



# Islamabad POST

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**Trudeau announces plan to resign as Prime Minister**

Detailed News On Page-08

**UK PM slams 'lies' after Musk tirade**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Rashid steers Afghanistan to Test series win**

Detailed News On Page-06



## PTI-govt talks

# Inability to present written demands behind deadlock

Sources say PTI will have to ink agreement with govt if written demands are accepted; written demands to be submitted after meeting with Imran Khan; PTI files application with the jail authorities for meeting

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amid no progress in the ongoing parleys between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the government despite two rounds of talks, the deadlock between the two sides has been attributed to the PTI negotiators' inability to meet their jailed party founder Imran Khan and present written demands to the government. With the opposition claiming that they have not been allowed to meet Khan by Adiala jail authorities, the government on the other hand has cited the former ruling party's inability to present a written charter of demand leading to National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's hesitance in calling a third meeting, added the sources. The existing stalemate comes after the two sides, following months of heightened political tensions, commenced much-hyped negotiations of which two meetings were held on December 27, 2024 and on January 2, 2025. During the last meeting between the government and the PTI's negotiation committees, the two sides had decided that the Khan-founded party would present its charter of demands in the next session after meeting the jailed prime minister. Also, it was decided that the third round of talks would be summoned after the PTI committee had met Khan. The former ruling party has time again reiterated its call for the release of its founder and their workers and the formation of a judicial commission on the events of the May 9 riots and last year's November 26 protests.

Continued on Page 06

## Verdict in 190m pound case likely on 13th

Imran Khan's lawyer confirmed the verdict would not be announced today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court has again delayed its verdict in the 190 million pound case against former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi. Earlier, the court was due to announce the verdict today (Monday). AC Judge Nasir Javed Rana said the court would announce the verdict later. After the latest development, the decision had been delayed three times. Now the verdict is likely to be announced on January 13. According to court staff, Judge Nasir Javed Rana is on leave today, and the verdict in the case has been postponed to January 13. The court staff informed Imran Khan's lawyer, Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, about the rescheduling. Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, stated that the court staff confirmed the verdict would not be announced today. It merits mention that the court had reserved the 190 million pound case verdict on December 18.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr Donald Blome, paid a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

## German diplomat found dead in Islamabad apartment

Cause of death is unconfirmed, but initial investigations indicate the staffer had a prior minor heart attack

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The body of Thomas Fielder, a German diplomat and Second Secretary at the German Embassy, was found in his apartment within Islamabad's Diplomatic Enclave, local authorities confirmed on Monday. Thomas Fielder's body was discovered by embassy staff, who became concerned after he had been

Continued on Page 06

## Türkiye condemns Trubhat attack

Türkiye voices support for Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: The Turkish Foreign Ministry has issued a statement strongly condemning a recent terrorist attack in Turbat, Pakistan, which resulted in significant loss of life and injuries. "We strongly condemn the terrorist attack that took place in Turbat, Pakistan,"

Continued on Page 06

## 'Example must be made' PM directs property confiscation of all human traffickers

PM praises FIA for targeting officials aiding traffickers, urges action to dismantle networks and protect lives

MEHTAB PIRZADA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed to take strict legal action against all human trafficking groups in the country to make them an example. Chairing a meeting regarding the progress on measures taken against human trafficking in Islamabad today, he emphasized that immediate legal action should be taken to confiscate the properties and assets of human traffickers. The Prime Minister said the prosecution process against all individuals involved in this heinous crime should be made more effective. He added that after consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice, the most competent lawyers should be appointed for prosecution. Shehbaz Sharif further instructed the Foreign Office to contact relevant countries regarding Pakistanis running human trafficking

Continued on Page 06

## Boat incidents Sukkur court summons PM, other top officials

The petitioner asked the court to issue directives for the registration of a case against government officials at Rohri police station

DNA

SUKKUR: A district and sessions court in Sukkur has summoned the top officials, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, over "loss of Pakistani lives" in migrant boat capsizing incidents off Greece coast last month. During the hearing, the additional session

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### JUI chief denounces Kurram riots

How long will you continue misleading society?

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that riots erupted the next day after he helped Kurram delegations work towards peace. Speaking at an event at Peshawar's Nishtar Hall, Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that democracy and parliamentary politics in the country lacked quality. "How long will you continue misleading society? Delegations from both sides approached me, and when we paved the way for resolution, riots started the next day," he held. The JUI-F chief mentioned that a diplomat visited him recently and discussed various matters, including Kurram.

### 'No backdoor contact under way'

Denies rumours of Bushra Bibi's involvement in backdoor talks

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has clarified that the party has no backdoor contacts or negotiations in progress. Speaking outside Adiala Jail, he said the committee formed by PTI founder Imran Khan was the sole entity authorised for negotiations. He confirmed two meetings had already been held with the government's negotiation committee, and a third round required prior consultation with Imran Khan. However, the meeting with him has not been confirmed yet. Gohar denied rumours of Bushra Bibi's involvement in backdoor talks, calling it baseless. He emphasised the PTI's demands remained the release of detainees and the establishment of judicial commission.

## Ahsan says govt to complete term PML-N claims PPP still on board with govt

"There's always a bit of a musical rhythm within a coalition government," says planning minister

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday that there are ups and downs in politics, downplaying the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) warning of quitting the coalition government in the centre. PPP spokesperson Shazi Marri had a day earlier expressed annoyance over the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) not taking her party on board in the decision-making process, warning that the "federal government will collapse the day PPP withdraws support". She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government kept the PPP and the Sindh government in the dark about the establishment of the Pakistan Maritime & Sea Port Authority (PMSPA). The PPP spokesperson also said they had long been demanding to convene a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) as well, but no meeting of

Continued on Page 06

## PPP decides to openly oppose govt policies

PPP issued detailed guidelines to its members, advising them to actively criticise govt's ineffective, flawed policies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Tensions between Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) have escalated further, with PPP deciding to openly criticise the government's policies, citing sources a private news channel reported. Sources revealed that PPP leadership has authorised its leaders to publicly

Continued on Page 06

## Maldives, Lankan envoys recalled from Pakistan

Maldives high commissioner's meeting with the Afghanistan Charge d Affaires cost him his job

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Maldives and Sri Lanka are preparing to appoint new envoys to Pakistan after both countries recalled their respective high commissioners in quick succession. The Maldivian government recalled its High Commissioner, Mohamed Toha, following a controversial meeting with Afghanistan's top diplomat in Islamabad. Toha's



ISLAMABAD: A view of meeting between the former Maldives High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohamad Toha and Afghan Charge d Affaires Ahmed Shakib. After this meeting the Maldives envoy was recalled. - DNA

engagement with Ahmad Shakib, Afghanistan's chargé d'affaires, reportedly took place without prior approval from Maldivian authorities. In a statement, the Maldivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had clarified that the meeting was not authorized. "The Maldives is guided by the practice followed by the United Nations General Assembly regarding the representative character of a government. Accordingly, the Maldives recognizes the Government representing Afghanistan at the United Nations as the legitimate authority," the statement read. During the meeting, Ahmad Shakib emphasized Afghanistan's goal of fostering constructive relations with all nations and its ambition to transform the country into a regional connectivity hub through economic policies. Photographs from the meeting were shared on the social media platforms of both embassies, further fueling the controversy. In response, the Maldives Embassy in Islamabad removed all images of High Commissioner Toha from its website and social media accounts, although the Afghanistan Embassy retained the photos. Toha was recalled only a few months after his appointment, marking an abrupt end to his tenure. Similarly, Sri Lanka has recalled its High Commissioner to Pakistan, Admiral Ravindra C. Wijegunaratne, less than six months into his posting. While the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not provided an official explanation, diplomatic sources suggest that political factors may have influenced the decision. Both recalls highlight unexpected diplomatic challenges for Islamabad as it awaits the appointment of new envoys from the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

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## Vintage car show 2025 attracts car enthusiasts at UET

PESHAWAR: A vintage car show 2025 organized by the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar on Monday enthralled car enthusiasts and the public with its stunning display of antique vehicles and innovative designs. The event featured over 40 vintage cars, including rare Japanese models from the 1990s, and student-crafted refurbished engines. The show, supervised by Professor Dr Sadiq Khattak, Advisor to SAE and inaugurated by Professor Dr Amjad Ullah Khattak, former Dean of Electrical and Computer Engineering. The auto show highlighted cutting-edge technology, creative designs, and the inventive prowess of UET Peshawar's students. Professor Dr Sadiq Khattak remarked that this unique event, held annually, had consistently garnered widespread public acclaim. He emphasized that the show served as a platform to encourage innovation within the automotive industry. The event concluded with participants being awarded certificates of appreciation, celebrating their contributions to the success of this exceptional gathering.—APP

## Bus overturns due to over-speeding, 5 dead

ISLAMABAD: At least five people were killed on the spot while multiple others were critically injured after a devastating road accident near Head Muhammad Wala in Chowk Sarwar Shaheed on Monday afternoon. According to sources within the rescue services, the ill-fated bus was en route from Mianwali to Multan when it overturned due to excessive speeding and claimed five lives on the spot, a private news channel reported. The impact of the crash was so severe that five passengers lost their lives on the spot, while several others were left battered and bruised. Rescue teams rushed to the scene to provide aid and transport the injured to nearby district hospital for treatment. An investigation into the incident is currently underway.—APP

## Housing Ministry asked to hand over house to widow

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Sub-Committee on Housing and Works on Monday recommended the Ministry of Housing to hand over the house to the widow. The committee meeting under the chairmanship of Convener Committee Senator Raja Nasir Abbas. The issue of alleged illegal occupation of an official residence by a widow was considered in the meeting of the committee. The petition filed by the widow regarding illegal hand over of her official residence to another citizen was considered. The sub-committee also heard the position of the ministry and carefully reviewed the entire issue. Apart from Senator Aslam Abro, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Works also attended the meeting of the said committee.—APP

# Secy Info, BD HC discuss enhanced media coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan and Bangladesh's High Commissioner in Pakistan Iqbal Hussain Khan met here Monday and discussed ways to boost media cooperation and people-to-people contacts between their countries. In a meeting held here at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the two sides focused on enhanced partnerships to highlight shared historical narratives and cultural values that strengthen mutual understanding. Secretary Information Ambreen Jan said Pakistan and Bangladesh had a longstanding diplomatic and cultural ties along with a shared history of cooperation in diverse sectors.

She emphasized collaboration between state media organizations including Pakistan Television Corporation, Associated Press of



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan presents a memento to High Commissioner of Bangladesh Iqbal Hussain Khan after meeting held here at Ministry

Pakistan and Radio Pakistan with their Bangladeshi counterparts in fields of joint productions and exchange of news. She highlighted that a journalist exchange programme could provide the media persons from Pakistan and Bangladesh an opportunity to learn about each other's perspectives and narratives on various matters. High Commissioner Iqbal Hussain Khan lauded the government of Pakistan for taking steps to encourage multifarious cooperation between the two countries. He likened the people of two countries as brothers and added that their connectivity through joint cooperation programmes would bring both nations further closer. The two sides also discussed expanding the availability of Pakistani news and entertainment channels on Bangladeshi cable networks and organizing film festivals and photographic exhibitions.

## Challenges posed by population growth highlighted

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb here on Monday highlighted the significant challenges posed by rapid population growth, particularly in the context of the country's development goals. During a meeting with Population Council delegation led by President Dr. Rana Hajjeh, that called on the minister, he stressed the need for a sustained, long-term, and evidence-based approach to understanding and addressing population dynamics. He called for integrating these dynamics into planning across key sectors such as health, education, employment, urbanization, and the environment, as a means to unlock the full potential for socio-economic development. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director, Population Council, and senior officers from the Ministry of Finance, according to press release issued by finance ministry. It focused on the critical issues surrounding population growth, demographic change, and their implications for Pakistan's development and economic growth, it added. Dr. Hajjeh and Dr. Sathar provided insights into the Population Council's ongoing research and initiatives aimed at addressing these issues. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Pakistan's efforts in crafting comprehensive, data-driven policies to ensure the country's demographic transition aligns with sustainable development. The meeting marked a significant step in fostering collaboration between the Population Council and the Ministry of Finance in tackling the challenges of population growth and its impact on country's future.—APP

## Pakistan Navy coastal command annual efficiency competition parade held

Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized that the Coastal Command has excelled in its mission by safeguarding Pakistan's coastal areas, spanning from Sir Creek to Jiwani, despite challenging internal and external security environments



DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Coastal Command Annual Efficiency Competition Parade for the year 2024 was held at PNS QASIM. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The event, organized annually by the Coastal Command of Pakistan Navy, celebrates achievements upon the successful culmination of its operational year. In his address, Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized that the Coastal Command has excelled in its mission

by safeguarding Pakistan's coastal areas, spanning from Sir Creek to Jiwani, despite challenging internal and external security environments. Earlier, in his welcome address, Commander Coast highlighted the operational achievements of Coastal Command and presented a brief review of the activities undertaken during 2024. He also underscored command's accomplishments in various operational, administrative, and welfare projects over the past year. During the ceremony, the Chief Guest presented efficiency awards and trophies to the

best-performing units of Pakistan Navy Coastal Command. The event was attended by a large number of senior serving and retired naval officers, civil dignitaries, and CPOs/sailors of Pakistan Navy. Earlier, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Admiral Naveed Ashraf has commended the Sindh Government's continued financial support toward the development and progression of Cadet College Sanghar. Addressing at the 28th Parents' Day ceremony at Cadet College Sanghar, the CNS said the Naval Chief lauded the efforts of the teaching facul-

ty and administration for providing excellent training facilities to the cadets and for their outstanding achievements in the annual board results, said a press release issued by Directorate General of Public Relations (Pak Navy) here Monday.

He also appreciated the efforts of HQ COMKAR in ensuring high standards of academic excellence and character building at Cadet College Sanghar. Earlier, the Principal of the College, Commodore Zeeshan Ali, presented the Annual Report - 2024 and highlighted the exceptional performance of cadets in academics, sports, and co-curricular activities. Later, the CNS presented prizes to the winners for their outstanding overall performance during the year. Ex-Cadet Faheem Ahmed and Ex-Cadet Sahib Khan clinched the highest prizes of the Stick of Honour and the Badge of Honour, respectively. Ex-Cadet Junaid Babar was awarded the Quaid-e-Azam Medal for Best Academic Performance.

## DG MOFA opens second Branch of Rich Food Sri Lankan Restaurant in Karachi

DNA



KARACHI: Rich Food Sri Lankan Restaurant celebrated the grand opening of its second branch in Karachi with a vibrant inauguration ceremony. The event was graced by Jagath Abeywardena, Consul General of Sri Lanka in Karachi, accompanied by his beautiful wife, prominent Sri Lankan expatriates, media personnel, and other distinguished guests. The chief guest of the event was Mr. Irfan Soomro, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ceremony commenced with a ribbon-cutting by the restaurant's proprietors, Mr. Asanka Nishan and Gayan Premakumara, joined by the Sri Lankan Consul General and the chief guest Mr. Irfan Soomro. This was followed by the lighting of traditional Sri Lankan oil lamps, a symbolic gesture

of prosperity and goodwill, performed amidst enthusiastic applause from the audience. A special mention must be made of the personal attention and dedication shown by H.E. Mr. Jagath Abeywardena, the Sri Lankan Consul General, in promoting Sri Lankan food, culture, and history to the Pakistani audience. As a true representative of his nation, his efforts have significantly contributed to the restaurant's success and the growing appreciation of Sri Lankan heritage in Pakistan. Guests were welcomed with refreshing drinks before being treated to a sumptuous spread of authentic Sri Lankan cuisine, which was praised for its rich flavors and culinary artistry. This new branch, located in the Phase 7 Extension of DHA, Karachi, marks the restaurant's rapid growth and popularity. Following the overwhelming success of its first branch, which opened last year in the DHA area, this expansion reflects the brand's commitment to delivering an exceptional dining experience to food enthusiasts in Karachi. The event highlighted the cultural and culinary connections between Sri Lanka and Pakistan, further strengthening bilateral ties in a festive and flavorful setting. It is hoped that this culinary journey will further bolster the cultural and trade relations between these two friendly nations.

## Poet Iqbal Faheem Jozi passes away

ISLAMABAD: An esteemed Urdu poet, researcher Iqbal Faheem Jozi has passed away today (Monday) and his family shared the heartbreaking news late Sunday. Director of Media and Programmes of Nazaria-e-Pakistan Council Hameed Qaiser in his condolence message said that Jozi was not only a good poet but a great human being as well. He prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and for the family to bear the loss with fortitude. Jozi funeral prayer would be held today after the Asr prayer at H-11 Graveyard, his family shared through his official social media account.—APP

## Maryam announces Rs 100b scholarships, 100,000 e-bikes

MULTAN: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced an unprecedented Rs 100 billion scholarship program, the distribution of 100,000 e-bikes to students, and interest-free loans of up to Rs 3 million for young entrepreneurs. In a groundbreaking move to empower Pakistan's youth, she revealed plans to introduce market-based training programs, establish e-bike charging stations, and provide paid internships in agriculture, environment, and other key sectors. Addressing a gathering in BZU Multan, Maryam Nawaz highlighted her government's efforts to ensure that no talented student is deprived of education due to financial constraints. She declared that 20,000 new scholarships would be added annually and pledged to pay the tuition fees of deserving students. She further stated the scholarship program, which benefits both male and female students, is entirely merit-based, with no consideration of political affiliations. The Chief Minister announced the provision of buses to facilitate female students' transportation and the milestone of awarding 60% of scholarships to girls. She also revealed plans to distribute laptops to students, with the first batch already in place, and to launch international scholarships to support higher education abroad. Maryam Nawaz stressed the need to equip students with skills in artificial intelligence, robotics, and other modern IT disciplines. Inspired by technological advancements in countries like China, she promised to ensure local students excel in the global arena. The government is also focusing on sustainable development, transitioning Punjab's transport system to electric vehicles to reduce pollution and improve air quality. Charging stations will be established in educational institutions to promote eco-friendly practices, she added. Calling the youth the backbone of Pakistan, Maryam Nawaz urged them to stay focused on education and avoid becoming tools for destructive agendas. "The future of this nation is in your hands," she remarked, adding that respect for women and moral values were essential for building a strong society. Concluding her address, she saluted the hard work of students and extended congratulations to Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, who wished them success in their endeavors. Maryam Nawaz expressed her commitment to continue supporting the youth, saying, "With your dedication, no one can stop the country from achieving unparalleled progress.—DNA

## 3 injured as fog causes motorbike accident

ISLAMABAD: Three including two brothers were critically injured on Monday when a car collided with their motorbike and hit a tree due to dense fog in Paghala Morr, Shakargarh. According to rescue sources, a car collision with a motorbike, followed by a crash into a tree, left three individuals, including two siblings, with serious injuries on Monday, with dense fog cited as the cause, private news channel reported. Rescue sources stated that the accident occurred due to dense fog, severely reducing visibility on the road. The car, traveling at a high speed was unable to stop in time, resulting in the collision. The three injured individuals, including two brothers were rushed to district hospital for immediate medical attention. Their condition is reported to be stable but further treatment is required to assess the full extent of their injuries.—APP

## Thai envoy explores cultural collaboration with Lahore museum

DNA

LAHORE: Ambassador-designate of Thailand to Pakistan Rongvudhi Virabutr along with Madam Banita Pichyakorn Virabutr, met with Mrs. Nabila Irfan, Director of the Lahore Museum, to discuss fostering cultural and archaeological cooperation between the two nations. On this occasion, Ambassador discussed cooperation on issues such as (1) knowledge-sharing on best practices in the areas of museum management which include organizing a seminar by experts from both countries (2) modernizing museums



to attract younger audiences through technology such as creating virtual museums (3) organizing permanent exhibitions to showcase Thai cultural and historical artifacts and items and (4) supporting archaeological work in Pakistan by Thai archaeologists, particularly at sites associated with the ancient Gandhara civilization. Both sides also discussed plans for an exhibition of Gandharan artifacts in Thailand scheduled for early 2026. The Royal Thai Embassy pledged full support to facilitate all preparations for the Exhibition. Ambassador is of the view that showcasing Gandharan artifacts in Thailand will be instrumental in

deepening the knowledge and understanding of Gandhara's rich heritage and its influence on Buddhist art, especially stone-carved Buddha imagery which occurred for the first time during Gandharan civilization. In addition of making Gandharan arts more known in wider circles since more than 35 million tourists visit Thailand, this initiative will also contribute to enhancing tourism to Pakistan's Gandhara sites as well as boosting the economy for the local community. This collaboration marks another step forward in strengthening the cultural bonds between Thailand and Pakistan!

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## Briefs

ANF recovers  
1231 kg  
drugs in 10  
operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country recovered 1231 kg drugs worth over Rs 220 million and arrested nine suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday. He informed that 250 grams heroin was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist near Main Korangi Road, Karachi. The arrested suspect confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. 40 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Bahrain at Lahore International Airport. 64 ice-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Jeddah through Lahore Airport. 1208 kg hashish was recovered from two different areas of Pishin in Balochistan. 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle intercepted near M-1 Interchange, Islamabad and a suspect was arrested. 3 kg heroin, 2 kg ice and 1.2 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Daska Chowk, Sialkot. 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused held near Sargodha Mor, Mianwali. In an operation, 2.5 kg heroin was recovered from secret cavities of a truck near Kamunki Toll Plaza, Gujranwala and an accused was arrested. In 10th operation, 700 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a drug dealer nabbed near Burhan Toll Plaza, Attock. Separate cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.—APP

Tourists  
advised  
to adopt  
responsible  
travel practices

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan's breathtaking northern areas beckon tourists to marvel at its majestic snow-capped mountains, renowned tour expert Sheikh Umer cautioned on Monday against the perils of overcrowding, stressing the vital importance of responsible tourism. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, Sheikh Umer, a seasoned tour operator & expert urged local tourists to steer clear of rush spot destinations, particularly during the peak snowing season, adding, it is crucial to heed the advisories issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department to ensure a safe and unforgettable experience. Additionally, the expert urged tourists to maintain a clean environment, respect local communities and conserve natural resources to promote sustainable tourism practices. When asked about the environmental impact of tourism, Sheikh Umer stressed the need for sustainable practices. "As tourists, we have a responsibility to preserve the natural beauty of these areas. We must ensure that our activities do not harm the environment or disrupt the local ecosystem.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Students and faculty members of Quaid-e-Azam university being briefed about Senate Museum At Parliament House.

Long-term economic policies  
crucial for economic growth

Siddiqui specifically criticized the current tax regime, which he said imposes a heavy burden on businesses. He also highlighted the issue of harassment through unjustified tax notices, raids, and fines, which erode entrepreneurs' confidence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, emphasized the pivotal role of the business community in driving Pakistan's economy, particularly in industrial, commercial, and trade sectors. However, he pointed out that numerous challenges are hindering

its progress. He added that the business community remains committed to working diligently for its economic well-being, aiming to reduce the country's reliance on foreign debt by contributing taxes. In turn, the community only expects support, respect, and a conducive environment for conducting business. Siddiqui specifically criticized the current tax regime, which he said imposes

a heavy burden on businesses. He also highlighted the issue of harassment through unjustified tax notices, raids, and fines, which erode entrepreneurs' confidence. He said that access to essential services like electricity, gas, and reliable infrastructure remains a significant challenge, further complicating business operations. He noted that the inconsistency in government economic policies also discourages investment, as it makes

business people hesitant to invest in the country's future. Siddiqui also expressed concern over the business community's lack of respect and involvement in the formulation of economic policies, further undermining its trust in the system. He stressed the urgent need for political stability and long-term economic policies that could foster the establishment of new industries, create job opportunities, and generate additional

revenue for the government, thereby reducing reliance on foreign loans. Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, the acting Vice President of ICCI, emphasized the need for access to low-interest loans and tax exemptions to help new businesses flourish. Both the acting President and the acting Senior Vice President of ICCI pledged their full support to the government to achieve economic progress and prosperity.

Efforts afoot for promotion  
of tourism sector in GB

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The development and prosperity of Gilgit Baltistan were the top priority of the Federal Government and in this regard, various projects of development had been launched for the promotion of the tourism sector, health facilities, improvement in the education sector and mitigate the pressure of unemployment in this area. An official source

told sttae run news agency here on Monday, he said that Federal government had announced a series of mega development projects for the development of the remote areas of the GB. He said the incumbent regime also focused on developing the road network and connectivity of slum areas with each other to facilitate the local community. The local government also upgrading the basic health units in the far-flung areas of the GB.

He underlined that tourism is a lucrative business of the local community and in this regard, GB government provides training facilities to the youth of the area. Tourism is the best source of income for the local population, as millions of tourists visit this area every year. He commended the federal government's efforts in promoting tourism and emphasized the need for its enhancement. He proposed the establish-

ment of camping sites and tourism facilitation centers across all provinces aimed at facilitating tourists and promoting local attractions. He highlighted the importance of extensive promotion of the Salam Pakistan portal, a dedicated platform designed to guide and assist tourists visiting Pakistan. He stressed the significance of leveraging technology to provide seamless experiences for travelers.

UN urged to intervene  
promptly for Kashmiri  
leaders' lives

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik Monday has made an urgent appeal to the United Nations (UN) and the global community to intervene promptly, as the lives of Kashmiri leaders, including her husband hang precariously in the balance. In an interview with a private news channel, she expressed grave concerns over the deteriorating condition of jailed Kashmiri leaders, including her husband, also appealed to the United Nations to intervene and stop the atrocities perpetrated against innocent Kashmiris. She said there is a dire situation in Kashmir, with the Indian government's brutal occupation taking a devastating toll on the region's leaders and civilians. She highlighted the alarming lack of healthcare facilities, exacerbating the suffering of the Kashmiri people.—DNA

Punctuality of trains  
reached 96pc

ISLAMABAD: The overall punctuality ratio of trains has improved from 76 to 96 percent in four months owing to close monitoring and stern measures taken by Pakistan Railways at the divisional and ministry levels. "With the punctuality of trains and concrete measures taken by the department in last three months, the number of passengers has increased by over 20 million, which is ample proof of the department's achievement," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said, "Pakistan Railways is also set to introduce the 'Train Driver Assistant System' (TDAS) to help train drivers a clear view of the railway tracks up to an impressive distance of 700 meters." "The technology aims to enhance the safety, punctuality and efficiency of train operations during adverse weather conditions, particularly in the presence of dense smog and fog," he added. The system, he said, "TDAS is set to revolutionize the way trains navigate through foggy landscapes. It promised not only to avert potential accidents but also to facilitate smooth train travel when visibility is severely compromised." He said, "The capabilities of this digital system extend beyond improved visibility; it can also identify and monitor vital elements such as signals, level crossings, gates, track obstructions, and other potential hazards within the same 700-meter radius." The official said, "This comprehensive approach to training management promises to reduce the risk of accidents significantly." Initially, he said the department was planning to install the anti-fog device in four engines. However, Pakistan Railways has outlined a strategic expansion plan, with the ultimate goal of equipping all trains with this life-saving technology in the coming year.—DNA

Jamali, Zafar discuss Pak's  
cultural heritage promotion

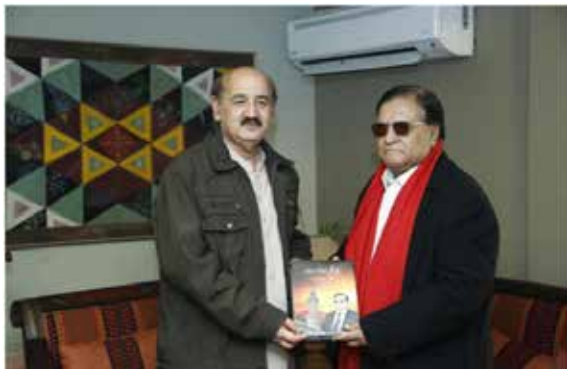
Ayub Jamali emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to showcase Pakistan's diverse culture, traditions, and arts on the international stage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Meeting between DG Pakistan National Council of Arts Ayub Jamali and President Pakistan Cultural Forum Zafar Bakhtawari, agreement on promoting the country's soft image Islamabad: Director General of Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), Ayub Jamali, met with President of Pakistan Cultural Forum, Zafar Bakhtawari, at his office. They held detailed discussions regarding the promotion of Pakistan's cultural heritage, arts, and the projection of the country's positive image. Both dignitaries agreed that Pakistan's cultural heritage plays a pivotal role in highlighting its positive aspects globally.

Ayub Jamali emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to showcase Pakistan's

Pakistan Cultural Forum and stressed the importance of cultural events, art galler-



diverse culture, traditions, and arts on the international stage. He highlighted the ongoing projects and activities of PNCA aimed at promoting the arts and culture. Zafar Bakhtawari shared details about the activities of the

ies, and active international representation to enhance the country's soft image. He proposed joint projects between PNCA and the Cultural Forum, focusing on music, film, and theater. It was mutually decided to

organize cultural festivals, exhibitions, and art workshops across the country. Additionally, they agreed on launching special campaigns and activating cultural delegations to promote Pakistani culture on the international level. DG PNCA stated that the National Council of Arts is committed to providing a platform for the country's artists and creatives. He acknowledged that Zafar Bakhtawari's suggestions would further strengthen the organization's initiatives. He underscored that Pakistan's cultural heritage deserves global recognition, and no effort would be spared in its promotion. Both leaders expressed their resolve to take every possible step to project Pakistan's soft image through culture, art,

Quaid-e-Azam  
University  
delegation  
visits Senate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 51-member delegation comprising students and faculty from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, visited the Parliament House as part of an academic tour. According to a press release, senior Senate officials warmly welcomed the delegation and facilitated the visit. The group toured the Senate Museum, where they watched a documentary on the history of the Upper House. They showed great interest in the statues of prominent politicians and the historical photographs on display. In the Banquet Hall, the delegation received a detailed briefing on the Senate's working procedures, legislative process, and its role in national governance. They later visited the Senate Hall, where officials further explained the importance of the Senate's functions and its contributions to the country's democratic system. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Senate officials for their hospitality and the informative session, describing the visit as both memorable and educational.

Naqvi  
condemns  
terrorist attack  
on police near  
Lakki Marwat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on police officers near Lakki Marwat, in which two brave officers embraced martyrdom. Paying tribute to the fallen heroes, the minister expressed heartfelt condolences to their families, assuring them of the nation's unwavering support during this difficult time. "We salute the sacrifices of the martyred officers who have set an example of courage and dedication," said Naqvi. He emphasized the historic contributions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police in the fight against terrorism, stating that their bravery and sacrifices will always be remembered and honored. Naqvi reaffirmed the government's commitment to combating terrorism and ensuring the safety of law enforcement personnel who continue to protect the nation.

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## Biden admin's 'steel wall'

IN a striking display of economic nationalism, US President Joe Biden blocked Japan's Nippon Steel from acquiring US Steel in a \$14.9 billion deal, citing "national security" concerns and the need to safeguard critical supply chains. This decision, made in the twilight of the current US administration, is more than a rejection of foreign investment; it's a declaration that the US industrial backbone is not for sale, even to its closest allies. Steel, the lifeblood of infrastructure and military might, is not just another commodity. It's the foundation of the US' bridges, tanks and skyscrapers - essential to national security, just like soldiers and satellites. This underscores the strategic significance of the Biden administration's decision. By keeping US Steel in American hands, the Biden administration has drawn a line in the sand, signaling that specific industries are too critical to be controlled by foreign entities. The statement from Biden reads: "Without domestic steel production and domestic steelworkers, our nation is less strong and less secure." This sentiment resonates deeply in a country where the decline of manufacturing has left scars on communities and fueled political populism. The Biden administration's move aligns with its broader commitment to protecting American jobs and industries - a promise that has garnered bipartisan support, with even his successor echoing similar sentiments. However, this isn't just about economics; it's about geopolitics. By rejecting Nippon Steel's bid, the US is also intensifying its efforts to maintain independence in industries where China's influence looms and attempting to strengthen its position in the ongoing economic rivalry with China. For Japan, Biden's decision is a bitter pill to swallow. Nippon Steel had promised it would not cut output capacity at US Steel's mills for 10 years. The Japanese company's pleas are in vain; Washington fundamentally treats Tokyo as a subordinate. How could a subordinate be allowed to control America's strategic industries? The implications extend beyond Japan. US allies, including the EU, are watching closely. The Biden administration's move reinforces a growing perception that the US is prioritizing its own economic security over the interests of its partners. This could strain alliances and push countries like Japan, as well as EU members, to seek closer economic ties with other nations. Washington's protectionist stance may accelerate the regionalization of the global economy. Countries excluded from US markets could double down on regional trade agreements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). These agreements, which exclude the US, could become platforms for countries to reduce their reliance on American markets and forge new economic alliances. This could lead to a more fragmented global economy, with regional blocs becoming increasingly economically self-sufficient. As the US raises barriers to foreign investment, China could position itself as a more reliable partner for countries seeking to diversify their economic relationships. While the Biden administration's decision may protect American jobs and industries in the short term, it carries long-term risks. By shutting out foreign investment, the US could miss opportunities to modernize its industries and strengthen its global competitiveness.

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## Destruction of Mosques in Gaza

THE Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs reported that the Israeli occupation army destroyed about 1,000 mosques in the Gaza Strip, while settlers stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque more than 250 times, and the call to prayer was prevented at the Ibrahim Mosque over 670 times last year. The ministry issued a special report on Sunday on the violations of the occupation army against Islamic and Christian holy sites in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the year 2024. In its report, the Ministry of Awqaf said that since the beginning of last year, the occupation has completely destroyed 815 mosques and partially destroyed 151 mosques. It also completely destroyed 19 cemeteries, violating their sanctity, exhuming graves, and removing bodies, and targeted and destroyed 3 churches in Gaza City. The ministry added that the Israeli occupation allowed settler gangs to invade and desecrate the Aqsa Mosque's courtyards and platforms with 256 incursions during the past year. They practiced unusual Talmudic rituals, including "epic prostration," which began for the first time on August 13, 2024, along with blowing the shofar. It clarified that these Talmudic rituals have been conducted at specific places and times to reinforce the temporal and spatial division of Al-Aqsa, under the supervision and protection of occupation police who consistently prevent Al-Aqsa Mosque guards, affiliated with the Awqaf in Jerusalem, from performing their duties during these incursions. The ministry noted that the so-called "Temple groups" facilitated celebrations of the Jewish New Year for settlers inside Al-Aqsa Mosque last year and incited "Temple Mount activists" to burn Al-Aqsa by posting a video showing the Mosque burning, accompanied by the comment: "Soon in these days." On the anniversary of the so-called destruction of the Temple, the ministry indicated that settlers performed collective rituals for the first time in the western area opposite the Dome of the Rock, treating the eastern area of Al-Aqsa as an unofficial "synagogue." The report said that the terrorist Ben Gvir invaded Al-Aqsa, supported by his extreme right-wing government, 7 times since taking office, and 4 times since the start of the war on Gaza. He issued a number of extreme right-wing statements threatening to establish a Jewish synagogue in Al-Aqsa, indicating intent to take control of it, and worked to intensify the Jewish presence by providing government support and legal cover. The report noted that 2,567 settlers stormed the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, during which many violations occurred, the most notable being Ben Gvir's incursion, and Rabbi Yisrael Shalita's Talmudic rituals, including dancing, singing, and epic prostration. Regarding the Ibrahim Mosque, the occupation forces committed daily violations, whether by preventing the call to prayer, which reached 674 times since the beginning of the year, or through restrictions on Muslims by closing it 10 times during the same period. The occupation also installed what is known as the "menorah" and Israeli flags on the roof and walls of the Ibrahim Mosque and held boisterous parties and Talmudic rituals in the occupied section, while beating on doors and shouting insults.

## The ruthless accountability...

Qamar Bashir



The power of social media was lately acknowledged by the US President Elect Donald J. Trump when he used TikTok very successfully to reach and influence the young audience across the country and acknowledge the power of the social media as the one major contributing factor towards his unprecedented victory during Election 2024. The power of social media has been instrumental in creating an informal yet highly effective global accountability system

THE democratization and widespread accessibility of social media across the globe have given a loud and clear voice to those who were previously unheard. These individuals, whose voices once had no reach, impact, or influence in their communities, societies, countries, or on a global level, are now empowered. Social media, with its various platforms, has opened up avenues of communication that, until a few years ago, were the exclusive domain of the rich and influential. This newfound freedom has enabled the general populace to develop the skills to ask questions, build followings, and exercise their influence. Social media influencers worldwide have become so powerful that media managers across the globe now systematically engage with them to leverage their reach and connect with their audiences, fans, and followers. During my tenure as a media manager at the Ministry of Information, I played a pivotal role in establishing social media initiatives. I was instrumental in setting up the social media cell for Maryam Nawaz Sharif and later the Digital Media Cell during the PTI government. Both entities effectively utilized social media platforms to amplify their policies and narratives, reaching millions of social media users. As Press Secretary, I curated a list of the country's top media influencers and organized two luncheons with the President. These events provided a platform for the President to share his thoughts on various critical issues of the time, fostering dialogue and understanding between the influencers and the government.

The power of social media was lately acknowledged by the US President Elect Donald J. Trump when he used TikTok very successfully to reach and influence the young audience across the country and acknowledge the power of the social media as the one major contributing factor towards his unprecedented victory during Election 2024. The power of social media has been instrumental in creating an informal yet highly effective global accountability system. This system has become particularly prominent in countries and societies where the rule of law is weak or nonexistent. In such places, the powerful often suppress criticism, control and gag accountability mechanisms, and manipulate the judiciary to serve their own interests. The legal and systemic frameworks in these societies are designed to protect the elite, allowing them to remain

above the law through sheer brute power. One striking example of this global accountability was seen in the case of General (Retired) Qamar Javed Bajwa, the former Chief of the Pakistan Army. General Bajwa wielded immense power over the country, to the extent that he was often described as a "God-like" figure. He had the authority to install or dismantle governments at will. During his tenure, allegations surfaced regarding the accumulation of billions in wealth. When his wealth and tax returns were leaked, the whistleblowers—journalists and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officials—were imprisoned rather than commended for exposing illegal financial activities. However, accountability for General Bajwa came in an unusual and public manner. While sitting on the steps of a church with his wife, he was repeatedly subjected to degrading verbal abuse, and the entire humiliating episode was recorded and uploaded to social media. The footage quickly became a viral story worldwide, illustrating how one of the most powerful figures in Pakistan could be reduced to a common, helpless individual in the face of public scrutiny. Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Qazi Faez Isa played a controversial role in Pakistan's political landscape. Through what was perceived as vindictive and revenge-driven decisions, he deprived the most popular and largest political party of its election symbol, removed its chairman, and barred it from contesting elections as a unified political entity. These actions were widely viewed as a grave disservice to the country and its people. While in Pakistan, Justice Isa appeared to be above the law. However, public accountability eventually caught up with him. First, he was humiliated while buying donuts, and later during a flight to London. Videos of these incidents quickly went viral, providing a sense of satisfaction to those who felt justice had been served for the perceived injustices against the party and its millions of supporters.

On a broader scale, the world has become increasingly hostile to the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N). The PML-N has been criticized for allegedly compromising its principles, aligning itself with the establishment, and using these connections to secure power at both the federal and provincial levels. The party was seen as the primary beneficiary of what has been described as

the most rigged, managed, and engineered election in Pakistan's history on February 8. Despite holding a minority in parliament, the PML-N formed a government with the establishment's support. Once in power, they introduced constitutional amendments and legislative changes that further empowered the already dominant establishment, solidifying their authority. These actions, however, did not go unchallenged. Both domestically and abroad, the leadership of the PML-N has faced relentless backlash. Overseas Pakistanis have publicly confronted and humiliated them, recording these incidents on video. These clips often go viral on social media, amplifying their humiliation globally and serving as a form of public accountability.

When a country's internal accountability mechanisms are stifled and fail to deliver justice, the diaspora of mis-governed nations turns to other power centers in their host countries to hold their leadership accountable for unlawful, undemocratic, and illegal actions. In Pakistan's case, as all pillars of the state have become subservient to the powerful establishment, the Pakistani diaspora has looked to the leadership of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. These countries wield significant influence over Pakistan as its largest aid donors, key importers, business partners, and through their control and influence over international financial institutions like the IMF, which can bring Pakistan's fragile economy to its knees.

This two-pronged accountability is extremely potent and has the potential to shrink the space for dictators and corrupt rulers globally. No matter how powerful a dictator, corrupt ruler, judge, parliamentarian, or businessman may be, they might evade formal accountability processes within their country, but they cannot escape the relentless accountability of the general public wielding the power of social media or the unyielding scrutiny of the country's diaspora worldwide. Rulers and dictators now face a stark choice: either restore the rule of law and allow the pillars of the state to function independently or prepare to face ruthless accountability through social media and the global diaspora. The era of unchallenged impunity is rapidly coming to an end.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
Former Press Minister at Embassy  
of Pakistan to France  
Former MD, SRBC

## How dialogue can transform Pakistan's political landscape

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The return to civilian rule in 1988 marked a period of frequent political dialogues between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the two dominant political parties. However, these engagements often devolved into personal rivalries, undermining institutional stability. One notable instance was the 1993 dialogue, which resulted in the resignation of both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan

IN Pakistan's parliamentary democracy, dialogue between the government and opposition plays a pivotal role in ensuring political stability and the smooth functioning of democratic institutions. The country's diverse social, ethnic, and political landscape makes such dialogue essential for bridging divides and promoting inclusive decision-making. Historically, the absence of effective communication between opposing sides has led to political impasses, destabilized governments, and hindered national progress. Constructive dialogue provides a platform to resolve contentious issues such as electoral reforms, economic policies, and constitutional amendments through mutual understanding and compromise. Furthermore, it addresses the grievances of marginalized groups and smaller political entities, ensuring governance reflects the aspirations of all citizens.

Pakistan's political history has often been marked by polarization and mistrust, further underscoring the significance of dialogue. Instances like the Charter of Democracy signed on May 14, 2006, demonstrate how meaningful engagement can pave the way for institutional reforms and political stability. Conversely, failures in dialogue, as witnessed during the political crises of 2014 and 2023, have led to prolonged stalemates, undermining public confidence in democratic processes. Effective dialogue fosters accountability, enabling the opposition to critique government policies constructively while providing the government an opportunity to explain its actions and build consensus. Strengthening Pakistan's democratic foundations requires prioritizing dialogue to address challenges, promote national unity, and uphold parliamentary democracy. Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, the relationship between the government and opposition has frequently been characterized by mistrust and conflict. This lack of a cooperative political culture has historically hindered efforts at dialogue, resulting in missed opportunities for national consensus. Dialogues have ranged from constitutional agreements to attempts at resolving political crises, yielding varying degrees of success and failure. In the early years of independence, Pakistan's nascent political system faced significant challenges, including the struggle to formulate a constitution. Efforts for dialogue were evident during the first Constituent Assembly's deliberations, but political rivalries and regional differences marred these attempts. The dismissal of Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin's government on April 17, 1953, set a precedent of political instability,

discouraging meaningful engagement between opposing political forces. This early breakdown in dialogue established a pattern of mistrust that persisted for decades. The political turmoil of the 1970s underscored the necessity of dialogue during one of Pakistan's most severe crises. After the 1971 secession of East Pakistan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government initiated the drafting of the 1973 Constitution, a landmark achievement of consensus politics. However, the political environment soon deteriorated. In 1977, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) alleged electoral rigging by Bhutto's government, leading to widespread protests. Attempts at dialogue between the government and the PNA in June 1977 failed, ultimately paving the way for General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law. The return to civilian rule in 1988 marked a period of frequent political dialogues between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the two dominant political parties. However, these engagements often devolved into personal rivalries, undermining institutional stability. One notable instance was the 1993 dialogue, which resulted in the resignation of both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, ending a prolonged standoff. While this resolution underscored the importance of dialogue, it also highlighted the recurring inability of political actors to resolve disputes independently. The political dynamics of the 2000s were shaped by the return of exiled leaders and the restoration of democratic processes. The 2006 Charter of Democracy, signed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, symbolized a commitment to democratic norms. Although the charter provided a framework for cooperation, its practical implementation often fell short as both parties prioritized their interests over institutional reforms. Nevertheless, the document remains a reference point for proponents of democratic dialogue in Pakistan. Meanwhile, Dharna (sit-in) politics emerged as a significant phenomenon in Pakistan's political landscape, often reflecting a deadlock between the government and opposition. Early instances, such as Qazi Hussain Ahmed's dharnas in 1993, set a precedent for mass mobilization to challenge government policies. Rooted in ideological opposition to corruption and perceived misgovernance, these protests highlighted the frustration of opposition parties unable to achieve their goals through parliamentary mechanisms. In subsequent years, dharna politics gained prominence with Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's Pakistan Awami Tehreek sit-ins and Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests.

Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's 2013 dharna demanded electoral reforms and accountability, while the 2014 PTI sit-in reshaped the political narrative. Lasting 126 days, the PTI sit-in in Islamabad called for an investigation into alleged rigging in the 2013 elections. While these protests demonstrated the power of large-scale mobilizations to disrupt governance and draw national attention, they also deepened political polarization, as seen in the growing mistrust between the PTI and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) during that period. These protests underscored both the strength of democratic expression and the limitations of dialogue and institutional mechanisms in resolving political crises, often pushing disputes from parliamentary halls to the streets.

The political dynamics following the 2018 general elections brought new challenges. The PTI's ascension to power was met with resistance from opposition parties, which accused the government of political victimization. Deadlocks over issues such as electoral reforms and accountability highlighted the persistent lack of trust. Despite occasional overtures for dialogue, meaningful progress remained elusive. The removal of Imran Khan as Pakistan's Prime Minister through a no-confidence vote on April 10, 2022, was a historic and polarizing event. While opposition parties hailed it as a victory for democracy, Khan's supporters protested, claiming it was a foreign conspiracy. Negotiations began again in earnest in May 2023, mediated by civil society groups and political actors concerned about Pakistan's stability. Discussions revolved around a roadmap for electoral reforms and a consensus on the timing of the next elections. However, the talks collapsed, over disagreements on key issues, including the composition of the caretaker government. This impasse further polarized the political environment, with both sides accusing each other of insincerity. Currently, PTI and the government, facilitated by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, have initiated dialogue to ease political tensions, with the first session held on December 23, 2024. The government has urged PTI to present a formal charter of demands. Both sides recognize the importance of dialogue for political and economic stability, making these talks a pivotal step toward reducing polarization in Pakistan. Pakistan's history underscores that constructive dialogue between the government and opposition is not merely an option but a necessity for democratic stability. Moving forward, fostering a culture of dialogue and compromise is essential to bridging political divides and ensuring that the country's democratic institutions can effectively address the challenges of governance and representation.

## Briefs

Inability  
to present  
written  
demands...

FROM PAGE 01  
Sources say that apart from presenting a written charter of demand after meeting Khan, the PTI would have to ink an agreement with the government if the demands are accepted. Despite the conducive environment in two of the sittings so far, neither side has approached the NA speaker's office to convene the third meeting. On the issue of written demands, PTI negotiator Asad Qaiser has maintained that the verbal demands presented in the two meetings had now become minutes and should be considered their written demands. Talking to the media outside Adiala jail on Monday, PTI Chairman Barister Gohar said that it was necessary to meet Khan before the third round of talks. Noting that they had informed the government's negotiation panel that they had to meet the party's incarcerated founder, Gohar said that they had hoped to do so by today but there has been no confirmation in this regard so far. "Hopefully we will be able to meet Khan tomorrow," remarked the PTI chairman. Refuting reports claiming that back-door negotiations were underway with Khan's wife and former first lady Bushra Bibi, he clarified that no meeting had taken place other than the two rounds of talks and that only the committee, formed by the party founder, was holding dialogue. Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief and PTI's negotiation committee member Sahibzada Hamid Raza has said that the government has not yet confirmed the permission to meet Khan. Speaking to a private news channel, PTI's Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram said that the party did not raise any objection regarding presenting its demands in writing. However, he added that they could not do so without meeting Khan.

PML-N  
claims PPP  
still on...

FROM PAGE 01  
The CCI was convened in the last 11 months. "There's always a bit of a musical rhythm within a coalition government, just like within a family. Within a family, siblings or family members might have their disagreements. "But that doesn't mean there's a serious rift. Whatever the issue is, we handle it internally in a mature manner," the planning minister told reporters in Karachi, speaking alongside PPP leader and Sindh Minister Nasir Hussain Shah. Explaining further, the federal minister said that the PML-N and the PPP are the country's major political parties with their distinct ideologies. However, he maintained, that they are in agreement on Pakistan's development — to stand on one page for the country's interest. "This understanding was the foundation of the Charter of Democracy signed by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. It reflects the essence of democracy, where two mature political parties collaborate for the country's betterment."

PM directs  
property...

FROM PAGE 01  
racket abroad and take prompt measures for their extradition to Pakistan. He also advised the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to run an awareness campaign, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, to inform the public about using only legal channels for overseas employment. He said technical training institutions should be promoted in the country to provide certified professionals to the overseas market as per the needs of the day. He also instructed to make the screening process for individuals traveling abroad more effective. Regarding facilitators and abettors of human traffickers, the Prime Minister said strict punitive measures, along with disciplinary action, should be taken against such elements.

South Africa whitewash  
Pakistan, win Test series 2-0

*Aiden Markram and David Bedingham easily chase 58-run target in seventh over*

## SPORTS DESK

CAPE TOWN: South Africa chased down the paltry 58-run target in 7.1 overs to thump Pakistan by ten wickets and complete the series sweep on the fourth day of the second Test here at Newlands on Monday. David Bedingham struck a quick 44\* off 30, laced with four boundaries and two sixes, while Aiden Markram scored 14 runs to help South Africa chase the target without any damage. Earlier in the evening, Salman Ali Agha and Mohammad Rizwan came out to bat in the third session and extended their partnership to 88 runs before the latter fell prey to Keshav Maharaj. The wicket-keeper went back to the pavilion after scoring 41 off 75. Maharaj struck again after a few overs to remove Agha, who was playing at 48, leaving Pakistan struggling at 441-7. Aamir Jamal then played a crucial 34-run knock and added a valuable 37 runs for the eighth wicket with Mir Hamza (16) before Pakistan were bundled for 478, setting a target of 58 runs. For South Africa, Kagiso Rabada and Maharaj claimed

three wickets each, while Marco Jansen and Mphaka took two and one wickets respectively. Earlier in the day, Shan Masood and Saud Shakeel extended their partnership to 51 runs, after coming from Lunch, to take the total to 329-4 before Pakistan faced a double blow. Rabada struck again to dismiss Shakeel, who scored 23 runs from 51 balls. Meanwhile, Masood fell prey to debutant Kwena Maphaka in the next over after playing a stellar knock of 145 runs from 251 balls, laced with 17 boundaries. After back-to-back wickets, Salman Ali Agha and Mohammad Rizwan joined hands to launch recovery for Pakistan. They forged an unbeaten 69-run stand to take the team's score to 398-5 at the end of the second session. Pakistan started Day 4 with captain Shan Masood (102\*) and nightwatchman Khuram Shahzad (8\*) on the crease at the score of 213-1 in their second innings after they were forced to follow on. However, Shahzad fell prey to Marco Jansen after extending his overnight score to 18 runs, which came off 47 balls, leaving Pakistan reeling at 235-2. Masood was joined by Kamran



Ghulam (28) and together they forged a gutsy partnership of 43 runs for the third wicket. South Africa pace spearhead castled Ghulam to bring Saud Shakeel out to bat, who stayed resilient with Masood to ensure no further damage until Lunch. Pakistan were

on 312-3 with Masood (137\*) and Shakeel (16\*) on the crease when the umpires called for Lunch on Day 4. Pakistan Playing XI: Shan Masood (c), Saim Ayub, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Salman Ali Agha, Aamir Jamal, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Khuram Shahzad. South Africa Playing XI: Aiden Markram, Ryan Rickelton, Wiaan Mulder, Tristan Stubbs, Temba Bavuma (c), David Bedingham, Kyle Verreyne (wk), Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kagiso Rabada, Kwena Maphaka.

Naqvi inspect rapid progress of  
Gaddafi Stadium renovations

Naqvi expressed his satisfaction with the speed at which the project is progressing

## BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: In less than three months, Gaddafi Stadium has undergone a remarkable transformation, with significant strides made in the construction and renovation process. The grey structure is now 100% complete, and the finishing work is progressing rapidly. The stadium, which boasts a capacity of over 34,000 spectators, is set to offer a completely revamped experience. The installation of modern lighting is nearing its final stages, adding to

the stadium's contemporary appeal. Notably, the view of the ground from the general enclosures has significantly improved, offering spectators an enhanced match-day experience. Additionally, the installation of new scoreboards on both sides of the ground is currently underway, further enhancing the venue's appeal. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi, recently visited Gaddafi Stadium for a detailed inspection of the ongoing reconstruction work. He reviewed the progress across all sections

of the stadium, including the general enclosures and the main building. Despite the challenging weather conditions, including severe cold and fog, Naqvi expressed his satisfaction with the speed at which the project is progressing. "I am pleased with the progress made so far, and I am confident that the stadium will be ready with state-of-the-art facilities well ahead of the Champions Trophy," Naqvi remarked during the inspection. He also took the opportunity to meet with the workers on-site, congratulating them for

Street child  
football team trials  
begin nationwide

The maximum age limit for participants has been set at 17 years

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Trials for the Pakistan Street Child Football Team are currently underway across the country, with the aim of selecting young talent for the prestigious Norway Cup 2025 and the Street Child World Cup 2026. In the first phase, trials successfully concluded in 12 cities across Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The cities that participated include Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Peshawar, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, among others. These trials received an overwhelming response, with a large number of enthusiastic young players taking part. The next phase of trials will focus on Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Young athletes from these regions will have the chance to showcase their skills and secure a place in the national team. To ensure a fair competition, the maximum age limit for participants has been set at 17 years. The Norway Cup 2025 will take place in Oslo, Norway, from July 26 to August 2, while the Street Child World Cup 2026 is scheduled to be held in the United States in February and March.

Jay Shah pushes for two-tier  
system in Test cricket

In 2016, former BCCI president Anurag Thakur had dismissed idea

## WEB DESK

DUBAI: India, Australia, and England are reportedly in advanced discussions to introduce a two-tier structure for Test cricket, with the "big three" nations playing each other more frequently in high-profile series. The proposal is gaining significant momentum, fueled by record crowds for the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which saw an attendance of 837,879 spectators. With a large following in these countries, the idea is now being seriously considered by the International Cricket Council (ICC), led by chairman Jay Shah. A meeting is scheduled later this month with Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird and England Cricket Board chairman Richard Thompson to discuss the implementation of the two-tier structure. This comes after growing calls for more "best versus best" encounters in Test cricket, a sentiment echoed by former India coach Ravi Shastri, who has long been critical of the current, overcrowded international schedule. "I've been a firm believer in that if you want

PCB neglects  
U19 cricket amid  
domestic revamp

PCB neglects domestic U-19 cricket, raising concerns over future talent

## DNA

LAHORE: In Pakistan cricket, it has become a longstanding tradition that every time a new chairman takes the reins at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the board's direction changes according to their personal approach. The current administration, under the leadership of PCB Chairman Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, appears eager to accelerate progress in the game. Naqvi introduced the "Champions Cup" tournaments and expanded domestic cricket by assigning additional responsibilities to five mentors. However, amidst these changes, one crucial element seems to have been overlooked—Pakistan's Under-19 cricket. Between September 2024 and January 2025, the PCB organised Pakistan's largest domestic tournaments—the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy (First-Class), the President's One Day Cup and the Regional Inter-District Senior (three-day) tournament. However, during this period, there has been a notable silence surrounding the domestic Under-19 scene. On September 10, 2024, the PCB unexpectedly halted the domestic Under-19 tournament. Since then, no updates or actions have been announced regarding junior-level cricket. Despite this, Pakistan's Under-19 team has remained active on the international front. However, the lack of a structured domestic Under-19 tournament has meant that selections have largely been made based on past performances or personal preferences, without the backing of current domestic data. This has raised concerns, with the board justifying the selections by claiming there was no recent domestic data available. In January and February 2024, Pakistan's Under-19 team, led by wicketkeeper Mirza Saad Baig, competed in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in South Africa.

Verdict  
in 190m  
pound...

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At first, it was pronounced that the decision would be announced on December 23. Later, it was delayed to January 6. £190 million case involves a reference filed by NAB against former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and others in December 2023.

PPP decides  
to openly  
oppose...

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criticise the government's decisions and directed them to challenge its policies, especially in federal and provincial governments. PPP leadership has reportedly issued detailed guidelines for its members, advising them to actively criticise the government's ineffective and flawed policies. The party has expressed concern that remaining silent on the government's actions would be seen as tacit approval, thus instructing party officials to raise their voices against what they see as detrimental policies. According to party sources, the PPP believes that silence on critical issues could lead to political damage, with the blame for the government's poor decisions potentially falling on the opposition party. The leadership is determined not to let the government's failures tarnish the party's image.

Türkiye  
condemns  
Trubat...

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read the ministry's press release on Monday. Expressing solidarity with the victims and their families, the ministry added, "We wish Allah's mercy upon those who lost their lives in the attack and a speedy recovery to the injured." Reaffirming its unwavering support for Pakistan in combating terrorism, the statement concluded, "Türkiye will continue to support Pakistan in its fight against terrorism." This declaration highlights Türkiye's commitment to its close ally, Pakistan, in addressing shared challenges related to security and regional stability. (ILKHA)

Sukkur court  
summons  
PM, other...

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judge-II issued notices to PM Shehbaz, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, directing them to appear before the court on January 15. The petitioner, in an application, claimed that the unemployed Pakistanis were "poised to leave the country due to the government's negligence." "The government writ has ended as 75 Pakistanis lost their lives in the incidents," it added. The petitioner asked the court to issue directives for the registration of a case against government officials at Rohri police station. The development came as more than 80 Pakistanis had drowned after boats carrying them capsized near Greece on the night between December 13 and 14.

German  
diplomat  
found dead...

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absent from work for two days, Express News reported. They broke into his apartment and found him unresponsive. Islamabad Police were notified immediately and transported the body to a local hospital for a post-mortem examination. Police officials stated that while the cause of death is not yet confirmed, initial investigations indicate that Thomas Fielder had previously suffered a minor heart attack, which could have played a role. A post-mortem report will determine the exact cause of death, and police are continuing their investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident. The German Embassy has been informed, and further details are awaited. Fielder had been residing in the Diplomatic Enclave, a high-security area where many foreign diplomats live and work.

## Rashid Khan powers Afghanistan to Test series win

*This is Afghanistan's fourth win in Test cricket history*

## WEB DESK

KABUL: Rashid Khan's exceptional seven-wicket performance led Afghanistan to a 72-run victory over Zimbabwe in the second Test in Bulawayo, securing a 1-0 series win after the first match ended in a draw. Zimbabwe, facing a daunting target of 278, were already on the brink of defeat heading into the final day at 205 for 8. They lost their last two wickets without adding to their overnight score. Rashid could have claimed a wicket in his first over of the day, dismissing Richard Ngarava, had captain Hashmatullah Shahidi not dropped a chance at point after running in from cover. However, it did not matter as Ngarava was dismissed in the following over, run out by Shahidullah Kamal following a miscommunication with Craig Ervine. Ervine, who had kept Zimbabwe's hopes alive in the first innings with his 75, was then trapped leg before, handing Rashid



his seventh wicket and Afghanistan their victory. Earlier in the match, Afghanistan had turned the tide through brilliant centuries from Rahmat Shah (139) and Ismat Alam (101), posting a challenging total for the hosts, despite trailing Zimbabwe's first-innings score. Zimbabwe's first innings relied heavily on three senior batters, Sikandar Raza (61), Ervine (75), and Sean Williams (49), who led their charge past Afghanistan's first-innings total. However, Zimbabwe's resistance faltered in the second innings as Rashid struck with crucial wickets on Day 4. Although Raza, Ben Curran, and Takudzwanashe Kaitano got starts, Rashid removed each of them. Ervine attempted a defiant knock, but the middle and lower order crumbled under the pressure, and Zimbabwe were bowled out, with Rashid claiming his 11th wicket of the match to seal the victory. This is Afghanistan's fourth Test win, with one victory each against Bangladesh and Ireland, and two wins over Zimbabwe.



