



### Honey Singh reveals his bipolar disorder struggles

Friday 17 January 2025

# PM Shehbaz augments Youth Loan amount up to Rs1.5m for SMEs

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed to increase the youth loan amount from Rs0.5 million to Rs1.5 million under the PM's Youth Programme for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and prepare a special package for women entrepreneurs in small scale business.

The PM chaired a review meeting on the issues of SMEs and reviewed the progress on the government's initiatives for the development

and facilitation of SMEs, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

PM Shehbaz Sharif underscored that the government was determined to facilitate SMEs to encourage the country's workforce for opting entrepreneurship. "Globally, SMEs play a key role in the development of the economy.

The first priority of the government is to promote SMEs so that domestic exports increase. The government is trying to empower youth and women entrepreneurs so much that they not only earn



self-employment but also create more employment opportunities," the Prime Minister said. He issued directives to complete a detailed survey of SMEs across the country for providing improved facilities. "In order to harmonize the facilities given to SMEs with international standards, it should be ensured that the models of developed countries are applied," he added.

During the meeting, it was informed that following the instructions of the Prime Minister, after taking all the stakeholders into confidence, the loan form for SMEs was made easier and simpler so that maximum SMEs could improve their business and benefit from the loan facility.

## Pakistan welcomes ceasefire deal in Gaza

HUMA REHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday welcomed the Gaza ceasefire deal reached on Wednesday, calling for its immediate and full implementation.

"It is hoped that the truce would lead to permanent ceasefire and help in scaling up humanitarian assistance," a Foreign Office statement said.

It said that the indiscriminate use of force by Israeli occupation forces had caused unprecedented loss of lives and prop-

erty and displacement of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilian Palestinians.

Israel's expansionist designs have destabilised the entire region, it added.

The Foreign Office also reiterated Pakistan's support for a just, comprehensive, and durable solution to the Palestinian issue, leading to the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine based on pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

# Irrefutable evidences presented in 190m pounds mega corruption scam: Tarar

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that £190 million pounds scam was an unprecedented mega corruption scandal in the history of Pakistan and irrefutable evidences were presented in the trial court.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that evidence in the scam was so clear that even independent observers were not giving clean chit to anyone accused.

The minister said

National Crime Agency (NCA) in Britain declared Shehbaz Sharif innocent after holding investigations in five countries. The same agency had confiscated 190 million pounds of a tycoon and handed over that amount to the government of Pakistan, he said and added that the question arose as to why did the National Crime Agency give that money to the government of Pakistan?

He said that money was given to the government of Pakistan because it was the money of the people of Pakistan. If the money was not confiscated, why did the NCA



hand over that amount to Pakistan, he posed a question.

About Imran Khan, he said the founder of PTI was the only leader in the history of Pakistan who confessed that he has no source of income. The minister challenged entire PTI leadership to tell the source of income of Imran Khan and if he had no source of

income, how did a house worth Rs 250 million in Zaman Park Lahore become a reality.

Attaullah Tarar remarked that a person was given a benefit of Rs 80 to 90 billion when a sealed envelope was approved by the cabinet during the PTI regime.

After the approval of agenda in the sealed envelope of the cabinet, the founding chairman of PTI earned billions of rupees by settling the fine of a business tycoon, he added. He said that tale of mega corruption scam started from there and Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi, Farha Gogi and

crories minted tens of millions of rupees.

"In the biggest mega corruption scandal in the history of Pakistan, the hands of founding chairman PTI, Bushra Bibi and Farah Gogi are stained with corruption," the minister said. The minister said he expected that justice would be done in this mega scam and those involved would be brought to justice.

Since February last year, when the present government came to power, many international institutions have certified about economic turnaround in the country.

## Notables assure Barrister Saif of support for Kurram peace

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Delegations of religious figures have called on government Information Adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif and assured him of their support for peace in Kurram.

The notables representing different sects apprised the adviser of obstacles to peace in the restive parts of the country. Barrister Saif assured essentials will be supplied to people in Kurram at the earliest, he added.

government's move to remove bunkers in Kurram.

Barrister Saif once again underscored the need for concerted efforts to ensure long-lasting peace in Kurram.

He said the objective could not be achieved without support of all stakeholders.

He said the bunkers of both parties at variance with each other were being dismantled. Essentials will be supplied to people in Kurram at the earliest, he added.

## Nadra's Pak ID website to be closed down from today

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that it has been decided to launch Nadra mobile app and set up three new regional offices.

In a statement released in Islamabad on Thursday, Mohsin Naqvi said that the Pak ID website is being closed down from tomorrow, January 17. The three new regional centers will be set up in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gwadar and Gilgit-Baltistan, Mohsin Naqvi said.

Interior Minister said attempts were made to obtain the personal information of citizens and misuse them and to prevent these activities, the website is being closed from January 17.

mobile app. Citizens, especially overseas Pakistanis faced difficulties in using the website, Mohsin Naqvi said.

At Mohsin Naqvi said that there was difficulty in scanning and uploading fingerprints and required documents.

"Fake elements were doing business of helping in making identity documents through fake websites, Mohsin Naqvi said.

Interior Minister said attempts were made to obtain the personal information of citizens and misuse them and to prevent these activities, the website is being closed from January 17.

# Omar Ayub presents written draft of their demands to NA Speaker

KOMAL BUTT

ISLAMABAD: A spokesperson for the government's dialogue committee Irfan Siddiqui said on Thursday that the opposition committee, led by Omar Ayub Khan, had presented a written draft of their demands to National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Speaking after a meeting of the negotiation committee chaired by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, Irfan Siddiqui read the joint press release, stating that the draft demands had been distributed among committee members and

read aloud by Omar Ayub during the session.

Both government and opposition committee members shared their perspectives on the demands, Siddiqui said and added, the government committee will present its formal response to the opposition's demands within seven working days.

The Speaker of the National Assembly will announce the date of the next meeting after consultations with both the committees, he said.

Irfan Siddiqui said that members from allied parties would consult their leadership and legal



advisors before responding to the opposition.

He said that the opposition had requested a meeting with their leader in Adiala Jail, which the government had

Minister Ishaq Dar briefed the committees on the Palestine ceasefire. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the ceasefire and expressed hope that it would alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza.

Speaker Ayaz Sadiq described the meeting as constructive, noting that the dialogue was progressing in the right direction.

Participants from the government side included Ishaq Dar, PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui, PFP MNAs Raja Razaev Ashraf and Naveed Qamar, Prime Minister's Political Aide Rana Sanaulah, MQM-P

MNA Dr. Farooq Sattar, PML-Z leader Ijazul Haq, Balochistan Awami Party's Nawabzada Khalid Hussain Maggi, and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party President Abdul Aleem Khan.

The opposition was represented by Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, PTI MNA Asad Qaiser, Sunni Ittehad-e-Muslimeen World League Muslim chief Hamid Raza, Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen chief Senator Raja Nasir Abbas Jafri, and PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja.

# Wakhan Corridor part of Afghanistan; annexation reports "speculative and erroneous": FC spox

AYESHA REHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday categorically rejected the reports of a foreign annexation of Wakhan Corridor, calling it a part of neighboring Afghanistan; however, it reiterated the call for the Afghan government to act against the terrorist groups enjoying sanctuaries across the border.

"I have seen this endless speculation. Wakhan is part of Afghan territory. Afghanistan is a neighboring country. We recognize its sovereignty and territorial integrity. There is no question of Pakistan having designs on one of its neighbors. I deem it speculative and totally erroneous actually," the newly appointed Foreign Office spokesperson Shafiq Al Khan said in his maiden weekly press briefing.

He said that both Pakistan and Afghanistan understood the importance of relations and wanted to nurture good ties but the key problem was the terrorists' sanctuaries on the border. Both countries were in contact on the matter through an ongoing multilayered engagement.

The spokesperson said that Pakistan welcomed the Gaza ceasefire, reached on Wednesday and called for its immediate and full implementation. It is hoped that the truce would lead to a permanent ceasefire and help in scaling up humanitarian assistance.

"Indiscriminate use of force by Israeli occupation forces has caused unprecedented loss of lives and property and



displacements of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilian Palestinians. Israel's expansionist designs have destabilised the entire region," he remarked. He also reiterated Pakistan's support for a just, comprehensive, and durable solution to the Palestinian issue, leading to the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The spokesperson

expressed deep concern over the increasingly racist and Islamophobic political and media commentary in the UK aimed at conflating the reprehensible actions of a few individuals with the entire 1.7 million British Pakistani diaspora.

Strongly rejecting the "baseless" accusations and "unfounded" assertions made by India's Defence Minister and Chief of Army Staff on January 13 and 14, he said Jammu and Kashmir remained an internationally recognized disputed territory, whose final status was to be determined in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

"In this context, India has no legal or moral

grounds to assert fictitious claims over the territories of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan."

The spokesperson referred to the hosting of the international conference on girls' education in Islamabad last week attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif; Secretary General OIC Hisseln Ibrahim Taha; Muslim World League Secretary General and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdul Karim Al-Jaza, besides high-level officials, ministers and dignitaries from a number of other Islamic countries.

He said that the Islamabad Declaration, adopted by the moot, "underscores girls' education as a fundamental

right protected by divine laws, Islamic teachings, and international charters and further emphasized aligning education with Islamic principles, national priorities, and global advancements, aiming to empower women and foster stable and peaceful communities."

He told the media that at the Fourth Round of Pakistan-China Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) and the Fifth meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) held in Beijing, the two sides noted with satisfaction the positive trajectory of Pakistan-China relations and reaffirmed the commitment to further deepen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative

Partnership.

They underscored the need to reinforce the mutual coordination at the multilateral forums, including at the United Nations Security Council, and exchanged views on a range of regional and international issues. To a question, he said that Pakistan would work to send more humanitarian convoys to Gaza once the relief aid starts moving into the territory, following the ceasefire deal.

He told the media that Pakistan's ambassador in Washington would attend the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump, and the reported invite to Pakistan Peoples of Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto was not routed through the foreign ministry.



# Pakistan aim to finish ICC Test Championship 2023-25 on a high note

**ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN**

**MULTAN:** Pakistan will aim to finish the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 on a winning note when they face West Indies in their two-match Test series commencing at the Multan Cricket Stadium from 17 January. The second Test will also be played at the same venue from 25 January.

West Indies, who will play a Test match in Pakistan for the first time since December 2006, are currently positioned at the bottom of the ICC World Test Championship table. In the last Test series between the two sides on Pakistan soil, PCB Hall of Famer Inzamam-ul-Haq led the home side to a 2-0 win in three-match Test series.

Pakistan and West Indies last faced each other

in the red-ball format in 2021 in West Indies, where the two-match series was levelled 1-1. Pakistan under the leadership of Shan Masood will be looking to win their second consecutive home series after they defeated England 2-1 in October last year.

Pakistan's 15-member squad has undergone three days of extensive training, while Kraigg Brathwaite-led side practiced for two days at the picturesque Multan Cricket Stadium. The touring side also featured in a three-day warm-up game against Pakistan Shaheens at the Islamabad Club in Islamabad last week.

The home side squad comprises of three uncapped players - Kashif Ali (right-arm fast bowler), Mohammad Huraiera (right-handed batter) and Rohail Nazir (wicketkeep-



er-batter), while Abrar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Ali and Sajid Khan have been recalled to the side. Abrar and Sajid require 11 and six wickets, respectively to complete their 50 Test wickets each. Shan Masood, Pakistan's Test captain, said: "This is our last Test series in the current ICC World Test Championship cycle, and we would like to finish it on a winning note. Every match in this format holds great importance, and we are committed to giving it our all to end the campaign with a memorable

series win.

"West Indies are a decent side with a lot of talented players. They bring a unique style to the game, and we know they will push us hard. Test cricket is about adapting to challenges, and as a team, we are prepared to respond to whatever comes our way."

"The series win against England at home has given us a lot of confidence and momentum. We are fully focused on putting in strong performances and carrying forward that winning attitude," he said.

Kraigg Brathwaite, West Indies' Test captain, said: "I've been very excited to be here in Pakistan. I personally have never come to Pakistan before and probably majority of players are also touring for the first time and we are really looking forward to doing well in the series. Pakistan are a strong side at home so we look forward to doing well in these conditions."

"Our team's performance will be quite crucial here, and obviously putting runs on the board is important but taking 20 wickets will be the key to win the Test match."

"Our preparations are going well, we had few days in Islamabad where we played a practice game which went quite good for us as a group and we had our sessions here in Multan which were helpful as well." Pakistan squad: Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shafeek (vice-captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Kashif Ali, Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Huraiera, Mohammad Rizwan (wicketkeeper/batter).

## Pakistan, West Indies seek to improve from Test Championship lows

**PEAK POINT**

**MULTAN:** Pakistan and West Indies viewed a strong finish when they met in the first Test in Multan on Friday despite dragging up the rear of the World Test Championship.

Pakistan are currently eighth in the 2023-25 cycle of the WTC, with their rivals in last place far behind finalists Australia and South Africa.

Skipper Shan Masood said the two-test series was significant for Pakistan, who finished sixth and seventh in the first two WTC cycles.

"This cycle is finishing so this series is significant for us as we want to become a better team by being unbeaten in home conditions," he told reporters on Thursday.

Pakistan ended a winless stretch of 11 home Tests by beating England 2-1 in October and Masood wants his team to keep winning at home despite a 2-0 defeat in South Africa this

year. "We won against England so it will be important we keep that momentum against the West Indies," Masood said.

West Indies finished eighth in both previous WTCs and skipper Kraigg Brathwaite wants to end on a positive note this time.

"I think this series is very

important with two Tests left in this cycle... so we want to start the year strong and that is our focus," Brathwaite said.

He said his players are ready for Pakistan's spin assault led by Noman Ali and Sajid Khan, who took 39 wickets between them against England.

"We have played in spin conditions in Bangladesh and these conditions are similar, so you have to be disciplined and be brave against any bowler," Brathwaite said.

Pakistan deployed industrial fans and patio heaters to dry out the Multan pitch and secure their series win against England after heavy rain.

They are ready to use the same tactic again if needed, with the second Test also to be played in Multan from January 25.

The tourists had a taste of those conditions in their drawn three-day practice game in Islamabad, where Alick Athanaze hit half centuries in both innings and newcomer Amir Jangoo scored an unbeaten 63. West Indies used a three-prong spin attack of Kevin Sinclair, Joel Warrican and Cuddehse Motie in that match but will be without pace spearhead Kemar Roach, who is unwell.

## Team to stay focused as per strategies, says Andre Coley

**PEAK POINT**

**MULTAN:** As the West Indies cricket team prepares to face Pakistan in the highly-anticipated Test series at Multan Cricket Stadium, Head Coach Andre Coley, shared his thoughts on the team's strategy, lessons from the past and the overall environment in Multan. Talking to the media at Multan Cricket Stadium on Wednesday, Andre Coley said the team's clarity in planning, particularly when it comes to setting targets during the match.

"Our plan regarding scores was clear, but the actual target can only be determined on the game day," he explained.

He highlighted the importance of adaptability and staying focused on

the present rather than dwelling on past performances. Talking about the team's journey, Coley admitted that the year 2024 brought a mix of successes and challenges for the West Indies. "We have learned a great deal from last year, both from our good performances and the areas where we fell short," he said.

He said that every experience has contributed to the team's growth

and he remains committed to continuous learning as a coach. "As a coach, my learning never stops he said and added that each match and every situation provide valuable lessons."

Coley expressed confidence in the arrangements and conditions in Multan, describing the pitches as "safe and conducive for good cricket."

He also commended the efforts of local authorities and security teams for ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for the players and staff. Looking ahead to the series, Coley reiterated his preference for staying focused on the present. "I prefer to focus on the current situation rather than the past adding, every match was a new opportunity, where our focus lies,".

The West Indies team, under Coley's leadership, was gearing up to take on Pakistan in what promises to be an exciting Test series.

## Abubakar Talha and Nabeel shine at Millat Tractors Junior National Championship

**SEHRISH NAZ**

**LAHORE:** The Millat Tractors Junior National Tennis Championship 2025 is in full swing at the Punjab Tennis Academy, Bagh-e-Jinnah, Lahore. The tournament saw intense competition across various categories, with standout performances lighting up the courts.

In the boys' U-18 quarter-finals, Abu Bakar Talha displayed sheer dominance, blanking Abud Rehman 6-0, 6-0 while Nabeel Qayum delivered a commanding 6-3, 6-2 victory over Muhammad Yahya.

In doubles action, the duo of Abu Bakar Talha and Amir Husnain Ali Rizwan and Muhammad Salaar overcame Nabeel Qayum and Muhammad Yahya

straight-set victories to advance to the semifinals. Husnain Ali Rizwan defeated Haider Ali Rizwan 6-3, 6-3 while Salaar beat Amir Mazari 6-3, 6-2.

In doubles action, the duo of Abu Bakar Talha and Amir Husnain Ali Rizwan and Muhammad Salaar overcame Nabeel Qayum and Muhammad Yahya

6-2, 6-3, while Haider Ali Rizwan and Husnain Ali Rizwan defeated Hamza Ali Rizwan and Omer Jawad 6-3, 6-1. Among the girls' U-14 category, Rania Shahrukh Malik showcased her prowess with a decisive 4-2, 4-0 win over Shaheen Umer, while Shahnoor Umer edged out Esha Rabi in a thrilling 2-4, 4-0, 4-2 encounter.

The boys' U-14 pre-quarterfinals witnessed standout performances, with Ohad-e-Mustafa and Aalay Husnain progressing with straight-set victories. Similarly, the boys' U-12 category saw Muhammad Ibraheem Hussain Gill, M. Turab Bhatti, and Muhammad Muaz cruising, to comprehensive wins. In girls' U-12 action, Eman Shabbaz and Shahnoor Umer dominated their quarterfinal matches, each securing straight-set victories. The boys/girls U-10 quarterfinals saw Ehsan Bari and Mustafa Zia emerge victorious with impressive performances.

## Pakistan team reach Johor for ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup

**PEAK POINT**

**JOHOR, MALAYSIA:** A 15-member Pakistan Women's U19 squad and the team management reached Johor from Kuala Lumpur after a six-hour-long journey on Thursday.

Pakistan team will rest today and train on Friday for their opening match against United States of America (USA) on Saturday.

The mega-event for 16 U19 teams is set to begin from 18 January. Pakistan arrived in Malaysia on Saturday and have featured in two warm-up matches against Nigeria and Australia. Pakistan's skipper Komal Khan said, "We have prepared well for the World Cup and all the players are excited to perform in the event."

## No fear playing with big boys: Waqar Younis lauds ILT20's growth and UAE talent

**JAVED KHAN**

**ISLAMABAD:** The DP World ILT20 Season 3 has kicked off with a thrilling start, showcasing riveting contests between some of the world's finest cricketers and promising UAE talent. Among the supporters of this rapidly growing tournament is legendary Pakistani fast bowler Waqar Younis, who is serving as a commentator for the third consecutive season.

Waqar expressed his admiration for the tournament's remarkable growth, describing the President's Trophy Grade-I as "grand" and emphasizing the ILT20's potential to rank among the top global T20 leagues. "The DP World ILT20 is getting

bigger and better every year. The opening match, the atmosphere, and the organization were outstanding. This tournament has all the ingredients to become one of the premier competitions in the world. Having been part of it for three seasons, I've witnessed significant progress," he said. Highlighting the tournament's role in nurturing UAE cricket, Waqar praised the performances of young talents Alishan Sharafu and Farhan Khan, calling them examples of the nation's cricketing strides. "Seeing local players rise to the occasion is a testament to the league's impact on UAE cricket," he added.

## Amin hits tons, Fawad crosses 15,000 FC runs milestone

**PEAK POINT**

**LAHORE:** State Bank of Pakistan's Umar Amin brought up his 34th first-class century as his team racked up 414-9 dec in reply to Pakistan Television's 93 all out, on day two of second round of the President's Trophy Grade-I at the SBB Sports Complex, Karachi on Wednesday.

Amin scored 101 off 137 balls with the help of 13 fours and two sixes as SRP continued from their overnight score of 136-1. Fawad Alam, who contributed with a 99-ball 61 inclusive of five fours, reached the 15,000 first-class runs milestone during the innings as well.

Opening batter Imran Butt (78, 15b, 8x4s) also scored a half-century in SRP's mammoth first-innings total. PTV's Mehran Sanwal returned figures of 103 in 28.1 overs. In turn, PTV were 52 for no loss at stumps, with a deficit of 269 runs left to surmount. At the Oval Ground, Umar Siddiq's 127 off 164 balls with the help of 19 fours took Ehsan Associates to 293 all out after they had slipped to 149-6 in reply to Ghani Glass' 379 all out.





ISLAMABAD: Chairman Overseas Employment Promoters Association Engineer Faheem Iqbal Chaudhary along with others holds protest in the favor of their demands outside National Press Club in Provincial Capital.

## PPRA partners with NADRA Technologies Limited to enhance transparency

### PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL) signed a significant agreement to enhance transparency and efficiency in public procurement processes. Under this agreement, NTL will provide biometric verification services through over 21,000 NADRA e-Sahulat for suppliers and bidders who intend to register in the e-PAK acquisition system (EPADS).

Project Director of PPRA stated, "By integration of biometric verification services into the EPADS system, we are taking a proactive approach to combat fraud and ensure the highest standards of integrity in Public Procurement." "By providing secure and reliable biometric verification services, we are confident that this collaboration will contribute significantly towards improving the efficiency and transparency of Public Procurement in Pakistan", said Mr. Anwar Nazki, CEO of NTL. The implementation of this agreement is expected to have a positive impact on the entire public procurement ecosystem, during the first phase around 35,000 bidders/suppliers will be verified. This number will be increased to 300,000 in the near future. Mr. Hafiz Javed Ahmed (Chief Technology Officer), Mr. Syed Abid Ali Rizvi, (Principal Software Engineer), Mr. Wanda Tanweer, (Principal Business Analyst) from PPRA, Mr. Irfan Anwar (Head of e-Sahulat), and Mr. Malik Usman (Senior Deputy Director Ops) from NTL were also present.

## Three DSPs, two SHO's penalized on IG's orders; others rewarded

### PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police, under IG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, penalized three DSPs and two SHO's for poor performance on Thursday, while rewarding others for their exceptional efforts. A public relation officer told APP that Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Sabzi

Mandi was closed to the line and charge-sheeted, while DSP Ramna was suspended and also charge-sheeted for unsatisfactory performance. Station House Officer (SHO) Abparafa faced similar action, being closed to the line and issued a show-cause notice. Meanwhile, SHO Sumbal and the investigation In-

## Heartfelt wishes pour in for chairman PCP following heart surgery

### PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaulah Tarar, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and several prominent figures have sent bouquets and expressed their well wishes to

Chairman of the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP), Arshad Khan Jadoon, following his heart surgery. In his message, Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar extended his heartfelt prayers for Jadoon's speedy recovery. He prayed to Allah Almighty for his swift healing and return to full health. Arshad Khan Jadoon underwent heart surgery last week at the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology (AFC) in Rawalpindi. Well-wishers have expressed their support and hope for his quick recovery during this challenging time.

# Senate body opposes change to PPAF's numerical structure

### PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, chaired by Senator Sardar Al Haj Muhammad Umer Gorgaji, visited the BISP Headquarters and received a comprehensive briefing on the performance of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). On this occasion, CEO PPAF, Nadir Gul Barech, informed that the PPAF was created to address the nation's multifaceted poverty challenges by engaging civil society and developing and strengthening the micro-financing sector. Primarily, he said that PPAF in collaboration with the civil society to cater the basic facilities of

the community like health and education. Over the course of years, with a footprint in over 149 districts of Pakistan, PPAF has provided interest free loans of 3.2 Million beneficiaries and inculcated skill development in over 1.161 Million individuals. Likewise, PPAF has formed 150,000 community organizations and extended a helping hand to over 30,000 disabled persons. As far as the financial operations of the organization are concerned, the Government of Pakistan has provided One Billion Rupees as an endowment fund to sustain the organization and lent around 17.56 Billion Rupees under the World Bank and IFAD projects out of which 13.24 Billion has been repaid.

Senator Aon Abbas raised concerns over the alleged rumors of PPAF being included in Government rightsizing list. He emphasized on the importance of PPAF being the only organization with nominal foothold of political intervention as the country has witnessed the downfall of profit making organizations due to political intervention. The committee unanimously opposed any change in numerical structure of the organization and recommended that the former basic structure shall stay unchanged.

Furthermore, Senator Rubina Qaim Khani highlighted several complaints pertaining to blockage of BISP beneficiary card and the third party commission agents depriving poor masses of the due share of their stipend by keeping half of amount in lieu of withdrawal charges. She also inquired about the existing beneficiaries of BISP while urging transparency in BISP disbursements. Departmental representative of the BISP informed that the existing number of BISP beneficiaries are around 9.3 Million families and the current number will reach 10 Million families by the end of this Financial Year. However, as per the recent survey, it has been observed that there are around 14 million families living below the poverty line and the current financial constraints have made it difficult to include all the eligible families into the programme.

# Opinion & Editorials

Rahim Khan Arif Mehmood

**DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD**

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## Steaming ahead in education

Dr Intikhab Ulfat

Education is the foundation of societal progress, enabling individuals to unlock their potential, foster innovation, and contribute meaningfully to the world. In a global landscape increasingly shaped by technological advancements and interdisciplinary challenges, it has become essential to adopt educational approaches that transcend traditional frameworks. This is where STEAM Pakistan's School Journey stands out, as a pioneering initiative aimed at revolutionizing the educational experience for students and educators in Pakistan. By integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) into its core, this programme seeks to inspire curiosity, innovation, and critical thinking, ensuring a generation of young leaders ready to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Conventional education systems, though vital, often fall short in equipping students with the skills needed to excel in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. These systems typically emphasise rote learning, where memorisation takes precedence over understanding and application. Such an approach not only limits a student's intellectual growth but also stifles creativity and problem-solving abilities - key traits required in today's competitive global economy.

In Pakistan, the challenge is further compounded by limited access to resources, outdated curricula, and a lack of emphasis on interdisciplinary learning. Recognising these gaps, STEAM Pakistan's School Journey was conceived to provide a holistic educational experience that blends academic rigour with practical, hands-on learning. This initiative ensures that students are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the critical skills and mindset necessary for success in a dynamic world.

STEAM education expands on the traditional STEM model by incorporating the arts, recognising the crucial role creativity plays in innovation and problem-solving. While STEM focuses on technical and scientific disciplines, the inclusion of the arts fosters imagination, cultural awareness, and design thinking. This integrative approach to learning, emphasising the interconnectedness of various fields and encouraging students to think beyond disciplinary silos. The STEAM framework promotes inquiry-based learning, where students are encouraged to explore, question, and experiment. By engaging in collaborative projects and real-world applications, learners develop a deeper understanding of how concepts apply to everyday life. For instance, a project on renewable energy might combine physics (understanding energy principles), technology (building a model), engineering (designing the system), arts (aesthetically presenting the project), and mathematics (calculating efficiency). Such interdisciplinary activities not only reinforce academic concepts but also nurture skills like teamwork, communication, and innovation.

STEAM Pakistan's School Journey represents a bold vision to transform education in the country. At its core, the programme aims to create a seamless and dynamic learning environment that prioritises critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. By aligning with global educational standards and integrating culturally relevant content, STEAM Pakistan ensures that students receive an education that is both modern and contextually grounded. A significant aspect of the initiative is its emphasis on inclusivity. STEAM Pakistan recognises that access to quality education is a fundamental right, regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location. To this end, the programme works to bridge educational disparities by providing resources, training, and support to underserved communities. By doing so, it seeks to empower all learners, fostering a generation of innovators who can drive positive change in their local communities and beyond.

Central to the success of STEAM Pakistan's School Journey is its commitment to empowering educators. Teachers are the backbone of any educational system, and their ability to inspire and guide students plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experience. However, many educators in Pakistan face significant challenges, including limited professional development opportunities, outdated teaching methodologies, and a lack of access to modern resources. STEAM Pakistan addresses these challenges by offering comprehensive training programmes designed to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge. These programmes introduce educators to innovative teaching strategies, digital tools, and the STEAM framework, enabling them to create engaging and effective lessons. The initiative also fosters a culture of collaboration among educators, encouraging the exchange of ideas and best practices. By equipping teachers with the tools and confidence to implement STEAM principles in their classrooms, the programme ensures that the benefits of STEAM education reach every student. At the heart of STEAM Pakistan's School Journey is its focus on experiential learning - a hands-on approach that encourages students to explore and interact with their environment. This method moves away from passive learning, where students merely absorb information, to active learning, where they are actively engaged in the process of discovery. Experiential learning activities often involve problem-solving, experimentation, and collaboration. For example, students might work together to design a sustainable city, combining knowledge of engineering, environmental science, and artistic design. Such projects not only reinforce academic concepts but also teach valuable life skills like teamwork, communication, and resilience.

## Fight over resources

Khurram Husain

HERE is an interesting question: what exactly animates the polity in Pakistan that it sees repeated military interventions in civilian politics, as well as repeated attempts by political parties to try and team up with the military and annihilate their opponents? All political systems face competition between parties; is what they are designed to do after all, to sublimate the conflictual forces within their society via a rule-bound space. But Pakistan is among those countries that see cutthroat competition, where parties don't just seek to out-manoeuvre each other but actively try to annihilate their opponents.

There has been one exception to this rule, and that was the years running roughly from 2008 to 2017, when two separate, rule-bound transfers of power took place following elections in 2008 and again in 2013. These were the years when the so-called Charter of Democracy was in play, in which the two main signatories - the PPP and PML-N - had agreed primarily to not challenge each other's mandate following elections, and to not team up with the security establishment in an effort to cut short the tenure of the other. This consensus was upended in 2017 when the opening salvo of the upcoming 'hybrid government' was fired in the form of a controversial Supreme Court judgement which, among other things, heralded the end of the transition to democracy that began in 2008. From that point onwards, Pakistan was back with 'hybrid governments', defined as governments that owed their majority in parliament to intervention in politics by the establishment.

By its definition, only the government formed after the elections of 1990, 2002, 2008, and 2024 can be called 'hybrid'. It is hard to tell how long this era of hybridity will continue, but our own history tells us it usually lasts a decade, meaning we should not realistically expect anything other than this till at least 2027. What is interesting is how episodes that see a rising arc of competitive pressure within the system follow a U-shaped, or a V-shaped, curve. The idea is that with rising competition for control over the state's resources, there are many ways to see this but a good and simple one is to measure the difference between budgeted and revised expenditures under various heads, during various fiscal years. The idea is that with rising competition for control over the system's resources, staying within budgetary allocations becomes more and more difficult. Years with rising systemic competition should show growing differences between budgetary allocations versus their revised outturns at the end of the year. The idea is that with rising competition for control over the system's resources, staying within budgetary allocations becomes more and more difficult. Many years ago, this publication featured a graphic which plotted this difference in defence allocations between the years 2000 and 2008. The graph showed a U-shaped dip, in which year after year, defence spending fell to a close within budgeted parameters, meaning spending over and above what was budgeted at the start of the fiscal year fell year after year.

## PPP's season of discontent

The political relationship between the PML-N and the PPP has become a key focus in Pakistan's ever-changing political landscape, especially following the controversial February 8 elections and the formation of the second PDM government last year. What once seemed like a strong coalition between the two major political forces is now showing signs of strain. Growing disagreements and unmet expectations are threatening the stability of this fragile alliance. When the initial PDM government was formed under Shehbaz Sharif, there was a clear sense of cooperation between the PML-N and the PPP. The PPP not only joined the federal cabinet but also took on important positions, including the foreign ministry. But now, the PPP has taken a different approach. It has chosen not to join the cabinet and instead has opted for constitutional positions such as governorship of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the chairmanship of the Senate, and the presidency. Political analysts have pointed to several reasons behind this shift. A major factor seems to be the unpopularity of the PML-N government, particularly after the disputed elections. The PPP, aware of the need to safeguard its own political future, seems to be distancing itself from a government that many view as controversial. By taking up constitutional roles, the PPP is still involved in governance but avoids being closely associated with the government's unpopular decisions. Despite this distancing, the PPP has not been shy in criticising the Shehbaz-led government. There are key issues that have caused tension, including internet restrictions, disputes over provincial resource distribution, and the creation of the Pakistan Maritime and Seaport Authority.

## Aurangzeb reaffirms commitment to maintain trust of development partners

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, here on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to maintaining the trust and credibility of its bilateral and multilateral development partners, including Japan.

The minister was talking to Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan, Akamatsu Shuichi who called on him here, according to press release issued by finance ministry. He welcomed Akamatsu on assuming his diplomatic responsibilities in Islamabad, commending Japan's longstanding partnership with Pakistan. Aurangzeb expressed appreciation for Japan's diplomatic, economic, and technical support and urged Japanese investors to

explore investment opportunities in Pakistan, particularly in manufacturing and production, which would contribute to the country's exportable surplus. The Minister highlighted the positive momentum in Pakistan's macroeconomic stability, which he attributed to key reforms and structural adjustments across various sectors, including fiscal framework, taxation, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), energy, rightsizing of the federal government, and privatization efforts. He emphasized that the government remained committed to continuing its reform agenda, focusing on critical issues such as population growth and climate change vulnerability. He noted the importance of the 10-year Country Partnership Framework signed with the World

Bank, aimed at addressing these challenges and fostering sustainable, inclusive economic growth. Aurangzeb acknowledged Japan's valuable contributions and assured the Ambassador of Pakistan's continued engagement with Japanese investors to incorporate their input in the upcoming federal budget's policy framework. On the occasion, Ambassador Akamatsu expressed his appreciation for the progress made in Pakistan's macroeconomic stability and the government's reform efforts. He provided an update on the scope of ongoing Japanese investment in Pakistan, noting that around 90 Japanese companies currently operate in the country, employing over 65,000 local workers, and significantly contributing to the Pakistani economy.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holds a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr Akamatsu Shuichi who called on the Minister at Finance Division.

## Awais Leghari invites France's Green Fund Support for EV transition in Pakistan

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, here proposed utilizing France's Green Fund to support the transition of small vehicles to electric technology in Pakistan.

The proposal was given by the Federal Minister for Power in a call on by French Ambassador to Pakistan, Nicolas Caley, here Thursday, said a press release.

During the meeting, the Federal Minister highlighted that Pakistan has recently introduced its Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, which will translate into annual fuel savings of billions of dollars and contribute to environmental protection. Additionally, it will cut transportation costs easing burden for the public.

The Ambassador appreciated Pakistan's effective negotiations and the amicable review of agreements with Independent Power



Producers (IPPs) in the power sector.

The Minister reiterated that negotiation with 28 IPPs will result in total national saving of Rs.1.4 trillion. He shared that the Government of Pakistan is setting Policy for electricity transmission and distribution soon, ensuring efficient distribution of surplus power.

Furthermore, plans are being made for the auction of additional electricity. These initiatives will allow Government of Pakistan to exit from the power business in Pakistan promoting a competitive environment, he said.

He added that Government of Pakistan has hired independent boards across most of the distribution companies. These neutral boards are improving recovery rates and significantly reducing the line losses. The government is also prioritizing the promotion of solar energy, he added.

Allwais Ahmad Khan Leghari emphasized that all reforms are being implemented with the utmost transparency, creating substantial investment opportunities in the power sector. He also noted Pakistan's remarkable progress in renewable energy and green energy projects.

## AJK SCBA seeks stringent notice of INO against Modi's unlawful visit to IIOJK state

PEAK POINT

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme (AJK) Court Bar Association has strongly condemned Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the international-ly acknowledged disputed region of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). Talking to journalists here, AJK SCBA President, Javed Nasjum-ul-Saqib Advocate

condemned Modi's visit to the disputed occupied territory a blatant attempt to project a false sense of normalcy in a territory recognized internationally as disrupted, he added. Saqib continued that Kashmir issue remained an unresolved matter stemming from the incomplete partition plan of 1947. "The United Nations has passed resolutions affirming the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination, a right that has yet to be secured under the spirit

of the UN resolutions on Kashmir", he recalled.

The AJK SCBA chief said that India's unilateral actions, such as the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the ongoing development projects in the region, contravened these resolutions and undermined efforts toward a peaceful resolution of the much delayed unresolved Kashmir dispute. Saqib called upon the United Nations Secretary-General to take immediate and effective measures to prevent any future visits by Indian officials to the disputed territory and to halt the inauguration of projects that alter the region's status. "Such forced unilateral actions by India not only violate international law but also exacerbate tensions between India and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed states, thereby posing a significant threat to regional and global peace", he observed.

## Dr Musadik Malik participated in FME panel discussion

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Dr Musadik Malik participated in a panel discussion focused on fostering international collaboration to meet global mineral demand at Future Minerals Forum (FME) in Riyadh.

His speech highlighted pragmatic approaches for enhancing cooperation between public and private sectors, emphasizing Pakistan's commitment to bolstering its mining sector.

The Future Minerals Forum (FME) registered over 20,000 interested visitors, including ministers, mining profession-



als, service providers, investors, and academics. The event continues to be a key gathering for stakeholders in the global mining industry.

The Pakistan Pavilion stood out as a highlight of the forum, drawing substantial attention from attendees. One visitor remarked, "If awards

designed pavilion, the Pakistan Pavilion would surely win." Dr. Musadik Malik visited the pavilion to review its exhibits. He praised Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) for its efforts in organizing the pavilion, alongside the support from other participating companies.

## Governor Kundi acknowledges welfare groups for promoting peace, prosperity

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Paktunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday acknowledged the vital role of reformist and welfare organizations in eliminating societal ills and establishing a peaceful and prosperous society. He said this in a meeting with delegation from the National Reform Movement, led by



Delegation meeting the Governor on their efforts for social reform, emphasizing the importance of facilitating regional conflicts, disputes, hatred, and discrimination.

The delegation included the National Shura of the National Reform Movement from various districts across the province, including Noorul Amin Yusufzai, Noorul Hadi, Shehzad Khan, and Advocate Abdul Rabani, among others.

They also discussed the need to eliminate usury, drugs, and other social vices, while promoting education, improving healthcare facilities, and raising public awareness.

call highlighted the importance government cooperation in fostering positive behavior among the youth and eliminating negative trends. They shared that the movement is running awareness campaigns and programs aimed at ending crime, social misconduct, and long-standing family feuds. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi praised the efforts of the National Reform Movement and expressed the government's readiness to collaborate with organizations and institutions that work for social betterment. The Governor stressed that the province needs such organizations more than ever to establish an environment of peace, tranquility, and development.

## Romina calls for National Climate Risk Management Strategy to tackle disasters

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, Thursday urged the development of a comprehensive National Climate Risk Management Strategy to address escalating natural disasters and mitigate their economic, social, and environmental impacts. Speaking at the "Humanitarian Futures" event organized by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), she called for improved access to international climate financing to support dis-

aster preparedness and resilience projects.

"Access to climate funds is essential to strengthen our capacity to mitigate climate change impacts and support sustainable recovery efforts," Ms. Alam remarked. Additionally, she advocated for incorporating disaster risk financing into the global loss and damage agenda.

Romina said, "Innovative financial tools, combined with inclusive and data-driven strategies, are essential for managing the rising costs of climate change

and fostering resilience across communities."

The "Humanitarian Futures" event served as a timely platform for discussing international collaboration and strategic responses to climate risks. Ms. Alam's address underscored the necessity for urgent and coordinated action to confront the ongoing climate crisis and build a resilient future for Pakistan and beyond. She stressed the urgent need for preparedness at the national, provincial, and district levels. She emphasized the importance of protect-

ing vulnerable communities and ensuring sustainable livelihoods amid mounting climate challenges. The event brought together government officials, humanitarian agencies, academics, climate scientists, and meteorological experts to discuss strategies for tackling the growing threat of climate-related disasters. Ms. Alam highlighted Pakistan's heightened vulnerabilities to extreme weather events such as devastating floods, heatwaves, droughts, desertification, and erratic rainfall.

## Two cops injured in attack on Shangla police checkpoint: officials

PEAK POINT

SHANGLA: Two cops were injured in a late-night attack by terrorists on a police checkpoint in the Shaheed tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Shangla district, police said on Thursday. Aloch Station House Officer (SHO) Bakht Zeb Khan told media that over a dozen assailants attacked the checkpoint late at night, however, the police personnel on duty thwarted the attack which forced the assailants to flee.

The SHO said, "Two cops were injured when they retaliated against the terrorists." Rescue 1122 spokesperson, Rasool Khan Sharif confirmed to Dawn.com that two police personnel were injured in the attack, adding that they were shifted to the Pir Muhammad Khan Shaheed Hospital and were referred to the Saidu Teaching Hospital in Swat for any further treatment. After hearing about the attack, the local police leaders from different parties called on local residents to come out against the attackers and fight alongside them.

They led the group equipped with weapons to the police checkpoint, however, the assailants had already fled the area. The country has lately witnessed a sharp uptick in the number of attacks targeting police forces, other law enforcement agencies, and security checkpoints, particularly in Balochistan and KP.

## Chairman CDA reviews F8, Sarena Interchange Projects sites

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, along with the relevant officers, visited the F-8 and Sarena Interchange projects and reviewed the ongoing construction activities at the sites. The relevant officers briefed Chairman CDA about the ongoing construction activities at the Sarena Interchange project and informed him that construction work on all parts of the project is progressing rapidly.



He also directed that modern and beautiful LED lights be installed prominently in the completed sections of the Sarena Interchange project.

Furthermore, he instructed that the landscaping and horticulture work around the project be completed soon. Meanwhile, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa also visited the

F-8 Interchange project and inspected the construction activities there.

The relevant officers briefed Chairman CDA on the ongoing construction activities at the site. During the briefing, Chairman CDA was informed that the girder launching work at the F-8 Interchange project is progressing rapidly, and the structural work of the flyover will be completed by the end of this month.

Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed that the landscaping work around the F-8 Interchange project be initiated as soon as possible.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing a seminar titled "Humanitarian Futures".