



Hailed the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) performance as it crossed 100,000 points signaling a major boost to Pakistan's economy

Minister for Industries and Production
Rana Tanveer Hussain

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No direct firing and no fatality during LEAs operation against PTI mob: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday stated categorically that no direct firing was done by the law enforcement agencies during operation to flush out Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf protesters.

Talking to foreign media, along with Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, he said that there was clear policy of the government that no direct firing will be done on protesters.

The minister said that there were no fatalities in the operation and both major hospitals of the Capital - Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences and Polyclinic had issued statements that no dead bodies were brought there. Besides, the Ministry of National Health Services also issued a statement denying PTI's claims that its workers were killed in security forces' firing. The minister stated that a list circulating on social media regarding the death of protesters was declared fake. The minister said that the federal capital was besieged for the past several days by the miscreants belonging to a political party and this was not the first time they had done so.

Attaullah Tarar said that the PTI activists wanted to disrupt peace in Islamabad. He said that the Belarusian President and his delegation was present in the red zone when the PTI protesters besieged the capital. The minister said that the miscreants had modern weapons, tear gas shells, stones and slingshots with them and they were targeting the law enforcement agencies personnel. He informed the foreign media that Islamabad High Court had ordered that there would be no protest of any kind but they openly violated the court orders. The miscreants violated the red zone and tried to wreak havoc with the country when the economy was doing well. "We offered them to protest at Sangjani near the capital where they could protest peacefully but they rejected the offer as peaceful protest was not their intention. He said two days ago, a footage was released in which professionals in the protesters could be seen firing, using weapons, tear gas shells, pellet guns. Tarar said that four Rangers and two police personnel were martyred by miscreant attacks. He asked on whose hands the blood of these martyrs could be found. He said the security forces performed their duty and established peace in the federal capital. The minister lamented that a false narrative was created on social media claiming that Rangers were martyred by their own people. He told the media that culprit involved in hit and run incident had been identified who belonged to Abbottabad City.

He said there was no rhyme or reason behind the protest, only they wanted to disturb the peace of Islamabad. They had no public demand, except they wanted release of their leader jailed in several cases including corruption, he added. "We arrested 37 Afghan criminals during the PTI protest. Afghanistan is our friendly country. The question arises, what were the Afghan citizens doing in the protest of the political party in Islamabad? Are they allowed to do so?" He said that a large-scale operations were conducted from 2013 to 2017, peace was restored to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh metropolis Karachi and incidents of terrorism decreased in entire country.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding law and order situation.

Govt to establish Anti-Riots Force to combat violence: PM

PM says he will soon announce 'Home Grown Plan' to transform Pakistan's economic landscape

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government will establish an Anti-Riots Force in Islamabad and across the country to combat future attempts to create violence and unrest in the country. This force will be equipped with professional training and necessary equipment, on the lines of international standards.

Legal actions will be taken against those who damage public and private property, along with armed individuals, the prime minister said. Chairing a meeting to review law and order situation in the country, the prime minister instructed that a comprehensive strategy be developed to prevent any future attempts to march towards Islamabad or any other city for personal or political gains.

He emphasized that those who attempted to bankrupt the country to save their government were brought to justice. The prime minister was briefed on the recent protests across the country, where demonstrators targeted government property and attacked Rangers and police personnel. The government, he said demonstrated restraint by preventing armed individuals from spreading chaos under the guise of peaceful protests.

The prime minister said, "Instead of following legal procedures, repeated efforts were made to create chaos by mobilizing forces towards

Islamabad, attempting to spread unrest across the country." He said during the mobilization of these disruptive elements, several security forces' personnel were injured and martyred. "How can these individuals claim to be revolutionary when they are attempting to destroy the nation and create chaos?" the prime minister questioned. He directed that immediate legal action be taken against the elements involved in the violent mob that marched towards Islamabad.

The prime minister also emphasized the need for further improvements in the prosecution system. "Once the disruptive group dispersed, the stock exchange crossed the 100,000 points mark," the prime minister pointed out. "The country suffered billions in losses due to these attempts to spread disorder."

The prime minister held the disruptive group and its masterminds responsible for the economic damage. He called for the immediate identification and punishment of the disruptive elements within the group. "The entire nation including myself pay tribute to the security personnel who sacrificed their lives while performing their duties during this turmoil," he added.

The prime minister also called for bringing to justice those responsible for inciting public agitation, uncertainty, and unrest during the recent events.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Prime Minister's Advisor Rana Sanaulah, the

Attorney General, and other senior officials. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has called for collective efforts to strengthen country's economy as national security is directly linked with the economic security.

Addressing 26th Security Workshop of the National Defense University in Islamabad on Thursday, PM Shehbaz Sharif said the national and the economic securities go hand and hand. The Prime Minister said economic security will automatically strengthen the critical security and vice versa if a country is economically strong, its exports growing, industrial base expanding, productive jobs are being provided, and bureaucracy is efficient and agile. PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed the confidence that Pakistan is moving in the right direction. He said the Stock Exchange crossed the hundred thousand points, which is a big mark in Pakistan's history.

The Prime Minister further said he will soon announce "Home Grown Plan" to transform Pakistan's economic landscape.

Regarding the security challenges, he said the brave soldiers of Pakistan Army, Law Enforcement Agencies, civilians, doctors, nurses, skilled workers, children, mothers and people from all walks of life rendered sacrifices to defeat terrorism.

He added that the nation paid a huge price including a loss of 89,000 lives and economic damages worth 130 billion dollars in the war against terrorism.

Every effort is being made to address the smog problem right away: Mohsin Naqvi

Country Director World Bank Najee Bin Hussain calls on Interior Minister



ISLAMABAD: World Bank Country Director Najee Bin Hussain called on Federal Interior Minister Senator Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

During the meeting, it was agreed to tackle the smog issue through mutual cooperation. In the meeting, it was decided that a joint team of the World Bank and CDA will prepare an anti-smog plan. During the meeting, sustainable development goals and issues of mutual interest in Pakistan were discussed. Moreover, electric buses, clean water, sewage and support for the development of slums were also discussed. Mohsin Naqvi said that this year the air quality index reached 271. Before the situation reaches dangerous levels, we need to immediately formulate a comprehensive anti-smog plan. He said that we would welcome the World Bank's cooperation in improving Islamabad's air quality. He added that every effort is being made to address the smog problem right away. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi highlighted that Islamabad is one of the most beautiful capitals in the world and its serenity should be maintained. He stressed that it is necessary to ascertain the real causes of smog through an international quality assessment report. He said that the installation of anti-smog machines in Islamabad is also being reviewed, and the main goal is to provide a clean and healthy environment to the citizens and visitors of Islamabad.

The Federal Interior Minister said that we are keen to control air pollution in Islamabad with the help of the World Bank. He said that an electric bus service has been started to keep the city's environment clean, and there is a need to increase it further. He said that the improvement of slums and rural areas is also among our priorities, furthermore providing clean water and sanitation to citizens is also among our goals. He said that WASA's institution in Islamabad is being replaced by "Islamabad Water".

The World Bank Country Director assured the Interior Minister of cooperation in controlling smog and achieving sustainable development goals, saying that they are ready to formulate an anti-smog strategy in consultation with the CDA, and the report will help get to the root cause of the problem. Federal Secretary Interior, Chairman CDA, Deputy Commissioner and relevant officials were also present on the occasion. SABAH

Closing Ceremony of 44th PARA central meet was held at AMU, Jhelum



RAWALPINDI: Closing Ceremony of 44th Pakistan Army Rifle Association (PARA) Central Meet was held today at Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU), Jhelum.

General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The mega shooting event was conducted from 14 October to 28 November 2024. Over 2000 Firers from Army, Navy, Air Force, Civil Armed Forces including Rangers (Sindh & Punjab), teams ex Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Federal Rifle Association, Lahore Garrison Shooting Gallery (LGSG) and civilians participated in the competition.

COAS and Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), who was the Guest of Honor at the ceremony, awarded trophies and medals to the award winners and runners up in each category.

In the Inter Services matches, Pakistan Army won three contests including CJCSC, COAS and CNS matches, while Pakistan Air Force won CAS contest. Pakistan Army secured overall Championship Trophy.

FTR team trophy was won by Pakistan Army led by Lieutenant General Ahsan Gulrez, HI (M).

The President's Cup National Challenge match trophy was awarded to Naik Waseem Ahmed Khan of Pakistan Army. Pakistan Air Force won the Prime Minister 'Skills at Arms' Big Bore National Challenge. Azad Kashmir Regiment won the first prize in para firing matches (infantry squad).

The highest military shooting honor, 'The Master at Arms' Trophy was awarded to Sepoy Aftab Ahmed of Punjab Regiment. The 'Best Shot Match Trophy' Group 2 and Group 3 was awarded to Lance Dafadar Muhammad Imran of Cavalry and Havaladar Fateh Ullah Khan of EME Battalion. While interacting with the participants, COAS appreciated the firers for their excellent standards of marksmanship. Terming shooting skill as the hallmark of a professional soldier, he said "attaining proficiency at shooting must remain at the heart of basic military training objectives".

Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Commander Rawalpindi Corps. PR

Four terrorists, including ringleader, killed in Bagh IBO: ISPR

RAWALPINDI: Four terrorists, including their ringleader Batoor, were killed and three others sustained injuries during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) carried out by security forces in the Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the military's media wing said on Thursday. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the security forces conducted the IBO in the general area Bagh, Khyber district on the reported presence of terrorists on November 27.

"During the conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged khwarj location, as a result of which, four khwarj including Kharij ring leader Batoor, were sent to hell, while three khwarj got injured." The ISPR said that the sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country. PR



Finance Minister lauds SECP efforts for promoting EODB

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, on Thursday appreciated the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) efforts for promoting ease of doing business (EODB) in Pakistan. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, visited SECP, Head Office in Islamabad, said a press release issued here. During the visit, he was briefed by the Chairman SECP, Akif Saeed, and the management team on upcoming initiatives, key reforms, and achievements to date.

The minister was briefed by the Chairman SECP on efforts towards ease of doing business in Pakistan and reaping the benefits of advancement in technology through regulatory reforms, digitalization of services, and access to finance, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

He was also briefed on areas related to market development and innovation, such as regulatory sandbox and efforts to promote startups. The minister expressed keen interest in SECP's initia-

tives towards sustainability reporting and investor education and protection and expressed satisfaction with the SECP initiative to launch the ESG Sustain Portal. The minister appreciated the steps being taken by SECP to provide a one-window solution to companies and digital filing of documents and other initiatives aimed at facilitating investors, such as the Central Gateway Portal and Emlaak Financials. While acknowledging the contribution of SECP in the launch of Government Debt Securities (GDS), he highlighted the need to create liquidity in the secondary market. The minister emphasized the need for creating awareness regarding positive initiatives taken by SECP to provide maximum benefit to stakeholders. He also advised SECP to maintain close liaison with the government for effective introduction of pension reforms and to work with other regulatory bodies to provide seamless and efficient services in the financial sector. The minister assured SECP of the government's support on the legislative reforms. DNA

NA of Pakistan & Russian State Duma sign historic agreement on cooperation

MOSCOW: Pakistan and Russia signed a historic Agreement between State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Cooperation in Moscow on Thursday.

The Agreement was signed here in Moscow by Visiting Pakistan's National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and his counterpart Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the Russian State Duma. The Agreement aims to enhance ties between the two legislative bodies and establish permanent cooperation mechanisms through committees, commissions and parliamentary groups. In his opening remarks, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq



noted that with Vyacheslav Volodin, he has long ties of friendship, while with some members of the Russian

delegation, Ayaz Sadiq has been acquainted for over 10 years. He also thanked Vyacheslav Volodin for

accepting invitation to visit Pakistan. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq also expressed gratitude to Vyacheslav Volodin for his support to the initiative of Pakistan to convene a Speakers Conference Format. The sides agreed to hold its fourth Session in Moscow in 2025. In this connection, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq suggested that not only official but also business delegations may be invited to this meeting in order to enhance economic cooperation. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Thursday, on the invitation of his counterpart, Vyacheslav Volodin. The two parliamentary leaders held a tête-à-tête, followed by delegation-level talks. SABAH

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New CPEC playbook

DR HASSAN DAUD BUTT

Amidst global economic uncertainty, developing nations are striving to minimise long-term economic setbacks and foster recovery. To break free from the low-income trap and achieve sustained prosperity, these countries are prioritising productivity, technological advancement, and innovation as fundamental pillars of their economic strategies. Emerging economies in Asia, as highlighted by the McKinsey Global Institute, have positioned themselves as leaders in technological platforms, resource management, energy solutions, and capital development. Examining the economic impact of demographics across regions reveals that Asia's urban population is expected to grow from 1.6 billion to 3.0 billion by 2030. A prime example of how geography, a sizeable population, and connectivity can drive economic success is China's extraordinary rise. With trends like globalisation, nearshoring, and friend-shoring reshaping the global investment landscape, Asia is poised to become the centre of the global economy by 2050. While these global trends offer opportunities, they also bring domestic political and economic challenges, including low productivity, into sharper focus. This is a critical time for Pakistan to reconsider its growth trajectory and align with international trends. Breaking the cycle of low income and setting the stage for a future centred on productivity and innovation will require gradual yet consistent advancements in the country's industrial and economic structure, renewable energy initiatives, and technological adoption. Over the past decade, China has been Pakistan's leading investor. Through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it has not only helped address Pakistan's energy shortages but also constructed critical infrastructure, including the Gwadar Port, a cornerstone of Pakistan's Blue Economy. Gwadar's strategic connectivity to the hinterland via the coastal highway and its linkage to global markets through the recently operationalized Gwadar International Airport, funded by a \$230 million Chinese grant, underscores its importance. Moving forward, it is imperative to focus on establishing processing and manufacturing industries within the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and the Gwadar Free Zone. This should be followed by a phase of maturity where endogenous mechanisms for sustainable growth are firmly in place. The development of Gwadar city infrastructure, as outlined in its master plan, will be crucial to realising the full dividend of the port city and addressing the genuine concerns of the local population. The next phase of CPEC may not involve mega-projects but should feature initiatives aligned with evolving global trends, regional needs, and Pakistan's economic priorities. However, the emerging geopolitical landscape poses significant challenges to CPEC's progress, notably in the form of security concerns and narrative-related issues such as recent terrorist attacks and debates surrounding anti-CPEC/BRI sentiments within the broader context of US-China rivalry. While discussing this new phase, it is essential to support and address the concerns of existing Chinese investors, who will play a pivotal role in attracting new private or state-owned enterprises to Pakistan. Regular engagement with these stakeholders is imperative. Strengthening security infrastructure through technology-driven solutions, particularly in critical areas like SEZs and mega energy projects, is equally important. Additionally, incremental investment and financing models must be adopted for large-scale projects like the MLI railway project. Dividing such projects into manageable phases with clear milestones will help attract investment and ensure steady, measurable progress. There is also untapped potential for collaboration between Chinese Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Pakistani businesses, particularly in sectors such as engineering, automotive, IT, chemicals, textiles, and agro-based industries. Encouraging Chinese SMEs and start-ups to visit Pakistan through tailored tourism and academia initiatives could serve as a precursor to investment. Simultaneously, the Pakistani business community must be motivated to seize these opportunities. Establishing a High-Tech Education City under CPEC, through partnerships with Chinese universities and research institutions, could be a transformative step forward. Given Pakistan's resource-constrained environment, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) offer a viable model for financing large-scale projects. However, the government must enhance the capacity of officials engaged in PPP nodes, particularly at the provincial level. Offering realistic, non-financial incentives tailored to each region's unique needs will further strengthen this model. It is essential to reflect on why Pakistan has struggled to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) at the same level as countries like Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, and Thailand, despite offering competitive incentives, a favourable geographical location, and a relatively large population. Furthermore, Pakistan's investment-to-GDP ratio remains significantly lower than the regional average. Investors, whether domestic or foreign, private or state-owned, are drawn to Pakistan's large market size and abundant human and mineral resources. What they need is a conducive environment characterised by pragmatic governance, financial security, and personal safety. The incentives required to attract investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be the same as those for Punjab and Sindh, which benefit from superior infrastructure. Pakistan needs a tailored approach that acknowledges the heterogeneity of investment opportunities across the country and implements region-specific strategies to attract both domestic and foreign investments. A recurring challenge in Pakistan's economic planning has been the gap between policy formulation and implementation. Incentive packages must not only be well-conceived but also reliably executed to build investor confidence. An incremental approach to economic development could involve targeting one SEZ, one Integrated Tourism Zone, one Mineral Zone, and at least one CPEC Agri-Tech Zone for 2024-25. These are achievable goals, provided the plans are kept straightforward and free of unnecessary complexity.

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Dr Imran Khalid

The shadow library

This year served as a reminder for avid book readers about the changing landscape of information accessibility in the digital era. The Internet Archive faced a major setback recently as it removed around half a million books from its borrowing service following copyright complaints raised by publishing houses. This reflects the clash between publishers and unconventional libraries like Library Genesis and Sci Hub. Unofficial digital collections provide access to digitised content by circumventing copyright laws through torrents and the dark web channels – a response to libraries struggle with adapting to the digital age landscape. The emergence of shadow libraries underscores a flaw in library systems' ability to evolve alongside the ever changing digital environment. For individuals living in areas lacking services and resources, these online platforms have been playing a crucial role by providing accessibility that traditional libraries cannot match easily. Shadow libraries help safeguard knowledge from being lost by storing it in a way that traditional institutions often fail to accomplish. The proliferation of these platforms denotes an important reality for readers in underserved regions: digital access through unconventional channels is more than a convenience – it is a necessity. The internet has opened up new frontiers in information sharing, but traditional libraries have struggled to keep pace. The limited adaptability of traditional libraries in utilising the internet's potential for sharing knowledge is quite striking.

When they began moving from physical to digital formats, their online footprint were often confined to stagnant and unimpressive catalogue. On the other hand, the emergence of shadow libraries as vibrant hubs on the web highlights the potential of the internet in spreading knowledge worldwide, even though they exist outside of legal frameworks. The introduction of e-books appeared to be an addition to libraries; however the process didn't go seamlessly as anticipated by librarians due to a key oversight. Unlike printed books, e-books can be easily copied which brought about significant copyright issues. Ironically, unlike printed books, lending e-books posed challenges because digital content is not governed by the same regulations. E-books are more like software than bound paper – a fact that libraries and publishers grappled with, but never entirely resolved. Digital libraries, known for embracing new technologies, were pioneers in creating digital collections. But now, their role as potential piracy hubs threatens their future. Some have adopted strategies from the software world, like NetLibrary's licensing model, which offers unlimited access based on the number of users or devices. Other libraries implemented models resembling software shareware, providing users with temporary access to evaluate a book before either purchasing it or letting it expire. Baker & Taylor's prototype e-book distribution system, designed alongside digital pioneers like iBooks and Digital Owl, presents another pathway, blending traditional and digital distribution. The system offers annual subscriptions and customisable digital catalogs, aiming to modernise libraries' reach while preserving their mission to serve communities. This initiative empowers users to check out e-books remotely for longer periods, a valu-

able feature in an age where digital convenience increasingly defines user expectations. An uneasy tension remains between the internet and libraries. The internet's vast troves of free information could render libraries obsolete, while libraries challenge the emerging e-publishing industry. Despite this, physical libraries retain their unique social and interactive appeal – something virtual platforms have yet to fully replicate. Their centuries-old tradition holds value that no digital system has managed to replace, at least not yet. Traditional libraries still hold a unique appeal, offering a physical space where people can engage socially and culturally. Unlike virtual platforms, which rely on users' screens, libraries have an enduring, tangible presence in communities, as a place where learning and social interaction coexist in a way that digital platforms struggle to replicate. Their ability to meet users' reference needs and selectively disseminate information is a testament to their continued relevance. But the contest between traditional libraries and their digital counterparts remains unresolved. Progress might eventually bring a synthesis, blending cutting-edge technology with the charm of low-tech spaces, transforming librarians into digital navigators. The charm of physical libraries parallels that of cinemas – spaces where people gather not just to consume media, but to experience it together. They serve as community centres, where individuals access knowledge, engage in discussions, and find solitude amid their shelves. This social dimension has sustained libraries for centuries, providing an irreplaceable setting for collective learning. Libraries meet users' needs for reliable references, offering curated content rather than the vast unfiltered information of the web. Their function as knowledge preservers,

selecting and organising information with purpose, contrasts with the internet's flood of unmoderated content. This conflict reflects changes in how information is shared and obtained. Conventional libraries need to adapt by integrating resources to remain relevant in a society increasingly influenced by the internet. Underground libraries highlight the public's desire for easily accessible information, in a digitising world. The future might see a hybrid of physical and digital libraries existing together with yet interconnected functions. Yet the debate over the future of libraries persists. Traditional libraries, with their historical role as information custodians, find themselves in a world where underground libraries and digital sharing hubs emphasise accessibility and immediacy. The rise of these alternative channels signals a desire for knowledge that is not confined to the walls of an institution or a set of licensing agreements. The public's enthusiasm for easily accessible digital knowledge highlights a critical shift in how information is shared and consumed. This evolution requires bold steps from library institutions, a readiness to invest in digital tools that bridge the gap between the tactile world of books and the convenience of the internet. In this hybrid vision, libraries would function not as competitors to shadow libraries, but as legitimate digital beacons where all are welcome to learn. In a world that is increasingly connected, libraries must acknowledge the digital realm not as a threat but as an opportunity. They must redefine their purpose, moving from solely housing physical collections to becoming dynamic centers for information – where digital knowledge and traditional wisdom converge.

The writer is a freelance contributor.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



The trade union movement dates to the late 19th century, but, because Pakistan's industrial sector (inherited at independence) was so small, organized labour as a proportion of total employment is still in the minority. This has not prevented it from becoming an important political force. Before the 1971 civil war, there were considerably more than 1,000 registered unions, most of them organized within individual establishments. Countrywide unions based on a common craft or a particular industry were very few. Most of the unions were situated in the urban centres and were affiliated with one of three national labour confederations. After the civil war and the emergence of

Bangladesh, the number of unions declined to a few hundred, affiliated with one umbrella organization, the Pakistan National Federation of Trade Unions. Because of the country's relatively high rates of unemployment, employers have remained in a strong position, and many of them have been able to bypass working agreements and laws. Only the unions in the larger industries (e.g., cotton textiles) have had the necessary coherence to fight back. Labour laws introduced in 1972 met some of the demands (job security, social welfare, pensions) of organized labour but also sought to control political activity by industrial workers. Labour union activity was severely constrained by the military

government of 1977-88 but was subsequently revived during the first administration (1988-91) of Benazir Bhutto. Taxation accounts for the main source of government revenue: the government levies sales taxes, income taxes, customs duties, and excise taxes. Sales and income taxes account for the largest proportion of all revenues, with nontax receipts constituting a large portion of the balance. Government expenditures exceed revenues by a large amount. Income tax rates have been comparatively high, but the tax base has been so small that individual and corporate income tax revenues have remained substantially lower than excise, sales, and other indirect taxes. The govern-

ment has been able to maintain heavy expenditures on development and defense because of the inflow of foreign aid and worker remittances. Buses and trucks have displaced rail as the principal long-distance carrier. A program of deregulation of the road transport industry was undertaken in 1970 and encouraged the entry of a large number of independent operators into the sector. Trucks and tractor-drawn trailers have largely displaced the traditional bullock cart for local transport of produce to markets, but in many rural areas animal power is still crucial to economic survival. Air transport of cargo and passengers has become increasingly important.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Lindsay Lohan reacts to 'Mean Girls' comeback

Lindsay Lohan talks about relevance of 'Mean Girls' in lives of young people



Lindsay Lohan, known for her role in Parents Trap, recently shared her feelings about Mean Girls return. The reboot was released in January, 2024, bringing back actress' hilarious Walmart commercials and setting the vibe of the original film. The Freaky Friday star, in an interview with Flaunt Magazine issued on November 28th, opened about how she felt regarding the resurgence of movie. "I think it's great because it already came with an important message," she said. The 38-year-old actress gushed over the drama's consistency as it delivers the appropriate message to young people. "I like that it's still sending the right message to people to stay true to yourself and don't change who you are inside for other people." She said it makes her "so happy" that the comedy is still relevant. The Irish Wish performer hoped that the coming-of-age story will be able to "bring light" to issues young people face in school as "It's hard sometimes to get kids to listen to their elders." So hopefully they'll listen to a film." She also expressed her "huge sense of gratitude" on playing the most "iconic" role of Cady Heron in the film. "It's made me such a strong woman." Lohan recently worked as an executive producer and starred in Netflix's Our Little Secret which was released on November 27, 2024.

Tech

Microsoft refutes accusations of training AI on customer data

Microsoft has denied allegations that it uses customer data from its Microsoft 365 applications, such as Word and Excel, to train artificial intelligence models, Reuters reported. The company's statement, issued on Wednesday, came in response to social media posts where users claimed that the "connected experiences" feature—enabled by default—was being used to train AI models. A Microsoft spokesperson clarified in an emailed statement to Reuters: "These claims are untrue. Microsoft does not use customer data from Microsoft 365 consumer and commercial applications to train foundational large language models." The spokesperson further explained that the "connected experiences" feature is responsible for functions like co-authoring and cloud storage, and is unrelated to how Microsoft trains its AI models. Despite this clarification, concerns about data privacy persist on social media, with

Microsoft says "connected experience" has been on by default since it was made available in April 2019

some users expressing unease over their data being potentially used for AI training without explicit consent. Additionally, Microsoft told BleepingComputer that the "connected experiences" feature has been on by default since its introduction in April 2019. The feature enables tools such as real-time grammar suggestions and web-based resources, and Microsoft emphasised that users have full control over their settings and can opt out at any time.

New HIV infections, deaths falling worldwide

PARIS: In a significant progress in the fight against HIV, the number of new infections and deaths due to the disease is falling worldwide. However, health experts on Sunday warned that HIV is far from being stamped out and more needs to be done. Fewer people contracted HIV last year than at any point since the rise of the disease in the late 1980s, according to a UNAIDS report on Tuesday. But the 1.3 million new HIV cases recorded in 2023 is still more than three times higher than needed to reach the UN's goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, the UN agency said. Last year also saw around 630,000 people die from AIDS-related illnesses, the lowest level since a peak of 2.1 million in 2004. A separate study published in The Lancet HIV journal on Tuesday found that the number of HIV

infections across the world declined by a fifth during the 2010s. Deaths related to HIV, which are generally caused by other diseases during the late stages of AIDS, fell by about 40% to below a million a year, the study said. The decline was mainly driven by improving rates in sub-Saharan Africa, which is by far the hardest-hit region in the global epidemic. However infections did not go down everywhere. Other regions, such as Eastern Europe and the Middle East, saw HIV numbers increase. "The world has made remarkable global progress to significantly reduce the number of new HIV infections," said lead study author Hmw Kyu of the US-based Institute For Health Metrics and Evaluation. "More than a million people acquire a new HIV infection each year and, of the 40 million people

living with HIV, a quarter are not receiving treatment," she said in a statement. Preventative treatments called Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) have proven to be a powerful tool in the fight against HIV. These daily pills reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex by around 99%, and have helped drive down HIV rates in many countries. But "only 15% of people who need PrEP were receiving it in 2023," UNAIDS said. For people who have been infected with HIV, antiretroviral therapy can reduce the amount of the virus in their blood to undetectable levels. But around 9.3 million people — nearly a quarter of those living with HIV worldwide — were not receiving this treatment, UNAIDS warned. These tools have worked well in wealthier countries but the high costs have meant that poorer countries — such as in Africa — have often been left behind. AFP



Health

Pakistan Stock Exchange achieves another historic milestone as 100-Index hits 100,000 points

PM Shehbaz congratulates the nation on PSX 100 Index surpassing one hundred thousand points for the first time in history

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Stock Exchange achieved another historic milestone on Thursday as 100-Index breached one hundred thousand points' psychological barrier for the first time in the history of the country.

The 100-Index that was closed at 99,269 points on Wednesday, reached one lac five hundred forty points with an increase of one thousand two hundred seventy one points at start of the business activities.

The constant upward trend in the stock market shows the increasing confidence of the business community and investors in the government policies to strengthen the economy.

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has congratulated the nation on Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) 100 Index surpassing one hundred thousand points for the first time in history.

In a statement, the Prime Minister said this remarkable achievement reflects the trust of business community and investors in government's policies.

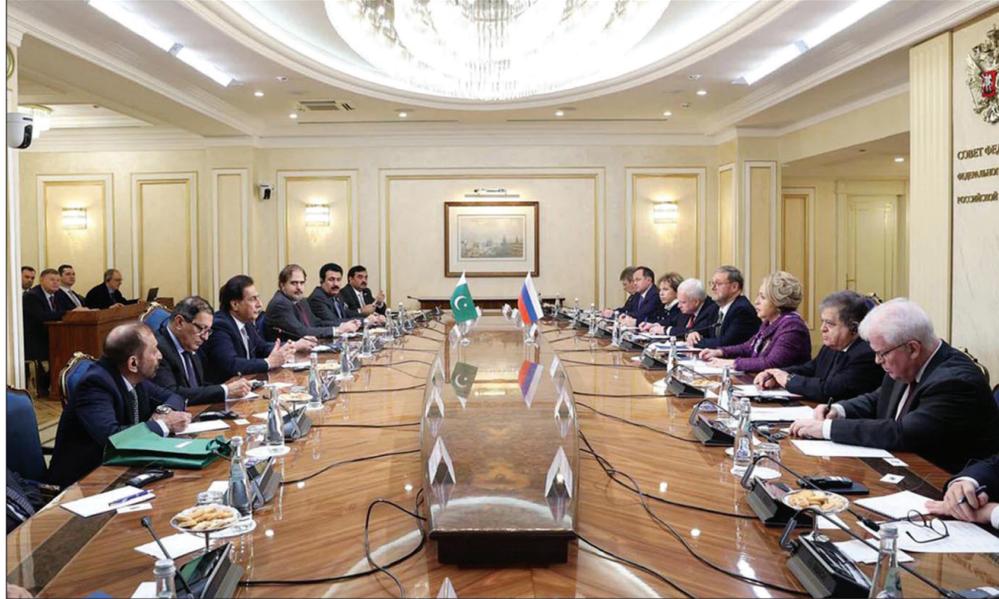
PM Shehbaz Sharif said the government's economic team and officials working tirelessly to promote investment in the country deserve appreciation for achieving this milestone.

The Prime Minister said he had pledged to take every possible measure for the economic stability and development of the country. He mentioned that they sacrificed their politics to save Pakistan from default. By the grace of God Almighty, the sacrifice has not gone in vain. PM Shehbaz Sharif said that as soon as the anarchist group left, the positive trend returned to the stock exchange. SABAH

Dastgir condemns PTI violent politics

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (N) senior leader Khurram Dastgir Thursday strongly condemned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's destructive agenda and blackmailing tactics, stating that these actions will no longer be tolerated. In an interview with a private news channel, he said that conspiring against the state will not be tolerated and that such actions will be terminated at all costs. The government will not hesitate to take decisive action against anyone found guilty of undermining national security or engaging in anti-state activities, he highlighted. He demanded that the PTI respect the democratic system and desist from its violent activities, which have compromised the security of Islamabad and put its residents at risk.

Dastgir emphasized that the protection of citizens is of paramount importance, and his government will not tolerate any compromise on their security. He reiterated that the government is committed to ensuring that the fundamental rights of citizens.



MOSCOW: Delegation level meeting between Pakistan National Assembly led by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Russian Federation Council led by Valentina Matviyenko in Moscow. INP

Pak reiterates its call on the int'l community, particularly the UNSC, for an immediate & unconditional ceasefire in Gaza: President

Urges the int'l community to act urgently & decisively to end the genocide of the Palestinian people

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that we stand in solidarity with the resilient people of Palestine in their rightful struggle for freedom, dignity, and justice. President Asif Ali Zardari said Pakistan reiterates its call on the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, provision of unimpeded humanitarian supplies to alleviate the sufferings of millions of Palestinians, as well as to hold Israel accountable for its actions that the International Court of Justice has rightly described as "plausible genocide."

This was stated by President Asif Ali Zardari in his message on the occasion of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, being observed today (Friday). President Asif Ali Zardari said that on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as well as for the establishment of an independent, viable, and contiguous State of Palestine, with Al-



Quds Al-Sharif as its Capital, based on the pre-1967 borders. We stand in solidarity with the resilient people of Palestine in their rightful struggle for freedom, dignity, and justice. President Asif Ali Zardari said that this day is being commemorated at a time when the world is witnessing ethnic cleansing, the destruction of infrastructure and residential areas, and the sufferings and displacement of Palestinians in Gaza and other Occupied Palestinian Territories as a result of Israel's ongoing genocidal military campaign. Over the past one-year, Israeli actions, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law, have claimed more than 45,000 Palestinian

lives, mostly women and children. He said that millions of Palestinians are being deliberately denied life-saving humanitarian assistance by Israel by obstructing the vital work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as other aid agencies. President Asif Ali Zardari said that Israeli impunity and continued aggression against other countries in the region also imperil the peace and stability of the entire region and beyond.

President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan strongly condemns these acts of aggression and urges the international community to act urgently and decisively to end the genocide of the Palestinian people. The global conscience cannot ignore the plight of millions who face unprecedented hardships due to Israeli occupation. We believe that the continued occupation and disregard for international law is the biggest obstacle to achieving peace in the region, he said.

"Let this day serve as a powerful reminder of our shared responsibility to ensure justice and equality for the Palestinian people. Pakistan stands resolute in its support for Palestine and remains committed to supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to self-determination" President Asif Ali Zardari said.

PTI founder not a political prisoner, facing corruption, violence charges: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said that the jailed founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, is not a political prisoner but is facing serious charges of corruption and inciting violence. These charges involve encouraging the public to attack sensitive installations, with the intent of sowing chaos and anarchy in the country.

"It should be clear to the international community that Mr. Imran Khan is not being victimized. He is not a political prisoner. He faces serious allegations, and no politician, public office holder, or celebrity in the Western world would be allowed to go unpunished for such actions," he said during a briefing for foreign media, alongside Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture, Attaullah Tarar.

He drew a parallel to recent racial riots and arson in the UK, highlighting the swift and decisive action taken by the British judicial system. "In just 24 hours, the UK authorities brought the perpetrators to justice, sending a strong message that such acts of violence would not be tolerated," he remarked.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that PTI had attempted to create mayhem in Islamabad in recent days, bringing armed protesters to not only stage a sit-in but also to occupy the Parliament House, as they had done in 2014. "At that time, they had stormed the Red Zone under the guise of a sit-in, eventually overruling the Parliament House and setting fire to the PTV headquarters," he added.

He noted that PTI had established a troubling pattern of violent politics, beginning with the events of 2014. In the years since, PTI had staged multiple protests and long marches, often using official resources from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. However, these attempts were unsuccessful due to decisive action by the federal government. He pointed out that PTI leadership and supporters had grown accustomed to violent behavior, even while appearing in court for routine proceedings. "They had engaged in acts of intimidation, throwing petrol bombs at officials who attempted to serve court summons, which reflected their extremist mindset."

"There is a clear pattern that reached its peak on May 9, when PTI supporters attacked Pakistan's key military installations. They targeted the General Headquarters of the Army, the Corps Commander's residence in Lahore, military and air force bases, intelligence headquarters, and monuments honoring our martyrs," Iqbal recalled.

The minister also noted that the scale of violence directed at military installations had reached unprecedented levels. "No democratic nation, whether the USA, the UK, or any European country, would allow any group to attack sensitive military installations or vital state institutions in the name of freedom of expression or action," he stressed. He further explained that PTI had once again attempted to replicate these actions in the federal capital, particularly during Pakistan's hosting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in October 2024, one of the most high-profile events Pakistan has hosted in nearly two decades. DNA

Meeting held to review progress on investment, privatization

ISLAMABAD: In light of the recent visit of a high-level Pakistani delegation to Azerbaijan, an important review meeting was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan to ascertain the progress on investment and privatization issues.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Qasim Mohi Uddin also attended the meeting via video link and apprised that Azerbaijani Government institutions are keen in investing in Pakistan on a "G2G" model and take part in privatization of institutions.

He said that the investment from Azerbaijan is also under consideration in two motorways M6 and M9 in the communications sector of Pakistan. He said that he is keen to quickly resolve investment issues with Central Asian Countries and the purpose of today's follow-up meeting is also to review the progress made in this regard. Aleem Khan asked the Ambassador to complete his Embassy's homework before the meeting of

Joint Commission being held the two countries on December 24 & 25, this year.

He added that he wanted to move forward through coordinated measures in all the three sectors of Privatization, Investment and Communication for which he will soon the meeting separately with the Ambassadors of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

Aleem Khan said that on trade issues, Central Asian Countries can prove to be a gateway for Pakistan to access Eastern Europe for which we have to make our efforts. He said that Pakistan's representation in the COP 29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan this month was prominent in the presentation by our country.

The federal secretaries of the privatization and communications departments and the Chairman of the National Highway Authority briefed the meeting regarding their departments and assured to deal with bilateral issues expeditiously in the light of the instructions of Federal Minister.

Iranian envoy visits Riaz Pirzada, condoles his brother's death

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Iranian Embassy led by Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri-Moghaddam Thursday visited Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada to offer condolences on the sad demise of his younger brother. The ambassador conveyed deep grief and condolences of the leadership, government and people of Iran, said a news release issued here on Thursday by the Ministry of Housing and Works.

He expressed his sympathies for bereaved family and prayed for the departed soul. He also mentioned his sincere thoughts embedded with deep love and respect for Pakistani brethren. Riaz Pirzada expressed his profound gratitude to the ambassador for the sympathies and for standing with him in this difficult time. He further underscored close fraternal Pakistan-Iran relationship that are deeply rooted in the religious, historical, ethnic and cultural commonalities. The minister reaffirmed that Pakistan would remain committed to further strengthening of brotherly ties. He stressed upon the frequent exchange of delegations in the field of education, agriculture and energy.

Carpet manufacturers to seek relief on tariffs

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) on Thursday met with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to request relief from customs tariffs that are adversely impacting the survival of the sector.

The delegation, led by Abdul Latif Malik (Patron In-Chief), Usman Ashraf (Senior Vice Chairman) and Mr. Riaz Ahmed (Vice Chairman), highlighted the challenges faced by the industry and sought immediate government intervention, said a press release issued here. Carpet manufacturers to seek relief on tariffs

During the meeting, Abdul Latif explained the complex production process of Pakistani carpets wherein raw materials are sent to Afghanistan, raw/unfinished carpets are returned back to Pakistan for final furnishing/processing before being exported globally. However, despite the fact that 99% of these carpets are exported, they are unable to avail the benefit of custom duty exemptions from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), leaving them without vital incentives for exports.

The representative of carpet association emphasized that the customs duties at the Afghan-Torkham border were forcing many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to shut down. "To save this sector and ensure its growth, it is essential to make semi-finished



carpets duty-free," Abdul Latif Malik urged, adding that government support is crucial for the sustainability of the industry. Jam Kamal Khan assured the PCMEA of his full support, recognizing the sector's potential as an export enhancer.

He stressed the importance of promoting "Made in Pakistan" products and addressing intellectual property issues, such as patent protections for Pakistani carpets, to improve global recognition.

The minister also proposed convening a meeting with the FBR and other stakeholders in the near future to explore the solutions and address the sector's concerns.

He reiterated his commitment to fostering growth in the carpet manufacturing industry and helping SMEs flourish.

The PCMEA hopes that the government's timely intervention will provide relief to manufacturers, helping the sector regain its competitive edge in international markets.

Pakistan's Maritime Future Set to Soar: Key Investments and Initiatives Announced at MARSEW-07

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, extended a warm welcome to all participants at the 7th Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW-07) and highlighted several key initiatives and strategic projects aimed at advancing Pakistan's maritime sector and enhancing its economic potential. The workshop brought together distinguished Navy officials, journalists, parliamentarians, members of the business community, and academia. Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood, Commander Central Punjab was leading the delegation of MARSEW-7. It served as an important platform for strengthening regional maritime security and advancing collaboration in the maritime sector.

In his welcome address, the Minister emphasized the growing significance of Pakistan's maritime sector and its pivotal role in shaping the country's economic future. He acknowledged the challenges and opportunities within the maritime domain and reaffirmed the government's commitment to enhancing regional cooperation and ensuring secure and sustainable seas for global trade. The Minister underscored that Pakistan's maritime sector, particularly through key infrastructure projects and policy reforms, is poised to contribute



significantly to the nation's economic growth, job creation, and international trade connectivity.

The Minister emphasized the recent launch of the Iran and Muscat cargo service, which is set to improve regional connectivity and further establish Pakistan's position as a major trade hub for Afghanistan and Central Asia. He also announced that Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) is projected to generate Rs. 60 billion in revenue by 2024, with the largest-ever ship procurement order of USD 300 million to strengthen Pakistan's national fleet.

The Minister revealed that Hutchison Ports is investing USD 1 billion in the expansion of Karachi Port, and AD Ports has committed USD 330 million to enhance port infrastructure. These investments highlight growing confidence in Pakistan's port development

and capacity to handle increasing trade volumes. He also stressed the importance of Gwadar Port, which is projected to handle 60% of the government's cargo in the coming years, further solidifying its role in Pakistan's economic development.

In line with boosting Pakistan's Blue Economy, the Minister announced the establishment of a Blue Economy Center in Gwadar. This center will focus on sustainable marine resource management, promoting marine tourism, and increasing seafood exports, with a target to reach USD 500 million in seafood exports. He also highlighted the promotion of aquaculture for export markets and a joint venture between Pakistani and Chinese companies in the seafood sector to attract foreign investment. The Minister further discussed efforts to improve port efficiency and logistics infrastructure, including the digitiza-

tion of port operations through the Port Community System and the development of a Ports Master Plan. He emphasized the ongoing rail and road connectivity upgrades between Karachi and Gwadar, which are crucial to enhancing hinterland connectivity and supporting seamless trade.

The PKR 12 billion Gadani Project, aimed at creating an environmentally sound ship recycling facility, was also highlighted as part of Pakistan's commitment to Green Shipping. The Minister noted that the Ministry is also working on revamping maritime and port laws to streamline processes and align with international standards. Additionally, a Ports Coordination Committee has been established to enhance operational efficiency across the country's ports.

The Minister concluded by emphasizing the growing role of the private sector in PNSC through the dilution of government shares and the introduction of public-private partnership projects to attract investment and strengthen Pakistan's shipping industry. He reaffirmed that these initiatives will position Pakistan as a key player in the global maritime trade network, supporting national economic growth and fostering international collaborations. PR

Muqam calls on Governor Kundi to discuss law and order situation in KP

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for SAFRON, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam, met with the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, at the Governor House on Thursday and discussed various issues of the province including political, economic and law and order. The meeting focused on the worsening law and order situation in the province and the growing concerns regarding provincial rights with the federal government. During the meeting, the two leaders engaged in in-depth discussions about the escalating security challenges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where incidents of terrorism and militancy have been on the rise.

Engineer Muqam and Governor Kundi also deliberated on the province's demands for greater autonomy in managing its resources and ensuring equitable development. There were calls for the federal government to take more decisive action to address the unique challenges faced by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in terms of security, infrastructure, and economic development. Federal Minister acknowledged the concerns raised by the Governor and assured him of the federal government's commitment to addressing the

issues, particularly in regard to enhancing the province's security apparatus and ensuring that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa receives its due share of resources and rights within the federation. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the need for immediate steps to improve the law and order situation in the province, underlining that lasting peace can only be achieved through joint efforts between the federal government, provincial authorities, and local communities. The Governor also extended invitation to Amir Muqam, urging him to join the All Parties Conference (APC) in first week of December here at Governor House to address the growing concerns over law and order in the province.

The invitation emphasized the need for a collective approach to tackle the increasing challenges related to security, crime, and social stability. The Governor highlighted Amir Muqam's political influence and experience, hoping his participation in the APC would foster a united effort among political leaders and stakeholders to formulate effective strategies for improving law enforcement, enhancing public safety, and ensuring a peaceful environment for the citizens. INP