



Government's continued efforts to advance women's rights, referencing significant legislative measures such as the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act and the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act

Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights, Senator  
**Azam Nazeer Tarar**

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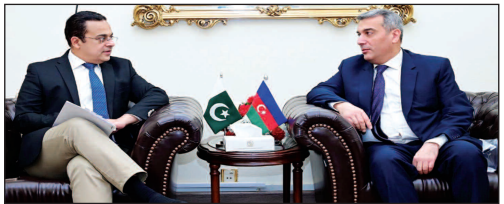
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Price Rs 8 | Pages 4

## Major among three soldiers embrace martyrdom; eight Khwarij killed in Bannu IBO

RAWALPINDI: A Major among three soldiers of Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom on Wednesday while eight Khwarij terrorists were eliminated during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted by the Security Forces in general area Bakka Khel, Bannu District. During conduct of the operation, Army troops effectively engaged Khwarij's location that left seven Khwarij terrorists injured along with the eight killed, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The martyrs included Major Atif Khalil (age: 31 years, resident of District Sudhanuti, AJ&K), a brave officer, who was leading his troops from front, fought gallantly and embraced Shahadat along with his two soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice included Naik Azad Ullah (age: 36 years, resident of District Karak) and Lance Naik Ghazanfar Abbas (age: 35 years, resident of District Layyah). "Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other Khariji found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said. PR

## Cheema hopeful 8th JMC to unveil new avenues of trade



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Cheema and discussed upcoming Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) between both countries, which has been scheduled on 3-4 December 2024. The minister is hopeful that the 8th JMC will bring positive results in terms of trade. Moreover, this JMC will be co-chaired by Minister for Defence Production from Pakistan side. He added that the decisions of 7th JMC are in implementation phase, and both countries are taking it seriously. Ahmad Cheema assured that Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ministry of Defence Production will create stronger liaison with Government of Azerbaijan in order to get the practical implication of JMC. He further stated that we are working to establish 'Azerbaijan Trade House' in Pakistan, and the details of this project will be unveiled soon after getting green signal from Azerbaijan. The minister also highlighted that upcoming JMC between both countries is very helpful in order to discuss terms of references of trade in various sectors. He added that the previous JMCs played an important role in developing mutual cooperation in trade, agriculture, energy, defence and tourism sector. In addition, Ahmad Cheema and Khazar Farhadov agreed to expedite meetings of the Joint Working groups (JWG) in various sectors. APP



DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

## PM, Amir of Qatar visit gallery of Pakistani artworks at National Museum of Qatar

DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani visited the gallery of Pakistani artworks titled "Manzar: Art and Architecture of Pakistan from 1940s to Today" at the National Museum of Qatar on Thursday. After attending bilateral delegation level meetings, the Amir of Qatar and the Prime Minister traveled together to the museum. The Amir of Qatar and, his sister Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani who is also Chairperson of Qatar Museums showed the prime minister the artworks in the exhibition and introduced organizers and the Pakistani artists in an informal and friendly atmosphere. PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed gratitude for holding the art gallery titled "Manzar" and promoting the Pakistani artists. He said holding of this exhibition was a matter of pride for every Pakistani. The prime minister emphasized that establishment of "Manzar" art gallery based on Pakistani artworks reflected the strong brotherhood and social bonds between Pakistan and Qatar. During the visit, the prime minister met

with renowned Pakistani architect Nayyar Ali Dada, Pakistani photographers, painters, calligraphers and other artists. Pakistani paintings, photography, calligraphy and other artworks were displayed in the exhibition. The artworks of Shakir Ali, Sadeqain, Gul Ji, Zubaida Agha, Kamil Ali Mumtaz, Nayyar Ali Dada and several other Pakistani artists were exhibited in the exhibition. Meanwhile, in his post on X, the prime minister said that he was deeply touched by the warm reception accorded by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar. "Pakistan greatly values its special bond of friendship with Qatar. In this visit, we are adding momentum to Pak-Qatar ties." He said he looked forward to the visit of the Amir of Qatar to Pakistan soon. Later, addressing the event, the prime minister said the Qatar museum with its global outlook and dedication to cultural diplomacy had set a new stage for an event that not only highlighted art but also championed the soft power of the nations. "Today our nation in its world class institutions and entrepreneurs continue to shape

Pakistan as a modern robust 21st century society and economy." The prime minister said the wonderful display of select and unique art exhibit from Pakistan meticulously curated by the organizers was telling the heart touching story of Pakistan in a completely new and different way. He said the collection on display at this exhibition spans the world of legendary like Abdul Rehman Chughtai, the great Sadeqain and Nayyar Dada to internationally acclaimed contemporary artists such as Saleema Haashmi, Imran Qureshi, Rashid Rana and Shazia Sikandar. "I am also delighted to note that today's exhibition include newly commissioned work from some of Pakistan's most innovative minds including Yasmeen Lari, Umar Waseem, Mariya Luqman and many others." He specifically lauded the collaborative efforts of Qatar Museum, the embassy of Pakistan in Qatar, National Heritage and Cultural Divisions, Alhamra Art Museum, Pakistan National Council of the Arts and various institutions and private collectors in Pakistan. APP

## Mohsin Naqvi hosts Sikh pilgrims from USA at State Guest House



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: In a warm and welcoming gesture, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi hosted a 44-member delegation of Sikh pilgrims from the United States of America at the State Guest House on Thursday. The delegation, led by prominent Sikh leaders Dr. Dalvir Singh Pannu, Surjeet Singh Hothi, Ranjit Singh Kahlon, and Laxman Singh, was greeted by Naqvi with the traditional Punjabi phrase "Ji Aayan Nu," marking the start of a historic visit. During the meeting, Minister Naqvi highlighted Pakistan's commitment to fostering easier access for Sikh pilgrims, recognizing that they have often faced visa challenges in the past. Recalling his time as former chief minister of Punjab, he noted efforts to improve the conditions for Sikh visitors, adding, "During my tenure, I worked to address issues faced by the Sikh community." Naqvi announced that Pakistan has now introduced an online visa application system specifically designed to facilitate Sikh travelers. Holders of American, Canadian, and UK passports can apply online and receive their visas within 30 minutes, a process Naqvi confirmed is also free of charge. He noted that this facility extends to Sikhs of Indian origin residing in these countries. Providing a glimpse into Pakistan's vision for fostering Sikh tourism, Naqvi stated, "Just as Saudi Arabia holds significance for Muslims, Pakistan holds the same for the Sikh community." He shared the government's plans to open additional Sikh heritage sites, including those beyond Hasan Abdal, Kartarpur, Nankana Sahib, and Lahore, removing the need for special permits to visit these sacred places. Naqvi expressed a vision of expanding Sikh tourism in Pakistan, hoping to raise the current annual visitor numbers from 50,000-100,000 to one million, with particular emphasis on attracting younger generations. He added that Pakistan now offers visa-free entry for citizens from 124 countries. Inviting international tourists to experience Pakistani sports as well, Naqvi extended a special invitation to cricket fans. "Come for the Champions Trophy and Pakistan-India matches; we're keeping a special quota for this purpose," he said, confirming that the government is making specific arrangements for Indian visitors as well. The Sikh delegation expressed gratitude to Naqvi for his hospitality and lauded the ease introduced by the free online visa system. "You have won our hearts," they shared, while also voicing interest in exploring investment opportunities in Pakistan. The event was attended by several prominent figures, including industrialist Kashif Ashfaq and other officials, who contributed to a memorable and culturally rich experience for the Sikh delegation. APP

## PIA privatisation draws single bid of Rs10 billion for 60% stake

The final bidding process for the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines attracted just one bid of Rs10 billion for a 60% stake in the national flag carrier, the Privatisation Ministry said on Thursday. The government had pre-qualified six groups in June, but only real-estate development company Blue World City participated in the bidding process, placing a bid that is below the government-set minimum price of Rs85 billion. Cash-strapped Pakistan was looking to offload a 51-100% stake in debt-ridden PIA to raise funds and reform state-owned enterprises as envisaged under a \$7 billion International Monetary Fund programme. The Privatisation Commission said it had asked the bidder to match the minimum bid. Blue World City Chairman Saad Nazir however stood by its bid. "We wish the government all the best if they don't want to accept our bid," he said during the ceremony. Nazir later told Reuters that it did not make commercial sense to raise their bid. "The cabinet is going to discuss this offer of ours. If this doesn't go through and they don't

accept our offer, we will start our own airline," he said. He added that he did not believe the government's \$5 billion minimum price was based on a correct financial model for an organization with "significant leakages". Mohammed Sohail, CEO of Topline Securities, said that the gap between the offer and reference price means the government would either need to consider this bid or revisit their strategy regarding the privatisation of the airline. Officials from three groups that chose not to bid told Reuters on condition of anonymity that there were concerns about the government's ability to stand by agreements made for the flag carrier in the long term. One executive voiced concern about policy continuity once a new government came in. The government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is reliant on a coalition of disparate political parties. The disposal of PIA is a step former governments have steered away from, as it has been highly unpopular given the number of layoffs that would likely result from it. Reuters

## President Zardari, PM Shehbaz express firm commitment to eradicate terrorism in all its forms from the country

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have expressed firm commitment to eradicate terrorism in all its forms from the country. In a statement, President Asif Ali Zardari has paid tributes to the soldiers of Pakistan Army who embraced martyrdom during operation against terrorists in Bannu. He said the entire nation stands with its forces in the fight against terrorists. He said the security forces are always alert for the defense of the country. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also paid tribute to the soldiers of Pakistan Army who sacrificed their lives during the operation against terrorists in Bannu district. In a statement, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the entire nation salutes the martyrs. He expressed Pakistan's firm commitment to eradicating terrorism in all its forms from the country.

## Islamabad, Astana as sister-city status to boost cultural, economic ties: Kazakhstan's Envoy

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, on Thursday proposed establishing a sister-city relationship between Islamabad and Astana, alongside renaming an Islamabad street after a distinguished Kazakh figure. Ambassador Kistafin, in a meeting with CDA chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa underscored his country's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan, spanning cultural, economic, and business fields. He commended Pakistan for the successful hosting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, marking Kazakhstan's Prime Minister's visit to Pakistan as a testament to Islamabad's hospitality and scenic beauty. Chairman Randhawa welcomed the initiatives, expressing CDA's readiness to formalize the



relationship with Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and emphasized the potential for collaboration in city development projects, including a new, advanced slaughterhouse. Both parties affirmed their commitment to fostering closer ties, signaling a new chapter in Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations through urban and cultural partnerships. APP

## Pakistan reiterates no talks with TTP; asks AIG to act against militant groups

The spokesperson said that Afghan authorities had the responsibility to act against terror groups, primarily TTP as Pakistan had also provided the pieces of evidence to the Afghan authorities. She explained that this was not merely Pakistan's demand but also the international community.

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday ruled out any talks with terror outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and reiterated its call for the Afghan Interim Government to act against the militant groups using Afghan soil to target Pakistan. The Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, said that Pakistan rejected any offer or advice for talks with TTP as the country had done so on several occasions.

Asked to comment on a statement by an Afghan diplomat in Islamabad, she said Afghan authorities had the responsibility to act against terror groups, primarily TTP as Pakistan had also provided the pieces of evidence to the Afghan authorities. She explained that this was not

merely Pakistan's demand but also the international community. The spokesperson condemned the recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and Baalbek region resulting in the tragic loss of civilian lives, including women and children, and the displacement of over a million people. "These airstrikes are a violation of Lebanon's national sovereignty and territorial integrity; and constitute a serious violation of international humanitarian law and the UN Charter. Pakistan also unequivocally condemns continuing Israeli assault against the people of Northern Gaza and the indiscriminate airstrike on Beit Lahya which has resulted in the tragic loss of over a 100 Palestinian lives, including women and children."



She viewed that targeting densely populated residential areas without warning, day after day, with absolute impunity, reflected Israeli disdain for international law and human suffering. The siege of Gaza and uninterrupted Israeli attacks are piling on heaps of misery, devastation and death upon the already battered people of Gaza, she added. Calling Israel's action of dismantling the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) unacceptable she said such acts were a manifestation of Israel's systematic campaign to dehumanize the Palestinian people. The spokesperson called upon the international community for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Palestine and Lebanon; protection of civilians; and unrestricted humanitarian access, besides ending Israel's genocidal campaign against the Palestinians in Gaza. To another query, she said there was no request from the governments of Palestine and Lebanon to provide search and rescue teams' support. However, Pakistan has been providing humanitarian

assistance to the people of Gaza and for Lebanon it was started recently, she said, adding, "We are providing humanitarian assistance as per the requirements of the Red Cross that includes tents, medicines, food items and shelter needs." She told the media that last week, Pakistan sent two more plane loads of humanitarian aid to Lebanon. Thus far, four special cargo planes with essential humanitarian supplies have arrived in Lebanon from Pakistan, she added. The spokesperson apprised the media of Prime Minister Shehbaz's concluded two-day visit to Saudi Arabia and ongoing Qatar visit where he would meet the Qatar leadership to discuss bilateral cooperation in trade and investment and discussion on regional developments. She also highlighted the visit of Speaker

of the Federation Council of Russia, Valentina Matvienko to Islamabad who held separate meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, besides addressing the Senate of Pakistan. Referring to the observance of Kashmir Black Day marking the 77th anniversary of the arrival of Indian troops in Jammu and Kashmir on October 27, the spokesperson told the media that Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had addressed letters to the leadership of the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), highlighting the ongoing situation in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). APP



Editor-in-Chief: Amna Munawwar Awan  
 Editor: Muhammad Hasam  
 Office # 408, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust,  
 Agha Khan Road, F-5/1 Islamabad  
 Phone: + 92 51 8354964

## Towards a just system

MUSTAFA ABDULLAH BALOCH

The passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment marks a pivotal moment in Pakistan's journey toward greater democracy and political reform. For decades, Pakistan's judicial system has struggled under the weight of inefficiency and massive backlog of cases. Public frustration with the judiciary has stemmed from delays in legal proceedings and unequal access to justice. There was no concept of check and balance on the judges and merit was compromised. The 26th Amendment will make sure that judges focus on timely justice and their performance is evaluated by their judgments. The amendment has introduced a series of reforms designed to address the inefficiencies and limitations of Pakistan's judicial system. The prime among these was the creation of constitutional benches within the Supreme Court, a move that will have profound implications for the administration of the justice system in Pakistan. The constitutional benches will handle constitutional matters, such as disputes between the federal and provincial governments, issues concerning the interpretation of the constitution, and matters related to the fundamental rights of citizens. By establishing dedicated constitutional benches, the amendment aims to alleviate the burden on the Supreme Court, which has often been overwhelmed with a variety of cases, ranging from constitutional challenges to civil and criminal matters. The creation of constitutional benches ensures that constitutional questions can be resolved more quickly and efficiently, without delaying other judicial processes. Under the new amendment, the process of judicial appointments has become more rigorous, ensuring that appointments are based on merit, integrity, and capability. Enhanced accountability measures are expected to curb practices that previously led to judicial partiality or conflicts of interest. By fostering transparency and reinforcing merit-based selections, the amendment ensures that only those committed to justice and fairness serve on the bench. This shift is expected to restore the public's faith in the judiciary, as citizens will be more confident in the impartiality and fairness of judicial proceedings.

The Charter of Democracy (CoD), signed in 2006 by two of Pakistan's major political leaders, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, was a response to decades of authoritarian rule and political upheaval. The charter outlined an agenda for strengthening democracy, curbing judicial interference by external actors, and empowering Parliament. However, after two decades the unfinished agenda of CoD has been brought into reality by key political players. The deadlock was over when Bilawal Bhutto stepped in and convinced the JUI-F to agree on the amendment. A key doctrine of the 26th Amendment is its aim to strengthen parliament by granting it a more decisive role in the judicial appointment process, thus creating a more balanced power structure between the judiciary and the legislature. Historically, judicial appointments and accountability have often bypassed parliamentary oversight, creating a power vacuum and undermining the separation of powers essential in a functional democracy. Through the amendment, parliament is granted the capacity to question, review, and scrutinize judicial appointments. This legislative oversight serves as a check on the judiciary and prevents it from becoming an insular institution disconnected from the democratic aspirations of the people. With this increased role, parliament will have greater responsibility in upholding democratic principles and ensuring that the judiciary remains aligned with public interests. Historically, Pakistan's legislative landscape has often been marked by partisan rivalries, with major reforms stalled by a lack of consensus. However, almost all major political parties, acknowledging the long-term benefits of an impartial and accountable judiciary, united to support this amendment. The bipartisan nature of this reform signifies a shift toward collective national progress and commitment to democratic principles over individual or party interests. This consensus-building is important not only for judicial reform but for fostering a political culture where cooperation supersedes conflict. In a country where democratic institutions are often fragile, such unity serves as a foundation for future reforms and a reminder that substantial progress is possible when leaders work together toward shared goals. The 26th Amendment sets the groundwork for substantial improvements within Pakistan's judicial system. First, the amendment strengthens checks and balances within the judiciary, which will help reduce instances of judicial overreach and ensure that judges act within the boundaries of their legal authority. Second, it addresses issues related to delays in judicial processes by implementing measures to improve efficiency and accountability.

An impartial judiciary is vital for Pakistan, where many cases – especially those concerning civil rights, political freedom, and constitutional rights – rely on the judiciary's fair interpretation of the law. With the amendment's focus on judicial reforms, Pakistan can expect a decrease in politically motivated decisions and an increase in cases resolved on legal merit alone. This will foster an environment where people feel protected and confident in the legal system, knowing that justice is dispensed fairly and equitably. A judiciary that prioritises public interest over other considerations empowers citizens to exercise their rights and participate more actively in democratic processes. When people believe in the fairness and reliability of their country's legal system, they are more likely to advocate for democratic values, hold their leaders accountable, and engage in positive change. This amendment can, therefore, be seen as an investment in Pakistan's democratic future.

As Pakistan moves forward, the 26th Amendment will serve as a cornerstone for a fair, just, and democratic society – a legacy of progress and hope for generations to come.



Hafiza Saba Ashraf

## Zen and the art of reading

perspective, the same number is 264,000 for the US, 401,000 for Germany, and 3,082 for Sri Lanka (a country with a smaller population but in our region).

The decline of reading as a habit is not a domestic phenomenon though. Reading habits have been on the decline globally. The Atlantic carried an extensive report recently (Rose Horowitz, 'The elite college students who can't read', The Atlantic, October 2024) on this trend. It cites Nicholas Dames from Columbia University, who for more than two decades has been teaching the widely known year-long 'Literature Humanities' course of a type commonly referred to as a 'great books course'. These courses usually cover collections of books foundational to Western culture and civilisation. At Columbia, students enrolled in this course are expected to read 24 books over two semesters. However, in recent years, students have been increasingly challenged by the volume of readings.

Dames is one of 33 faculty members the authors spoke to, most of which had similar observations. Out of the data points those conversations brought out was how in one place a teacher of high school Advanced Placement English Literature now covers only six to seven books in a year, down from 14 in the past. The other, a professor of literature at UC Berkeley, who used to assign as many as 200 pages a week as reading but, over the years, had to cut it down to half as many. This is the state of change of literary education in some of the world's best universities.

I spoke to a handful of Pakistani professors, all of whom spent years teaching in science and engineering departments in Pakistan and the Middle East region. The magnitudes were different, but the trend they observed was the same. Once upon a time, most university courses centred around a textbook, and it was implied that students would have to read along in order to do well at the end of the year/semester. Now, expectations are that all learning materials will be contained in

the slide deck professors use in their lectures – call it the PowerPoint course. In many places, course-assigned textbooks exist only on paper to fulfill documentation requirements for accreditations. In some institutions, the situation has regressed to the extent where exam questions that are not from or close variants of what was shown in lecture slides are considered unreasonable.

There are now universities operating in the region that lack libraries entirely – a situation unthinkable only a generation ago. Outside universities, libraries accessible to the public have been disappearing. In the '90s Islamabad had the British Council Library and the American Center Library, both of which closed since then. Today, the city's population has multiplied but the number of significant and accessible public libraries stands at near zero. The National Library is in the city's Red Zone, making it impractical for most.

There are a few community libraries in six sectors (one operating out of a shed-like building). Some of them are smaller than the personal book collections people have in their homes. The Aiwan-e-Quaid Library in F-9 Park is about the size of a middle or high-school library and is easily accessible. None of them qualify as adequate for a city the size of Islamabad, not to speak of a country's capital. Bookshops have followed a similar trajectory, with one significant bookstore remaining (a handful if we expand the definition of 'significant').

According to the UNDP's Human Development Report, 94 out of 100 young Pakistanis do not have access to a library. This difference clearly shows when you speak to a young person who has the privilege of library access or can access books otherwise and is in the habit of reading regularly and widely versus one who does not read at all, either due to lack of opportunity or by choice. There is a difference in the nature and quality of conversations to be had with young people who read

(anything) regularly and those who do not. It shows in their vocabulary, expression, and originality of thought. Unfortunately, 'I am not a reader' has become a perfectly acceptable response. Reading for pleasure has been relegated to a niche pursuit.

According to a prominent local publisher, there are no official numbers for the number of books published in Pakistan every year. The book-selling business is facing significant headwinds. Importers of foreign books have to contend with the low value of the Pakistani rupee vs foreign currencies.

Locally published books are also affected by this because paper and ink are also imported and the cost of power is linked to the exchange rate, making even locally published books more expensive. Higher education is already starved of public funding which leaves even less than before to allocate for the purchase of new books for their libraries' collections.

I would like to note that not all reading is alike. Plenty of people spend their days scrolling through Twitter and other social media feeds – 'reading'. However, reading short-form content like social media posts and blogs does not bestow the same benefits as reading a book (not to speak of the much higher likelihood of finding disinformation on the former). The latter requires the ability to follow lengthy and nuanced arguments and story arcs (depending on the nature of the text), provoking the reader to do some deeper thinking and requiring them to make connections.

Occasionally, someone asks me what they can do to become better writers. My usual response is to start writing to get better at it, but reading plays an equally big part because it triggers new ideas, perspectives, and connections and stimulates intellectual curiosity and critical thinking that make up the foundations of a vibrant society.

The writer (she/her) has a PhD in Education.

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

### Pakistan

The Muslim League could not win a majority of Muslim seats since it had not yet been effectively reorganized. However, it had the satisfaction that the performance of the Indian National Congress in the Muslim constituencies was bad. After the elections, the attitude of the Congress leadership was arrogant and domineering. The classic example was its refusal to form a coalition government with the Muslim League in the United Provinces. Instead, it asked the League leaders to dissolve their parliamentary party in the Provincial Assembly and join the Congress. Another important Congress move

after the 1937 elections was its Muslim mass contact movement to persuade the Muslims to join the Congress and not the Muslim League. One of its leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru, even declared that there were only two forces in India, the British and the Congress. All this did not go unchallenged.

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah countered that there was a third force in South-Asia constituting the Muslims. The All-India Muslim League, under his gifted leadership, gradually and skillfully started organising the Muslims on one platform. The 1930s witnessed awareness among the Muslims of their separate

identity and their anxiety to preserve it within separate territorial boundaries. An important element that brought this simmering Muslim nationalism in the open was the character of the Congress rule in the Muslim minority provinces during 1937-39.

The Congress policies in these provinces hurt Muslim susceptibilities. There were calculated aims to obliterate the Muslims as a separate cultural unit. The Muslims now stopped thinking in terms of seeking safeguards and began to consider seriously the demand for a separate Muslim state. During 1937-39, several Muslim lead-

ers and thinkers, inspired by Allama Iqbal's ideas, presented elaborate schemes for partitioning the subcontinent according to two-nation theory. The All-India Muslim League soon took these schemes into consideration and finally, on March 23, 1940, the All-India Muslim League, in a resolution, at its historic Lahore Session, demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims in the Muslim majority regions of the subcontinent. The resolution was commonly referred to as the Pakistan Resolution. The Pakistan demand had a great appeal for the Muslims of every persuasion.

To be continued....

## Jennifer Aniston speaks out against negativity in politics

Jennifer Aniston's endorsement goes beyond politics as she calls for sanity and decency



Jennifer Aniston has made a bold statement in support of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz, proudly announcing her vote for the duo on Instagram. However, her message went far beyond a simple endorsement.

"Hi friends, Today, I voted for access to healthcare, reproductive freedom, equal rights, safe schools, and a fair economy, but also for SANITY and HUMAN DECENCY," the Friends alum wrote.

"Remember, your voice matters, and your VOTE matters, regardless of who you are or where you live."

Aniston's heartfelt post emphasized the importance of unity and mutual respect, urging Americans to move beyond divisive politics. "We may not agree on everything, but that's the beauty of our country. Aren't you tired of the negativity, intimidation, and constant threats against those with

differing views?"

She concluded with a rallying cry: "We're fortunate to have the power to vote, and this election is in our hands! With just one week until Election Day, let's come together with respect, common cause, and love – talk to your friends, family, and neighbors."

This isn't Aniston's first foray into politics. Earlier this year, she criticized Donald Trump's running mate, J.D. Vance, for his remarks about women who haven't given birth. "I truly can't believe this is coming from a potential VP," Aniston wrote.

"Mr. Vance, I pray your daughter has children one day and doesn't need IVF, which you're trying to take away from her."

The Murder Mystery star's powerful message serves as a reminder of the significance of every vote in shaping the future.

## When, where and how to watch Leonid meteor shower?

The earthlings are yet again going to experience the breathtaking celestial event known as Leonid meteor shower which will be active from November 3 to December 2 this year and peak overnight from November 16 to 17. When Earth travels through the debris left behind by comet 55P/Tempel-Tuttle the Leonids are produced. It happens during its highly elliptical orbit around the Sun every 33 years, reported Space.

It is worth noting that the Leonids are regarded as some of the fastest meteors, zipping through the sky at 44 miles (71 kilometres) per second, as per Nasa.

Moreover, they can also result in impressive fireballs producing long, bright and colourful meteor streaks.

On the date of Leonid's peak, the Moon will be almost fully illuminated. As a result, it will interfere with viewing opportunities and wash out fainter meteors.

If one wants to have the best experience of seeing the Leonids, they should go to the



darkest possible location, lean back and relax. Additionally, telescopes or binoculars are not needed as the secret to a good meteor viewing experience. However, it should be made sure that viewers allow their eyes about 30 minutes to adjust to the dark. According to the Royal Museums Greenwich, the best time to look for the Leonids is between midnight and dawn local time.

## The Best Lunch Foods for Better Blood Sugar, According to Dietitians

Whether you take proper lunch breaks, find yourself shoveling food into your mouth in between back-to-back meetings or skip lunch altogether, all of these actions will impact your blood sugar in various ways. What you eat—or don't—at lunchtime can either cause your blood sugar to spike, dip or maintain a steady level. And your blood sugar may have a bigger impact on your well-being than you realize. It can influence your energy levels, appetite and mood for the rest of the day. To shed light on this topic, we consulted two registered dietitian nutritionists who explain how lunch influences blood sugar. Next, learn about their top six lunch foods for achieving better blood sugar balance. "Lunch, like other eating windows during the day, causes blood sugar to rise," says Prague-based registered dietitian Elizabeth Shaw, M.S., RDN, a

wellness advocate and author of the Air Fryer Cookbook For Dummies. Shaw explains that blood sugar levels depend on a meal's composition. For example, a balanced lunch that includes lean proteins, whole grains, healthy fats and plenty of veggies will cause a gradual rise in blood sugar. On the flip side, a lunch that contains mostly simple carbs—like a plate of pasta with a brownie or many fast food meals—can shoot your blood sugars up, causing a quick spike and fall. Therefore it's important to pay attention to what we are eating to maintain relatively stable blood sugar levels. First things first: Lunch is important. Yasi Ansari, M.S., RDN, a national media spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, does not recommend skipping lunch, as that can cause blood sugar levels to drop and result in feelings of fatigue, sluggishness, lack of

concentration and mood swings. So what foods should you pile onto your lunch plate? Keep reading for some blood-sugar-friendly options. Small, yet nutrient-mighty, lentils deserve more love! They pack 18 grams of protein and 16 grams of dietary fiber into a 1-cup cooked serving, and according to Shaw, this dynamic duo is key for better blood sugar management. 1 Research also shows that lentils can reduce post-meal blood sugar levels by 20%, likely due to this combo of nutrients. 2 A 1-cup serving of lentils also contains 40 grams of fiber-packed slow-digesting carbohydrates that are less likely to spike blood sugar levels, and helps to keep your belly full and satisfied long after lunch. Lentils often can be found in soups and stews, but they also taste delicious in bowls, as burgers or stuffed in wraps.









## Acting President Yousuf Raza Gilani extends greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan on Diwali festival

Says the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed religious freedom to all minorities

ISLAMABAD: As Hindus celebrated their annual Diwali festival on Thursday, Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani extended greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in his message said that the celebration Diwali festival by the Hindu community in Pakistan was the manifestation of the interfaith harmony and cultural diversity. He said Diwali, being the festival of lights gave a message of peace, prosperity and pleasure besides symbolising the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said that the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed religious freedom to all minorities, and called for collective efforts for the country's progress and prosperity.

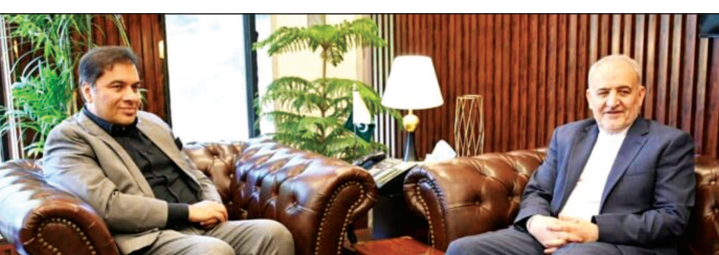
## FBR to disburse Rs.32 bln sale tax refunds to exporters

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday said that the board will disburse Rs.32 billion pending sale tax refunds to exporters on 1st November 2024. This move comes after the Chairman FBR directed the speedy processing of refund payment orders up to September 30, 2024, said a FBR statement issued here. PR

## CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Directs to Establish Punjab's Ist Roads Safety Authority (PRSA)

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over 19th Punjab Cabinet meeting and welcomed 3 newly inducted cabinet members namely Shahid Tarar, Salma Butt and Sania Ashiq. Approval for the establishment of Punjab's first Roads Safety Authority in the history of Pakistan was granted. PRSA will undertake measures for roads safety, vehicular safety and driving training schools. PRSA will undertake measures for ensuring standardization of roads. PRSA will also establish standard vehicular testing laboratories. A motor transport agency will also be established under the supervision of PRSA. It was informed during the meeting that death ratio of persons during traffic accidents in Punjab on a daily basis is 10 percent. Minister Transport will head the 14-member special committee of PRSA. The Chief Minister directed to rehabilitate Gurdawaras and other minorities religious places across Punjab including Rawalpindi. Approval to enhance grant of Artists Khidmat Cards for the actors was approved and principal decision was made to enhance assistance grant of actors.

## Islamabad, Tehran explore new partnership in urban development



### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, and Iranian Envoy Reza Amiri-Moghaddam, Thursday underscored the shared vision to advance urban sustainability, marking a promising chapter in the relationship between the two neighboring countries. Both sides in a high-level meeting on World Cities Day, discussed avenues for mutual cooperation in urban development. The Iranian Ambassador praised Islamabad's status as a green, beautiful, and meticulously planned city, noting that Pakistan and Iran share a deep cultural connection. Highlighting this bond, he referenced streets

in Iran named after Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal and appreciated Pakistan's gesture of renaming a road in Islamabad as Iran Avenue. The ambassador emphasized Tehran's municipality's interest in collaborating on projects with Islamabad, particularly in infrastructure development and solid waste management, where Iran has considerable expertise. Chairman Randhawa responded with enthusiasm, describing the CDAs ongoing efforts to enhance Islamabad's beauty and modernity. He expressed a keen interest in learning from Tehran's urban management practices and welcomed the opportunity for collaborative projects in solid waste management and infrastructure. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening ties between Pakistan and Iran, with hopes that this cooperation would lead to valuable knowledge-sharing and sustainable development in both cities.

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## Pakistan's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment: High-level meeting with UN Women and INGAD delegation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, here on Thursday held a meeting with representatives from UN Women Pakistan and the Interagency Gender and Development Group (INGAD) to strengthen Pakistan's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. The high-level dialogue focused on collaborative strategies and targeted actions to address the persistent barriers facing women in Pakistan.



stronger gender-responsive frameworks and advocacy programs within Pakistan.

The meeting saw participation from notable international representatives, including Maria Hultsberg from UN Women, Andrew Bowden from the Commonwealth and Development Office, and Jeroen Willems from the European Union. These stakeholders shared global insights and underscored the importance of Pakistan's commitments under interna-

tional frameworks like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), underscoring Pakistan's dedication to ensuring equal opportunities and protection for women. He further said that recognizing the importance of comprehensive and inclusive approaches, the Ministry of Human Rights is collaborating with local and international partners to engage men and boys as allies in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The National Strategy for Male Involvement in Addressing GBV, developed in partnership with UNFPA and the Pakistani NGO Rozan, seeks to promote positive societal change by challenging harmful gender norms and fostering male responsibility in preventing violence. The ministry is actively engaging with multiple UN agencies to

advance gender-focused initiatives. Key collaborations include a joint work plan with UN Women, a rolling work plan with UNICEF, and cooperative efforts with UNDP to implement the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. These partnerships are structured to generate sustainable impacts, enhancing the Ministry's ability to overcome challenges, particularly in areas where cultural norms and resource limitations hinder the progress of gender equality initiatives. By strengthening these international alliances and driving targeted policies, Pakistan is positioned to make significant strides in promoting gender equality. These efforts will further empower women, solidifying their contributions to national development and fostering a more inclusive society.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mr. Mistuhiro Wada, called on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Planning minister chairs PDSI meeting, reviews strategic decisions within ministry

### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of the Senior Management Committee of the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives (PDSI) was held under the chairmanship of the Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal here Thursday. Senior management officials, joint chief economists, members of the planning commission, project directors, and sectional chiefs attended the meeting, according to press release issued by planning ministry. This high-level meeting focused on reviewing strategic decisions and developments within the ministry, with an emphasis on restructuring, appointments, and performance monitoring of senior officials, sectional chiefs, project directors, and their respective teams. Ahsan Iqbal led a comprehensive review of the ministry's organizational structure, aiming to optimize efficiency and operational synergy. Planning minister chairs PDSI meeting, reviews strategic decisions within ministry

Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a Senior Management Committee meeting at the MoPDSI, focusing on strategic planning and key national projects in Islamabad on October 31, 2024. He maintained that the restructuring would enhance inter-departmental coordination, thereby streamlining efforts to fulfill the ministry's mission of sustainable development. Recognizing the significance of a fully staffed team, the Minister emphasized the importance of swift and merit-based appointments

to fill vacant positions within various projects, a step considered vital to strengthening project execution and ensuring effective resource availability. Meanwhile, the development and alignment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for senior officials and their teams were discussed as a priority. The KPIs will serve as a benchmark for accountability and provide clear targets for tracking progress towards the ministry's strategic goals, said the minister.

The meeting addressed ongoing challenges at both the project and organizational levels, proposing actionable solutions to enhance resource mobilization, improve service quality, and promote inter-ministerial collaboration. Reviewing ongoing strategic initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal underscored the need to align them consistently with the ministry's core objectives, ensuring they contribute effectively to national development goals and produce desired outcomes. "Our dedication to excellence is reflected in our focus on restructuring and performance



enhancement. We are committed to building a team that can deliver on our vision of sustainable development and prosperity for all," stated the minister.

"Our projects are the driving force behind Pakistan's progress. Filling key positions and ensuring our teams have the resources they need is essential to realizing these ambitions." He emphasized the importance of accountability, adding, "performance accountability through KPIs will ensure transparency and set a benchmark for all officials." He said, this was our pathway to a more efficient and result-oriented ministry.

While concluding the meeting, the minister stated that we have to develop a mechanism for the continuous monitoring, improvement, and ensuring our strategic focus to address the challenges facing the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives. The minister reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to delivering impactful results, driving growth and development aligned with national priorities, ultimately turning the ministry into a role model for the other ministries and government functionaries.

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## Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan bid farewell to Pakistani dignitaries

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, on 30th October 2024, hosted a reception at his Official Residence in Islamabad to bid farewell to Pakistani dignitaries and friends. Ambassador WADA is going to leave Pakistan on 19th November and will take up his new assignment as Ambassador of Japan to Croatia. Ambassador WADA assumed his office in October 2021, since when he has served as the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan for more than three years. Looking back his tenure, Ambassador WADA said, 'Pakistan is a country that is very friendly to Japan. But I've tried not to take this for granted and have made various efforts in economic cooperation, cultural exchange and personal interaction to further deepen the historical ties between our two countries.' This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Pakistan.

Ambassador WADA reiterated the importance of human aspects in Japan's ODA, saying, 'we always seek to work together with the local people and eventually encourage them to stand on their own. Rather than just providing money or goods, JICA tries to run alongside the Pakistanis and help them become the driving force of development. The key is the people, and Pakistan is blessed with such talents.'

He also mentioned the significance of cultural and people-to-people exchange and hoped that the cultural organizations such as Pakistan Japan Cultural Association (PJCA), Lahore Arts Foundation Trust, Lahore Sogetsu Study Group and Lahore Bonsai Society, as well as those who had studied in Japan including the MEXT Scholarship alumni, will continue bridging the gap between Pakistan and Japan. Ambassador WADA further stressed that he had met a lot of wonderful people who worked passionately to strengthen Japan-Pakistan relations. He said, 'I am now convinced that without the support of these great people, the friendship between Japan and Pakistan would have been impossible. I am deeply grateful to all of you.'

Referring to the difficult political, economic and security situations in Pakistan today, Ambassador WADA firmly said, 'I know very well how patient and resilient the Pakistani people are and how big the potential of this country is.'

Once the elite - politicians, the judiciary, the establishment and others - and the common people come together on the same cause and work hard to solve the problems, I have no doubt that Pakistan will overcome these difficulties and firmly develop in the long term.' He reiterated Japan's commitment to support such efforts of Pakistan in the coming years and decades.

Ambassador AKAMATSU Shuichi, former Consul-General of Japan in Shanghai, will arrive in Pakistan in late November to succeed Ambassador WADA. In addition, Minister TAKANO Shuichi, now Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Brazil, will also succeed Minister ITO Takeshi in late November.

Ambassador WADA hoped that his friends in Pakistan will extend their generous support to Ambassador & Mrs. AKAMATSU and Minister & Mrs. TAKANO as they have done for himself. DNA

## NA body on petroleum expresses serious concern over CSR fund misuse

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Standing Committee on Petroleum Division on Thursday expressed serious concern over inadequate regulatory oversight that has led to the misuse of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and the underutilization of the Production Bonus and Training Fund by exploration and production (E&P) companies.

Chaired by MNA Syed Mustafa Mehmood, the Standing Committee convened to review the CSR initiatives by E&P companies.

In a unanimous decision, the committee agreed to form a subcommittee to draft new guidelines aimed at improving the utilization of CSR funds, production bonuses, and training funds for capacity building within the sector. The committee further directed companies to take steps to limit environmental impacts, specifically by reducing biodiversity disruptions, minimizing water usage and waste discharge, and cutting harmful air emissions. The emphasis was placed on reducing green-

house gas emissions and enhancing energy efficiency in line with climate change mitigation efforts. The Secretary of the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) provided an overview of the allocation, utilization, and transparency measures for CSR funds managed by E&P companies. He highlighted that under Petroleum Policies from 1994 to 2012, companies were mandated to allocate funds to local welfare initiatives, covering areas such as healthcare, education, drinking water, drug awareness, sports, rehabilitation, scholarships, and infrastructure projects. He further detailed that E&P companies also invest in training and capacity building while adhering to policies governing Production Bonus contributions.

The Secretary said that local District Coordination Officers (DCOs) and District Commissioners (DCs) oversee CSR obligations, and the Auditor General of Pakistan conducts regular audits to ensure alignment with national development objectives and accountability. INP

## PMYP, Bosnia agrees to explore avenues for collaboration in youth programmes



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday stressed the importance of international partnerships in tackling youth challenges and promoting sustainable development.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Pakistan Emin Cohodarevic at his office, he welcomed the ambassador's enthusiasm and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to sharing knowledge and experiences in youth development.

The Ambassador Cohodarevic on the occasion expressed his heartfelt gratitude for Pakistan's continued support over the years, emphasizing the importance of fostering strong ties between the two nations.

He commended the initiatives implemented under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, which have significantly contributed to the development and empowerment of young peo-

ple in Pakistan.

Ambassador Cohodarevic highlighted the positive impact of these initiatives and expressed a keen interest in replicating this successful model in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He noted that collaboration in youth programs could enhance skills, provide opportunities, and strengthen the bonds between the youth of both nations.

"This meeting marks a significant step towards establishing a collaborative framework for youth initiatives that can benefit both Pakistan and Bosnia," said Mashhood Khan.

"Together, we can create meaningful opportunities for our young people and pave the way for a brighter future."

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to explore concrete avenues for collaboration in youth programs, ensuring that the youth's voices and aspirations are at the forefront of this partnership.