



Veena Malik says studying religion to be more practical

PM desires implementation of faceless customs assessment system in other cities

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that after functioning in Karachi, the faceless customs assessment system should be broadened and implemented in other cities as soon as possible so that all imports across the country could benefit from this system.

The prime minister chaired a review meeting on the matters related to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Minister



The prime minister directed the Ministry of Information Technology

and Telecommunication and FBR to work together to further improve the faceless customs assessment system. He desired that the system should be shifted to artificial intelligence by minimizing the human intervention. He also directed for the development of a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the track and trace system in various industrial sectors. The meeting was briefed over the recent FBR reforms. The faceless customs system at all Karachi port terminals would be made fully operational by the end of February 2025.

Naqvi hails security forces operations in North Waziristan

HUMA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the efforts of security forces for their successful operation against Khwarij 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, Mohsin Naqvi commended the security forces for their bravery and commitment.

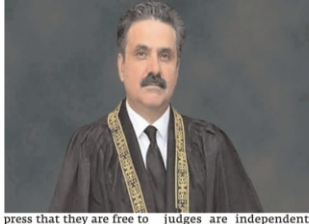
"We commend the security forces for sending nine Khwarij terrorists to hell," he said.

"Once again, our courageous forces have thwarted the nefarious designs of these terrorists." He emphasised 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.

CJP advises press to criticize judges but constructively

SAMRAATHAR
ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi has said the disposal of over 8000 cases in a short period of time at the Supreme Court of Pakistan is an achievement.

He said still he felt embarrassed in various jails are complaining about the prolonged litigation without conclusion but assured that the ongoing process of reforms in judicial system will reduce cases backlog significantly. The Chief Justice stated this while talking to



The Chief Justice advised members of the Press Association of the Supreme Court of Pakistan who called on him Monday at the SCP premises.

under the high courts and the Supreme Court doesn't interfere in the affairs. "I have great respect for the high court and the district judiciary," he said.

Regarding the ongoing process of judicial reforms, the CJP said that soon there will be a proper mechanism for fixing of urgent petitions. Special benches are to be constituted for tax and criminal cases while free legal aid for deserving litigant will be provided on district level.

About the Supreme Judicial Commission, the CJP said that proceedings

against few judges are underway in the SIC.

He admired Justice Mansoor Ali Shah for his contribution to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system and said that soon ADR will be introduced in Islamabad while in the rest of the country with the passage of time.

Commenting on the internal affairs of the SCP, the CJP said all judges are working in cordial environment. Nobody desires to impose his thinking on others and we are moving forward with collective wisdom.

Pakistan set to launch another space mission on Friday

JAVED KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to launch its first indigenously-built satellite into space on January 17 (Friday), marking a historic achievement for the country, according to reports here on Monday.

The development underscores Pakistan's growing expertise in Advanced Earth Space and Planetary Sciences (AEPSS) and represents a leap forward in the nation's self-reliance in space technology. The launch of Electro-Optical One is expected to pave the way for further

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia sign annual Hajj agreement

KOMAL BUTT
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Saudi Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah on Monday signed the annual Hajj agreement between the two countries, which would see 179,210 Pakistani pilgrims perform Hajj this year.

Haj, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, is performed each year by millions of Muslims worldwide. Pakistan receives one of the highest Haj quotas from Saudi



Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Saudi Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah on Monday signed the annual Hajj agreement between the two countries.

Arabia. Under the current Hajj quota, some 89,602 people will be performing the pilgrimage under the government scheme, while the rest will perform it through private tour operators, according to the religious affairs ministry.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs today, the agreement included a "commitment to provide the best possible facilities for the pilgrims, who will be offered special accommodation in Mina at reduced rates".

The Saudi minister

assured his Pakistani counterpart of all possible support for better facilities for the pilgrims, the statement said.

"To make the Haj journey more accessible, easier, and comfortable, a short Haj programme of 20 to 25 days has been introduced," the statement said, adding that pilgrims would have the option to choose their

PTI formally contacts NA Speaker for third round of talks with govt

MOHSIN ALI
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has formally reached out to National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, requesting him to convene the third round of negotiations between the government and PTI committees.

PTI has asked for the meeting to be scheduled soon, with a proposal suggesting January 12 as the date for the talks to take place in the National Assembly.

Responding to the request, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq assured the opposition party that the third session of talks would be convened within the week.

Meanwhile, speaking to the media outside Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, PTI leader Barrister Salman Akram Raja stated that the dialogue between the government and PTI had not stalled.

"I have heard that the third round will be held on January 15," he said.

Raja dismissed rumours that PTI was pursuing negotiations for a deal, emphasising, "The purpose of the dialogue is to ensure democratic justice in the country."

Verdict in £190 million Al-Qadir Trust case deferred once again

AVESHA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: The verdict in £190 million Al-Qadir Trust case against former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi was once again deferred and will now be pronounced on January 17 (Friday). This was the third time that the announcement of the reserved decision has been postponed.

On Sunday, the accountability court staff had informed PTI founder Imran Khan's counsel and NAB prosecution team that the accountability court judge will announce the reserved verdict at Adiala Jail.

Judge Nasir Javed Rana was present in courtroom since 9:00 am on Monday but neither of Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi or their lawyers showed up in the courtroom.



The judge waited for them until 10:30 am and later it was announced that the announcement of the verdict has been delayed once again which will now be pronounced on January 17. The judge then left the Adiala Jail after announcing the fresh deferment.

The court has now rescheduled the hearing for January 17, with hopes that the accused and their legal teams will be present in court.

Lamenting postponement in the pronouncement of the verdict in the 190 million pounds case, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Monday said that the purpose of a delay was to pressurize the former prime minister and the PTI founder Imran Khan.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, Gohar said that the party leadership was eager to listen to the

verdict today. "We kept hearing inside the jail for that for hours," he said there was no truth in reports that a delay in the decision in the case was part of any 'deal'.

Gohar further said that the case against the former prime minister was "fake", "Imran did not receive any monetary benefits."

He is not the owner of Al-Qadir University, but only its trustee," he said, adding PTI has been the victim of a political witch-hunt. Now there is a hope that we will get justice in the case from the superior courts. Just like these courts did justice in the past, we expect that this time too, justice will be done."

Speaking on the occasion, PTI leader Barrister Salman Akram Raja said that talks between the party and the government

founder will not be held on another postponement in the court decisions," she added.

Earlier the court had deferred the announcement of the verdict in a £190 million case twice.

On December 23, 2024, the original date the verdict was supposed to be made public, the accountability court postponed its decision in the case until January 6, 2025, due to winter vacations in courts.

Then, on January 6, the verdict could not be pronounced as Judge Nasir Javed Rana was on leave.

Imran Khan and his wife were indicted in the case on February 27, 2024, shortly after the general elections.

In its reference against Imran Khan, the NAB had alleged that the then cabinet approved a confidential deed in 2019 worth £190 million, seized by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) and returned to Pakistan.

The Bureau alleged that Imran Khan and Bushra, in return, got billions of rupees and land measuring hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town for "legalising" the money. As per the reference, Malik Riaz's son transferred 240 Kanals of land to Farhat Shahzadi, while Zulfi Bukhari received land under a trust, which the NAB argued did not exist at the time of the transfer.

The prosecution further alleged that a trust was created only after the 190 million pounds, raising doubts about its legitimacy and purpose.



Champions Trophy 2025: Teams announce full list of squads

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is set to return after an eight-year hiatus, with Pakistan hosting the prestigious tournament beginning on February 19. As both the host nation and the defending champions, Pakistan will look to defend their title against seven of the world's top cricket teams. The tournament will feature eight teams, divided into two groups. Each team will play three matches in the group stage, with the top two from each group advancing to the semi-finals. Group A includes Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and New Zealand, while Group B consists of Australia, England, South Africa, and Afghanistan. The

opening match of the tournament will see Pakistan face New Zealand on February 19 in Karachi. Group A will consist of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and New Zealand while Group B will feature Afghanistan, England, Australia, and South Africa. Team squads Bangladesh: Nazmul Hossain Shanto (c), Soumya Sarkar, Tanzid Hasan, Tawhid Hridoy, Mushfiqur Rahim, MD Mahmud Ullah, Jaker Ali Amir, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Rishad Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Parvez Hossain Emon, Nasum Ahmed, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Nahid Rana Pakistan: Mohammad Rizwan (c), Babar Azam, Tayyab Tahir, Irfan Khan Niazi, Sufyan Muqeem,

CHAMPIONS TROPHY 2025

PAK 15 MEMBERS NEW SQUAD

PAKISTAN SQUAD



PAKISTAN 2025

Mohammad Abdullah Shafiq, Naseem Khan, Usman Shaheen Shah Afridi, Harris Rauf, Abrar Ahmed, Kamran Gulam, Salman All Agha, Imam-ul-Haq, Fakhar Zaman, Babar Azam (captain)

Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Ben Duckett, Jamie Overton, Jamie Smith, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Saqib Mahmood, Phil Salt, Mark Wood. New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (c), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Ben Sears, Nathan Smith, Kane Williamson, Will Young. Australia: Pat Cummins (c), Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa. South Africa: Temba Bavuma (c), Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Mahara, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Rassie van der Dussen. England: Jos Buttler (c), Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Jacob Bethell.

Warner picked by Kings as PSL Player Draft 2025 under way in Lahore

SEHRISH NAZ

LAHORE: The Pakistan Super League Player Draft 2025 was held at Huzoori Bagh in Lahore Fort on Monday. Originally planned for Cwadar, the event was relocated to Lahore due to logistical challenges. The six franchises assembled the star-studded squads during the draft ceremony at one of Lahore's most famous heritage sites. Platinum Category Karachi Kings have picked David Warner, while Lahore Qalandars have selected Darrell Mitchell. Peshawar Zalmi secured Tom Banton, while Islamabad Gladiators picked the right to match in the Platinum category, while New Zealand's Mark Chapman was acquired by Quetta Gladiators. Michael Bracewell has joined Multan Sultans, New Zealand's Adam Milne has been selected by Karachi Kings, and Finn Allen



has joined Quetta Gladiators in the Platinum Category. Matthew Short has been picked by Islamabad United, while Faheem Ashraf by Quetta Gladiators, and Abbas Afridi is now part of Karachi Kings. Diamond Category In Diamond category, Karachi registered in the Platinum category for the draft. The pool includes 44 exciting players from eight countries. Kane Williamson, the second leading run scorer for New Zealand in T20is, has also registered in the Platinum category along with his long-time team mate and leading wicket-taker ever in T20is, Tim Southee. Apart from Williamson and Southee, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell, Finn Allen, Jimmy Neesham, Mark Chapman and Michael Bracewell are other Kiwi players, who will interest the six HBL PSL franchises on Monday. The most number of overseas Platinum category players - 13, are from Australia, including the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 winners Ashton Agar, David Warner and Daniel Sams. Usman Khawaja, who represented Islamabad United in HBL PSL 2021, is also part of this category.

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Pakistan women's U-19 team wins warm match against Nigeria

PEAK POINT

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA: The Pakistan U-19 Women's cricket team secured a convincing 11-run victory against Nigeria in their opening warm-up match for the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup in Malaysia on Monday. Batting first, Pakistan posted a modest total of 105 runs for the loss of 6 wickets in their allotted 20 overs. Fatima Khan emerged as the top scorer, contributing a solid 28 runs from 39 balls. Ravel Farhan provided crucial support with 23 runs off 37 balls. Other notable contributors included Zofshan Ayaz (13 runs),



Manahel (10 runs) and Areesha Ansari (7 runs). Komal Khan scored 4 runs while Tayyaba Imdad and Maham Anis remained unbeaten with 2 and 3 runs respectively. In response, Nigeria's team was restricted to 94 runs for 6 wickets. Qara Al-Ain was particularly impressive, taking 2 wickets while conceding just 9 runs in her 4-over spell. The win provides a promising start for Pakistan's young cricketers as they prepare for the upcoming World Cup tournament.

Netflix's 'The Greatest Rivalry: India vs Pakistan' set to release on Feb 7

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Popular streaming website Netflix has announced the release date of its cricket documentary 'The Greatest Rivalry: India vs Pakistan'. It has added to the excitement among fans, who are eager to watch the upcoming documentary. The sports documentary is set to release on Feb 7 on the streaming platform. As for the poster, the documentary features Indian stars Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag with their backs to the camera, heading towards the pitch where the Pakistan team players put their heads together to discuss strategy.



A glimpse of Pakistani players, identified only by their jersey numbers - 96, 13, and others in the 50s - has set cricket fans abuzz. Last February, Netflix dropped a tantalizing teaser for its upcoming documentary, showcasing glimpses of the fierce cricketing rivalry without revealing much else. At present, the Netflix website offers a brief promo featuring interview snippets with cricket legends Waqar Younis, Virender Sehwag, and Sourav Ganguly, discussing the nuances of spin bowling. Meanwhile, the comment section has become a battleground for fans, who passionately supported their teams.

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ICC delegation visits Gaddafi Stadium to assess readiness for Champions Trophy

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: A six-member International Cricket Council (ICC) delegation Sunday visited Gaddafi Stadium Lahore to assess venue's readiness for the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025, to be hosted by Pakistan from February 19 to March 9. The delegation comprised of ICC officials, broadcasters, and logistics personnel and it reviewed facilities including the media boxes, dressing rooms, and enclosures at the venue. The visit will provide the delegation with the first hand information on the state of affairs at the venues in Pakistan. It reviewed PCB's readiness for the ICC event. PCB's Director International Cricket Usman Waheed briefed the delegation on the ongoing



upgradation work at the stadium. The Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi recently claimed that the things were in place for the inauguration of the upgradation work on January 25. The PCB has further relocated the tri-nation ODI series featuring South Africa and New Zealand to the Gaddafi stadium Lahore and NBP stadium Karachi to further satisfy the ICC on the preparedness for the mega event. The tri-series matches will also help PCB put the upgradation work to the litmus test and see whether there are some shortcomings so that these may be rectified prior to the start of the ICC Champions Trophy on February 19. The ICC delegation has already visited NBP stadium, Karachi and Rawalpindi stadium, Rawalpindi.

Pakistan Shaheens & West Indies warm-up match ends in draw

KOMAL BUTT

ISLAMABAD: The three-day warm-up match between Pakistan Shaheens and the West Indies concluded in a draw on Sunday at the Islamabad Club Ground, chasing a target of 312 runs, Pakistan Shaheens finished at 128 for 2 in 30 overs. Opening batsman Mohammad Huraiba, who is also part of the Test squad impressed with a quick-fire 80 runs off just 80 balls including 12 fours and 2 sixes. This followed his earlier innings of 74 runs, contributing to an 82-run partnership with Omair Bin Yousuf who scored 25 runs. In their first innings, Pakistan Shaheens declared at 212



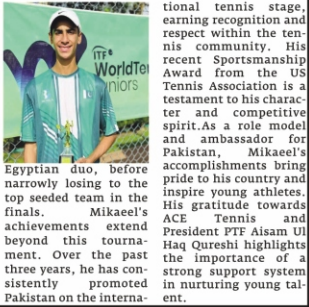
for 9, trailing by 134 runs. West Indies then batted for 40 overs in their second innings, scoring 177 for 5 before declaring, setting the Shaheens a challenging target. West Indies had a shaky start, falling to 25 for 3 and later 73 for 5, but Alick Athanaze (58 not out) and Tevin Inshah (57 not out) rescued the innings with an unbeaten 104-run partnership for the sixth wicket. For Pakistan Shaheens, Musa Khan took 2 wickets for just 5 runs while Ali Raza also picked up 2 wickets for 32 runs. The West Indies Test squad will now travel to Multan where their first Test match begins on Friday, 17 January.

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Pakistani Teen Tennis Sensation Mikael Ali Baig Makes Waves Internationally

MUHAMMAD HARI

ISLAMABAD: At just 15 years old Mikael Ali Baig has taken the tennis world by storm with his impressive performance at the ITF J30 tournament in Cairo. Reaching the finals in the double championship alongside partner Alex Brown, Mikael demonstrated exceptional skill, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. Mikael and his partner defeated strong teams, including the #2 seed team from Egypt and the #3 seed Russian/



Egyptian duo, before narrowly losing to the top seeded team in the finals. Mikael's achievements extend beyond this tournament. Over the past three years, he has consistently promoted Pakistan on the international scene, earning recognition and respect within the tennis community. His recent Sportsmanship Award from the US Tennis Association is a testament to his character and competitive spirit. As a role model and ambassador for Pakistan, Mikael's accomplishments bring pride to his country and inspire young athletes. His gratitude towards ACE Tennis and President PTF Aisam Ul Haq Qureshi highlights the importance of a strong support system in nurturing young talent.



ECO Calligraphy and Arts Exhibition Concluded Celebrating Regional Unity Through Culture

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The exhibition "Timeless Serenity of Calligraphy and Arts," which showcased the artistic and cultural treasures of the Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO) member states, concluded with a ceremony held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on January 13, 2025. Organized by the ECO Cultural Institute, the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Division, the Diplomatic Insight, and PNCA, the exhibition celebrated the region's rich cultural diversity, artistic heritage, and the unifying

power of art and calligraphy. The concluding ceremony was graced by Hassan Nasir Jamry, Federal Secretary, Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, as the Chief Guest, and Atadjan Movlmov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, as the Guest of Honor. In his address, Hassan Nasir Jamry emphasized the transformative role of cultural diplomacy in strengthening regional harmony and mutual understanding. He praised the exhibition as a reflection of the shared values and artistic brilliance of the ECO member states. "Art and cul-

ture provide a universal language that transcends boundaries, fostering connections that are essential for sustainable regional cooperation," he said. Atadjan Movlmov, while addressing the audience, acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the organizers and commended the exhibition for celebrating the diverse yet interconnected cultural identities of the ECO region. He noted that such initiatives contribute significantly to deepening mutual respect and understand-



ing among member states. Dr. Farhat Asif, in her remarks, reflected on the exhibition's journey and its role in promoting dialogue and cultural understanding. She highlighted the participation of visitors who not only admired the artistry but also learnt about the unique traditions and heritage of the ECO member countries. Dr. Asif emphasized the importance of the Diplomatic Insight and the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies in organising initiatives that build bridges between nations and advance the goals of cultural diplomacy. The exhibition, which ran from January 7 to 14, featured calligraphic masterpieces by Azeem Iqbal and paintings from ECO member states, including Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Visitors had the opportunity to not only admire the art but also deepen their knowledge of the cultural richness of ECO member states through the exhibits and interactive engagements. On the last day of the exhibition, Azeem Iqbal is hosting a calligraphy workshop on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at Gallery #10, PNCA, National Art Gallery, Islamabad. This will offer the attendees to have a hands-on learning and a deeper appreciation of the art form, enhancing their cultural experience. The event drew wide participation from diplomats, cultural practitioners, and art

Police Efforts Boost Service Delivery and Public Safety in Rawalpindi

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani, visited the Traffic Headquarters to evaluate public services and inspect newly introduced driving simulators at the driving school. Expressing interest in technological advancements, the CPO directed the extension of simulators to other licensing centers. During his visit, he reviewed facilities in the one-window licensing hall, issued instructions for resolving citizen issues promptly, and suggested improvements to

Islamabad Police Vows Steadfast Efforts Against Crime, Says DIG Ali Raza

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Islamabad Police, Syed Ali Raza, conducted a briefing with zonal SPs, SHOs, Clerks and Police Squad officials to reaffirm the department's resolve in eliminating crime across the district. DIG Raza emphasized that officers will be held accountable for incidents occurring in their respective areas, urging intensified patrolling in commercial zones and hot spots through the Smart Car Patrol initiative. He directed all patrolling units to

Senate Committee Urges Focus on Education, Energy, and Tourism Development in GB

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan highlighted the region's educational, energy, and tourism challenges during a meeting chaired by Senator Prof. Sajid Mir. Despite a commendable overall literacy rate in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), the Chief Secretary of GB reported significant issues in the Diamer Division, particularly in Astor and Chilas districts, where cultural barriers impede girls' education and women face widespread denial of basic

Chairperson BISP Hosts Live E-Kachehri to Address Beneficiaries' Concerns

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senator Rubina Khatun, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), hosted a live e-Kachehri session via the program's official Facebook page, engaging directly with beneficiaries to resolve grievances. Over one hour, 32 callers from across the country shared their issues and received immediate directives for resolution. During the session, 17-year-old Ayesha from Dera Ismail Khan stood out for her honesty. She informed the Chairperson

Opinion & Editorial

Strict Measures Needed for Rioters and Propagandists

Abdul Basit Alvi

Countries often implement strict measures to address rioting and propaganda. For instance, Russia has taken a firm stance against both through legal and state control measures. The Russian government has used substantial force to suppress violent protests and public demonstrations, such as during the 2011-2012 anti-government protests, where authorities dispersed crowds with police force and arrested many participants. The legal system has imposed fines and prison sentences on those deemed responsible for unrest. Russia's 2019 'fake news' laws target individuals spreading what the government considers false information, and the state controls media outlets. Turkey has also faced challenges related to riots and propaganda and has responded with a range of strict measures. In response to the 2013 Gezi Park protests, the Turkish government implemented extensive police measures to manage the

the 2009 Green Movement and the 2019 fuel protests, the Iranian government has employed severe measures, including deploying security forces to suppress demonstrations, arresting protesters, and imposing harsh sentences. Tactics such as the use of force and shutting down communication channels have been commonly used. Iran has implemented stringent laws against what it deems subversive propaganda. The government closely monitors and controls media and internet access, censoring content that is considered a threat to national security. Individuals involved in spreading dissent or anti-government sentiments face arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment. Egypt's response to rioting and propaganda also emphasizes security and control. The government has addressed unrest, such as the 2011 Arab Spring protests and subsequent demonstrations, with severe security measures, including deploying security forces, using live ammunition, and conducting mass arrests of protesters and

activists. Legal actions have been taken against those accused of inciting unrest. Additionally, the Egyptian government has imposed strict controls on media and online platforms, enacting laws against 'false news' and anti-government propaganda, and penalizing those who disseminate information considered harmful to state interests. The government also monitors and censors online content to prevent the spread of dissenting views. In the UK, recent riots have also made headlines. On July 29 this year, a knife attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance and yoga event resulted in the death of six-year-old Bebe King, seven-year-old Elsie Dot Stancombe, and nine-year-old Alice da Silva Aguiar, with eight other children and two adults injured. Police arrested a 17-year-old from a nearby village and stated that the incident was not being treated as terror-related. Immediately following the attack, social media posts falsely speculated that the suspect was an asylum seeker who arrived in the UK in 2023,

spreading incorrect names and unfounded rumors, including that the suspect was Muslim. In reality, media reports revealed that the suspect was born in Wales to Rwandan parents. The police urged the public to avoid spreading 'unconfirmed speculation and false information.' The following evening, more than a thousand people attended Sir Keir Starmer's vigil for the victims in Southport, where violence erupted near a local mosque. Rioters threw bricks, bottles, and other missiles at the mosque and police, set a police van on fire, and injured 27 officers. The disorder was widely condemned, with local MP Patrick Hurley criticizing "thugs" who exploited the tragedy for political gain and Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer denouncing the "marauding mobs" in Southport. By August 6, police had made over 400 arrests, including children as young as 11. Sir Keir Starmer condemned what he described as "far-right thuggery," vowing that charges and convictions would follow regardless of the apparent cause or motivation behind the violence. He warned that those involved in the violence, including those inciting it online, would face serious consequences. The government announced that a "standby army" of specialized officers would address the disorder, and police forces would collaborate to share intelligence on violent groups. Additionally, efforts were underway to work with social media companies to remove misinformation and disinformation. The government also pledged to create over 500 new prison spaces to ensure that those involved in the violence would be incarcerated. Authorities are exploring terrorism charges for some suspects and considering the extradition of influencers from abroad who may have contributed to the disorder. In the UK, police have arrested three individuals linked to violent and hateful social media posts following far-right violence. Online footage captured one of these arrests at their home, showing the suspect, an individual under the Communications Act for

Kamila Hyat

The passing of Sir Zakir Hussain, arguably the finest tabla nawaz of his generation, sparked waves of obituaries and tributes across the world. Yet in Pakistan, his death barely registered beyond a handful of mentions, underscoring a painful truth: we have driven classical music away from our lives and out of our cultural consciousness.

The fate of maestros like the late Fateh Ali Khan and Mehdi Hassan, known for their evocative semi-classical voices, is simply some examples of this. There are countless others including both instrumentalists and vocalists of all classical genres that now find their art fading into oblivion. We have forgotten what classical music and the traditions that it brings

with it means to lives. Classical music is more than merely an art form; it is a vessel of tradition, skill and cultural identity. It would be a tragedy if future generations never experience the astonishing vocal ability of classical maestros or the skills involved in playing a sitar or a sarod. Instead, we have embraced a deluge of popular music that while innovative at times, overshadows the

is one reason why the astonishing classical genius of our country has fallen silent within it. It is highly appreciated in India, where many of our musicians have travelled at least in the better days of the past when it was possible to do so to gain audiences and with them the money needed to keep the classical and non-classical art forms alive. Courtesy: The News

Pakistan focuses on broadening tax-base, becoming export-led economy: Aurangzeb

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday said Pakistan was committed to broadening its tax base and advancing with a focused approach to becoming an export-led economy.

"We are well on our way to achieving the target [tax-base expansion], not only because the IMF is saying that but also because, from my perspective, the country needs to reach that benchmark to make our fiscal situation sustainable," he said in a television interview with Bloomberg on the sidelines of the Asian Financial Forum in Hong Kong.

The finance minister said the IMF, scheduled to visit Pakistan next month, wanted the country to

broaden its tax base and achieve a tax-to-GDP ratio of 13.5 percent, up from 10 percent in December.

After Pakistan secured the IMF bailout last year, it has received some reprieve, including cooling inflation, which provides space for policymakers to cut borrowing costs further and help stabilize a nation still grappling with structural weaknesses.

Stronger remittances, a bright spot, have helped shore up currency reserves. As a result, the rupee rose about 2 percent in 2024, making it one of the best performers in emerging markets. The benchmark stock index also outperformed nearly all other equities markets last year. Commenting on Pakistan's economic transformation plan, Aurangzeb said, "We are

in the phase of stabilization. Now, where do we go from here? We must focus on sustainable growth. Our current focus is on fundamentally changing the DNA of the economy to make it export-led."

Aurangzeb predicted that the nation's GDP would likely expand by 3.5 percent in the fiscal year ending June 30, compared to a 2.5 percent expansion in the prior financial year, with a 3.6 percent economic growth target set for the upcoming year. In response to a question, Aurangzeb said Pakistan was preparing to debut Yuan-denominated bonds this year to strengthen its finances, while the government remained optimistic about meeting the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) bailout loan conditions.



HONG KONG: Finance Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, delivering a keynote speech at the Asian Financial Forum 2025.

Plenary Session I – Innovation: The Solution to Unlock the Next Growth Engine

主題討論 — 創新：解鎖新增長引擎的方案

PTI running away from £190 million scam due to involvement in corruption

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Monday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership was running away from mega corruption case of £ 190 million because they know that their hands were not clean and they were involved in corruption.

Addressing a press conference along with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz senior leader Senator Tal Chaudhry that there was no example in the history of waiving off billions of rupees like this as black money was whitened through creation of a fraudulent trust.

He said the 190 million pounds case was classic example of "robbing Peter to pay Paul".

The minister said that the verdict on 190 million pound case was supposed to be given today, but the accused fail to appear in



the court. tactics in court cases.

The minister said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership had made a habit of not appearing in courts.

He reminded that the PTI had used delaying tactics for six years in foreign funding case. Similarly, he said in the Tosha Khana case also, they used delaying tactics and sought adjustments after adjustments.

"Sometimes the PTI leaders changed the lawyers, sometimes they changed the letters of attorney," the minister remarked.

He said that the innocent people never change attorneys and lawyers but it has been the practice of the PTI to use delaying

He asked why did they need to take a sealed envelope in the cabinet meeting and get its approval without opening it.

He said that the then cabinet approved 190m bribe issue without knowing the facts in a sealed envelope brought by Shahzad Akbar.

He remarked that 190 million pounds was a mega corruption case in the history of Pakistan and there was no example of such a big corruption in history.

He said that concession to the tycoon and diamond rings, land for Al-Qadir Trust were linked to this case.

Bilawal to pay week-long visit to Lahore

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is set to visit Lahore next week for a week-long stay to address critical political and organisational issues in Punjab.

During his visit, Bilawal will meet with the PPP leadership to discuss the power-sharing dynamic with the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Punjab and the province's evolving political situation.

According to sources, the chairman will also hold meetings with party representatives from across Punjab and is expected to visit the homes of dedicated PPP workers in Lahore.

Sources further revealed that Bilawal plans to make key decisions regarding the restructuring of PPP's Lahore chapter during his stay.

This visit comes after Bilawal's remarks last

Senator Talal accuses PTI of fabricating deal narrative

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senator Talal Chaudhry, a senior leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), on Monday sarcastically accused the PTI leadership of fabricating a false narrative about negotiating a deal with the government to evade accountability.

Speaking to the media alongside the Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Heritage and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, Chaudhry emphasized that no leniency would be granted to those involved in the £190 million corruption scandal. He stated that the case



clearly implicated the PTI founder and his spouse, who are employing delaying tactics to evade accountability. He pointed out the contradiction between the PTI founder's ambition to establish a "Riasat-e-Madina" and the corruption accusations against him, particularly regarding his appropriation of entire Toshakhana gifts.

Critics accuse him of



wrongdoing while presenting himself as a proponent of Islamic values, yet his actions resemble those of Yazeed.

Additionally, PTI government has been accused of misusing state resources and donating a portion to charity to create a false image of generosity, raising doubts about the authenticity of PTI leadership.

Chaudhry also firmly rejected PTI's claims that the government offered to move the PTI founder to Nathiagali or place him under house arrest at his Banigra residence, asserting that these claims were fabricated by PTI, with no such offer from the government.

Education Minister Khalid meets with ex-PM Norway

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Monday met with a high-level delegation led by former Prime Minister of Norway Kjell Magne Bondevik.

The meeting was also attended by Secretary of Education Mohtyuddin Ahmad Wani and former Member of the Oslo Parliament, Norway, Aamir Javed Sheikh, said a press release.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool welcomed the former Prime Minister of Norway

Kjell Magne Bondevik. He said that Kjell Magne Bondevik is a friend of Pakistan who has always worked towards helping Pakistan in fighting its challenges. The minister said that the presence of His Excellency internationalized the agenda of the International Conference on Girl's Education. He said that Pakistan is taking the lead for the Islamic countries to tackle the issue of girl's education and Out of School Children in general. Dr. Khalid Maqbool said that Pakistan faces a myriad of challenges in

the field of education in the wake of climate change. He said that the present government has also declared an educational emergency. He said that currently the Ministry of Education is addressing the issues of access to schools, limited infrastructure, quality of teachers training and nutritional problems of children in collaboration with other ministries.

Dr. Khalid said that due to our efforts the percentage of Out of School Children with respect to population is decreasing. He said that to develop

and implement targeted interventions a special department called Pakistan Institute of Education has been developed to gather accurate data about challenges being faced by the Education sector of the country. The minister said that to address the cultural impediments of access to education for girls, the International Conference on Girl's Education will be a historic achievement. He said that religious scholars from all over the world supported the cause of girl's education.

He clarified that the government has no involvement in cases like the 190 million pound case or others, but judicial decisions could still influence the dialogue process.

"If the decision goes against PTI, it will inevitably impact the mood and sentiments of PTI members, particularly the negotiation committee, and could affect their spirit regarding the dialogue," he said.

Responding to a question about the 190 million pound case decision, he emphasized that it has no connection to the dialogue process and that the government is not using it to exert pressure.

He further explained that the purpose of seeking PTI's demands in writing is to assess their nature thoroughly, as verbal and written demands can lead the process in different directions.

Siddiqui urges separation of dialogue, judicial matters

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson for the government's coalition dialogue committee, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, on Monday stated that dialogue and judicial matters are two separate domains, and they should not be mixed.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the judiciary operates independently within its jurisdiction and the government has nothing to do with the cases of former chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

He clarified that the government has no involvement in cases like the 190 million pound case or others, but judicial decisions could still influence the dialogue process.

"If the decision goes against PTI, it will inevitably impact the mood and sentiments of PTI members, particularly the negotiation committee, and could affect their spirit regarding the dialogue," he said.

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Delay in Al-Qadir Trust verdict not linked to any deal, says Barrister Gohar

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar on Monday stated that the delay in the decision of the 190 million pounds reference was not the result of any deal.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala jail alongside PTI Secretary General Salmaan Akram Raja, Gohar said incarcerated founder and former premier Imran Khan was not the owner of Qadir University, adding the latter was just a trustee of the institution.

He further stated that Al-Qadir case was politically motivated, and injustice had been done to them. He added that the name of Bushra Bibi was included in the case to exert pressure on the founder of PTI. He emphasized that the PTI founder was not concerned about the cases, and they had come to court today to hear the decision. "The responsibility of bringing the founder of PTI from jail to court was of the jail administration," he said. The PTI chairman also said they had been given a time of ijam for the decision, and they arrived accordingly. They pin



hopes on the higher judiciary and will approach the higher courts for justice. He believes that just like other cases were concluded, this case also would be resolved.

During the discussion, Salmaan Akram Raja mentioned that the negotiation process was going on, it was being heard that the third round of talks would be held on Jan 15. He clarified that they were not making any deals and were negotiating for democracy and justice in the country.

He further stated that the negotiations and this case were not related to each other, adding that there was an impression being created that a deal was being brokered.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui met with a high powered delegation led by the former Prime Minister of Norway Mr Kjell Magne Bondevik.

Bushra Bibi's bail pleas dismissed in November 26 protest cases

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A local court in Islamabad on Monday dismissed three pre-arrest bail petitions filed by Bushra Bibi, wife of former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan.

Additional Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majka heard the petitions in cases linked to the November 26 protests, Express News reported.

Prosecutor Iqbal Kakhar and defence counsel Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry appeared in court during the proceedings.

Dr. Bushra Bibi's lawyer submitted an application seeking exemption from appearance.



The judge expressed concern, stating, "You have not yet submitted the surety bonds. You are not complying with the court's orders."

Judge Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry responded that Bushra Bibi had to appear in court for a decision on the 190 million reference and was required to visit Adiala jail.

Judge Majka subsequently dismissed the bail pleas, noting that the interim bail previously granted to Bushra Bibi

was valid only until the date of the hearing. The cases against her stem from alleged involvement in protests held on November 26.

An accountability court in Rawalpindi on Monday postponed the announcement of its verdict for the third time in the 190 million reference involving former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi.

Judge Nasir Javed Rana said that the verdict had been deferred due to the absence of the accused and their legal representatives.

The judge stated that although he arrived at the court at 8:30 am and issued two summons for both Khan and Bushra Bibi failed to show up.