



Indian drama accused of copying 'Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum'

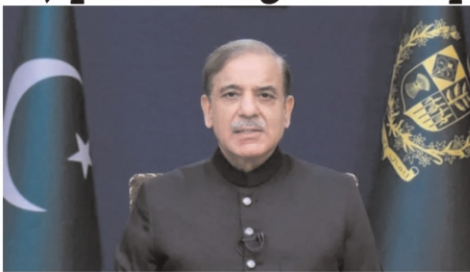
Saturday 08 March 2025

PM reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to empower women, promote gender equality

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, on the International Women's Day, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to empower women and promote gender equality. "On this day, let us reaffirm our collective resolve to intensify our efforts to further advance respect for women's rights and build a Pakistan where every woman's potential is realized and every daughter's dream is within her reach", the prime minister said in his message on the occasion of women's

day. "Today, on International Women's Day, we celebrate the strength and luminosity of women, the architects of our society, the pillars of our homes, and the change makers of our future. From classrooms to boardrooms, fields to front-lines, resilient Pakistani women are redefining possibilities to shape a bright future for our nation," the prime minister remarked. He highlighted that this year's theme, "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment", was a call to action, reminding



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif speaking at a podium during the International Women's Day event. He emphasized the government's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

the dignity and rights of women. Pakistan has made significant strides in advancing women's rights through our government's concerted efforts, including policy interventions, legal reforms, and institutional support," he said adding "Our journey towards true gender equality is far from over. Empowering women is no longer an option; it is now an imperative for the prosperity and progress of Pakistan. When we invest in women's education, health, and economic independence.

US extends 'gratitude' to Pakistan for arrest of terrorist Sharifullah

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States thanked the government of Pakistan for the arrest of ISIS-K terrorist responsible for the death of 13 American servicemen and more than 160 Afghans. US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce, in her media briefing, said that "we extend our gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, we do, for their partnership in bringing Mohammad Sharifullah to justice." Replying to a question, she said "Mohammad Sharifullah was detained in Pakistan for the tragic Abbey Gate terrorist attack that took the lives of 13 service members of our country. He has been extradited to



the United States to face swift justice." She also mentioned that in his address to Congress, President [Trump] announced the arrest of an ISIS-K operative and planner responsible for the deaths. Regarding the nature of relationship with Pakistan, she stated that "we have a common interest, obviously, in fighting terrorism, and the arrest of this terrorist also illustrated that US-Pakistan cooperation on counterterrorism remains vitally important."

New ministers get portfolios, Pervez Khattak made PM's aide on interior affairs

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday allotted portfolios to new faces recently inducted into his cabinet. Besides allotting portfolios to four new special assistants, the premier also reassigned the ministries of some of the cabinet members. Setting aside tall claims of austerity drive and cut in government's expenditure, the premier last week inducted new members into his team including 12 federal ministers, 9 state ministers, 3 advisers and four special assistants, while

two state ministers were elevated to post of the federal minister. According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division today, federal minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has been given the portfolio of Parliamentary Affairs, while Ali Pervaiz Malik and Shaukat Faizma Khawaja made the federal ministers of Petroleum and Information Technology, respectively. Interestingly, Pervez Khattak, once a close aide of incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan and former Khayber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister — has been



New cabinet members including Pervez Khattak. Khattak is appointed as Adviser to Prime Minister on Interior Affairs. Other new members include Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Ali Pervaiz Malik, and Shaukat Faizma Khawaja.

the Prime Minister (SAPMs) include Haroon Akhtar, who has been given the portfolio of Industries and Production; Huzefa Rehman, National Heritage and Culture; Mubarak Zeb, Tribal Affairs; and Talha Burki, Political Affairs. It is pertinent to mention here that President Asif Ali Zardari administered the oath to the new federal cabinet members in the ceremony attended by PM Shehbaz, Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani and senior officials.

Gov't to continue efforts for welfare of lawyers: Law minister

AYESHA REHAN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday said that the government would continue playing its role for the welfare of the lawyers. He also announced to issue funds worth Rs.5 million for the development of Multan Bar Association and up gradation of library there. The law minister held meeting with the delegations of district bar asso-

ciations of Multan and Jhang. The delegation was led by President Multan Bar Association Malik Javed Dogar. During the meeting the law minister assured that the government would continue playing its role for welfare of the lawyers. He further said that he would make a consultation with the Punjab government to resolve the problems of Multan Bar.

Empowering women essential for building a progressive society: Ayaz

KOMAL BUTT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday emphasized that empowering women and integrating them into the national mainstream is imperative for developing a progressive society. He said that providing equal opportunities to women in all sectors of life is crucial for country's progress. Ayaz Sadiq expressed these views on the occasion of International Women's Day, observed worldwide on March 8. He highlighted that Islam grants women equal rights, dignity, and respect while strictly opposing gender discrimination and for a shift in negative attitudes towards women's rights and their full inclusion in national

progress. He emphasized the necessity of advancing women in economic sectors and encouraging their participation to ensure financial stability. Reaffirming the commitment of the Parliament, he ensured the implementation of all possible measures to empower women, secure their rights, and grant them their rightful place in society. He further stated that the Parliament of Pakistan has substantial female representation, actively contributing to the legislative process. Ayaz Sadiq said that the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and the Special Committee on Gender Mainstreaming are playing an active role in advocating for women's rights and enhancing their political and social well-



Ayaz Sadiq speaking at a podium. He emphasized the importance of empowering women for a progressive society and mentioned the role of the Parliament and various committees.

played by iconic women figures during the Pakistan Movement. He particularly honored Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, and Begum Shaista Ikramullah for their exemplary leadership and sacrifices, which paved the way for the independence struggle and secured their place in the annals of history. Ayaz Sadiq said that even after the establishment of Pakistan, women have played a pivotal role in the stability of democracy and national development. Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Mir Chulham Mustafa said that the establishment of Pakistan, women have played a pivotal role in the stability of democracy and national development. Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Mir Chulham Mustafa said that the establishment of Pakistan, women have played a pivotal role in the stability of democracy and national development.

mainstream. He emphasized that protecting women's rights remains a top priority for the current Parliament. Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees women complete protection of life and property, access to employment, business opportunities, education, freedom to choose a profession, and participation in political and social activities. Chulham Mustafa paid tribute to the services of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, acknowledging her as the first female Prime Minister of the Muslim world. He highlighted her efforts in reorganizing her party after the martyrdom of her father, Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and her relentless struggle for democracy until her martyrdom.

Rubina Khalid assures resolution of employees' issues

HUMA REHAN

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid on Thursday met with the Presidents of All Pakistan BISP Employees Welfare Association, Sardar Shiraz, and BISP Officers Association, Sardar Azmat, along with their delegation to discuss employees' issues. During the meeting, special prayers were offered for the late BISP employees — Raja Idrees (Driver, Headquarters), Fida Bala, Kazim Raza, and Muhaammad Naem (Consultant). The Chairperson expressed heartfelt condolences to

the bereaved families and assured that the BISP family stands with them in their time of grief. A detailed discussion was held regarding various problems faced by the employees. Senator Rubina Khalid took immediate basic. The employees' representatives expressed gratitude to the Chairperson for her prompt response and commitment to addressing their grievances.

SC seeks daily progress report in Arshad Sharif murder case

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's constitutional bench on Friday ordered the government to submit a daily progress report in the case of the murder of senior journalist Arshad Sharif. A six-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Naeem Akhtar regarding the murder of Arshad Sharif. The bench included Justice Jamal Khan Mandozkhal, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Asif Ali Zardari, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, and Justice Shahid Bilal. At the start of

the hearing, the federal government requested more time to finalise the mutual legal assistance agreement with Kenya. The additional attorney general stated that the agreement would be ratified by the president within a month. He mentioned that the mutual legal assistance agreement with Kenya had already been signed, and the ratification process was ongoing. The SC raised questions about the delay in the case's progress, asking why the agreement, which was signed on Dec 10 last, has not been ratified yet. The court questioned whether they should



Justice Aminuddin Khan speaking in court. He emphasized the court's demand for a daily progress report and the government's request for more time to finalise the mutual legal assistance agreement with Kenya.

Arshad Sharif case, questioning why so much time had passed without significant progress. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar inquired about who sent the summary to the president. The additional AG responded that the Ministry of Interior would send the summary to the president after cabinet approval. He mentioned that he had not been able to contact the Ministry of Interior, to which Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that the Ministry of Interior officials are present in court. The joint secretary informed the court that the note was sent to the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs after cabinet approval on Feb 27. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked whether the president could reject the agreement. The legal adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined to comment on the matter. The lawyer representing Arshad Sharif's second widow, Javeria Siddique, appeared in court and stated that the High Court in Kenya had ordered action against the officials involved in the murder. The Kenyan government has filed an appeal against the decision, and the Pakistan government has not become a party to the

case or provided any support. Justice Mandozkhal remarked that the woman was fighting the case alone in Kenya, and asked what problem the government had in assisting her there. The additional AG informed the court that the government did not have access to the crime scene and that becoming a party to the case would not solve the issue. Access to investigation is necessary, he added. He further stated that access would only be possible once the mutual legal assistance agreement was in place. He mentioned that statements from over

30 people in Pakistan had already been recorded. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar noted that the suo motu case had been pending for several years. The lawyer representing Arshad Sharif's mother argued that the government had conducted a fact-finding investigation and requested a copy of the report. The additional AG responded that the entire issue had already been created before the fact-finding report appeared in the media. Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing of the Arshad Sharif murder case for one month.



India chasing Champions Trophy history, New Zealand ready to scrap

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

BENGALURU: India are heavy favourites to claim a record third Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday but Rohit Sharma's men face a New Zealand side with plenty of firepower in the first major white-ball final between the teams in a quarter of a century.

India, who refused to play in host nation Pakistan, have produced clinical performances to win all four of their matches in the United Arab Emirates, including a 44-run group-stage victory over the Black Caps last weekend.

The 2003 and 2013 champions have excelled on pitches offering turn, while the batting group led by Virat Kohli has excelled under pressure with masterful run-chases in victories over Bangladesh, Pakistan and Australia.

India are on the verge of winning back-to-back International Cricket Council trophies following last year's Twenty20 World Cup triumph but coach Gautam Gambhir is focused only on Sunday.

"We still have one more game to go," he told reporters. "We know we're a good one-day side. The most important thing is the way we've played throughout this competition."

"The hunger, the commitment and the eagerness to try and do something special for the country is always there."

With Mohammed Shami filling in superbly for injured pacer Jasprit Bumrah, and all-rounder Hardik Pandya offering



Valuable batting depth, Rohit was delighted with the form of key players going into the title decider.

"When you want to play in the final, you want all your guys to be in form," he said.

made an impact whenever they've got an opportunity and that gives us a lot of confidence."

Despite their flawless displays in Dubai, India will not take anything for granted against New Zealand, who beat them

by four wickets in the final of the 2000 event where it was named the ICC KnockOut Trophy.

New Zealand batsman Kane Williamson said his side have every chance of derauling India in a major final once again.

"Obviously it was a long time ago and a great victory for our country," said Williamson, whose side also stunned India in the World Test Championship title clash four years ago.

"Here, now, lots of things are different... we'll be changing our focus quickly to this next match, which is an exciting opportunity for us."

While India will be more comfortable with the venue having played all their games in Dubai, Williamson said anything can happen in a final.

"It was a great atmosphere in the last game and I'm sure it'll be a good one again," he added. New Zealand head into the match having thumped South Africa in the semi-final after registering the highest Champions Trophy total of 362-6, with Rachin Ravindra and Williamson in fine fettle after scoring centuries.

Their capable spin unit comprising captain Mitchell Santner, Michael Bracewell, Glenn Phillips and Ravindra can cause plenty of problems for India, who will aim to move ahead of Australia in the Champions Trophy winners list. Australia won the event in 2006 and 2009.

New Zealand will hope to have Matt Henry fully fit after the pace bowler injured his shoulder against South Africa.

Shoaib Akhtar feels CPL will connect overseas Pakistanis with their roots

RIZWAN HAIDER

ISLAMABAD: Legendary Pakistani pacer Shoaib Akhtar has thrown his weight behind the Capital Premier League (CPL), hailing it as a vital platform for uniting overseas Pakistanis who want to contribute to their homeland.

Speaking at a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between the CPL Brand Ambassador Shoaib Akhtar and CPL top notch here at a local hotel on Thursday, he expressed his pleasure for being part of the League. "It will serve through CPL for the betterment of the country," he said.

Akhtar emphasized the significance of CPL in connecting overseas Pakistanis with their roots. "This league is an important effort to bridge the gap between overseas Pakistanis and Pakistan. It's a great initiative, and I'll try my best to support it," he said. When asked about Pakistan's early exit from the ICC



Champions Trophy 2025, Akhtar expressed his disappointment. However, he lauded Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Shaheen Shah Afridi and others saying we feel extremely happy when they perform well. By hosting the Champions Trophy we have proved that Pakistan is a safe haven and there is no problem of security here.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi for his efforts to revamp Pakistan cricket. "Work needs to be done at the grassroots level, and leagues like CPL are essential breeding grounds for talented players," he said.

CPL President Ch. Arshad Ali Bega welcomed Akhtar on board, saying, "We're honoured to have him with us. We'll unite over-

seas Pakistanis through this league thus bridging the gaps." CPL CEO Aftab Ahmad Nayyar Siddiqui pledged to take the league's mission forward. "We thank everyone who has supported us in making CPL a reality," he said.

Ambassador CPL and senior journalist Afzal Butt praised Akhtar's commitment to merit. "Shoaib Akhtar is a stalwart who always advocates merit, and his involvement in CPL will ensure that meritocracy prevails," he said.

Brig Ahsan Afridi of Green Tourism Pakistan Private Limited highlighted the significant contribution of sports to Pakistan's tourism industry. "We'll continue to support CPL, even after the event, to promote tourism and sports in Pakistan," he said.

The CPL Director Cricket Operations Waqar Ahmed was also present at the ceremony.

Reiffel, Illingworth appointed on-field umpires for ICC CT final

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Paul Reiffel and Richard Illingworth, both members of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Umpires, have been appointed as the on-field umpires for the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 final between India and New Zealand to be played in Dubai on Sunday.

Both stood in the semi-finals, with Illingworth in the middle for India's four-wicket win over Australia and Reiffel overseeing the Black Caps' 50-run victory over South Africa the following day, said a press release.



Umpire of the Year Illingworth also stood in the final of the most recent ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in 2023, as well as the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, and took charge of the Group A match between the two finalists, which India won by 44 runs.

The pair will be joined by Joel Wilson as third umpire and Kumar Dharmasena as fourth umpire. Both Emirates

ICC Men's Player of the Month nominees for February 2025 announced

SAMARA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council has revealed the nominees for the Men's Player of the Month award for February 2025. Australia's Steve Smith shone during the Test series against Sri Lanka, scoring 141 and 121 in the two matches his side played there, with a strike-rate of 136.00. He was named Player of the Series in recognition of those efforts.

In the one-day series, he scored 12 and 29, and then going into the ICC Champions Trophy, which will be his last international tournament in the format - he got five against England and then not out against Afghanistan. In his five one-day internationals over the course of the month, Indian batter



Shubman Gill compiled 406 runs, averaging 101.50 at a strike-rate of 94.19.

That includes three great innings against England in their three-match series - 87 in Nagpur, 60 in Cuttack, and 112 in Ahmedabad. He was Player of the Series as India defeated England by 101. His contributions and three unbeaten knocks - helped New Zealand win the series in Pakistan.

Pakistan, Iran strengthen baseball ties ahead of West Asia Cup 2025

KOMAL BUTT

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from Pakistan's Federation Baseball (PFB) met with Dr. Asghar Masoudi, Director General of Iran Culture Center & Cultural Attaché at the Consulate General of Iran in Lahore. The meeting focused on Pakistan's participation in the XVI West Asia Baseball Cup, set to take place in Karaj, Iran, from May 15 to 23, 2025. The PFB delegation, led by Syed Fakhr Ali Shah, General Secretary, included key officials and team members Moazzam Khan Klair (Executive Director), Amjad Nawaz Khan (Coordinator), Umair Imdad Bhatti (National Baseball Team Captain), and Nadeem Sajjad (National Baseball Coach). The meeting centered on key strategies to



ensure Pakistan's smooth participation in the championship while strengthening bilateral baseball ties. Discussions focused on facilitating the travel and

logistics of players and officials, promoting the event within Pakistani and Iranian communities, engaging business leaders from both countries to support the initiative.

was highlighted as a crucial factor in ensuring the success of this historic international baseball event in Iran. Dr. Asghar Masoudi assured his full support for Pakistan's participation, emphasizing the importance of baseball as a bridge for cultural exchange and sporting cooperation between the two nations.

In a heartfelt exchange of goodwill, General Secretary Syed Fakhr Ali Shah presented Dr. Masoudi with the Arab Classic Baseball United Pakistan National Baseball Team's participation, symbolizing mutual respect and friendship.

Miller slams ICC after South Africa's exit from Champions Trophy

MUHAMMAD USMAN

LAHORE: South Africa's batter David Miller criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC) after the Champions Trophy semi-final loss of his team to New Zealand on Wednesday at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.

While expressing his frustration, he pointed to scheduling and travel arrangements, which he believed adversely affected the Proteas' performance.

Both semi-finalists from Group B, South Africa and Australia, had to travel to Dubai after finishing their group-stage matches, as India's semi-



final opponent remained uncertain until their victory over New Zealand in the third league match. After India's win, South

Africa had to return to Pakistan for their semi-final showdown against New Zealand in Lahore, while Australia stayed in Dubai to face India.

The left-handed batter, who scored a century against New Zealand, criticised the travel schedule, calling it far from ideal.

"It's only an hour-and-40-minute flight, but the fact that we had to do that was not ideal," Miller said.

"It's early morning, it's after a game, and we had to fly. Then we got to Dubai at a p.m., and at 7:30 in the morning, we had to come back. It doesn't make it nice. It's not like we flew five hours and had enough time to recover and recuperate. But it was still not an ideal situation," he added.

PSB appoints Election Commissioner, adjudicators to strengthen sports governance

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has appointed an Election Commissioner and a Panel of Adjudicators to strengthen sports governance in the country. The PSB, under the Pakistan Code of Ethics and Governance in Sports (PCEGS Code). Following the framework established in the 38th Board Meeting of PSB on December 4, 2024, a committee comprising the President, Vice President, and Secretary of PSB finalized the appointments after due deliberations. Renowned legal expert Advocate Zohaib Hassan Gondal has been appointed



as the Election Commissioner for a three-year term. To further reinforce governance, PSB has constituted a Panel of Adjudicators, which will also act as Election Tribunal, comprising distinguished professionals from diverse fields including Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Ishahuddin Siddiqui (Hockey Olympian), Manzoor-ul-Hasan (Hockey Olympian), Shayan Iqbal Butt (Athletics Coach), Ms. Anna Batool (Member National Assembly), Senator Rubina Irfan and Shakeel Durrani (Former Civil Servant). The Panel will oversee dispute resolution, ethical compliance, and governance in sports. This first-of-its-kind initiative will help eliminate irregularities and strengthen discipline in Pakistan's sports sector. PSB appoints Election Commissioner, adjudicators to strengthen sports governance.

PANAH urges IMF to pay attention to Pakistan's health policy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Non-communicable diseases are becoming the cause of Pakistan's economic and social decline. Non-communicable diseases can be controlled by imposing taxes on ultra-processed products. Secretary General PANAH Sanaullah Chumman Islamabad-Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are not only the biggest cause of death in Pakistan but also a huge burden on Pakistan's economy. If they are not controlled, the economic deterioration will increase day by day. The loss of very useful people in Pakistan and we will continue to use the loans taken from other places including IMF only through these diseases and the debt burden on Pakistan will increase further, which will further increase



poverty in the country and further increase the suffering of the people. To stop the flood of NCDs, proven policy action is needed to prevent the factors that cause them, learning from the world's experiences. The biggest reason for this is our unhealthy diet. To reduce its use, according to the world's proven tax policy, instead of making it more expensive by taxing the necessities of life, we should tax the unnecessary ultra-processed products and things that cause diseases, on which the tax is zero percent (0%) in Pakistan, which will reduce their use and also reduce diseases. And this can not only save the deaths of useful people but

will also reduce the health burden, the economy will also improve and revenue will also be generated. The government takes the tax on the necessities of life, which also increases inflation. The IMF should also draw the government's attention to taxes on ultra-processed products. These things were said by Secretary General PANAH Sanaullah Chumman while talking to the media. He said that NCDs are becoming a big problem in Pakistan. According to the 2021 report of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), there are about 1,00,000 people in Pakistan who have diabetes and the annual cost of its management in Pakistan has reached \$2.64 billion. PANAH is working at every level to educate people about the prevention of NCDs and to work with law and policy

makers to solve this problem. For this, taking advantage of the world's experiences, it is repeatedly drawing the attention of policy makers to such policy measures that the world has used to solve this problem, the most prominent of which is increasing taxes on such things to keep them out of the reach of people and this policy is being used by many countries. This will not only reduce the burden of diseases by reducing the consumption of these items, but will also generate revenue and will not have to be taxed on the necessities of life, which will also reduce poverty and improve the economy. The IMF should recommend to the government of Pakistan to impose taxes on non-essential items such as ultra-processed products.

Crackdown on profiteering; 117 arrested as Islamabad admin ensures affordable Ramazan essentials

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive move to protect consumers from price hikes during Ramazan, the Islamabad administration has arrested 117 profiteers and imposed hefty fines during surprise inspections.

The crackdown comes as part of the government's Ramazan Relief Package, aimed at ensuring the availability of essential food items at affordable prices for the public. The first meeting of the Monitoring Committee, chaired by Convener Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, was held on Thursday to review the implementation of the relief measures. During the meeting, the committee reviewed the establishment of subsidized markets and Ramazan stalls across the city. It was revealed that five major subsidized markets and 20 Ramazan stalls

have been set up in various sectors of Islamabad, offering essential food items at reduced prices.

Joint teams, comprising officials from the Islamabad Police and district administration, have been formed to monitor and control prices.

The committee was informed that the prices of essential food items in Islamabad's subsidized markets are significantly lower than those in Lahore and Rawalpindi.

Under the Ramazan Relief Package, sugar is being sold at Rs. 130 per kilogram at special stalls, and efforts are underway to ensure an adequate supply of sugar and other essentials such as ghee, flour, chicken, and eggs. The committee directed the district administration to engage with shopkeepers and devise strategies to further reduce prices in subsidized markets. Assistant Commissioners and Price

Control Magistrates were instructed to ensure the availability of essential items at official prices in their respective areas.

Additionally, the committee emphasized the importance of prominently displaying official price lists at all subsidized markets and stalls.

Strict action was also ordered against those charging more than the official prices or engaging in illegal profiteering.

To facilitate consumers, the committee directed that helpline numbers and WhatsApp contact details of officials be shared widely, enabling the public to report violations and seek assistance.

Following the meeting, members of the monitoring committee visited subsidized markets and Ramazan stalls to conduct a detailed review of prices and ensure the effective implementation of the relief package.

Senate Committee Urges Resolution of Kuttaw Ji Qabar Dispute, Reviews Gas Distribution Concerns

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas, chaired by Senator Agha Shahzad Durrani, convened at Parliament House to deliberate on the jurisdictional dispute over Kuttaw Ji Qabar and review key development concerns, including gas distribution and petroleum projects. The meeting, attended by Senators Danesh Kumar, Muhammad Aslam Abro, and Falak Naz, along with senior officials from Sindh and Balochistan, highlighted the ongoing territorial contention surrounding Kuttaw Ji Qabar, a historical site in Mouza Dhadaro, Tehsil Karkh, District Khuzdar. The dispute intensified after the

Sindh Government declared the site a protected heritage area in January 2025, a claim strongly contested by Balochistan, which asserts legal and administrative jurisdiction over the location. During discussions, a representative from Sindh provided historical, geographical, and literary references to justify Sindh's claim, advocating for a resolution through inter-provincial coordination rather than escalating the matter at the federal level. However, Senator Durrani refuted this stance, emphasizing that constitutional disputes involving provinces fall under federal jurisdiction. Citing Article 143 of the Constitution, he argued that such conflicts warrant federal intervention. He also

criticized Sindh's inconsistent approach, pointing out that the province seeks federal intervention in water disputes while rejecting it in territorial matters. "Territorial boundaries have shifted over centuries, but what matters today is the legal status of the area," Durrani remarked, urging clarity on the electoral jurisdiction of Kuttaw Ji Qabar and requesting a voter list to determine under which province the residents cast their ballots. He noted that the current MPA representing the area belongs to Balochistan, further strengthening the province's claim. A Balochistan representative reinforced the province's position, stating that constitutional provisions affirm the site as part of

Balochistan. He argued that any territorial realignment requires a two-thirds majority approval and proposed that Sindh withdraw its objection while still recognizing the site's historical significance. To prevent further escalation, Chairman Durrani recommended the formation of a joint committee comprising officials from both provinces to resolve the dispute within 30 days. If no resolution is reached within 90 days, the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) will intervene, with the final outcome reported to the Senate Committee. The committee also reviewed the criteria for gas distribution, instructing officials to submit a compliance report in an upcoming session.



ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand guard to counter any unexpected situation during the Nimaz-e-Juma at Shah Faisal Mosque in Federal Capital.

Opinion Editorial

Rehman Khan Arif Mehmood
PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD
 Arif Mehmood Khan
 Group Editor: 0333-5366814
 Contact us For Daily news, Advertisements
 Correspondent and News Agency
 Samra athar Kakakhel
 Resident Editor
 Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
 www.peakpoint.pk

Why clean water is a women's issue

Alishba Khan
 The Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6 or Global Goal 6) declares the importance of achieving "clean water and sanitation for all". It is one of the 17 SDGs established by the United Nations General Assembly to succeed the former Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Without safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, women and girls seem to be more vulnerable to abuse, attack, and illness, limiting their ability to study, work and live in dignity. Improvements to WASH at home, school, work, and in public places promote gender equity. Women and girls must play a central role in developing and implementing solutions that address their specific needs.

In many areas, women and girls are usually responsible for fetching water. This is a hazardous, time-consuming and physically exhausting task. Long walks, often multiple times per day, can expose women and girls to attack and prevent them from attending school or earning a living. Personal safety is paramount for women and girls when it comes to sanitation. Having to use toilet facilities outside or sharing facilities with men and boys puts women and girls at greater risk of abuse and assault.

Women and girls have specific hygiene requirements. They require clean, functional, lockable, gender-segregated space with access to sanitary products and disposal systems in order to manage their personal hygiene. The lack of safe drinking water and sanitation is an equality issue. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. However, their voices and needs are frequently ignored in the design and implementation of improvements, ensuring their ongoing marginalisation.

By failing women and girls, we jeopardise the 2030 Agenda. Access to water and sanitation are fundamental human rights. When women are denied those rights, their health suffers significantly,

limiting their educational and economic opportunities and denying them their full participation in society.

Due to traditions of patriarchy and gender inequality, women in developing countries such as Pakistan are especially vulnerable to climate change and its consequences of climate change are becoming undeniable and more concerning within the past decade. It is crucial to highlight the predicament of the most vulnerable and marginalised community members – women and children – and include them in crucial decision-making discussions when a nation or community is struck by a natural disaster of such epic proportions. In the event of a calamity, women and children are 14 times more likely to lose their lives than men.

According to reports, women made up 70 per cent of the 230,000 fatalities from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Due to ingrained gender disparities that shape the moral and social fabric of their communities, women in developing countries such as Pakistan are more susceptible to the effects of climate disasters.

When in Pakistan continue to face challenges, whether it be in the form of a lack of economic empowerment or significant leadership positions in the community. In light of this, natural disasters such as floods will exacerbate already-existing gender disparities by compounding the suffering of millions of women and young girls who are continuously fighting for their rights to proper economic, health and educational opportunities in a society that is dominated by men. Given the general limitations on women's mobility and education, particularly in Pakistan's rural areas, evacuation can be difficult because women lack basic life-saving skills such as swimming, navigation and self-defence techniques. Due to the conservative and patriarchal nature of most rural households in Pakistan, women are also frequently prohibited from leaving their homes without a male companion or permission from tribal elders, resulting in limited out-

side exposure. They are also primarily caregivers at home, which may further limit their ability to evacuate.

Biased social attitudes and archaic traditions thus contribute to the disproportionate impact of climate-related disasters on women, who are displaced or killed in the process.

Women's roles and contributions to the informal sector and agriculture are not given enough policy-level attention or economic importance in the country, so when apocalyptic floods destroy crops and fields, women's employment is severely impacted, and unlike their male counterparts, women lack the resources or receive adequate assistance to find alternative means of livelihood.

The floods of 2022 affected approximately thirty-three million people. More than two million houses were damaged, displacing approximately eight million people and placing 600,000 in relief camps. Approximately, 8.2 million women and 16 million children were most severely affected.

Women face challenges long after a disaster, as many women and young girls are vulnerable to gender-based violence even in flood relief camps and shelter homes. There is also great concern about women's hygiene and sanitation needs; these shelter homes are frequently unsanitary and lack proper lavatories, clean water, and food supplies. The extremely consequential levels of humanitarian, infrastructure and economic destruction experienced are colossal, making it nearly impossible to accurately quantify the losses at this point. As the Pakistani government and international agencies work to assist flood victims and build greater climate resilience in the future, they must consider women's roles and needs. Women are critical to the development of better climate adaptation mechanisms and disaster risk resilience efforts because they bring distinct perspectives, insights and challenges to the table that must be recognised and incorporated into future policymaking.
 Courtesy: The News

Sinking dreams

Tariq Khosa
 OVER the past few years, several tragic incidents have occurred involving boats carrying Pakistani migrants attempting to reach Europe through irregular channels.

On June 14, 2023, the Adriana, an overcrowded fishing trawler, capsized and sank off the coast of Greece. The vessel carried an estimated 750 migrants, including about 350 Pakistanis. Of the 104 survivors, only 12 were from Pakistan. Over 500 individuals died, making it one of the deadliest shipwrecks in the Mediterranean. The then PDM government sprang into action and asked the then DG National Police Bureau (NPB), Ehsan Adik, who had earlier served as additional DG FIA, to submit recommendations to combat the smuggling of migrants.

According to a report released last year by the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), Pakistan climbed to fifth position among the countries accounting for the most illegal immigrants to Europe. The report contained chilling data: nearly 40 per cent of Pakistanis wanted to leave due mainly to economic woes, political uncertainty, lack of employment and educational opportunities, inflation, and terrorism. In 2023, 8,778 Pakistanis crossed into Europe illegally. In 2022, 13,000 reached Europe; 10,000 did not return.

Moreover, Pakistanis lodged 28,000 applications for international protection in European Union countries from October 2023 to October 2024, the EU's Agency for Asylum said in a country-specific report. The preferred options for Pakistani asylum seekers were Italy, France, Greece, and Germany. About 12pc of applicants were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection.

According to another report, as many as 7.3 million Pakistani nationals have left for greener pastures in the last 10 years. Around 3.8m left during the PML-N government's tenure (2013 to 2018), 1.3m during the PTI government (2018 to 2022), and 2.2m during the PDM government (2022 to 2024), while 0.38m have left since the present government took over in 2024. A gruesome fate awaits the desperate migrants who take huge risks by undertaking journeys by road through the Pak-Iran border, enter Turkey, and then reach Greece; or those who fly to Egypt, Dubai, Libya, Morocco or other West African destinations on visit visas and from there rely on organised criminal networks to transport them to European countries like Italy, Greece, and Spain. In January 2024, a boat carrying 80 passengers, including Pakistanis, capsized near the Moroccan-controlled port city of Dakhla while en route to the Canary Islands. More than 40 Pakistanis were feared drowned.

Two recent incidents are chilling reminders that the migrants are still willing to take deadly risks to reach European shores. In January 2025, again off the coast of West Africa, a boat carrying 86 migrants, mostly Pakistanis, en route to the Canary Islands, encountered difficulties during a 13-day journey. Almost 50 individuals perished while 36 were rescued.
 Courtesy: Dawn

Justice for Kashmir

The latest remarks by India's External Affairs Minister Subramanian Jaishankar on Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) are yet another example of India's aggressive rhetoric and historical distortion of facts. Speaking at Chatham House in London, Jaishankar claimed that the Kashmir dispute would be solved once the "stolen part of Kashmir" referring to AJK – was returned to India. Such statements are not only misleading but also an outright dismissal of international law and historical realities. The Foreign Office (FO) of Pakistan has rightfully rejected these claims, urging India instead to vacate the illegally occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir, which have remained under its brutal control for 77 years. Occupied Kashmir is not merely a territorial dispute but an issue of the fundamental rights of its people. Despite India's repeated assertions that the revocation of Article 370 in 2019 has resolved the Kashmir conflict, the reality on the ground tells a different story. The abrogation of Kashmir's special status has only intensified the oppression of the Kashmiri people, exacerbating their struggles under India's military occupation. The recent elections in Indian-occupied Kashmir cannot be considered a substitute for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, as enshrined in multiple United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, recently expressed concern over India's continued human rights violations in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, warning about the use of restrictive laws, arbitrary detentions, and the harassment of journalists and activists. Such statements are reminders that, despite India's attempts to present itself as the world's largest democracy, its actions in Occupied Kashmir are far from democratic.

National development impossible without active participation of women; Ahsan Iqbal

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said national development and economic stability were impossible without active participation of women, who constituted more than half of the country's population.

Addressing an event in connection with the International Women's Day here, he also voiced to provide equal opportunities to women aimed at moving the country on path of development and progress. The minister acknowledged the immeasurable contributions of women in Pakistan and around the world. He said the International Women's Day was a reminder of the incredible

strength, resilience, and determination of women who have shattered barriers, defied challenges, and led the way toward a brighter and more inclusive future.

He added that gender equality was not just a moral imperative but an economic necessity, citing studies that indicate closing the gender gap in labor force participation significantly boosts GDP. While acknowledging the progress made toward gender equality, Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the serious concerns regarding women's empowerment in Pakistan. He pointed to the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2024 by the World Economic Forum, which ranked Pakistan 145th out of 146 countries. This, he stressed, was an alarming sign, reinforcing the

urgent need for stronger measures to enhance women's participation in the formal economy and decision-making processes. The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to gender inclusion and recalled that upon assuming office in 2022, one of his first initiatives was the establishment of a Gender Unit (GU) in the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. The GU plays a key role in integrating gender inclusivity across all sectors, with a particular focus on education, health, skills development, and workforce participation. He noted that the GU actively monitored policymaking to eliminate discrimination against women and to create an enabling environment for their leadership roles.

Palestinian embassy honours young Pakistani siblings for advocacy on Gaza

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Palestine hosted a special reception to honor two young Pakistani siblings, Ubaydah Al Fiddah Hafah (11) and Gulam Bishar Hafif (13), for their steadfast advocacy for the children of Gaza. Palestinian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Zuhair Zaid expressed profound gratitude to the siblings for their unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian cause. In an official letter of appreciation, he praised their courageous efforts, calling them a symbol of justice and humanity.

"I find myself at a loss for words, overwhelmed by the depth of your courage, the purity of your love, and the boundless compassion you have shown," Dr. Zaid wrote, emphasizing that their message was a powerful reminder that "humanity is still alive in its purest form."

He lauded the impact of their sacrifice, noting that "though small in action, it is immeasur-



able in meaning," and described their advocacy as an "unbreakable bond that transcends distance and time" between the people of Pakistan and Palestine.

The ambassador further commended their ability to turn "pain into power, grief into hope, and silence into a voice that echoes across borders." He acknowledged the depth of their advocacy, stating that their words, "written with hands so young yet hearts so vast," held profound significance.

Dr. Zaid also recognized their non-violent approach, praising their commitment to justice through love and truth rather than violence. "Your blood has mingled

with the cries of the innocent," he wrote, adding that their actions served as "a beacon of humanity amidst the darkest times."

In his concluding remarks, the ambassador assured the siblings that their message of sacrifice would never fade. "From the depths of my heart, I thank you. I honor you. And I promise that your message will continue to inspire millions," he stated. During the reception, Dr. Zaid, accompanied by his young daughter, made an emotional declaration, stating that from now on, Ubaydah Al Fiddah and Gulam Bishar would be considered his own children, alongside his five biological children.

Country to review 18pc tax on packaged milk, says food security minister

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Food Security & Research Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing the challenges in the dairy sector, referring to reviewing the impact of the 18 per cent general sales tax on packaged milk.

According to a Press Information Department (PID) press release, Hussain met a delegation from the Pakistan Dairy Association (PDA) to "discuss key challenges faced by the dairy sector".

According to the statement, the meeting focused on the need to boost investment in dairy farms and review the 18pc GST on packaged milk.

The previously tax-exempt packaged milk is now taxed at 18pc, making it more costly than in France, Australia, and Amsterdam.

A Bloomberg article compares that in dollar terms, a litre of packaged milk costs \$1.33 compared with \$1.29 in Amsterdam, \$1.23 in



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, launching the Gender Action Plan 2023-26 Report at the MoPDSI during an International Women's Day ceremony at MoPDSI.

Paris, and \$1.08 in Melbourne.

The hike in packaged milk prices in Pakistan has raised serious concerns about the nation's already prevalent malnutrition issues. According to data presented at a meeting with Unicef representatives, malnutrition costs the country an estimated three per cent of GDP. Moreover, the indirect sales tax was projected to cause further a substantial loss of around \$23 billion. The delegation urged the government "to reconsider the GST on packaged milk, citing its adverse impact on affordability and investment in the sector".

While the food security minister assured that they "would consult stakeholders and explore ways to support the industry, ensuring that any tax relief directly benefits both consumers and dairy farmers."

The minister emphasized that Pakistan was among the leading milk-producing countries — with an annual production exceeding 70 million tons.

NEPRA announces cut in power tariff nationwide under monthly FCA

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has announced a reduction in electricity prices for consumers across the country under the monthly fuel charge adjustment (FCA).

According to the official notification, the sectional average Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) has been reduced by Rs.2,124.00 per unit, bringing the actual fuel cost to Rs.10.88 per kWh from the earlier reference rate of Rs.13,010 per kWh.

The electricity rates for Karachi consumers have been reduced by Rs.12 per unit, while rates for consumers in other parts of the country have been lowered by Rs.12 per unit, said a notification.

NEPRA issued separate notifications for the adjustments, stating that consumers will receive the relief in their March electricity bills. The reduction for K-Electric consumers is based on the December 2024 monthly adjustment, while the decrease for other consumers nationwide is applied under the January 2025 adjustment.

This FCA reduction applies to most categories, except for lifeline consumers, protected consumers, electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS), and prepaid customers.

Yousaf Raza Gilani acquitted in three corruption cases

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: The Federal Anti-Corruption Court in Karachi acquitted Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in three corruption cases on Friday.

According to details, the hearing of the TIDAP corruption scandal was held at the Karachi Anti-Corruption Court, where the former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani personally appeared. The court accepted his acquittal plea, clearing him of all charges.

In the previous hearings, the verdict on three cases against Gilani had been reserved. The former prime minister was accused of causing a loss of over Rs 6 billion to the



national treasury in freight subsidies.

Speaking to the media after the verdict, Gilani termed the corruption charges against him as politically motivated and declared his acquittal a victory of truth. "The person who testified against me has now become an accused himself," he remarked. Responding to political queries, Gilani reiterated his stance on

boycotting the Senate session over the non-implementation of production orders for detained PTI Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, "I have been in the House for years and always act according to the law," he said, adding that issuing a production order for an imprisoned senator is his legal right.

He criticized the government's failure to implement his order, saying that it has created an atmosphere of confrontation in the Senate.

On January 24, 2025, Gilani had announced that he would not preside over the Senate session until his production order for Ejaz Chaudhry was implemented.

British High Commission honors young climate storytellers on Commonwealth Day

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission hosted a special ceremony to celebrate young climate storytellers on the occasion of Commonwealth Day 2025.

"Winners of the Art for Earth competition showcased their creative talents through art, film, and storytelling, highlighting the impact of climate change and innovative solutions."

Young Pakistanis aged 13 to 24 from across the country were invited to participate, sharing their artistic expressions on how climate change affects their lives and communities. Organized in collaboration with the British Council, the com-



petition received over 550 creative submissions, demonstrating the enthusiasm and commitment of youth toward climate awareness.

To honor the winners, the British High Commission held a prestigious award ceremony, featuring an exhibition of the winning entries and discussions on youth-led climate action.

Speaking at the event, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr. Jane Marriott CMB OBE, while praising the participants' creativity said: "I have been truly inspired by the extraordinary creativity of these young individuals. They have highlighted the urgency of climate action in the most innovative ways."

KP becomes first province in introducing of a Bridge Design Code

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Under the leadership of Chief Minister Aili Amin Gandapur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has once again outpaced other provinces by becoming the first in Pakistan to introduce a Bridge Design Code.

This landmark initiative aims to set minimum standards for the construction, repair, and design of bridges, aligning them with internationally recognized engineering principles. The Chief Minister has approved the implementation of this code across the province, ensuring that future bridge construction adheres to these newly established standards. The code was prepared by a dedicated briefing the Bridge Design Code prepared by Communication and Works Department. It was noted that the code has been



specifically designed to accommodate the unique climatic and geological conditions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A working group, comprising government officials and experts has prepared the code, which is licensed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). To ensure its enforcement, the government plans to introduce formal legislation, making compliance with the code mandatory for all future bridge projects. Officials highlighted that the

absence of such regulations in Pakistan has contributed to frequent bridge collapses. During the 2022 floods, 107 bridges were destroyed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone, while the 2010 floods damaged 150 bridges across the province. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister emphasized that the introduction of a Bridge Design Code was long overdue, adding that the implementation of this code is essential to prevent bridge failures that lead to the loss of human lives and public resources.

Turkish ambassador inaugurates calligraphy exhibition by renowned Pakistani artist Wasil Shahid

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu on Friday inaugurated a calligraphy exhibition by renowned Pakistani calligrapher Wail Shahid, featuring works dedicated to the names of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Turkish ambassador inaugurates calligraphy exhibition by renowned Pakistani artist Wasil Shahid. The exhibition, organized by the Yunus Emrey Cultural Institute, (Turkiye) Islamabad, is being held as a tribute to the esteemed Turkish calligrapher, Master Hasan Celebi.

The event was attended by a distinguished audience, including Professor Dr. Khalil Tokar, Head of the Yunus Emrey Cultural Institute Pakistan Chapter, ambassadors from 24 Islamic countries, and prominent Pakistani intellectuals and writers. Turkish ambassador inaugurates

calligraphy exhibition by renowned Pakistani artist Wasil Shahid. During the inauguration, Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu emphasized the shared cultural heritage and values between Pakistan and Turkey, highlighting that through their unity, the two nations promote tolerance and understanding worldwide.

He also spoke highly of the enduring friendship and brotherhood between the two countries, which serves as an exemplary model for the world.

Dr. Khalil Tokar expressed that the institute is committed to fostering shared cultural traditions in Pakistan and reviving beautiful values that are often overshadowed by modern-day life.

The exhibition not only showcased Wasil Shahid's artistic mastery but also highlighted the deep cultural ties between Turkey and Pakistan, celebrating the rich heritage of Islamic calligraphy.

exemplary model for the world.

Dr. Khalil Tokar expressed that the institute is committed to fostering shared cultural traditions in Pakistan and reviving beautiful values that are often overshadowed by modern-day life.

The exhibition not only showcased Wasil Shahid's artistic mastery but also highlighted the deep cultural ties between Turkey and Pakistan, celebrating the rich heritage of Islamic calligraphy.

He also spoke highly of the enduring friendship and brotherhood between the two countries, which serves as an



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan Irfan Neziroglu cuts the ribbon along with others to inaugurate Solo Calligraphy Exhibition by Wasil Shahid at local Mall in Federal Capital.