pope Francis wants this year — 2025 — to be lived as a year of hope.
Ultimately, it is the hope for peace and love and well-being of our fellow human beings that should guide our beliefs and our exertions for a better world. But we do live in a tumultuous world in which there is not much joy and a lot of pain.
Still, it is inspiring to see the believers engage in redemptive activities and seek spiritual renewal. I had a glimpse of this in Rome, in the initial days of the Jubilee year.
Courtesy: The News

How to counter insurgencies

Amir Rana
IT is easy to say that the state must develop comprehensive and distinct counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies; however, what does comprehensive mean? This critical aspect is often missed in policy and public discussions. As insurgents in Afghanistan and elsewhere have evolved, marking a significant increase in frequency and intensity over the past several months, it becomes essential to analyse the characteristics of the insurgency.
Another question often raised during policy discussions is how to compare the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). How are they different, and why does the BLA qualify as an insurgent group while the TTP does not?
The operational strategy and capabilities of Baloch insurgent groups have evolved significantly. The BLA, in particular, has transitioned from conducting low-intensity, small-scale attacks several years ago to executing more sophisticated, high-profile operations today. Similarly, the TTP has adopted operational strategies that are more complex and sophisticated than both banned groups draw inspiration from the Afghan Taliban's strategy, which was effectively employed in Afghanistan.
The Taliban did not invent new strategies; they mainly adopted classic guerrilla warfare tactics, maintaining a high level of secrecy and avoiding large-scale conventional battles except in situations with overwhelming local superiority. This approach allowed them to sustain a prolonged conflict against more powerful adversaries. Both the BLA and TTP have incorporated elements of this strategy, adapting it to their local contexts to prolong their campaigns.
Public support for the state is critical for a successful counterinsurgency strategy.
Bard E. O'Neill, one of the leading scholars of modern warfare and terrorism, provides valuable insights into these complex subjects. His work helps answer critical questions, such as what constitutes a comprehensive strategy in addressing insurgency and terrorism. Among his many contributions, O'Neill's book 'Insurgency & Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare' stands out as particularly important for understanding these issues in local and global contexts. O'Neill emphasises that the primary distinction between insurgency and terrorism lies in the political goals and public sympathy that violent actors seek to cultivate. Insurgencies are often defined by their broader political objectives and the level of public support they command. In contrast, terrorist organisations typically lack widespread appeal in their political messaging and resort to terrorist tactics to generate fear and attention. Insurgency and terrorism can be distinguished based on their goals, methods, and scope of operations. Insurgents aim to overthrow existing governments, achieve autonomy, or enact significant political change.
Courtesy: Dawn

Our crypto dilemma

Pakistan has often been accused of being slow to adopt new technologies. This reluctance has repeatedly cost the nation opportunities to tap into lucrative markets, and nowhere is this more evident than in the case of cryptocurrency. Last year, Bitcoin — the flagship cryptocurrency — surged past the \$100,000 mark for the first time following Donald Trump's victory in the US. But for Pakistan, this monumental moment passed in muted silence. The country's legislators are the first step towards integrating Pakistan into the global digital economy. The reality is that cryptocurrency trading in Pakistan has long existed, albeit in the shadows. Unofficial estimates suggest that Pakistanis hold at least 20 million registered accounts on various exchanges. In 2022, the blockchain analytics firm Chainalysis ranked Pakistan sixth on its Global Crypto Adoption Index. Despite the lack of regulation, the annual trading volume of digital assets in Pakistan is estimated to range between \$18 billion and \$25 billion. This hidden economy represents a missed and significant opportunity for the state to generate much-needed tax revenue.

Governments, civil society must unite for girls' education: Gilani

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Sunday urged governments, civil society, and international partners to collaborate in creating an environment where girls are encouraged, supported, and empowered to pursue their education.

While addressing the concluding session of the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities held in Islamabad, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that education is not a privilege but a fundamental right.

He called on Muslim communities and the international community to renew their commitment to empowering girls through education, underscoring the teachings

of Islam and the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who strongly advocated for gender equality and the importance of education for all. The conference brought together global leaders, including Hissein Ibrahim Tabba, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Isa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, and distinguished dignitaries such as Nobel Laureate Malala Yousofzai and former Prime Minister of Norway Kjell Magne Bondevik, to discuss the challenges and opportunities for girls' education in Muslim communities.

He said, "The future of any

society lies in the education of its youth, particularly girls. We cannot build a prosperous future if we leave half of our population behind." He also paid tribute to the global efforts of Malala Yousofzai, whose advocacy has inspired millions. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ensuring that every girl, regardless of background, has access to quality education.

Gilani also highlighted the contributions of Former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and first women Prime Minister of the Muslim world Benazir Bhutto for women's education and their endeavors for bringing gender equality, social empowerment, and political participation for women in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Malala Yousofzai at the closing ceremony of the International Conference for Girls' Education.

Commerce Minister meets Korea Eximbank Official in Seoul

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Mr Kamal Khan held a meeting with UM Sung-Yong, Executive Director of the EDC Operation Group at the Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank), at the Pakistani Embassy in Seoul.

The meeting focused on the progress of ongoing development projects in Pakistan and opportunities for future collaboration, said a press release issued here on Friday. During the discussion, Executive Director UM Sung-Yong provided an overview of the ongoing projects in Pakistan, highlighting the processes involved in their approval, scrutiny, and execution.

He appreciated the role of Pakistani departments for their efficient handling of projects from concept stage to completion. UM Sung-Yong also announced that \$1.1 billion has been allocated



from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for development projects in Pakistan for the period 2022-2026. He noted that while the allocation reflects Korea's strong commitment to Pakistan, only two loans worth \$13 million have been approved so far.

He emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation to expedite approvals for the remaining projects.

The Executive Director further expressed optimism for deepening cooperation in the future and appreciated Pakistan's efforts to foster an enabling environment for investment and development partnerships.

Federal Minister Kamal Khan conveyed Pakistan's gratitude to Korea Eximbank for increasing EDCF funding to \$1 billion. He also raised the following key points during the meeting:

Minister Kamal Khan emphasized the need for Korea Eximbank to establish an EDCF country office in Pakistan, which would enhance coordination and accelerate project approvals.

He urged Korea Eximbank to expedite the formalities for the 12 pending projects to ensure timely implementation.

participating in the event that gathered over 150 representatives from 44 Muslim and friendly countries.

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui sees off Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hissein Ibrahim at Islamabad International Airport as he wraps up his visit to Pakistan.

Both Secretaries General expressed confidence that the step would galvanize concerted efforts to improve quality education and women empowerment in the Muslim World.

They expressed gratitude to the government of Pakistan for a wonderful hospitality extended to them and their

respectful delegations during their visit to Islamabad.

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and senior government officials saw off the dignitaries at their departure at the Islamabad International Airport.

Director Home Publicity, Press Information Department Nergis Shazia Chaudhary presented a photo album to the guests as a souvenir of their visit to Pakistan.

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Asad Mahmood Malik Elected General Secretary in Rawalpindi District Bar Association Elections 2025

BY: MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM

RAWALPINDI: Lawyers actively participated in the Rawalpindi District Bar Association elections held on Saturday, demonstrating their commitment to the democratic process. Over 8,525 lawyers cast their votes, ensuring the elections were conducted in a peaceful and organized manner. The elections concluded with Asad Mahmood Malik being elected as the General Secretary. The polling process began early in the morning and continued until evening, with lawyers showing great enthusiasm throughout the day. The transparent and well-managed electoral process was free from controversies, reflecting the dedication of the organizers to maintaining fairness and order. In his victory message, the newly elected

General Secretary, Asad Mahmood Malik, expressed his gratitude to his supporters; "I sincerely thank all the lawyers who placed their trust in me. My top priorities will be to safeguard the rights of lawyers, implement developmental projects for the Bar Association, and take all possible measures to address legal issues. Following the announcement of the results, members of the Bar extended their heartfelt congratulations to Asad Mahmood Malik, considering his victory a promising step towards the growth of the Bar and the protection of lawyers' rights. This election has strengthened democracy and unity within the Rawalpindi District Bar Association, inspiring the legal community to work with renewed determination for collective progress.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Praises Security Forces for Successful Operation in North Waziristan

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the efforts of security forces for their successful operation against Khawarij terrorists in North Waziristan. The operation resulted in the elimination of nine terrorists, marking another significant achievement in the fight against terrorism. In a statement, Minister Naqvi commended the security forces for their bravery and commitment. "We commend the security forces for sending nine Khawarij terrorists to hell," he said. "Once again, our courageous forces have thwarted the nefarious designs of these



terrorists." He emphasized the unwavering support of the nation for the armed forces. "The entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in the war against terrorism," Naqvi remarked, adding that the sacrifices and valor of the forces are a source of national pride. Highlighting the importance of their continued success, the minister stated, "The nation views the achievements of our security forces with great admiration and respect." This operation underscores the government's resolve to maintain peace and stability in the region while sending a strong message to those threatening the country's security.

9 khwarij terrorists killed in two separate engagements in North Waziristan: ISPR

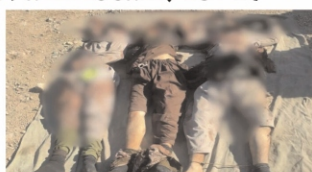
PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: The Security Forces killed nine khwarij terrorists in two separate engagements on Saturday in North Waziristan districts.

An Intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in general area Dosali, on reported presence of Khwarij.

During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the Khwarij location and resultantly, six Khwarij were sent to hell, while two Khwarij were apprehended," said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued here Sunday.

Another Intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Esham, North Waziristan District. After intense fire exchange, three Khwarij were neutralised by security forces, while two Khwarij got injured. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians. "Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other khwarij found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country," it further said.



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Secretaries General of OIC, MWL laud Pakistan for 'successful' moot on girls' education

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hissein Ibrahim Taha and Secretary General of Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr Muhammad Bin Abdul Karim Al-Isa lauded Pakistan for its successful hosting of the two-day International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities.

The dignitaries expressed these views as they wrapped up their visit to Islamabad after

participating in the event that gathered over 150 representatives from 44 Muslim and friendly countries.

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui sees off Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hissein Ibrahim at Islamabad International Airport as he wraps up his visit to Pakistan.

Both Secretaries General expressed confidence that the step would galvanize concerted efforts to improve quality education and women empowerment in the Muslim World.

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'PTI founder says no to any relief, vows to fight legal battle'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan said that he will not accept any relief and will fight the legal battle against the case.

According to PTI leader Barrister Ali Zafar, Imran Khan is determined to take on the challenges ahead and will not back down from the case against him.

Zafar stated that the treatment meted out to PTI workers and leaders is unacceptable and the party will continue to raise its voice against injustice. He mentioned that the desire for a free Pakistan is a fundamental right of all citizens, and the party will not be silenced over the injustices. The PTI leader also mentioned the growing polarization in Pakistan, which has now extended beyond politics into homes. He termed the increase in freedom to the lack of polarization and democracy in Pakistan and that its goal is to fight for justice and freedom.

He said that the Imran Khan has always encouraged people to speak out against injustice and that this stance will continue to guide the party's actions. The development came at the time when Imran Khan decided to plea his case at the International Human Rights Organisation (IHRO), announced Aleema Khanum.

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Sardar Ayaz Sadiq: bridging political, partisan divides through dialogue

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, has played a pivotal role in easing political tensions and fostering dialogue between the government and the opposition, earning trust and respect from both sides through his experience and impartial approach.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the National Assembly highlighted that Speaker Sadiq has consistently called for positive and productive discussions between the two sides, emphasizing his ongoing efforts to promote constructive dialogue.

During the previous session, Speaker Sadiq ruled that the Speaker's Office would be accessible

to all members throughout regular sessions. In addition to this, he pledged to allocate more time to the opposition than to the government—a promise he has successfully fulfilled.

The spokesperson also emphasized that Speaker Sadiq firmly believes in resolving issues through negotiation and mutual understanding. He has consistently advocated for mutual respect and fostered a culture of dialogue and inclusivity within the Assembly.

Remaining committed to his role as a mediator, the spokesperson added that the speaker continues to facilitate negotiations with sincerity, successfully bringing opposing parties together at the table, a testament to his effectiveness in promoting dialogue and cooperation.

The spokesperson urged both the government and opposition to act responsibly and take full advantage of the speaker's facilities to work toward the country's betterment. He reaffirmed that the speaker has provided a neutral platform for both sides to unite and is dedicated to ensuring the success of these negotiations.



ISLAMABAD: Ms Nergis Shazia Chaudhary, Director HP, Press Information Department presenting a photo album to Secretary General of Muslim World League H.E Dr Mohammad Bin Abdulkarim Al-Isa on completion of his visit to Pakistan, at the Islamabad Airport.