

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Imran Ashraf, Sonya Hussain team up for drama serial 'Masoom'
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PM says no negligence will be tolerated in preparations of Hajj 2025

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday reviewed preparations for Hajj 2025, directing that no negligence in preparations will be tolerated. "Pilgrims are the guests of Allah Almighty, therefore no negligence will be accepted in terms of services and assistance for them," the prime minister stressed. He chaired a meeting to review preparations for Hajj 2025 here, the prime minister directed to ensure all possible facilities and assistance to the

Hujjaj (pilgrims) during the upcoming Hajj. He instructed to prepare comprehensive briefing with respect to the preparation of Hajj 2025 and present it in coming days. He also directed to present a detailed briefing on the selection criteria of Moavineen Hajj (Hajj assistants), their responsibilities, their responsibilities and other arrangements. He said the best possible facility should be provided to the pilgrims, besides ensuring selection of capable officers having good reputation for Hajj duty.



He also ordered to take special care of residence, travel and other facilities for the pilgrims. "Merit and transparency must be ensured in deployment of the Moavineen."

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Chaudhry Saikh Hussain and other relevant top officials. The meeting was briefed in detail about progress on Hajj Fund which was in final stages. The meeting was told that similar to the previous year, mobile phone SIM cards will be provided to the pilgrims from Pakistan and that the mobile application for the assistance of Hujjaj will be operational.

Over 3000 kg emergency medicines delivered to Parachinar via helicopter

PEAK POINT
PESHAWAR: On the directives of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, over 3,000 kilograms of emergency medicines have been airlifted to the District Headquarters (DHO) Hospital Parachinar via helicopter. Advisor to the Chief Minister, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, stated that the Medical Superintendent (MS) of Parachinar Hospital had reported a critical shortage of medicines. In response, essential medical supplies were promptly dispatched. Additionally, other necessary items were sent to cater to the needs of residents amid the harsh cold weather. Due to security concerns and blocked roads caused by severe weather conditions, helicopters are being used for the transportation of medicines and supplies. This timely initiative ensures continued medical care for the residents of Parachinar during this challenging time.

Maroof International hospital organizes health gala

SAMRA ATHAR
ISLAMABAD: Maroof International Hospital (MIH) has organized a Health and Fitness Gala 2025 to pay tribute to the Pakistan's police force especially the families of martyred. The event was organized in collaboration with Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and Islamabad Police for promoting wellness and fitness for all. The event offered free medical consultations across to specialties, including General Medicine, Orthopedics, Ophthalmology, Dental



Health check-ups and preventive care. Among the distinguished guests were Chairman Senate Syed Yousof Raza Gillani, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, MNA Dr Tariq Fazal Ch President FPCCI Atif Ikram, Standing

Committee FPCCI, heads of Foreign missions and several other esteemed dignitaries. Chairman Senate Syed Yousof Raza Gillani remarked, "We owe our police force a debt of gratitude for their sacrifices. Events like these unite us in honoring their bravery while promoting a healthier society." Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan praised the collaboration, stating, "This initiative sets a benchmark for fostering health and well-being through collective efforts." As a symbol of solidarity, Chairman MIH presented a cheque to the families of martyred police officers, reaffirming MIH's commitment to supporting those who sacrifice for the nation. Haroon Nasser, CEO of MIH, expressed, "At MIH, we are committed to making healthcare accessible and giving back to the community." He emphasized, "Community support programs, health awareness sessions, and disease prevention initiatives are key to improving public health." He said, "It is our responsibility to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to manage their health proactively."

Feb 8 to be commemorated as 'Day of Development & Progress': Atta Tarar

KOMAL BUTT
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday said the government would complete its maiden year on February 08, 2025 which will be commemorated as the "Day of Development and Progress". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to celebrate the February 8 as the Youm-e-Tameer o Taraqi because this year, we have achieved many milestones including the economic growth," said the minister while talking to the



There is a need to hold more such tournaments that promotes healthy competition and sportsmanship, he said while reiterating the commitment of the government

media after witnessing the final match of Media Cricket League which featured 67 matches with participation of various media teams. He congratulated Khyber TV on winning the final of the tape ball tournament, and also the Jang Media Group team which was the winner-up of the competition. All the media channels must organize such tournaments, he said while assuring them of the full support of the Ministry of the Information and Broadcasting in organizing such events which resonated a good message across the country. which has been hunting the remarkable talents by organizing various trial camps. "We are going to host the International Champions Trophy after a hiatus which will restore the cricket festivity in the country and promote the game in Pakistan," he said, adding the fans would also get the chance to watch the international players playing on Pakistani grounds. He appreciated the critical role played by the Interior Minister and Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi in negotiating with the International Cricket Council for hosting the international tournament in Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has fully empowered his team in this regard, he added. All arrangements regarding the Champions Trophy are complete, he said calling it a proud moment for the country to host such a big event. Recently, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held in Pakistan after 27 years, he said while recalling the government's achievements including its initiatives for the economy that had restored the confidence of international institutions.

DPM/EM Dar terms Gwadar Int'l airport functioning as historic

AVESHA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Monday termed the formal functioning of Gwadar International Airport as historic, paying way for the endless future opportunities. On X account, the DPM/EM further posted that the development marked the beginning of a new era of building link-

UK Court's decision on 190m pounds case a slap to govt: Barrister Saif

PEAK POINT
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser on Information, Barrister Dr. Saif, has called the UK High Court's decision regarding the 190 million pound case a resounding slap to the government. In a statement, Barrister Saif said that as per the agreement, the amount was to be deposited in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He claimed that the Al-Qadir Trust case verdict was driven by personal vendettas and malice. He added that, like other fabricated cases, this too would be proven baseless in the High Court. He stated that once the case reaches the High Court, Maryam Nawaz and the Sharif family's hopes would crumble. The Adviser further noted that the truth behind all of the government's false cases was gradually being exposed. Barrister Saif expressed confidence that this case, like others, would soon be dismissed while urging the government to prepare for yet another baseless case. He praised Imran Khan for courageously facing all fabricated charges.

New year 2025 will promise new positive developments in Pak- Viet Nam ties: Ambassador Pham Anh Tuan

HUMA REHAN
ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Pham Anh Tuan has believed that 2025 will promise new positive developments in Viet Nam-Pakistan relations. The Viet Nam Embassy in Pakistan will always be a common home and a bridge accompanying the community in all activities to together build an increasingly cohesive and developing Vietnamese community in Pakistan, the Ambassador said. Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Pham Anh Tuan said this while addressing the celebration of Vietnamese Lunar New Year in the embassy of Vietnam in Islamabad. "Spring is coming to our homeland and to the heart of every Vietnamese per-

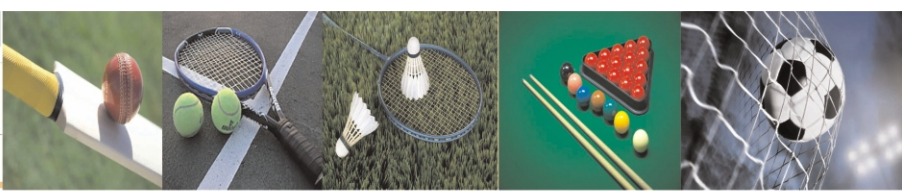


son, he said. The Ambassador said that despite the many difficulties and challenges, the potential and opportunities for development of our country and of Viet Nam-Pakistan relations are enormous. New year 2025 will promise new positive developments in Pak-Viet Nam ties; Ambassador Tuan-Pakistanian cuisine recipes. He said that looking back 2024, Viet Nam has achieved many outstanding accomplishments across all fields: stable Macro-economy; ensured national defense and security as well as social security and welfare; maintaining a peaceful and stable environment for national development; the people's lives continue to improve; the country's international status and prestige has been continuously

homeland, and actively support the movement to build and protect the Fatherland in Viet Nam, he said. He said that every Tet holiday, Vietnamese people, wherever they may be, turn their thoughts toward their families, ancestors, homeland, and country, and feel an immense nostalgia, wishing to come back to their homeland for a family reunion and a taste of the particular flavours of Tet Holiday. Today, "we are delighted to welcome representatives of the Vietnamese community who living, studying, and working in Pakistan, along with close friends of the Viet Nam Embassy in Pakistan, gathered the common home of Vietnam in Pakistan to share the atmosphere of Vietnamese Tet, enjoy traditional Vietnamese

cuisine, and together look towards our homeland and beloved families." He said that in this context, Viet Nam-Pakistan relations have also continued their strong development momentum. The Ambassador said that economic and trade exchanges between the two countries in 2024 also witnessed remarkable development, becoming increasingly extensive and more effective and two-way trade reached over \$ 800 million, an increase of more than 21% compared to 2023. In October 2024, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh had an important meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Saudi Arabia on the sidelines of the 8th Future Investment Initiative, he said.

our nation's achievements and successes in 2024 in the joyful atmosphere welcoming the New Year of the Snake 2025, "I wish all of you, Vietnamese people in Pakistan, and your families a new year filled with health, happiness, and success." "I wish the Vietnamese community in Pakistan continued expansion and development; I wish all families success and prosperity and Viet Nam, our beloved homeland, increasing prosperity and lasting peace." The ambassador hopes for the strengthening and development of the friendly and comprehensive cooperative relationship, especially economic, between Viet Nam and Pakistan, contributing to the happiness and happiness of the people of both countries.



Pakistan set new Test record with dominant win over West Indies

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's men's cricket team rewrote the record books with a resounding 17-run victory over the West Indies in the first Test of the two-match series at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

The match, which concluded in under three days despite rain interruptions on the opening day, broke a 34-year-old record to become the shortest Test in Pakistan's history to produce a result based on balls bowled. Only 1,064 deliveries were bowled across the four innings, surpassing the previous record of 1,080 balls from a Pakistan-West Indies clash in 1990. Adding to this extraordinary feat, the West Indies faced just 371 deliveries, marking

their lowest-ever balls faced in a Test, far below their previous low of 450 balls against England in Leeds in 2000.

The match also saw standout individual performances from Pakistan's stars. Sajid Khan reached a significant milestone by claiming his 50th Test wicket, dismissing West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite to achieve the feat. The right-arm spinner accomplished this in only his 11th Test, making him the third-fastest Pakistani to reach the milestone. Yasir Shah remains the fastest Pakistani to 50 Test wickets, achieving it in nine matches, while Waqar Younis, Shabbir Ahmed, Mohammad Asif, and Mohammad Abbas share second place.



Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan also had a memorable outing, completing his 100th dismissal in Test cricket.

Rizwan now boasts 107 dismissals in just 64 innings, placing him among Pakistan's finest wicketkeepers.

Wasim Bari leads the all-time list for Pakistan with 228 dismissals in 146 innings, followed by Kamran Akmal (206 in

99 innings), Sarfaraz Ahmed (182 in 104 innings), Moin Khan (147 in 118 innings), and Rashid Latif (130 in 69

innings). Sajid Khan was named player of the match for his remarkable performance, reflecting both individual brilliance and team effort. "The pitch was fantastic, and the team's collective effort was commendable. Special credit goes to Rizwan, Shakeel, and Shan for their contributions, especially Shan in the second innings," he said. "Our spin bowling coach provided valuable insights, and in the second innings, I adjusted by bowling slower and focusing on maintaining control, which helped me avoid conceding runs," he explained. He also credited fellow spinner Noman for his guidance. "Noman's experience is invaluable; we discuss strategies extensively. Our goal in the second innings was to restrict the opposition's scoring, and I worked brilliantly, Sajid added. West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite reflected on his team's performance after their defeat, acknowledging that the batters fell short of expectations. However, he highlighted positives, including Jomel Warrican's effective spin bowling and Alick Athanaze's impressive batting, particularly his sweeping technique. Looking ahead, Brathwaite emphasized the need for bravery and self-belief in the final Test, urging his players to trust their defense while showing interest on challenging pitches.

'PCB to pay additional \$100,000 to elite PSL recruits'

PEAK POINT
KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will pay an additional sum of \$100,000 to six high-profile foreign players in the HBL Pakistan Super League franchises for making themselves available for the upcoming edition for the event, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported on Sunday. According to PTI, the PCB agreed to share the money from a special fund which has now grown to \$1 million. During the PSL draft, the PCB had set a maximum base price salary of \$200,000 to franchises for each overseas player.

"David Warner, for example came onboard for a fee of \$300,000 and \$100,000 of this will be paid to him by the PCB from the special fund," the PTI quoted a PSL official as saying.

The official explained that a few years ago, the PSL governing

council decided that when the central pool's net broadcast revenue reached \$3 billion, \$500,000 would be allocated annually for elite players' salaries.

He said last year the additional amount was not utilised and the amount has increased to \$1 million.

"The PCB will use this fund to assist in paying some of the elite

players who signed on during the players draft," the official said.

Number of overseas players who went unsold in the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction were signed on by franchises for the 10th edition of the PSL including Warner, Daryl Mitchell, Kane Williamson, Finn Allen, Matthew Short, Sean Abbot, Nahid Rana, Liton Das, Michael Bracewell, Ruslan van der Dussen and Corbin Bosch among others.

This is the first time that the PSL is being held in the same window as the IPL and both leagues will clash in their latter stages. The PSL will be held from around April 17 to May 22 while the IPL runs from March 21 to end of May.

Previously the highest paid players in the PSL were Kieron Pollard (\$250,000) and AB de Villiers (\$230,000).

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England beat Pakistan by 6 wickets in ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup

PEAK POINT
DUBAI: England beat Pakistan by six wickets in their ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup match at the Johor Cricket Academy Oval in Johor, Malaysia on Monday, according to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

The PCB said in a statement that England chased the 67-run target in 9.2 overs to seal their first win of the tournament. Pakistan, who were awarded one point for their washed-out opening game against the US, are now placed third in Group B with Ireland at fourth. After England invited Pakistan to bat first, the Komal Khan-led outfit lost wickets at regular intervals, slipping to 35-5 in 9.2 overs and then 66 all out in 18.5 overs.

Zoofishan Ayyaz topped with a 33-ball 15 with the help of two boundaries, while Komal contributed with 12 off 25 balls with the help of two fours. For England, Amurutha Surenkumar was the pick of the bowlers with figures of 3-17, while Tilly Corteen-Coleman and Olivia Brinsden picked up two wickets each. In turn, England were reduced to 33-4 before player of the match Katie Jones (20 not out, 16b, 1x4, 1x6) stitched an unbeaten 34-run fifth-wicket stand with skipper Abigail Norgrove (14 not out, 9b, 2x4). Mahnoor Zeb picked up two wickets, while Fatima Khan and Quratulain dismissed one batter each.

Pakistani alpinist Asad Ali Memon summits Antarctica's Mount Vinson

PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Pakistani mountaineer Asad Ali Memon has added another feather to his cap by summiting Mount Vinson, the highest peak in Antarctica, edging closer to his quest to complete the Seven Summits challenge. The 26-year-old confirmed this feat while talking to Geo News from Antarctica, highlighting the physical and mental resilience required to conquer one of the most remote and coldest peaks on Earth. "From Karachi to Antarctica, the journey ends here," Memon said in his message. "The past two weeks, battling sub-zero temperatures, relentless winds, and extreme isolation, tested every ounce of my strength. But this is impossible when fueled by purpose, discipline, and the will to push beyond limits." At



4,892 meters, Mount Vinson is Antarctica's tallest mountain, situated in the heart of the continent's icy wilderness. Known for its freezing temperatures that can drop to -40°C and its harsh, unpredictable weather, the mountain

stands as one of the most formidable summits in the world. With this achievement, Memon has completed six of the seven peaks to climb the highest mountains on every continent, following the Messner ver-

sion of the Seven Summits. His final challenge lies in summiting Puncak Jaya in Indonesia, which he plans to tackle next.

Born in Larkana, a city in Pakistan's Sindh province, Memon's ascent to the world's highest

peaks defies expectations. Hailing from a region characterised by flat terrain and scorching heat, he has transformed his passion for mountaineering into a historic journey of achievement.

Memon has previously summited Mount Everest (Asia), Mount Elbrus (Europe), Mount Aconcagua (South America), Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa), and Mount Denali (North America). Each climb has tested his endurance, discipline, and resilience.

"This victory is not just mine, it belongs to every dreamer out there," Memon stated. "To those who choose hardship over luxury, discipline over comfort, and resilience over giving up. Keep chasing your dreams, no matter how impossible they seem," he concluded.

ICC delegation visits Gaddafi Stadium

RIZWAN HAIDER
ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from the International Cricket Council (ICC) visited Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium to prepare for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, set to begin next month.

The delegation, led by ICC Head of Events Sarah Edgar and GM Cricket Wasim Khan, thoroughly inspected the venue, including its main building, offices, and pavilion. Officials from broadcasting and event management teams were also part of the visit.

PCB's Director of Infrastructure, Jawad Qazi, provided a detailed briefing, assuring that all remaining work at the



venue would be completed by January 30. The eight-team tournament, featuring 15 matches, will take place from February 19 to March 9 across three venues—Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi in Pakistan and Dubai.

A consists of Pakistan, India, New Zealand, and Bangladesh, while Group B features Afghanistan, South Africa, England, and Australia. The tournament opener will see hosts Pakistan face New Zealand on February 19 in Karachi.

The highly anticipated Pakistan-India clash is scheduled for February 23 in Dubai.

Champions Trophy preparations on schedule, PCB says

JAVED KHAN
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) allied fears about the readiness of the venues for this year's Champions Trophy as it welcomed media for a tour of stadiums in Lahore and Karachi on Monday.

The eight-team 50-over event will be the first global tournament to be held in Pakistan in 28 years. India, however, will play all their matches in Dubai due to the hostile relationship between the two countries.

Stadiums in Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi are being upgraded and if the tournament is successful more could follow



in a country deemed unsafe following a 2009 attack on touring Sri Lankan cricketers.

"We are on schedule to complete the renovation and upgrade of the Gaddafi Stadium (in Lahore)," PCB spokesperson Sami Ul Hasan said.

"The venue is expected to be handed over to us by the end of the month.

"We have no doubt about Gaddafi Stadium's operational readiness to host the Champions Trophy match between Australia and England on February 22."

The stadium's capacity has been increased to accommodate 35,000 fans and new hospitality areas have been built.

Lahore and Karachi will host a tri-nation series, also involving New Zealand and South Africa, next month to prove their readiness for the Champions Trophy beginning on Feb 19.

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Indian Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra marries Himani Mor

PEAK POINT
NEW DELHI: Indian two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra tied the knot with his partner Himani Mor in the presence of dearest family and friends in a closed ceremony. On his social media, India's javelin thrower announced the news of his marriage with a heartwarming note, reported Olympics.

"Starting a new chapter in life with my family. Grateful for every blessing that brought us to this moment together. Bound by love, happily ever after," read the caption on the photo uploaded by Neeraj. It was confirmed by his uncle, who revealed that



the marriage took place two days ago, that a reception party for the marriage will take place soon. Himani Mor hails from Larsauli, Haryana, and attended Little Angels School in Sonapat. Moreover, she is currently pursuing her Masters in Science in Sports Management and

Administration from the McCormack Iserberg School of Management in Amherst, Massachusetts. Neeraj's marriage is the second high-profile wedding in Indian sports within a span of a few months following fellow Olympic medallist PV Sindhu's wedding back in December.

Health and Fitness Gala 2025 held at the Islamabad Police HQs

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Health Concerns Revealed at Health & Fitness Gala 2025: 30% of Attendees Diagnosed with Diabetes, 25% with Eye Allergies, and 25% with High Blood Pressure. The Health and Fitness Gala 2025, held at the Islamabad Police Headquarters, was a powerful celebration of health, unity, and honor. This remarkable event, organized by Maroof International Hospital (MIH) in collaboration with FPCCI and Islamabad Police, brought together distinguished leaders and organizations to pay tribute to the bravery of Pakistan's police force especially the families of martyred while promoting wellness and fitness for all. The event offered free medi-



cal consultations across 10 specialties, including General Medicine, Orthopedics, Ophthalmology, Dental Care, Cardiology, and more, along with fitness activities that highlighted the importance of a healthy lifestyle. A heartfelt tribute was also paid to the martyred heroes of the police force, underscoring the event's deep

emotional significance. During the medical camp, a wide range of health concerns were addressed. Notably, 30% of attendees were found to be suffering from diabetes, 25% experienced eye allergies, and 20% had near vision weakness. Additionally, 25% of the participants had high blood pressure, underscoring the need

for regular health check-ups and preventive care. Among the distinguished guests were Chairman Senator Syed Younis Raza Gillani, Governor Punjab, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, MNA Dr. Tariq Fazal Ch. President FPCCI Atif Ikram, Chairman Standing Committee FPCCI, heads of Foreign Missions and several other esteemed dignitaries. Their speeches focused on the critical role of community health initiatives, the power of public-private partnerships, and the need to support the families of martyred police officers. In his address, Chairman Senator Syed Younis Raza Gillani remarked, "We owe our police force a debt of gratitude for their sacrifices."

Pak-China collaboration around green SEZs' is crucial for low-carbon development: Experts

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The experts on Monday emphasized the significance of enhanced collaboration between Pakistan and China to learn from the latter's experience in developing green special economic zones (SEZs) to raise climate competitive industry aligned with global sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) under the auspice of Green CE Alliance hosted a pivotal webinar titled "Development of SEZs under CPEC: Learning from China's Green Model," exploring strategies to create sustainable Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Pakistan by drawing

on China's expertise in green industrialization. The session brought together prominent experts and policymakers to discuss integrating environmental sustainability with economic growth in the SEZ framework under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Dr. Erfan Iqbal, Executive Director General/Additional Secretary, Board of Investment highlighted the ongoing efforts to accelerate Pakistan's SEZs development, including satellite imaging, marketing plans, and incentives for foreign and local investors. She highlighted the importance of integrating environmental considerations into economic planning and wel-

PARCO MD Visits Descon Engineering's Head Office to Celebrate Project Success

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Managing Director of PARCO-Itzeh Ali Qureshi, a valued client of Descon Engineering for over 25 years, recently visited Descon's Head Office to commemorate the successful completion of a major Turnaround project delivered by Descon Engineering. This visit was a proud moment, symbolizing not just a recognition of Descon's technical expertise but also a gesture of appreciation from the highest leadership at PARCO. During the celebration, Mr. Qureshi applauded Descon for its unwavering commitment to excellence, safety, and timely execution of critical projects. He also emphasized the importance of Descon's contributions to the



energy sector over the years. Mr. Taimur Saad, CEO of Descon Engineering stated, "We are honored to celebrate this milestone together. This achievement, reliability, and excellence. Adding to the dedication to delivering world-class solutions while upholding the highest standards of safety and performance. Our long-standing

relationship with PARCO is a source of pride, and we remain committed to supporting their vision with innovation, reliability, and excellence. Adding to the celebration, Muhammad Anwar ul Haq, President of the Industrial Services Division at Descon, who led the charge on this pro-

ject, said that, "The successful execution of this Turnaround project is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our teams. I am proud of their dedication and technical proficiency in overcoming challenges and delivering outstanding results. We remain steadfast in our commitment to setting new standards in the energy sector and building on this partnership with PARCO. This moment not only highlights the success of the recent Turnaround project but also reinforces Descon's position as a trusted industry leader. It is yet another chapter in a relationship built on over two decades of shared success, mutual respect, and enduring collaboration."

Four-Day Illustrators workshop kicks off at NBF

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The four-day illustrators workshop kicked off at the Ahmed Faraz Auditorium of the National Book Foundation (NBF) on Monday.



The event brought together around twenty illustrators from various cities who participated in this international workshop with a special focus on children's education.

NBF, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi organised this workshop. The moderators included Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi Manager Publication Fareeha Nasim and NBF Publication Incharge Nazia Rehman, Sri Lanka Writer and Director Mahesh Pathirathna, and Maria Riaz from Muzaffarabad, Kashmir. The aim of the workshop was to produce children's literature in order to promote reading culture in Pakistan from an early age. The four-day workshop would conclude on January 23.

Opinion and Editorial

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A malignant appeasement Trump, Act II

Maleeha Lodhi

A Khurram Dasgiri-Khan dolf Hitler destroyed the first German democracy, the Weimar Republic (1918-33) and twelve years later destroyed Germany itself. Weimar has since become like the palantir in 'The Lord of the Rings': a crystal ball for historians to view the murky present and to predict a dark future. Pakistan too can be glimpsed in the palantir. Exhausted by Imran Khan's [IK] unremitting attacks on Islamabad, some circles within the Pakistani state, business, and politics are deluded that the only way to achieve the holy grail of political stability is to let IK take over. This time we know better, claim the appeasers: not only can IK be controlled better in the second round, but that his complete lack of governance ability will destroy his popularity. The warning from history comes from Joseph Goebbels: "The big joke on democracy is that it gives its mortal enemies the means to its own destruction."

The Nazi leader did not storm into power; he was given power by a paralysed elite. The German chancellor before Hitler, Franz von Papen, recommended Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933 and boasted, "We have hired him. Within two months, we will have pressed Hitler into a corner so tight that he'll squeak!" Media-mogul Alfred Hugenberg declared, "We're boxing Hitler in." General Kurt von Schleicher even had a Zalmungprozess or taming process to bring the Nazi party into the political mainstream. Germany's ruling classes were sure that, writes Adam Gopnik, "after the passing of a brief [fascist] storm cloud, so obviously overloaded that it had to expend itself, they would emerge in possession of power." All were proven wrong catastrophically.

Hitler systematically disabled and then dismantled his country's democratic structures and processes in less than two months' time - specifically, one month, three weeks, two days, eight hours, and 40 minutes." Timothy Ryback wrote recently in 'The Atlantic Monthly', Germany degenerated from a bat-

tered democracy to a one-party dictatorship and a police state. Freedoms of speech, press, and assembly were lost. The new chancellor assumed an extrajudicial power to arrest and detain people without trial, laying a legal basis for the Nazi concentration-camp system. The Nazi chancellor deposited non-Nazi state officials in the German parliament. Hitler disbanded labour unions, purged the civil service and the independent judiciary, and outlawed all opposition parties.

How to un-grease Pakistan's slippery slope towards fascism? "Weimar has bequeathed three distinct cautions," writes Christopher Browning, "for the political right of an era about what not to do in comparable situations: join in disseminating a Big Lie; take inadequate action and impose an inadequate penalty after a treasonous uprising; and cement an alliance between traditional conservatives and fascists."

The Big Lie in our case is that the US conspired to change the regime in 2022 and that the insurrection of May 2023 was a false-flag operation. The peril of weakness or compromise in prosecuting the 9 May 2023 insurrection is incalculable. The understanding between the PML-N and PPP to unite despite their differences is one bright spot. Weimar Germany lacked such an alliance, as the moderate-left Social Democrats and conservative Catholic Centre Party never attempted a coalition. Yet Pakistan's much-reviled ruling coalition still has to enunciate the nature of its adversary. Legions are under the delusion that by practicing tolerance and abiding by parliamentary rules they could encourage IK's hordes to play by them as well. The hordes of critics of the hybrid regime fail to understand that fascism is a cure worse than the disease of authoritarianism. They also fail to understand the fascist hatred of parliamentary democracy. Hitler despised the haggling and compromise inherent in parliamentary democracy. Historian John Lukacs, who spent a lifetime studying the Hitler's psychology, observed, "His hatred for his opponents was both stronger and less abstract than was

his love for his people. That was (and remains) a distinguishing mark of the mind of every extreme nationalist." The parallels with Pakistan are alarming and uncanny.

In his invaluable recent book 'Takeover: Hitler's Final Rise to Power', Timothy Ryback writes that the Fuhrer's strategy was to outmanoeuvre the liberalising politics of cultural warfare to "flood the public space with inflammatory news stories, half-truths, rumours, and outright lies." Ryback's book will make any Pakistani shudder who is not blinded by the half-truths, rumours, and outright lies. Page after page reads like our daily newspapers. When the author notes the chaotic mess of struggling intragroups who feared and despised each other in the National Socialist Party, one lifts one's eyes to the television to see the same scene broadcast live from outside the parliament in Parliament yard. The strength of the Nazis lay not in their organisational efficiency, but in the unshakable prejudices of their leader. The Weimar Republic was a republic without republicans, just as Pakistan is a democracy without democrats. The danger lies in our governing elites - the civil and military bureaucracy, business leaders, most heads of political parties, and view democracy and elected representatives as a contemptible nuisance to be tolerated only as a stratagem to achieve power. The elites may comprehend the horrors of inflation, but they underestimate the abiding effects of the extortionate 2021-22 inflation as the last straw of Pakistan's accumulating disillusionment with a "system" racked with رکڑر authoritarianism, incurable rot of inefficiency, and lack of delivery of basic services to citizens. The lessons from Weimar are delayed, work, scapegoating needs to be addressed early, norms, once broken, are hard to repair; the socio-economic effects of inflation can be deadly. The regime is at the mercy of events."

Securing the digital walls

The 2020s have been a rather contradictory decade thus far. Even though the world is becoming ever more interconnected in economic and communications terms, this decade's political development has been defined by the rise of forces advocating for more borders, more tariffs, less immigration and less integration. These trends are quite out-of-step with socio-economic realities and are now actively making our lives less safe. A new World Economic Forum (WEF) report says that global cybersecurity challenges have become more profound and complex due to geopolitical tensions. According to the 'Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2023' released last week, almost 60 per cent of organisations stated that geopolitical tensions have affected their cybersecurity strategy. A third of all CEOs covered in the report also cite cyber espionage and data or intellectual property theft as their top concern and 45 per cent of cyber leaders expressed concerns about the disruption of operations and businesses. Many cyber leaders also expressed a lack of confidence in the countries in which they are based to respond to major cyber incidents targeting critical infrastructure, particularly in the Global South. Only 40 per cent of organisation leaders in Asia were 'confident' or 'very confident' in the ability of their country to respond to such attacks. The picture that emerges from the report is one of organisations increasingly concerned about cyber security risks and geopolitical tensions feeding into these perceptions. And while the WEF report does not focus on specific countries, we know that cyber security risks have only been escalating in Pakistan. According to a report by cybersecurity firm Kaspersky, cyber threats targeting Pakistan's financial sector have seen a dramatic rise in 2024.

Planning minister chairs consultative meeting on Uraan Pakistan's action plan

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Monday chaired a consultative meeting on the action plan for the "Uraan Pakistan" program, launched with the primary goal of achieving sustainable development and accelerated economic growth.

The meeting was attended by secretaries from all ministries, as well as chiefs, project directors, and both federal and provincial officials, according to a news release.

During the meeting, the minister directed each ministry to align its objectives with the Uraan Pakistan program and appoint a senior focal person to ensure continuous coordination and monitor progress.

Additionally, ministries were tasked with identifying three key factors that could stabilize the economy. Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the need to engage stakeholders through comprehensive strategies, proposing workshops to strengthen collaboration with provincial governments. He stressed that the shift toward export-led growth was critical for long-term economic sustainability. Highlighting the current export level of \$40 billion, he pointed out that this was insufficient and called for an increase to \$100 billion. He also noted that two-thirds of the country's exports come from low-value-added textile products, urging a significant overhaul of the export ecosystem to

promising progress in IT exports and shared the government's vision of increasing IT exports from \$3 billion to \$10 billion by 2029.

He underscored the importance of equipping the youth with the necessary training, skills and opportunities to leverage the country's demographic dividend. Addressing the critical issue of out-of-school children, the minister emphasized the need to bring one approximately 2.5 million children currently outside the education system back into school.

He argued that this step was crucial for unlocking the potential of Pakistan's young population and driving sustainable economic growth.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, chaired a consultative meeting on the Uraan Pakistan Action Plan with the representatives of Ministries, Provinces and Divisions.

'Team Eco-EduTech from Daharki' wins entrepreneur competition in British High Commission

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: In annual inter-school business Competition 'Team Eco-EduTech from Daharki' has won eighth cycle of enterprise challenge Pakistan, organized by British high commission in Islamabad.

The Eco-EduTech from Daharki, Sindh showcased an inspiring business idea centered on using waste material to make learning materials for children with disability. The event was hosted by British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMB OBE, in Islamabad with King's Trust International and SEED Ventures.

Their innovative approach highlights the power of inclusion and creativity in addressing real-world challenges.

Enterprise Challenge Pakistan is the largest entrepreneurship national competition for students under the age of 18. This year, the finals, held in Islamabad on 18



January, featured promising start-up ideas from five teams selected from regions throughout Pakistan.

Some of the innovative ideas included Peshawar-an innovative solution for an-ear green sprout focusing on maximizing agricultural yields while minimizing water and space usage.

Multan, Paws on Wheels - a viable business idea revolving around delivering professional pet healthcare services at the doorstep.

In competition Quetta, Nutribites - nutrient-packed gummies offering a convenient

alternative to traditional pills and tablets. As well Islamabad: Aqua Wave - a portable water purifying bottle ensuring instant access to clean drinking water anytime, anywhere.

Prizes were handed out celebrating innovation, climate friendliness, financial viability and impact.

The King's Trust Global Young Achiever Award Asia 2024 was presented to Mahnoor for her creative business idea of harnessing fly larvae and food waste to create new sustainable products such as organic chicken feed and powdered chitosan.

Arif Alvi rushes to SHC for protective bail as another case filed

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Former president Dr Arif Alvi fearing arrest again, rushed to Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday to seek protective bail in another case lodged against him.

Arif Alvi has been named in the fourth case at Wah Cantt police station. He had already obtained bail in first three cases.

Late last month, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) had granted transit bail to Arif Alvi and directed him to appear before the respective trial courts.

The PHC approved 40-day bail for the former president.

During the hearing, the defence counsel told the court that many cases have been registered against Arif Alvi and his son Awab Ali in different police stations of the country, suspecting their arrest. The PHC was

requested to restrain the police from arresting them in any of the cases.

The former president along with PTI founder Imran Khan and others have also been booked in a case related to the November 24 protests.

In a case registered at the Taxila police station in Rawalpindi under the Anti-Terrorism Act, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and other PTI leaders, including Shehryar Ijaz, Hamid Azhar, and Asad Qaiser, had also been named.

The case included charges of robbery, attempted murder, and other sections of the Pakistan Penal Code. The PTI leadership has been accused of inciting violence and damaging public property during the protests.

CGS of Iranian Armed Forces calls on COAS Syed Asim Munir

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of General Staff (CGS) of the Iranian Armed Forces Monday visited the General Headquarters (GHQ) and called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (AM), Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters related to the prevailing regional security environment and bilateral defence cooperation, said a news release issued by Inter-Services Public Relations.

CGS of Iranian Armed



Forces calls on COAS Syed Asim Munir. He was warmly received, including a guard of honor presented by a singly turned-out contingent of the Pakistani Army.

Senator Irfan emphasizes connection of Muslims to Holy Prophet (PBUH), criticises land allocation to Al Qadir Trust

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senator Irfan UI Haq Siddiqui has emphasized the universal connection of every Muslim to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Addressing on Point of Order in the Senate Session here on Monday, he highlighted the importance of religious education, stating, "Even in the most remote areas, families ensure that their children are taught Quran and Hadith, whether at home or in nearby madrassas. This is a matter of honor for us, and no Muslim or Pakistani can object to institutions promoting religious education or the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH)." Pakistani cuisine recipes

from the UK linked to the trust. "I don't wish to delve into the details, but one claim suggests the money belonged to the state, while another asserts it was Malik Riaz's funds transferred to the trust's account. I won't engage in this controversy, but these claims raise significant questions."

He questioned why Malik Riaz, a well-known businessman, allocated nearly 500 kanals of land to a trust that had only recently been established. Additionally, 240 kanals were reportedly given to a woman named Farhat Shahzadi in Bani Gala. "Why was this land given, and under what justification? If no favors were granted to Malik Riaz, why did he donate this land?"

HC emphasizes strengthening Pakistan-Singapore ties

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Pakistan to Singapore, Rabia Shafiq on Monday highlighted the longstanding strong growing bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Singapore, emphasizing continued collaboration at bilateral, regional and multilateral fora. She stated that over the past few decades, Pakistan and Singapore had steadily cultivated its political economic and institutional partnership with Singapore. While engagements have laid a strong foundation for cooperation

across multiple sectors, she stressed that these untapped potential, the High Commissioner said. She further said that another promising development was Pakistan's growing presence in Singapore's fintech ecosystem. Since 2019, there has been regular participation in the Singapore Fintech Festival, showcasing the innovative potential of Pakistani startups.

This engagement has led to increased participation by Pakistani companies in global fintech events, further expanding opportunities for collaboration, the High Commissioner said.

During her address to the journalists, the High Commissioner emphasized that both Pakistan and Singapore were committed to working together. While diplomatic ties are flourishing, the economic and trade relationship between Pakistan and Singapore still holds untapped potential, the High Commissioner said.

Currently, the trade volume between the two countries stands at approximately US\$1.193 billion, which is relatively modest compared to other South Asian nations and the Halal products sector

presenting significant potential, she said.

She further said that another promising development was Pakistan's growing presence in Singapore's fintech ecosystem. Since 2019, there has been regular participation in the Singapore Fintech Festival, showcasing the innovative potential of Pakistani startups.

SC issues notices to govt for Students' Union in Universities

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has issued notices to the Federation of Pakistan regarding restoration of Students Union in Universities and adjourned the hearing for a date to be fixed later.

A six-member constitutional bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, headed by Justice Amin ul Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naem Akhta Afghan was hearing Constitutional Petition against Ban on Students of Universities to form Association and Union and Indulging in Politics.

The petitions are filed by Hamza Muhammad Khwaja vs Federation of Pakistan through Secretary Federal Education and Professional Training Islamabad and others and Muhammad Usama Amir General Secretary, Islami Jamiat Talaba Pakistan vs Federation of Pakistan through Secretary, Ministry of Interior and others. The Court, after initial proceedings, issued notices to the respondents and also observed that the Qaid-e-Azam University had announced scheduled by-laws holding elections of the Students Union. It can be a rule model for rest of the universities in the country.

Gwadar Airport becomes operational after first flight lands

PEAK POINT

GWADAR: The Gwadar International Airport finally became operational after a PIA flight carrying nearly 50 passengers from Karachi landed on Monday.

Defence and Aviation Minister Khawaja Asif, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti and other senior officials including military personnel were present at the airport to welcome the passengers of the first flight, PIA's PK-502. They offered roses to all the passengers after their plane was also accorded water salute as it landed on the runway. The inauguration of Gwadar International Airport marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's aviation industry.

Authority Nadir Shafi Dar, and DG ASF Major General Adnan Asif Shad. According to the report, Gwadar is Pakistan's second greenfield airport, capable of accommodating large aircraft such as the Airbus A380.

The airport's construction began in 2019, with an estimated cost of Rs50 billion (including a Chinese grant), and the project was completed in November 2024. The state-of-the-art airport can provide refueling and cargo services to over 50 airlines daily, marking a transformative step in enhancing connectivity and boosting the region's economic prospects.



Pakistan High Commissioner to Singapore, Rabia Shafiq Interacting with Media in Singapore.