



The government's commitment to creating a conducive business environment to attain sustainable economic growth and development in the country

Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb

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## Finance Minister launches ESG Sustain portal developed by SECP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, officially launched ESG Sustain, a centralized online sustainability portal developed by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in collaboration with UN Women Pakistan in Islamabad. The launch of ESG Sustain marks a significant milestone under SECP's ESG Roadmap aimed towards advancing sustainable practices across regulated sectors.

The portal provides companies with a robust tool to report climate-related data, disclose sustainability progress and share gender-disaggregated statistics, while also hosting a dedicated Knowledge Hub with resources from professional bodies and market leaders to support capacity building, said a press release issued here.

With over 40 companies already on boarded for contributing data, ESG Sustain is set to play a pivotal role in fostering data-driven decision-making, attracting sustainability-linked investments and paving the way for an ESG Index in future.

Addressing the participants, the Finance Minister commended SECP on launching ESG Sustain. He highlighted that "Portal's emphasis on inclusivity and gender reforms aligns with the Government of Pakistan's vision for inclusive growth".

Noting the global shift towards climate resilience and climate finance, he stressed the importance of leveraging resources through collaboration and scaling up efforts digitally, with ESG Sustain serving as a catalyst for these initiatives.

ESG Sustain reflects the government's vision of enabling the private sector to drive economic growth while it concentrates on creating a supportive policy framework.

Ms. Vipunjit Ketunuti, Deputy Country Representative for UN Women, commended the launch of ESG Sustain for its potentially pivotal role in promoting sustainable development. "It is truly inspiring to see an increasing number of companies in Pakistan recognizing the critical importance of embedding ESG principles into their core business strategies for long-term success. ESG Sustain will go a long way in facilitating the process. I am particularly proud that the SECP has recommended the UN Women Empowerment Principles as among the globally recognized frameworks for sustainability reporting. This is a significant step toward enabling companies to particularly advance gender equality and empower women within their operations."

The Chairman SECP, Mr Akif Saeed extended heartfelt gratitude to the Honorable Finance Minister, for his leadership and guidance and the UN Women Pakistan for their unwavering support in the development of ESG Sustain.

Highlighting the urgency of aligning with global sustainability commitments, he said that "ESG Sustain stands as one of the few centralized sustainability portals globally, providing a vital platform to facilitate climate finance, advance gender reforms, and foster corporate accountability and enables the private sector to highlight their sustainability accomplishments on a global platform. While thanking the stakeholders, he said that the launch of ESG Sustain marks a collective commitment to integrate sustainability and inclusivity into Pakistan's corporate and economic landscape."



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reiterated government's resolve to eradicate the scourge of terrorism from the country.

## PM Shehbaz reiterates govt's resolve to eradicate the scourge of terrorism from the country

Says Pakistan's development & progress is possible only through harnessing the blue economy

### VOM Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the Pakistan Navy was fully prepared to ensure the defense of the maritime boundaries of the country. Addressing the closing session of the 7th National Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW) at the Navy War College in Lahore as a Chief Guest, the PM lauded the Pakistan Navy's unwavering commitment to contribute to the development of the country and its significant role to the national security. The premier emphasized the strategic importance of maritime security and the blue economy, commending the Navy's exceptional capabilities in addressing diverse challenges. He praised the dedication and professionalism of the Navy's officers and personnel in protecting the country's maritime boundaries.

"The blue economy holds central importance in today's world," he remarked, highlighting Pakistan Navy's proactive measures to harness maritime resources for the nation's development. He also acknowledged China as a vital partner, expressing gratitude for its steadfast cooperation in the maritime domain. PM Shehbaz Sharif underscored the critical

link between economic prosperity and the efficient utilization of the blue economy, saying that Gwadar Port was considered a cornerstone of Pakistan's economic future due to its strategic location, economic potential, and its role in the development of regional trade and connectivity.

The PM expressed government's firm resolve to eliminate terrorism from all over Pakistan as did in 2018. He paid rich tribute to the martyrs of the armed forces for their great sacrifices during anti terrorism operations. He told the participants that Apex Committee meetings were being held regularly aimed at ensuring peace and security in the country. He expressed a strong commitment to leveraging maritime resources for economic progress and enhancing national security. He termed the role of Gwadar Port very important in the blue economy and it must be prepared to facilitate the importers and exporters. He added that Karachi Port Trust must be equipped with the modern technology to execute the loading and unloading consignments from across the world.

He was of the view that real estate business was not the domain of Port Trust and the professional approach could steer this institution towards its real commercial scope in the blue economy. He highlighted the importance of

National Shipping Corporation and vowed to re-establish it in accordance with the commercial needs.

Shahbaz Sharif said that Pakistan had full of talent and resources, adding that this potential should be utilized to get rid of the debt. Earlier, the Chief Guest was received by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, upon his arrival at PN War College.

In his welcome address, Commandant Pakistan Navy War College, Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood, provided an overview of workshop's activities.

Later, a panel of participants presented a paper containing recommendations for a National Maritime Policy. The panel analyzed the maritime environment, highlighting its impact on national security and economic prosperity, and proposed measures to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities. The Maritime Security Workshop was an annual event organized by Pakistan Navy to enhance understanding of maritime security dynamics, create awareness about Blue Economy, and explore Pakistan's untapped maritime potential.

Participants included parliamentarians, policymakers, bureaucrats, academics, entrepreneurs, armed forces officers, and media representatives.

## Jam Kamal vows to boost trade in Balochistan



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries Jam Kamal Khan on Friday vowed to boost trade activities, reaffirming government pledge to develop the infrastructure and set up industries in Balochistan. "In line with the economic plan devised by the federal government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, industrial sector is being revived to boost economic activities in Balochistan," he said while addressing to the members of Quetta Chamber of Commerce in provincial capital.

Jam Kamal Khan said that Balochistan is the trade gateway, connecting the central Asian countries to the rest of the world.

He said that many countries are keen to invest in the transit, roads and ports of Pakistan and transport their goods to other parts of the world through Balochistan. The minister said he visited the Quetta Chamber of Commerce to interact with business community and devise a joint strategy to enhance the trade in the region.

He said the Balochistan province has huge transit potential due to its geographical location, adding that efforts would be taken to formulate formal trade mechanism in order to improve the sector.

Addressing the business community, the Minister said that geographical location of Balochistan is very important in terms of trade which has a significant role in the development and economic activities of the country.

"The federal government, he said is trying to encourage the business community making all-out efforts to facilitate the trade community.

He expressed concerns over the lack of facilities in the special economic zones stressing the need for constructing special economic zones for giving rise to the business and trade.

Jam Kamal said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is paying special attention to the development of Balochistan. "PM is trying to develop all the sections of Balochistan equally so that the people of the province get benefits of the government policies.

On this occasion, he assured the business community that concrete steps would be taken to solve the problems of the business community on a priority basis.

He noted that the PM has formulated a special committee for the enhancement of formal trade and called a meeting of the committee to discuss the issues faced by the business community and devise a concerted strategy. He deplored that the provinces have hesitating to own commerce industries and not paying required attentions for the promotion of exports.

Jam Kamal Khan while talking to Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industries also expressed concern over the poor infrastructure and energy issues terming them main hurdles behind the slow pace of business activities in Balochistan. APP

## Tarar, Meta's global head discuss digital child safety



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar met with Meta's Global Head for Human Rights Policy, Miranda Sissons

guarding children and empowering families to navigate the digital landscape safely.

Both parties also discussed the need for digital law compliance mechanisms, aligning policies with human rights standards to address online harm, extremism, and ensuring that digital platforms remain sensitive to Pakistan's cultural and religious values. The Minister emphasized the importance of META and inter-ministerial cooperation, particularly with the Ministry of Information Technology and the Ministry of Interior, to effectively implement policies safeguarding human rights in the digital realm.

Sissons recognized the challenges of managing risks on online platforms and expressed Meta's strong commitment to working closely with the Ministry for long-term solutions. The discussions also highlighted the importance of strengthening the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, aiming to improve digital governance frameworks while protecting constitutional freedoms. Both parties emphasized the need for policies that balance online safety with respect for cultural sensitivities, reinforcing a shared commitment to enhancing the digital landscape. DNA

discuss critical issues related to digital child safety, online protections, and human rights advocacy.

The meeting highlighted the success of the "Take It Down" initiative, a collaboration between the Ministry of Human Rights, designed to safely remove harmful and non-consensual content, protecting minors from online exploitation. The launch of the Urdu version of the platform enhances accessibility, broadening its reach to Pakistan's youth. The meeting further emphasized the ministry's continued commitment to child rights protection, highlighting ongoing initiatives such as digital literacy campaigns and public awareness programs focused on cyberbullying and online exploitation. These efforts are essential in safe-

## Foreign Office issues advisory for Pakistan nationals in Syria

Pakistan nationals have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel or visit to Syria until the situation improves

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on Friday issued a travel advisory for Pakistani diaspora amid recent developments and evolving situation in Syria.

"Pakistan nationals are advised to avoid unnecessary travel or visit to Syria until the situation improves," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advisory said.

It added that the national currently in Syria were advised to exercise extreme caution and remain in contact with the Embassy of Pakistan in Damascus.

It added that the Embassy could be reached out for any assistance on cellphone, WhatsApp contacts: +963 987 127 822, +963 990 138 972 and email: parep-damascus@mofa.gov.ok.

## Serena Chowk Interchange Project will be completed in 3 months: Mohsin Naqvi

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited the Serena Chowk Interchange project. He highlighted that the Serena Chowk Interchange project will now be completed in 3 months instead of 10 months. He tasked the CDA to complete the project ahead of schedule.

He reviewed the construction work and inspected the ongoing construction activities on the project. He gave directions for the timely completion of the project. The Interior Minister said that the completion of this mega project will resolve the problem of traffic in the capital for years.

He assured that people from other cities coming to Islamabad would also get convenience in transportation.

He added that Serena Chowk Interchange will now be built in just 3 months instead of 10 months and the task has been assigned in this regard. Mohsin Naqvi said that under the Serena Chowk Interchange project, 2 underpasses and connecting roads are being built. He stated that he was personally monitoring the project to ensure its completion within the stipulated period. He instructed that the project should be completed within the stipulated period by



continuing 24/7 construction work. The Interior Minister stressed that during the construction work, the alternative traffic plan should be strictly implemented. He emphasized that the best management must be made to ensure the flow of the traffic. The Interior Minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the construction of Serena Chowk Interchange. Chairman CDA, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

## China requested to develop two model industrial zones in Pakistan: Ahsan

### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said China has been requested to develop two model industrial zones in Pakistan on a turnkey basis for their replication in other areas of the country.

"These model zones will serve as benchmarks for other industrial zones across the country," he said while chairing a progress-review meeting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a news release said.

The meeting was attended by Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Planning, members of the Planning Commission, secretaries of various Ministries and

Divisions, besides senior officials from relevant departments.

The minister also directed the Board of Investment (BOI) to finalize the availability of land for the SEZ development in Islamabad. The meeting reviewed progress in key sectors, including Energy, Infrastructure, Food & Agriculture and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The Ministry of Railways and Communications updated on the recent progress of the ML-1 and Karakoram Highway (KKH) projects and outlined their future course of action. Discussing the ML-1 project, Ahsan Iqbal noted the commitment made by the Chinese Premier for the visit of a team of Chinese technical experts to Pakistan.

During a recent meeting with the Chinese Ambassador, it was also agreed that a team of financial experts would



accompany them to ensure the simultaneous and efficient resolution of all matters related to the project.

Regarding KKH, the minister directed

the National Highway Authority (NHA) to expedite progress in coordination with the Chinese side to ensure its timely completion, as it was a strategic

project under CPEC Phase II. The minister directed the Power Division and PESCO to immediately energize the internal network of Rashakai SEZ and provide electricity to meet its current requirements. Regarding Gwadar's tax exemption policy, officials clarified that under the Finance Act, the China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) and other Free Zone businesses were entitled to tax holidays and related incentives.

Accordingly, they said notifications have already been issued to relevant departments, confirming there is no turnover tax on SEZ enterprises operating in Gwadar. The meeting also reviewed progress on the training of 1,000 agricultural graduates in China.

The minister directed that experts traveling for agricultural training should be fully facilitated. The trainees, to be

selected from public and private sectors on merit, would learn the latest technology and farm mechanization techniques from China and help in modernizing Pakistan's agriculture.

Special arrangements for their provision Halal food, including Sehri and Iftar to them during Ramadan, were also instructed. Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the vital role of the agriculture sector in Pakistan's development and noted that the Prime Minister would soon announce the 5Es National Economic Transformation Plan Framework, which is homegrown.

"This framework will be integrated into the five-year development plan, followed by the formulation of a comprehensive National Agriculture and Industrial Policy to advance the agriculture sector under a structured policy framework", added.

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## Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its impact on nuclear proliferation

LUKE COFFEY

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has led to numerous unintended global consequences. Among these are heightened concerns about food insecurity, especially in vulnerable regions, and an acute energy crisis in Europe, which is only now being addressed through a complete restructuring of the continent's energy imports. Economic uncertainty and inflation have surged, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. However, one consequence that has escaped widespread discussion is the impact on efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. To understand this issue, it is essential to examine the recent history of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, 15 newly independent states emerged, three of which — Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus — found themselves in possession of sizable numbers of Soviet nuclear weapons. While Kazakhstan and Belarus quickly transferred control of their nuclear arsenals to Moscow, Ukraine's situation was different. At the time, Ukraine unexpectedly became the world's third-largest nuclear power. This triggered an internal debate about the country's nuclear future. On the one hand, many of these weapons were nearing the end of their operational life, and Ukraine lacked the resources to modernize and maintain them. On the other hand, there was significant support for retaining a nuclear deterrent to ensure the nation's security and defense. Ultimately, after significant international pressure, Ukraine agreed to relinquish all its inherited nuclear weapons in exchange for substantial economic support and security guarantees from Russia, the US and the UK. This agreement culminated in the signing of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances on Dec. 5, 1994. This week marks the 30th anniversary of the agreement. According to the memorandum, Russia, the UK and the US agreed to "reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defense or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations."

However, as time went on, the Budapest Memorandum became fraught with ambiguities. It meant different things to different parties. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Ukrainians have accused their Western partners of failing to honor the memorandum's security guarantees. From the US perspective, the Budapest Memorandum was a memorandum — not a legally binding treaty. For the US, obligations under such agreements require Senate ratification to carry the force of law. While the US and UK argue that it is Russia, not them, that has violated the memorandum, this distinction remains a sore point for Ukraine. This week, during a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybaha held up the country's original copy of the Budapest Memorandum, as a symbolic reminder to the world of the commitments made three decades ago. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, three significant consequences for global nuclear nonproliferation efforts have emerged. First, no country currently in possession of nuclear weapons — or close to developing them — will willingly give them up. Ukraine's experience has underscored the risks of disarmament. Had Ukraine retained even a limited nuclear deterrent, it is unlikely that Russia would have invaded in 2014 or 2022. This lesson will not be lost on other countries. States with nuclear ambitions will be emboldened to develop and maintain their arsenals, making global nuclear disarmament a distant goal. Secondly, the war in Ukraine has inadvertently strengthened the nuclear capabilities of Iran and North Korea. Facing unexpected setbacks in its campaign, Russia has relied on material and manpower support from these allies. North Korea, for example, has provided Russia with artillery shells and ballistic missiles. Recent reports even suggest North Korea has sent thousands of soldiers to fight alongside Russian forces. This support has not come without a price. It is widely suspected that Russia has offered nuclear or missile technology in exchange. Speaking in Brussels, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte warned that "there's every reason to believe that nuclear and missile technology is flowing into North Korea." Finally, the possibility of Ukraine pursuing a nuclear weapons program cannot be dismissed. With trust in the Budapest Memorandum shattered and the prospect of NATO membership — and its accompanying security guarantees — still remote, President Volodymyr Zelensky has hinted that Ukraine may have no choice but to reconsider its nuclear options. While there is no evidence that Ukraine is actively pursuing nuclear weapons, experts agree that the country has the technical expertise and resources to do so in the future. It would be a tragic irony if the Budapest Memorandum, designed to reduce the number of nuclear-armed states, ended up accelerating nuclear proliferation. The memorandum highlights how partial solutions to complex security problems can lead to unintended and far-reaching consequences. As President Donald Trump prepares to enter the Oval Office next year, he has expressed a desire to negotiate a settlement between Russia and Ukraine. Any such deal must include robust and enforceable security guarantees for Kyiv. Ukraine, understandably skeptical of diplomatic assurances, will demand more than cleverly worded agreements with little practical enforcement. Historians may one day look back on the Budapest Memorandum and the subsequent war as the moment the global nonproliferation regime began to unravel. Without credible commitments and enforcement mechanisms, efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons may prove futile, leaving the world a far more dangerous place.

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Iftkhar A Khan

## Misplaced priorities

agreements with Hubco, Lalpir, Saba Power, Rousch Power, and Atlas Power will be terminated. What's the progress on the decision? The public would like to know. Since taxing solar power owners is a fresh case under consideration, it's taken as government highhandedness against solar energy consumers. The government's intention to reduce the solar panel tariff to

supply of electric power occurred. These companies, however, are overstaffed and headed by CEOs who pocket a few hundred thousand in salary every month. There are other public-sector projects, which I like to call 'blackholes'. For instance, the privatisation of PIA is testing the patience of the taxpayers. The national airline has devoured billions of public money

tium, offered its bid. And the bid was appallingly low — Rs10 billion while the Privatisation Commission demanded Rs85 billion.

The difference was huge and bridging such a differential could only be a pipedream. However, Privatisation Minister Abdul Aleem Khan recently stressed the need to continue inviting offers for PIA's privatisation. Now that the European Aviation Safety Agency has lifted the ban on PIA flights to Europe, it should not be a matter of consolation for the government to postpone its privatisation process. With the removal of the ban, PIA is likely to attract more bidders with better offers compared with the puny bid of Rs10 billion and asking price of Rs85 billion.

Why is all quiet in the case of another huge loss-maker — the Pakistan Steel Mills? There was a time when Russia and China offered to take it over but the government at the time played delaying tactics. The political interests of politicians and others employed in the mills on high salaries led to the issue being placed on the back burner. PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto openly opposed the privatisation of the PSM.

The government must value public tax money and privatise loss-makers like PIA and the PSM. It must trim its bureaucracy and withdraw glossy SUVs and new cars from officials. Sparkling luxury vehicles and protocols irk taxpayers. Lastly, to revitalize the economy, the prime minister may keep in mind that it's not the job of the government to undertake commercial ventures.

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Our governments know how to keep the public on the edge of the precipice. The present government is considering reducing the pay-back tariff for solar system users by the power grids. People were sick of the shortage of electricity and gas in their homes, and many decided to install solar panels atop the roofs of their homes to save themselves from paying exorbitant bills to any of the DISCOs.

Installing a solar panel system is no ordinary matter; it costs a fortune. Rooftop solar system owners believe that once they have invested, however heavily, they will get financial respite in the future. But the government didn't appreciate the idea that people saved money by generating their own electric energy and avoiding using the power produced by the influential IPP owners who enjoy sovereign guarantees. Instead of negotiating with the IPP owners to act rationally during a struggling national economy, the government is considering devising an easy way out — squeezing domestic and industrial solar system owners.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a federal cabinet meeting that agreements with five IPPs would be terminated and would save Rs411 billion annually and reduce the burden on the power consumers by Rs60 billion. In the first phase,



Rs7.5-11 per unit from the existing Rs21 per unit at which electricity is given to the national grid through the net metering system is highly objectionable. Instead of cutting down its expenses by drastically reducing the size of bureaucracy and its perks and privileges, it has decided to squeeze domestic solar system users.

Similarly, some power plants and many DISCOs were earmarked for privatisation but they continue to operate — much to consumer dismay. Other than naming the DISCOs after big cities — Lesco for Lahore, Fesco for Faisalabad and Pesco for Peshawar etc — no change in the

but the concerned officials entrusted with its privatisation continue to make inane statements occasionally. Sometimes friends bet with one another whether the PIA will ultimately be privatised or some government functionaries and the vested interests find a way around it to keep it in the public sector to milk it. When Airblue and AirSial in the private sector are operating successfully, why can't PIA?

Some joint ventures of companies were interested in taking over the PIA but quoted far below what the government expected. Finally, these companies lost interest and only one company, Blue World City Consor-

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 National Assembly has 336 members, each of whom serves a five-year term. Of these, 266 seats are filled by direct popular election in electoral constituencies; 256 are for Muslim candidates, and 10 are for non-Muslims. Of the remaining seats, which are allocated to parties through proportional representation, 60 are reserved for women; in 2008 the assembly elected its first female speaker. The Senate has 100 members, each serving a six-year term. A portion of the senators are chosen by the provincial assemblies; others are appointed. One-third of the senators relinquish their seats every two years.

A unique feature of the constitution is the designation of a period of up to 60 days between the completion of the National Assembly's term and general elections. Upon the dissolution, the president, on the advice of the outgoing prime minister and opposition leader, appoints a care-

taker prime minister who is tasked with executing the regular duties of government until elections are held. Pakistan's four provinces are divided into divisions, districts, and subdistricts (tehsils, or tahsils). These units are run by a hierarchy of administrators, such as the divisional commissioner, the deputy commissioner at the district level, and the subdivisional magistrate, subdivisional officer, or tehsildar (tahsildar) at the tehsil level. The key level is that of the district, where the deputy commissioner, although in charge of all branches of government, shares power with the elected chairman of the district council. During the period of British rule, the deputy commissioner was both the symbol and embodiment of the central government in remote locations. Expected to serve the constituents in numerous ways, the officer's responsibilities ranged from that of magistrate dispensing justice to record keeper, as well as provider of advice

and guidance in managing the socio-economic condition. Those multiple roles have varied little since independence, but increasing emphasis has been placed on self-help programs for the rural populace.

In addition to the provinces, Pakistan has the Islamabad Capital Territory and a number of tribal areas that are administered by the provincial governments. The areas of Kashmir under Pakistani control are administered directly by the central government.

Under the constitution there is a formal division between the judiciary and the executive branches of government. The judiciary consists of the Supreme Court, the provincial high courts, and (under their jurisdiction and supervision) district courts that hear civil cases and sessions courts that hear criminal cases. There is also a magistracy that deals with cases brought by the police. The district magistrate (who, as deputy commissioner, also

controls the police) hears appeals from magistrates under him; appeals may go from him to the sessions judge. The Supreme Court is a court of record. It has original, appellate, and advisory jurisdictions and is the highest court in the land. At the time of independence, Pakistan inherited legal codes and acts that have remained in force, subject to amendment. The independence of the judiciary has been tested at times, most notably in 2007, when Pres. Pervez Musharraf replaced the chief justice and several other Supreme Court justices who challenged his constitutional legitimacy. Pressure from lawyers' groups and opposition leaders led to the justices' reinstatement in 2009.

The judicial system also has a religious dimension; a reorientation to Islamic tenets and values was designed to make legal redress inexpensive and accessible to all persons.

To be continued....

## Showbiz

# Rihanna plans to retire from music after making 'easy money'

Rihanna is eaning big money outside music, says source

Rihanna has recently hinted at retiring from music after she has been earning big money from other lucrative non-music related projects.

A source spilled to RadarOnline.com that the Umbrella hit-maker "hasn't released any music for such a long time and there's not much sign of any more coming".

The source noted that it's highly unlikely Rihanna might return to music as she's occupied with her Fenty brand photoshoots.

After becoming a mother, the insider reflected that Rihanna "still earned big money due to her Fenty range and



other affiliated brands, and best of all it hasn't taken much effort".

"So why does she need to get back into the stress of the studio, touring and promo, when it's just too easy to make money starring in sexy ad campaigns?" explained an insider. The source mentioned, "She's now just a highly paid stripper."

Earlier, the songstress wanted to work on a range of reusable cloth nappies as she appeared on the cover of British Vogue with infant son in a cloth nappy. Sharing her reason for creating new clothing diapers range, Rihanna told Vogue,

## OpenAI rolls out new subscription tier for ChatGPT



OpenAI on Thursday launched a new subscription tier for its popular generative artificial intelligence chatbot, ChatGPT, which can be used in engineering fields and for research. ChatGPT Pro, the new version of ChatGPT, is priced at \$200 per month, expanding the AI firm's existing offerings that included ChatGPT Plus, Team, and Enterprise. The introduction of ChatGPT Pro reflects OpenAI's ambition to further commercialise its technology, which had kicked off the AI

boom, Reuters reported. Additionally, the company said that ChatGPT Pro will allow access to the most advanced OpenAI tools, including unlimited access to its new reasoning model o1, o1 mini, GPT-4o and advanced voice.

Taking to X to announce the launch of the new version, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said: "we just launched two things: o1, the smartest model in the world. smarter, faster, and more features (eg multimodality) than o1-preview. live in chatgpt now, coming to api soon."

"chatgpt pro. \$200/month. unlimited usage and even-smarter mode for using o1. more benefits to come!"

The o1 pro mode is a version which uses additional computing power to solve more complex queries.

OpenAI said the o1 pro mode performs better on machine learning benchmarks across math, science and coding compared with the o1 and o1-preview versions.

## Health

# Airlines don't always fulfil commitments made with food allergy patients: study

Airlines do not always fulfil requests of food allergy patients during flights, a new study from the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology has revealed. People with food allergy say that airlines commit to protect their health and take necessary measurements but then don't fulfil them, as per UPI. 20% of the patients said airlines promised cabin announcements related to food allergies that didn't happen while 17% said the airline promised them allergen-free buffer zones and they didn't follow this commitment.

The most drastic situation of all for a person with food allergies would be to have no allergy-free and safe food options while being several thousand feet in the sky and according to the research, 23% people faced this where they were promised allergy-free food that wasn't offered. "We are not asking for the moon and stars, we just want reasonable accommodations that are promised in advance," says researcher

"We are not asking for moon and stars, we just want reasonable accommodations that are promised in advance," says researcher

want reasonable accommodations that are promised in advance of travel to be honoured at 30,000 feet," said study co-author Lianne Mandelbaum, founder of the non-profit No Nut Traveller. "On every flight, it is uncertain if and how crew members will accommodate nut allergies, and this adds tremendous unnecessary stress," Mandelbaum said. "Flying with food allergies is akin to a

game of roulette, each flight a random spin around the wheel," the co-author added. The researchers surveyed more than 4,700 individual patients and families from all over the world to assess their concerns related to food allergies and flying.

Patients with food allergies said they worry the most about whether an airline would follow through on accommodations arranged and discussed during the ticket-booking process.

They also said they were worried about carrying Epi pens or allergy-safe foods being confiscated or contaminated at the airport security check or by customs agents. Mandelbaum said she has heard from people with food allergies that they were kicked off of flights after asking for cabin announcements and being mocked by air hostesses and fellow passengers for their health concerns.



# دشمن کی گراف

## دہشت گردی ناسور، خاتمے کیلئے ہمارا عزم بچتہ ہے: وزیراعظم

پاک تجزیہ ہر طرح کے چیلنجز سے نبرد آزما ہونے کی بھرپور صلاحیت رکھتے ہیں، پاک تجزیہ کے بہادر افسر اور جوان پاکستان کی سمندری حدود کا تحفظ یقینی بنائے ہیں، شہداء کے خطاب

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# خیمہ چٹوختو خیمیں گورنر کی بجائے وزیراعلیٰ یونیورسٹیوں کا چانسر ہوگا، صوبائی اسمبلی میں ترمیمی بل منظور

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## سریہ چوک انٹرنیٹ پر ایکٹ 3 ماہ میں بنے گا، وزیر داخلہ

سریہ چوک انٹرنیٹ پر ایکٹ 3 ماہ میں بنے گا، وزیر داخلہ

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## حکومت سرمایہ کاری بڑھانے کیلئے اقدامات کرے گی، وزیر خزانہ

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## بعض عناصر نو جوانوں کو مذہبی اور سیاسی انتہا پسند بنانا چاہتے ہیں، بلاول بھٹو

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اسلام آباد وفاقی وزیر داخلہ نسیم احمد نے وزیراعلیٰ پنجاب مریم نواز سے ملاقات کی اور ان کے ساتھ دیگر افسران اور عملے کے ساتھ ایک تصویر کھینچا۔



فری سولر بینٹیل سکیم کے افتتاحی موقع پر وزیراعلیٰ پنجاب مریم نواز اور دیگر افسران کے ساتھ ایک تصویر کھینچا گیا۔



چیمبرین چیئرمین پارٹی بلاول بھٹو زرداری تقریب سے خطاب کر رہے ہیں۔

## کمرشل گاڑیوں کی ای وی پر منتقلی عوامی نقل و حمل نظام کیلئے اہم قدم، محمد علی رندھا

کمرشل بسوں کو ای وی بسوں میں تبدیل کرنے کے عمل میں تمام متعلقہ ایجنٹس ہولڈرز کو شامل کیا جائے، چیئرمین ڈی اے

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## شادی ہال مالکان کا تقریباً 10 فیصد وولٹنگ ٹیکس وصول کرنا کلامان

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## آئینی بیٹھ، مارگلہ ہلز میں غیر قانونی تعمیرات پر رپورٹ طلب

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## ان لیگ کل بھی پنجاب کی سب سے بڑی پارٹی تھی، آج بھی ہے: عظمیٰ بخاری

ان لیگ کل بھی پنجاب کی سب سے بڑی پارٹی تھی، آج بھی ہے: عظمیٰ بخاری

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## بھاگنے والی عورت نہیں، ڈی چوک پر مجھے اکیلا چھوڑ دیا گیا، بشری بی بی

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## بانی پی ٹی آئی کے پاس نو جوانوں کو دینے کیلئے صرف انتشار ہے، شہرزیاد میمن

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## سیاسی بحران حل کرنے کیلئے اب بھی وقت ہے، بیرسٹر گوہر

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## پی ٹی آئی کو آئین قانون میں رہ کر بات کرنی ہے، شاہد خاقان

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## Quality education essential for sustainable economic growth, says Muqam



MANSEHRA: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam on Friday emphasized the importance of quality education for achieving sustainable economic development and prosperity in Pakistan.

Speaking at the annual Parents' Day ceremony at Pakistan Scouts Cadet College Batrasi, he highlighted the role of collective efforts in overcoming challenges, including terrorism.

He remarked, "Pakistan is endowed with abundant natural resources, and we need to work collectively for its progress to reach greater heights."

Citing examples of national resilience, such as the 2005 earthquake, the 2010 floods, and the fight against terrorism, the minister praised the nation's unity in overcoming adversities.

Muqam acknowledged the significant contributions of graduates from Cadet College Batrasi in various fields and underscored the importance of students as the nation's future leaders.

He urged parents to closely monitor their children's academic performance, extracurricular activities, and daily routines to secure a bright and safe future.

Addressing concerns about misinformation on social media, the minister warned against misleading propaganda aimed at youth, encouraging students to follow truth and reject negative elements attempting to distort young minds.

He lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's efforts in tackling economic challenges, noting that the government's effective monetary and economic policies have reduced inflation to single digits and boosted the stock exchange to record levels.

Reflecting on the devastating earthquake of October 8, 2005, which severely impacted the Hazara Division, particularly Mansehra District, the minister commended the college administration for continuing educational activities despite significant infrastructure damage.

He also mentioned the college's efforts in providing quality education and promoting sustainable economic development and prosperity in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Finland, Hannu Ripatti cutting a cake on Independence Day of Finland in the Federal Capital. ONLINE



RAWALPINDI: personnel shifting a person to the hospital after he was suffocated due to a fire that broke out after a short circuit in a private restaurant in Saddar. The person later lost his life in the hospital. ONLINE

## We cannot afford the politics of chaos & disruption: Abdul Aleem Khan

Says only an economically independent & strong Pakistan can move forward with dignity & respect in the world

ISLAMABAD: President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that only an economically independent and strong Pakistan can move forward with dignity and respect in the world by getting its proper representation in the comity of the nations. He added that we cannot afford the politics of chaos and disruption because doing so is not patriotism but is tantamount to enmity with the motherland.

These views were expressed by Central President Abdul Aleem Khan while talking to the senior leaders of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan

Party, Central Secretary Information Syed Samsam Ali Bukhari and President Punjab IPP Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan who called on him in Islamabad. Abdul Aleem Khan said that the first priority of his Party is the interest of the country and the nation, we stood with the security institutions and will continue to support them in future as well.

President IPP Abdul Aleem Khan directed the party leaders to complete the organizational activities in all the districts of Punjab as soon as possible and said that the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party will fully participate in the upcoming Local Body elections of Punjab for which it is very important to organize the

party workers at the Union Council level. Abdul Aleem Khan congratulated Syed Samsam Ali Bukhari on holding the office of Central Secretary Information of IPP and said that he should highlight the party's version at every forum. He took a detailed briefing from Punjab President Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan on the organizational updates. Both the leaders Syed Samsam Ali Bukhari and Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan expressed their gratitude to Party President Abdul Aleem Khan and assured that they would fulfill their responsibilities in the light of the new instructions to popularize Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party at local level. SABAH

## Govt decides to introduce online registration for plastic producers: Senior Minister

LAHORE: Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb announced that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has decided to introduce online registration for plastic producers, suppliers, collectors, and recyclers. This initiative is a landmark step by the Punjab government, aiming to centralize data for the plastic industry. Through this registration, the "supply side" of plastic will transition

from the informal economy to the formal economic framework.

The Senior Minister stated that this measure will not only address environmental pollution but also promote transparency in the economy. Under the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, efforts to make Punjab plastic-free are being intensified by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Marriyum Aurangzeb emphasized action against polythene bags with thicknesses below 75 microns. The Department of Environmental Protection has issued notices to nine plastic bag manufacturing factories for violations. Anti-plastic squads are inspecting food outlets, markets, and shops to enforce ban on plastic bags. Vendors are being directed to switch to eco-friendly alternatives as part of the crackdown.

"Plastic pollution poses a serious threat to our environment and public health," the Senior Minister said. "Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is determined to eradicate this problem from its roots. She has instructed strict action against violators without any leniency."

## CM launches free solar panel scheme

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the purpose of the free solar panel scheme is to offer lasting relief to the public from the burden of expensive electricity.

While formally inaugurating the CM Punjab Free Solar Panel Scheme for 100,000 consumers in Punjab here on Friday, she said that Punjab consumers can apply under the scheme via SMS or online portal from today.

The CM said earlier 7.3 million consumers of Punjab benefited from the subsidy of Rs.14 per unit, adding that public resources will be spent only for the public convenience and relief.

Earlier, the Provincial Secretary Energy briefed Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif about the free solar panel scheme, under which, 100,000 solar systems will be installed over a period of one year. He added solar systems will be given free to electricity consumers of the province who consume up to 200 units per month.

The CM was briefed that 52,019 consumers who consume 100 units per month will be given free 550-watt solar systems, while consumers consuming up to 200 units of electricity per month will be given free 1100-watt solar system. She was apprised that to register under the CM Free Solar Panel Scheme, one can visit the online portal "cmsolar.scheme.punjab.gov.pk. Consumers of Punjab can also register for the scheme by sending an SMS to 8800. Verification will be done using the reference number and CNIC number mentioned on the monthly bill of the consumers. A computerized balloting will be conducted to ensure transparency in the Scheme. She was also briefed that a helpline will also be established to support and guide the consumers who will get free solar systems.

To protect the solar panel and inverter from theft, the solar panel and inverter will be linked

to the computerized CNIC of the consumer. Installing 100,000 solar systems in Punjab will reduce carbon emissions by 57,000 tons. Free solar panel scheme will also reduce the burden of subsidy on the federal government.



## JUI-F gives deadline for passing Madrasah Registration Bill

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has given the government a deadline of December 8 to pass the Madrasah Registration Bill.

In a statement, JUI-F leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidri said that the government must approve the bill concerning religious seminaries by December 8.

He warned that if the bill is not passed by December 8, they would be forced to march towards Islamabad.

"We are religious people and do not wish to take such a step, but the country cannot bear this delay," Haidri said.

The JUI-F leader also accused the delay in passing the bill of being a deliberate attempt to obstruct the process, labeling it as "malicious intent."

Haidri assured that there would be a resolution to the issue, as Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had assured him that he would speak with the president to ensure the bill's approval.

Responding to a question regarding the potential change in the PM House, Haidri stated that they did not acknowledge the current elections and questioned how the government could take a U-turn after such a shift. He clarified that the bill is not just supported by JUI-F and Wafaqul Madaris, but is endorsed by all religious seminary organizations.

Earlier it was reported that President Asif Ali Zardari has returned the Madrasah Registration Bill to the Prime Minister's Office, citing legal objections. According to Express News, the bill, which aimed to regulate and register religious schools (madrasahs), has faced significant hurdles in the legal review process.

Sources reveal that the president raised concerns over the bill's legal validity, particularly its lack of clarity regarding the jurisdiction of madrasah registration. The bill had been pushed through by the government, following assurances made to Maulana Fazlur Rehman, a key ally. INP

## SBP injects over Rs9.6 trillion in the market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Friday, injected Rs9640.7 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO). The SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on December 06, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and, as per results issued, accepted an amount of Rs9086.7 billion offered through 32 bids. The central bank received 32 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs9086.7 billion at the rate of return ranging from 15.04 to 15.11 percent while no bid was received for the 28-day tenor. The central bank accepted the entire amount offered through 32 bids for 7-day tenor at the 15.04% rate of return.

Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for the 7-day and 28-day tenors. The central bank received 4 bids for 7-day tenor quoting an amount of Rs554 billion at the rate of return ranging between 15.10 to 15.12% while no bid was received for 28-day tenor. The SBP accepted the entire amount offered through 4 quotes for 7-day tenor at 15.10% rate of return.

## CDA charts path to electric mobility

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to modernise the capital's transportation system and reduce environmental impact, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has unveiled plans to transition public and commercial vehicles to electric.

The initiative was discussed in detail during a meeting chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday. The meeting, attended by key CDA officials and members of the Islamabad Bus Service, also explored integrating digital advertisements on metro and electric vehicle (EV) buses and their stations.

Chairman Randhawa termed the move a pivotal step towards a greener and more efficient public transport network in Islamabad. He directed officials to engage all relevant stakeholders, including educational institutions, to ensure the seamless implementation of the plan.

"Our focus must remain on reducing the carbon footprint while enhancing the city's environmental quality," said Randhawa. He also called for the exploration of special incentives to accelerate the adoption of electric mobility across the capital. A critical component of the initiative will be upgrading the city's charging infrastructure.



To this end, Randhawa instructed the introduction of regulations to enable electric vehicle charging stations at existing petrol pumps. Additionally, plans to introduce digital advertisements on buses and bus stations were discussed. Randhawa highlighted that such advertisements would not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the surroundings but also provide a valuable revenue stream, reducing reliance on subsidies.

## Transport link between Uzbek-Pakistan is significant for regional integration

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtayev on Friday said that the transport link between Uzbekistan and Pakistan is significant for regional economic and trade integration and connecting the region for achieving future economic objectives.

The regional connectivity projects, such as the Termez-Kabul and Peshawar railway projects, the recently launched Tashkent-Lahore flight, the Trans-Afghan Railway, and the multimodal Belarus-Russia-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan transport corridor, are highly significant.

They not only promote regional economic integration but also enhance global geo-economic connectivity, stated Alisher Tukhtayev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtayev told media.

The Uzbek envoy said the rapid development of Uzbek-Pakistani relations meets the long-term interests of not only regional countries but also has a positive impact on strengthening security and developing trade, economic, transport, communication and humanitarian ties in our regions. He

said that transport links between Uzbekistan and Pakistan are of strategic importance for the two countries, but also for the entire region.

He said that the current restoration of air traffic, as well as the implementation of projects to develop road and rail infrastructure, will deepen trade, travel and cultural ties. The ambassador said the governments of Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are actively cooperating in the implementation of joint economic and infrastructure projects and one of them is the construction of the Trans-Afghan Railway.

He said the "Termez-Kabul-Peshawar" railway project plays an important role in restoring ties of regional connectivity between Central and South Asia. He said that once the project is launched, the volume of trade will increase significantly and shipping costs will decrease. Alisher Tukhtayev said the railway connectivity will contribute hugely to regional stability and overall prosperity by aiding Afghanistan's economic recovery.

The ambassador said the project will facilitate the delivery of Uzbek goods to world markets through Pakistani ports and will open up a new route for

Pakistan to export its products to Central Asian, CIS, and European markets. The expansion of inter-regional trade will bring economic benefits to all countries of the region, he said.

He said the Trans-Afghan railway can carry up to 20 million tons of cargo per year, and transportation costs will decrease by 30-35% and timing from 2 weeks up to 3-4 days. "I have always emphasized, the resumption of regular direct flights, which to be support people-to-people diplomacy between our two friendly nations", he said.

The Uzbek envoy said that in particular, the launch of direct flights between Tashkent and Lahore will create unprecedented opportunities in the economic and tourism sectors. In addition, he said that work is underway on several joint projects in the development of automobile routes.

The Ambassador said that the international cooperation project on the development of the multimodal transport corridor "Belarus - Russia - Kazakhstan - Uzbekistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan" is being actively promoted.

The envoy said that the recently operationalized direct flights between Uzbekistan and Pakistan resumed on November 29, 2024, also enhancing regional integration. This flight, connecting the cities of Tashkent and Lahore, aims to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, and take trade and economic relations to a new level, he added.

The ambassador said that this remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the personal initiative and unwavering support of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. He said that because of the leadership and strategic vision of President, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, since September of this year, Uzbekistan has resumed the issuance of tourist visas for citizens of brotherly Pakistan.

He said that this wise decision has not only facilitated easier travel between the people from both sides, but has also strengthened the bonds of friendship, and created new opportunities for mutual understanding, business collaboration, and people-to-people connections between the two nations. DNA