

Hania Aamir explains her sudden departure from Dallas event

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# Federal cabinet 'okays' presidential ordinance for seminary registration

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday 'okayed' issuance of presidential ordinance for seminary registration.

profit of Rs70 billion. It is to be noted that PM Sharif recently held meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari to discuss the seminary bill issue and other important ordinances.

Last week, federal government agreed to all demands presented by Itehad Tanzeem Madaris Deenia (ITMD) regarding Seminary Bill.

According to reports, assurances have been given that the registration of Seminaries will be conducted under the Societies Act, addressing a key concern of the organisation.

Additionally, the Income Tax Ordinance which will help government to collect taxes from banks on the additional



Furthermore, it has joint session of Parliament will be convened to discuss this matter, in line with the proposed amendments under the 26th Constitutional Amendment, a notification is expected to be issued soon, formalising the agreement.

The Parliament had passed the Societies Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which was sent to President Asif Ali Zardari for his assent but he returned the bill to the National Assembly citing concerns.

The president's concern revolve around the bill's potential to create conflicts and undermine the existing laws governing seminaries.

# Bilawal pays tributes to BB on her 17th anniversary

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: The Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid a glowing tribute to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto on her 17th martyrdom anniversary.

Commemorating her unparalleled sacrifices, unwavering leadership, and enduring legacy for Pakistan, he emphasized that her life was an embodiment of courage, resilience, and hope for millions of Pakistanis, rooted deeply in the vision of her father, Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founding leader of the

PPP. The Chairman of PPP said "Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was not just a political figure but a beacon of hope for the marginalized, the oppressed, and the forgotten."

Her unwavering commitment to her father's vision of an egalitarian and prosperous Pakistan remains an inspiration for all of us.

Like Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, she believed in the power of the people and the importance of empowering workers, farmers, and the underprivileged as a cornerstone for national progress.

# Establishment of peace in Kurram is our top priority: CM Gandapur

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said on Friday that the protection of citizens' lives and property, as well as the establishment of peace and order in Kurram, is the provincial government's top priority.

A spokesman for the Chief Minister's House of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has said that, following special instructions from Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the provincial government's helicopter service was ongoing. He stated that the helicopter service

would continue until the land route to Kurram is opened, adding that six flights were conducted to Kurram using the Mi-17 helicopter on December 26 (Thursday).

He further informed that, so far, a total of 613 people have been provided air transport services through the helicopter service, including members of emergency workers, as well as ordinary citizens such as children, women, students, and patients.

CM Gandapur stated that the provincial government was fully aware of the difficulties faced by the citizens of Kurram in the current situation.

# 925 terrorists killed in 59,775 operations during 2024: DG ISPR

SAMRA ATHAR

RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General (DG) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry is addressing a press conference at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi to provide an update on the Pakistan armed forces' ongoing counterterrorism operations.

Addressing the presser, DG ISPR outlined the Pakistan military's efforts against terrorism, reporting a significant number of successful operations in 2024.

DG ISPR Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry revealed that security forces had carried out a total of 59,775 operations this year, emphasising the significant sacrifices made by Pakistan in its fight against terrorism. He stated that these operations resulted in the death of 925 terrorists, including members of terrorist groups such as the Khawarij, marking the highest number of terrorist fatalities in the past five years.



The ISPR spokesperson noted that the operations were not only successful in neutralizing terrorists but also in capturing numerous militants. Additionally, 73 high-value targets, including some of the most-wanted terrorists, were eliminated during the operations, DG ISPR said, adding that among those targeted was the leader of Fitna al Khawarij, a prominent terrorist group based in

Malakand Division.

He also provided a look ahead, saying that he would address important matters regarding Pakistan's national security and defense in 2024, especially in light of the changing regional situation.

The ISPR official highlighted that more than 179 operations were being conducted daily by the Pakistan Army, law enforcement agencies, intelligence services, and the police to maintain security across the country. In a recent attack, 16 Pakistani soldiers were martyred last week when terrorists ambushed a checkpoint in South Waziristan's Maken

area. The attack was met with a swift response from the armed forces, which killed eight militants in the ensuing firefight. The military continued its operations with an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the region, which led to the killing of 13 more terrorists.

The following day, another 13 militants were killed during three separate security operations across KP's Bannu, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan districts. Today's press conference also comes after the military court issued its verdict, holding 60 individuals accountable for their role in the May 9 unrest.

# Iranian ambassador, PCP chairman join hands to combat fake news

KOMAL BUTT

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghadam and Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) Chairman, Arshad Khan Jadoon on Friday reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing media collaboration between Iran and Pakistan as part of a broader strategy to counter the growing menace of fake news.

disinformation that threatens social harmony. They agreed that fostering strong media ties between the two nations is essential to portraying a positive image of both countries on the global stage.

The Iranian ambassador, PCP chairman join hands to combat fake news



and mutual understanding among our peoples," he stated. He also assured full support from the Iranian side to further strengthen bilateral media cooperation.

Chairman Jadoon provided an overview of the PCP's constitutional mandate, highlighting its role in addressing fake news and promoting ethical journalism. He outlined PCP's efforts in monitoring media practices and ensuring adherence to the code of ethics to maintain journalistic integrity.

Chairman Jadoon emphasized that the agenda of Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif to combat fake news is a critical issue facing the entire world. He highlighted the importance of strengthening bilateral ties to address misinformation and to collaboratively work

towards the development of journalists in both countries.

The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to foster meaningful media partnerships and adopt innovative measures to counter fake news, contributing to a more harmonious and informed society.

On this occasion, Chairman Jadoon graciously presented the traditional Sindhii Ajrak (shawl) and Topi (cap), along with a bouquet, as a gesture of hospitality and cultural significance.

# Funeral prayer for Shaheed Major offered at Miran Shah

AYESHA REHAN

RAWALPINDI: Funeral prayer for Shaheed Major Muhammad Awaiz (Resident of District Narowal) who fought gallantly against terrorist forces and embraced martyrdom in North Waziristan offered at Miran Shah.

On this occasion, Chairman Jadoon graciously presented the traditional Sindhii Ajrak (shawl) and Topi (cap), along with a bouquet, as a gesture of hospitality and cultural significance.

(ISPR) news release. The body of Shaheed Major departed to his native town in vain. He would be buried with full military honor.

The supreme sacrifices of the martyrs for the defence of the motherland will not be in vain. Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve, it further said.

# Indicators signify optimistic economic outlook: Finance Ministry

HUMA REHAN

ISLAMABAD: The country's economy has demonstrated sustained positive developments during the first five months of the current fiscal year, indicating an optimistic outlook for the ongoing fiscal year (2024-25), Finance Ministry said in a report released here Friday.

Macroeconomic fundamentals have strengthened, marked by a further deceleration in CPI inflation, stable food prices, effective fiscal consolidation resulting in fiscal surplus, current account surplus supported by increased exports and remittances, and an accommodative monetary policy stance," says Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for December.

According to the report, these develop-

ments have bolstered the business and consumer confidence, reflected in significant private sector credit uptake and a sharp rise in the Pakistan Stock Exchange. Prudent fiscal management and strategic reforms are paving the way for sustainable economic growth, it adds.

The report says efforts were afoot to ensure agricultural sector achieves self-sufficiency for Rabi 2024-25 as the government has set a wheat production target of 27.92 million tonnes from an area of 9.262 million hectares.



bursement reached Rs. 95.7 billion during July-November FY2025, an increase of 8.5 percent compared to Rs. 85.3 billion during the same period last year.

pared to 7.2 percent in the previous month and 29.2 percent in November 2023.

Updating about the revenues, the report says, during July-November FY2025, FBR tax collection grew by 23.3 percent to Rs 4,295 billion against Rs 3,485 billion last year. Within total, direct taxes rose by 27.0 percent, sales taxes by 23.6 percent, FED by 25.1 percent and customs duty by 8.0 percent.

According to the Federal Fiscal Operations November 2023, as production and sales of all vehicles grew by 25.2 percent and 24.8 percent, respectively.

management helped contain the expenditure growth to 20.6 percent relative to high revenue growth. In absolute, total expenditures reached Rs.497 billion against Rs.3707 billion last year.

Consequently, the fiscal balance posted a surplus of Rs.495 billion (0.4% of GDP) against a deficit of Rs.868 billion (-0.8% of GDP) last year. Similarly, primary surplus increased to Rs.3,124 billion (3.0% of GDP) against a surplus of 1,430 billion (1.4% of GDP) last year.

The external account position has significantly improved, driven by notable increases in exports and remittances despite a rise in imports.

During July-November FY2025, goods exports increased by 7.4 percent, reaching 513 billion compared to last year, while imports recorded at \$23.0 billion, against \$21.2 billion last year (8.3% increase). This has resulted in a goods trade deficit of \$9.7 billion, reflecting a slight increase from \$8 billion last year, while maintaining a steady overall trade momentum.

Meanwhile, during November 2024, the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment registered 60,492 workers for employment, compared to 77,316 in October 2024 and 81,427 in November 2023. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), in collaboration with its 24 partner organizations, distributed 21,195 interest-free loans amounting to Rs 994 million. On future prospects, the report says, to achieve the target of FY2025 and sustain economic recovery, the government was committed to achieve the crop production targets by facilitating the farmers to achieve the desired production level. However, weather conditions may pose challenges, as below normal rainfall may lead to water stress during the critical emergence stage of Rabi crops like wheat and barley, especially in rain-fed agricultural zones.



# Pak vs SA: Proteas take command after Green Shirts lose three wickets

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

**CENTURION:** Day 2 of the first Test between Pakistan and South Africa came to an abrupt end as the match officials called the play due to bad light with the visiting side trailing by two runs at the SuperSport Park, Centurion on Friday.

Coming in to bat for the second innings, Pakistan faced an early blow as power pacer Kagiso Rabada struck and Saim Ayub got out after scoring 28 runs leaving Pakistan just one-run short of the 50-run mark. Babar Azam joined Shan Masood and together they built-up a short partnership of 21 runs as the skipper fell to Marco Jansen, giving South Africa a chance to repeat their first inning fierce-

ness that led Pakistan to bundle out on 211 runs.

The pacer struck again in his very next over and dismissed Kamran Ghulam on just four runs. When Pakistan was trailing by two runs, the match officials decided to delay the play due to bad light. The bats were pushed off the stumps and the players returned to the pavilion until further notice.

Later on, the play was officially called off for the day with the scoreboard for the visiting side ticking at 88/3.

Earlier in the first innings, from Aiden Markram's steady innings of 89 runs — just 11 runs short of a ton — and a swift cameo from debutant Corbin Bosch (81 runs off 93 balls) South Africa had garnered a lead of 90 runs



against Pakistan on the second day of the first test in reply to Pakistan's first innings total of 211. Markram had been

under pressure after a series of low scores for South Africa but showed his value to the team with chanceless knock

that left South Africa 31 runs in arrears with five wickets in hand at Centurion. Markram's steady

flow of runs was a danger to Pakistan and resuming after lunch, the batter was dismissed leaving South Africa at 213/8.

With an end to Markram's innings, Pakistan's players found themselves back in the game. Still, a fiery cameo from Bosch sidetracked the team.

Bosch, along with Dane Paterson kept scoring runs whenever the Pakistani bowlers gave them a chance. However, their partnership could not be further extended after Paterson got out on 12 runs bringing an end to South Africa's first innings.

Pacer Mohammad Abbas grabbed one scalp whereas the latter batter was dismissed by Saim Ayub. South Africa were 82-3 overnight with Markram and Temba Bavuma putting on a further 54 runs before the skipper was dismissed, offering a thick outside edge to a delivery from

Aamer Jamal and was caught behind for 31. Bedingham was characteristically attacking in his short spell at the crease, scoring 30 runs off 33 balls before extra bounce from Naseem Shah saw him edge to Kamran Ghulam in the slips. South Africa need to win one of the two-match series against Pakistan to reach the WTC final at Lord's in June, adding extra pressure to the contest.

They have won their last seven home tests against Pakistan.

Pakistan's playing XI Shan Masood (captain), Saim Ayub, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Rizwan, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha, Amir Jamal, Naseem Shah, Khurram Shahzad and Mohammad Abbas.

# Babar Azam achieves another Test milestone

JAVED KHAN

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan batsman Babar Azam has achieved a significant milestone by completing 4,000 runs in Test cricket.

The right-hand batter reached this milestone during the first Test match against South Africa. Babar Azam needed only three runs to complete 4,000 runs in Test cricket, which he achieved on the first day of the Test against Proteas. However, he was dismissed after scoring four runs. He took 56 Test innings to reach the milestone. Babar Azam is the third player in the world and the only Pakistani batter to complete 4,000 runs in Test, ODI, and T20 cricket. Meanwhile, Pakistan were bundled out for 21 on Friday as 13 wickets fell on the opening day of the first Test match. After being put into bat,



the tourists on the back of half-century by Kamran Ghulam managed to score 211 all out in 57.3 overs. Kamran, the right-hand batter from Upper Dir, playing his third Test, scored a

71-ball 54, which included eight fours and a six.

This was Kamran's maiden Test half-century, after he had scored his maiden ton, in his first Test innings against

England at home.

Kamran knitted an 81-run partnership for the fifth wicket with white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan (27, 62b, 2x4s). All-rounder Aamer Jamal (28, 27b, 4x4s) was another notable contributor with the bat.

For South Africa, Dane Paterson, playing his seventh Test, bagged second five-wicket haul and ended up with figures of 16-4-61-5. Debutant and fast bowler Corbin Bosch took four wickets.

In turn, the hosts lost Tony de Zorzi (2, 8b) and Ryan Rickelton (8, 10b, 2x4s) to Khurram Shahzad inside seven overs. Right-arm fast Mohammad Abbas, making a comeback in the Test side after more than three years, got Tristan Stubbs leg-before wicket for nine in the 16th over.

# Ameer Muqam urges Afghan youth to remember Pakistan's support in difficult situation

PEAK POINT

**PESHAWAR:** Federal Minister Engineer Ameer Muqam emphasized that for 45 years, Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees, and even now, there are 3 million Afghans residing in the country. He urged Afghan youth to remember how Pakistan stood by them during difficult times. He said that disrespecting Pakistan's flag or interfering in its internal politics would only increase hardships for Afghan refugees. He expressed gratitude to international organizations for their assistance but noted that their contributions were negligible and called for greater generosity. The



Federal Minister made these remarks during the closing ceremony of the Afghan Cricket League final match. He awarded trophies and prizes to the winning team and runners-up, watched the final overs of the match, and praised the players for fostering love and harmony between the host community and refugees. The ceremony was also attended by Secretary SAFRON Zafar Hasan, Commissioner Islamabad Abbas Khan, Commissioner Peshawar Shakeel Sami, and other senior officials. Vice Chancellor of Islamia College University, Dr. Ali Muhammad Yusufzai, was also present.

# Pakistan with Draws from AFC Asian Women's Futsal qualifying round due to funding issues



MUHAMMAD HARI

**ISLAMABAD:** The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced its decision to withdraw from the AFC Asian Women's Futsal qualifying round citing a

lack of funds. The qualifying round matches were scheduled to take place next month in Indonesia with Pakistan's matches slotted in Group B. However the PFF's request for funding from FIFA to partici-

participate in the event went unanswered forcing the federation to make the difficult decision to withdraw. This setback has also raised concern about Pakistan's participation in the Men's Asian Cup qualifying rounds.

According to sources, if a response regarding funding is not received by January 20, it will be challenging for Pakistan to participate in the Men's Asian Cup qualifying matches scheduled for March. The PFF's finan-

cial struggles have put a question mark over Pakistan's participation in various international football events, highlighting the need for urgent support to ensure the country's continued involvement in the sport.

# Record number of female entries received for Quaid day chess event

SEHRISH NAZ

**LAHORE:** The preparations are in full swing for the Quaid Day Chess Championship, commemorating the 148th birth anniversary of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The event, organized by Pakistan Chess Federation and Lahore Student Olympic Association, will take place on December 28 and 29 at the Punjab University Sports Sciences Department. A record number of female participants are among the hundreds of entries received from across the country, reflecting the growing interest in chess among women. Hosted by Kings Club, the championship



promises intense competition in multiple categories, including Open, U-10, U-13, U-16, and Women's categories, all played under the Swiss system. The winners will be rewarded with trophies, medals, and cash prizes totaling Rs 150,000. Pakistan Chess Federation SVP Saalim Akhtar, overseeing the arrangements, expressed pride in the increasing participation of young players, particularly women. He highlighted the impressive performance of Pakistani players at the recent World Chess Championship in Hungary, emphasizing that such events are vital for nurturing talent and raising Pakistan's profile in the global chess community.

# Serena Master Cup Tennis Championships continued at the Peshawar Services Club



PEAK POINT

**PESHAWAR:** The championship features the top eight men's and women's players, competing for top

honors in this highly anticipated event. The ladies are participating in a tournament in Peshawar for the first time since 2018. Mr.

Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) and an internationally renowned player, is also participating in the tournament, adding to the excitement and prestige of the event. This competition is part of the Serena Hotels

Master Series, a key initiative under the Serena Hotels Sports Diplomacy program. The series has launched in Peshawar, with

plans to expand to other cities across Pakistan in the near future, creating opportunities for players nationwide. The schedule for

tomorrow is as follows. Men's Singles Final: Aqeel Khan vs Muhammad Shoab (10:00am). Ladies Singles Final: Sheeza Sajid vs

Amna Ali Qayum (followed by Men's Doubles Final: Barkatullah/Yousaf Khalil vs Muhammad Shoab / Muzammil Murtaza.



RAWALPINDI: A protest demonstration being held in the commercial market against the closure of land routes in Parachinar under the auspices of Shia Ulema Council.

# CDA eyes major investment through auctioning prime commercial plots

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is gearing up to offer a diverse range of lucrative commercial plots in Islamabad, following a high-level meeting chaired by Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday. The initiative aims to attract significant investments while bolstering the city's economic and infrastructural development. In the meeting, attended by CDA Members and senior officials, Chairman

Randhawa emphasized the importance of creating investor-friendly opportunities. He directed the identification of prime, business-suitable locations to ensure maximum returns and encourage widespread participation in the upcoming auction. The auction will feature a variety of plots, including commercial spaces, agro farms, Class-II shopping centers, industrial plots, I&T centers, hotels, and apartment complexes. These options are designed to cater to a diverse group of investors, ensuring a wide range of development across the city.

To streamline the process, a special committee under the supervision of Member Finance has been established. This committee, comprising officials from the Estate, Enforcement, and Law departments, will address any challenges related to the offered plots and provide actionable recommendations to ensure a smooth auction process.

# Inter-Ministerial meeting reviews plans for observing Kashmir Solidarity Day

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: To ensure a well-coordinated observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day, an inter-ministerial meeting was convened on Thursday focusing on activity planning and task distribution among stakeholders. The meeting, chaired by Secretary Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-

Baltistan, Ali Tabir, thoroughly reviewed the responsibilities of various ministries to ensure the event is marked with zeal and fervor. It reviewed all activities and allocated responsibilities for the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5, Kashmir Solidarity Day, observed annually, highlights Pakistan's political and moral commitment to the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). It also pays homage to Kashmiri martyrs and supports their separatist movement against Indian rule. Representatives from different ministries, especially the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,

# BISP organizes Quran recitation event on BB's death anniversary

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) organized a Quran recitation event at the BISP Auditorium to pay tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 37th martyrdom anniversary. The employees of BISP Headquarters actively participated in this solemn and blessed occasion. On the special instructions of the Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid, Quran and Fataha recitation ceremonies were also held in all BISP offices across the country.

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto conceived the idea of the Benazir Income Support Programme during her exile in Dubai. This visionary concept was realized in 2008 by the then President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari. The Benazir Income Support Programme is Pakistan's largest social protection initiative. It continues to empower underprivileged women and girls economically, a significant positive impact on their lives.

# PNRA Issued Construction License to Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) has issued Construction License to Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) for Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5), on December 27, 2024. PAEC applied for the construction license in April this year alongwith the Preliminary Safety Assessment Report (PSAR) and other licensing submissions covering design and operational aspects of nuclear safety, radiation protection,

emergency preparedness, waste management and nuclear security. After a thorough review and assessment of the licensing submission and satisfactory fulfillment of all regulatory requirements in compliance with the relevant national and international standards, PNRA issued the license. C-5 is an advanced third-generation Pressurized Water Reactor (PWR) of Chinese Hualong design (HPR1000) having active and passive safety features including a double-shell containment and reactor filtered venting system, and has a 60 years design life. In addition, a number of other technological innovations have been made in the design. This is the 3rd Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Pakistan with this design. Two NPPs (K-2 & K-3) of the same design are already successfully operating at Karachi and adding electricity to the national grid of Pakistan. It is also pertinent to note that, C-5 will be the largest electricity producing NPP in Pakistan with the capacity of 1200 MWe.

# Opinion Editorial

Rahim Khan Arif Mehmood

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## Commitments for a sustainable future

**Dr Khalid Waleed**

The pursuit of climate prosperity has become a defining theme of international cooperation. The Paris Agreement, when climate commitments were viewed in isolation from socio-economic development with the operationalisation of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and their climate prosperity plans (CPS).

The latest cycle of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), referred to as NDCs 3.0, reflects a more cohesive approach; countries are updating their pledges under the Paris Agreement by mapping out concrete sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies that unite economic growth, social equity, and environmentally sustainable economic priorities. Recent examples from the UAE, the UK, and Brazil, presented at COP29, underscore the importance of operationalising Article 4.1's temperature targets in a manner that respects national circumstances yet pushes global ambition toward limiting temperature increases to well below 2 C and, ideally, toward 1.5 C.

This new wave of climate commitments extends beyond symbolic statements. Sector-focused policies for renewable energy, decarbonised transport, and industrial transformation exemplify the progression principle enshrined in Article 4.2, which requires each successive NDC to demonstrate incremental ambition. Yet the tension between economic prerogatives and climate action remains palpable, most visibly in nations reliant on fossil fuel revenues.

Even when updated NDCs articulate bold objectives, inconsistencies in implementation can dilute progress, as evidenced by the underutilisation of Decision 4(CMA.1) on clarity in accounting methodologies. Without robust and transparent accounting, global stocktaking under Article 14 risks being muddled by inconsistent data, eroding trust and hindering coordinated action.

Climate prosperity, as illustrated by Brazil's CHAMP initiative 'Coalition of High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships', elevates climate policy from a narrow focus on emissions reductions to a broad-

er transformative agenda. By incorporating subnational authorities, local governments, and civil society, energy between climate resilience and socio-economic benefits.

Decision 4(CMA.1) emphasises the necessity for clarity in NDC design, ensuring that ambitious goals translate into measurable and verifiable outcomes. The draft decision -CMA.6 advances this discourse by mandating an annual synthesis report on NDCs - a critical instrument to aggregate best practices, identify bottlenecks, and pinpoint areas of overlap or duplication that could benefit from collective interventions.

Although ambitious commitments are increasingly common, disparities remain. Major emitters sometimes present laudable targets but lack the policy muscle or enforceable frameworks to put them into effect. Article 4.3's call for the highest possible ambition continues to clash with entrenched economic dependencies, particularly when fossil fuels still underpin large segments of national revenue.

More acutely, adaptation measures remain underprioritised, despite Article 7.9 stipulating their integration into NDCs, leaving frontline communities vulnerable and undermining the comprehensiveness of climate strategies. Similarly, loss and damage considerations often lack detailed guidance in national pledges, weakening the potential for a truly inclusive approach that safeguards those most at risk.

Effective NDC implementation hinges on frameworks that move beyond aspirational statements. Decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 26, offers pathways for legally binding commitments, timelines, and accountability measures that ensure compliance with Article 4.1's temperature goals. Likewise, Article 13's enhanced transparency framework requires harmonised reporting formats for both mitigation and adaptation, reinforced by Decision 18/CMA.1.

These guidelines lay the groundwork for an annual synthesis process, as advocated by draft decision -CMA.6, providing a realistic barometer of global progress and revealing areas where corrective measures are most urgent. In concert with multilateral platforms like the G20's net-zero coalition, such development deficits can be resolved through technical collaboration, and orchestrate the large-scale shifts required for a just and inclusive transition. For Pakistan, whose vulnerability to climate shocks is well documented, the trajectory toward climate prosperity demands targeted policy choices. In a context where development deficits con- verge with intensifying climate threats, updated NDCs must serve not just as compliance documents but as cornerstones of socio-economic transformation. A National Climate Action Transparency Portal could complement the Article 13 requirements by systematically tracking progress on emissions reduction, adaptation initiatives, and loss and damage assessments, feeding the information for Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs).

Coupled with annual synthesis reports as outlined in Decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 30, this platform would allow policymakers to detect gaps in near real-time, refining strategies that unite mitigation with resilience-building.

Public institutions in Pakistan should enact legislative frameworks that institutionalise climate commitments, mandating that federal and provincial budgets allocate resources for renewable energy expansion, resilient infrastructure, and climate-smart agriculture. Incentives can encourage research and development in low-carbon technologies, creating local supply chains that support green jobs and economic growth.

Complementing these measures, the private sector must align corporate strategies with net-zero aspirations, invest in decarbonisation operations, and adopt transparent accounting methodologies to bolster the credibility of emissions reporting. Greater financial innovation, including green bonds and blended financing models, could channel private capital toward clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, and climate-resilient urban development, amplifying the momentum generated by public investments.

Courtesy The News

## Protest is patriotic

**Akbar Zaidi**

It is to be expected that the leader of a country, whether elected, or belonging to the military, or installed in office with the help of non-democratic and authoritarian forces, would say something like 'civil disobedience is anti-national' and that this suggests 'enmity with the country'. One expects this from those who feel threatened by the power of the people, especially when such presumed power is ephemeral.

In fact, protest and criticism of those in power (whether in government or behind the scenes), and even civil disobedience, if it comes to that, are patriotic acts. The right of citizens to protest and to articulate their causes when ignored through other means, whether through parliament or through the justice system, is part of the legitimate and democratic framework of praxis. Under authoritarian regimes or under direct military rule, which we have experienced for some decades, such protests have far graver consequences than they do under civilian or democratic rule. It is when many citizens question the election results. We have enough martyrs in our historical record who gave their lives protesting and fighting for justice and democracy under military regimes; we even celebrate their sacrifices. These are not mere heroes. In fact, we reverse one on her death anniversary today.

The history of Pakistan's civilian and political movements contains ample examples of protests for just causes. The return to democracy in Pakistan, at just 18 years of age, was due to the legitimate and democratic protest of civil disobedience by political parties and citizens. Whether it was the movement against Gen Ayub in 1968, led by Z.A. Bhutto along with students and workers, or the MRD movement led by the PPP in 1983, it was political parties who led these protests. In 2008, lawyers played an instrumental role in overthrowing a military dictator who was forced to resign and flee after 2008. The political party in power today, the PML-N, has also played a very active and effective role in leading protests against one military regime in the past. Things may have changed today for reasons of expediency, but the history of Pakistan's civilian and political movements contains ample examples of protests for just causes. Such statements are especially hypocritical when governments and officials celebrate civil disobedience and protest to overthrow regimes not to their liking in other countries. Our own region offers such examples in the very recent past. The overthrow of the Hasina Wajed regime by Bangladesh's popular revolution a few months ago has given a huge advantage and opening to Pakistan, with relations restored to levels unheard of for decades. The second Fall of Dhaka may not have been publicly celebrated by officials in Pakistan, but it has been by their benefit.

Courtesy Dawn

## Airstrikes in Paktika

One could say Pakistan had given fair warning of the precision airstrikes it has conducted in Afghanistan's Paktika province, eliminating over 71 terrorists, including several key commanders. According to reports, four critical hideouts were obliterated in the operation, including a suicide vest manufacturing facility and the Umar Media Cell. Why do we say there was fair warning? Because Pakistan has been consistently reminding the Afghan regime that it is harbouring terrorists that strike at Pakistan's sovereignty. But nothing has been done by those running the show across the border. Now after the strikes, the Afghan Taliban regime has responded by condemning this as "a blatant violation of international principles and an obvious act of aggression," warning that it would not leave such actions unanswered and asserting its "inalienable right" to defend its territory. However, this is not the first time Pakistan has been forced to carry out cross-border operations to target terrorists. It is no secret that the Afghan Taliban have been harbouring the leadership of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) within Afghanistan. Their continued failure to take action against the TTP or carry cross-border terrorism has left Pakistan with no choice but to act in self-defence. The numbers speak for themselves: in the first ten months of this year, 1,566 terrorist incidents were reported in Pakistan, claiming at least 924 lives, including those of civilians and law enforcement personnel. Earlier this year, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif openly stated that Pakistan has been conducting operations in Afghanistan. "We will continue to do so," he told the BBC. "We won't serve them with cake and pastries. If attacked, we'll attack back."

# President Zardari pledges to protect rights of all provinces

**PEAK POINT**

**GARHI KHUDDA BUX:** President Asif Ali Zardari addressed the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) workers in Garhi Khudda Bakhsh on the occasion of 17th Death Anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto here on Friday, emphasizing the party's commitment to the people and the country.

He stated that if there is any superpower, Pakistan also has its own superpower, which is the power of its people.

President highlighted the party's achievements, including the reversal of the verdict against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto 45 years after his execution. He reiterated the party's loyalty to the people, the

federation, and Pakistan, emphasizing the need to protect the country.

The president assured the nation that despite challenges, the party is committed to resolving issues and ensuring the provision of basic necessities like water and gas. He promised that the rights of all provinces, including

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh, will be protected. He also expressed his optimism about the country's future, stating that modern advancements will benefit humanity and, by extension, Pakistan. He urged the people not to worry, as the party will provide good news and ensure the country's stability.

**BB's legacy of courage, vision of freedom guiding light for nation: Zardari**

**President, Asif Ali Zardari, on the 17th martyrdom anniversary of former prime minister, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto eulogized her political legacy and courage as 'unmatched and eternal vision a guiding light for the nation.'**

In his message issued from the President's Office, Asif Ali Zardari said, "Today, we are observing the 17th martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. On this



day, we honour a leader who embodied the very spirit of hope, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the ideals of democracy and justice."

He added that she was a trailblazer who dreamt of a Pakistan where the rights of all citizens, irrespective of colour, class

and creed, would be protected, and the power of the people would reign supreme.

Benazir Bhutto once said, "Democracy is the best invention," the President mentioned and added that these words were not just a defiant response to tyranny and

dictatorship but reflected her profound belief in the transformative power of the people.

The envisioned Pakistan, he said where every child could access education, where women could progress as equals, and where justice was not a privilege but a right. Throughout her life, she raised her voice and worked for the uplift of the downtrodden segments of society and women's empowerment, he added.

President Zardari underlined that her life was a journey of immense struggle and a source of inspiration and strength for the nation. Facing adversity and persecution, he said she remained steadfast in her

struggle against dictatorship for the restoration and strengthening of democracy and the protection of people's political, economic and social rights.

He added that Benazir famously declared, "The fight against injustice and cruelty is the fight of my life." She lived and died fighting for this cause, and is still alive in the hearts of millions of people. She firmly believed: "You can imprison a man, but not an idea. You can exile a man, but not an idea. You can kill a man, but not an idea."

"As President of Pakistan, I reaffirm my commitment to advancing her vision of a peaceful, progressive and democratic Pakistan. Her ideas live on, urging us to rise above differences and build a Pakistan that is united, inclusive, and just. So, let us not merely mourn her loss but commit to follow her enduring legacy."

democratic Pakistan. Her ideas live on, urging us to rise above differences and build a Pakistan that is united, inclusive, and just. So, let us not merely mourn her loss but commit to follow her enduring legacy."

"Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and our family sacrificed their lives for the cause of democracy and Pakistan. It is my firm belief that we, as a nation, need to draw inspiration from her vision to steer the country out of its current challenges. Let us work together to ensure that her dream of a peaceful, progressive, and democratic Pakistan becomes a reality," he urged.

## Commerce minister to visit Korea for Strengthening economic ties

**JAVED KHAN**

**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan is set to embark on an official visit to Korea to sign the Pakistan-Korea Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), marking a significant step toward enhancing bilateral economic cooperation.

During his visit, the minister will engage with key stakeholders, including the Pakistani business community in Korea, prominent Korean investors, the Korean trade Minister, and other high-ranking officials, said a press release issued here on Friday.

In preparation for this special visit, Jam Kamal Khan received a comprehensive briefing today from the relevant government wings, outlining the objectives, challenges, and opportunities associated with the trip.

Korea, which currently has a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, poses a competitive landscape for Pakistan.

However, the EPA is expected to not only dou-



ble the trade volume between the two nations but also pave the way for a potential shift of Korean manufacturing operations to Pakistan, thanks to the country's strategic location and lower production costs.

The visit also includes a meeting with the International Economic Institute, where the minister will discuss strategies to attract Korean industries to offshore their operations to Pakistan.

Presently, Korea has been favoring countries like India and Vietnam for such ventures, but this visit aims to highlight Pakistan as a viable alternative.

A meeting with K-EXIM Bank representatives will be held to dis-

uss the underutilization of \$1.1 billion earmarked for 2022-2026, which could be increased to \$1.7 billion for future projects.

The minister will also have engagements with the Korea Trade Association (KWEA) leadership and major investors, including LOTTE Group and a prominent steel company. Additionally, a press interaction with the Korea Herald is scheduled. The visit will also include a trip to Korea's new capital, located two hours from Seoul, to meet the think tank president of the International Economic Institute.

Plans are being made to arrange a gathering with Pakistani laborers working in Korea, recognizing their contributions to the economy and fostering stronger community ties.

The schedule also allows for a two-hour shopping break.

Korea's high production costs have driven its industries to seek offshore manufacturing hubs in countries like India and Vietnam.

## India announces state funeral for former PM Manmohan Singh

**BY: AFP**

**DEHLI:** India announced seven days of state mourning on Friday after the death of former prime minister Manmohan Singh, one of the architects of the country's economic liberalisation in the early 1990s.

Singh, who held office from 2004 to 2014, died at the age of 92 late on Thursday evening at a hospital in New Delhi. He will also be accorded a state funeral.

"As a mark of respect for the departed dignitary, it has been decided that seven days of state mourning will be observed throughout India," the Indian government said in a statement on Friday, with mourning running until January 1.

"It has also been decided that the state funeral will be accorded to late Dr. Manmohan Singh," it said, with the national flag fluttering at half-mast on official buildings across the country. India's cricket team

batting hosts Australia in the fourth Test took to the ground in Melbourne on Friday with black armbands to show respect for Singh.

The official date for the state funeral was not announced immediately but a senior member of the Congress party suggested it would be held on Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India "mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished leaders", while newspapers hailed his legacy.

"Man who liberated India's dreams," The Times of India front page read. "He opened India to the world," The Indian Express headline ran.

The former premier was an understated technocrat who was hailed for overseeing an economic boom in Asia's fourth-largest economy in his first term. However, Singh's ascension ended with a series of major corruption scandals, slowing growth, and high inflation.

## CDA, NAB join hands to strengthen transparency, accountability

**MOHSIN ALI**

**ISLAMABAD:** Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa, held a meeting with Director General National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Rawalpindi, Mirza Irfan Baig, here on Friday.

The meeting marked a significant step towards bolstering transparency and accountability processes within the CDA.

Both leaders expressed their commitment to enhancing mutual cooperation and coordination between the two institutions. Chairman Randhawa emphasized the CDA's ongoing efforts



to promote efficiency and transparency in its operations. Highlighting the authority's focus on reducing human inter-

vention, he noted that CDA is increasingly adopting automation and technology-based systems to streamline office processes and minimize the potential for corruption.

The Chairman reiterated the CDA's dedication to working closely with NAB and leveraging its technical expertise to further improve accountability mechanisms.

He assured that the CDA would continue to adopt best practices to maintain a corruption-free environment.

## Planning ministry prepares framework for 'alternate financing' of climate responsive investment

**PEAK POINT**

**ISLAMABAD:** Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday directed the ministry's climate change section to develop an asset register of climate and disaster resilience response programs that could be funded through alternate financing sources.

Among alternate sources of funding like concessional climate funds, green fixed securities, blended finance and carbon finance can be useful in diversifying sources of finance and reducing the dependence on the national exchequer," he said while addressing a meeting which discussed



the Planning Ministry's framework being developed for financing climate projects.

The minister, according to a news release, also stated that the Sindh coastal highway, which faced the highest vulnerability to sea intrusion, should follow a climate-resilient construction model so that it could be considered eligible for climate finance.

"Climate change must be used for economic

transformation," the minister asserted.

As briefed by the Member Climate Change, the ministry is in the process of preparing draft reform measures for the resilience and sustainability facility of the IMF. The reform measures would ensure debt sustainability, drive exports in emerging green value chains and build economic resilience to climatic shocks.

It was discussed during the meeting that the ministry would also develop a comprehensive framework for integrating financial instruments, including bonds, guarantees and blended financial models, into national and sub-national development planning.

## Mohsin Naqvi inaugurates sector C-14 Development Project

**ARSHAD MALIK**

**ISLAMABAD:** In a major development, Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday inaugurated development work in Sector C-14, Islamabad, marking a significant milestone for the city's residents.

It is to be noted that the booking of plots in Sector C-14 will be until December 30, while the open draw for allotment will be held on January 14.

The Interior minister reviewed the development work in detail. He tasked the CDA to complete the development

works of Sector C-14 by February 15.

Mohsin Naqvi said that Sector C-14 is being offered exclusively for overseas Pakistanis and local residents.

He stated that Sector C-14 is located at a prime location in Islamabad, which is designed for a better and peaceful lifestyle.

He directed the concerned authorities to further expedite the sector development work in view of the growing population of Islamabad and to complete development works in all pending sectors.

Visiting the newly constructed site, the Interior Minister directed the CDA authorities to ensure timely possession of plots to the allottees after the completion of the development works. He also ordered the CDA authorities to take indiscriminate action against the encroachment mafia.

He said that no concession should be made against the encroachment mafia on the land of Margalla Hills National Park. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa briefed the Interior Minister regarding

the development works. While giving the briefing, he said that special priority will be given to Overseas Pakistanis in Sector C-14. He said that bookings can be made till December 30, 2024, to get plots in Sector C-14. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa also briefed the Interior Minister regarding the development works of Sector I-12. Chairman CDA said that the development works of Sector I-12 are in the final stages of completion and possession will be handed over to the allottees soon.

## All set for TDAP's Swat Trade Show

**PEAK POINT**

**SWAT:** The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is organizing Swat Trade Show 2024, scheduled from December 28-29, 2024, at Nakrezy Event Complex, Mingora, Swat.

The trade show will be inaugurated by Chief Executive of TDAP Zubair Motiwala and Secretary TDAP, Sharyar Taj along with Senior Director General Muhammad Naser and Director General Peshawar, Naveed Bashir. He will also attend the inaugural session, says a press release. Chief Executive TDAP, Zubair Motiwala welcomed the guests. He highlighted the importance of trade shows in promoting traditional goods to the world.

The two-day trade show aims to promote trade, commerce & investment opportunities in Swat and the surrounding regions. It is a shining example of TDAP's dedication to empowering local businesses and promoting economic growth in the region. The event will bring together businesses, entrepreneurs and investors to showcase their products and services in an international mode on more than 80 stalls. It will offer business to business (B2B) meetings and networking opportunities. Trade Development Conference on trade-related topics, oration, said a press release issued here on Friday. During the discussion, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ahsan Bakhtawari, and Waqar

## Turkish envoy, UBG for strengthening bilateral ties

**PEAK POINT**

**ISLAMABAD:** United Business Group Pakistan (UBG) Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of Clean and Green Environment Movement Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, and Chairman of Ba-Waqar Pakistan Waqar Bakhtawari visited the Turkish Embassy, where they met with Turkish Ambassador Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu.

The meeting focused on enhancing trade relations, promoting business and investment, increasing trade volume, and exploring new opportunities for collaboration. Zafar Bakhtawari said a press release issued here on Friday. During the discussion, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ahsan Bakhtawari, and Waqar



Bakhtawari emphasized the need to activate the railway and road systems for expanding trade and business with Turkey. They stressed the importance of establishing an efficient direct cargo shipping system with Turkey. Waqar Bakhtawari suggested that Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority should grant permissions to airlines other than Turkish Airlines to operate from Islamabad and Lahore, in addition to Karachi, to ensure

maximum utilization of resources for trade promotion.

The conversation also highlighted the importance of fostering economic cooperation, identifying trade opportunities, and promoting cultural exchanges. Both sides agreed to identify new avenues of collaboration to further expand relations between the two countries. This meeting was considered a significant step toward strengthening the friendly relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

On this occasion, the Bakhtawari family expressed solidarity with the people of Turkey and stressed the importance of joint efforts to achieve peace and prosperity in the region.



**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi reviewing the development work in the newly constructed Sector C-14.