

QUETTA VOICE

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QUETTA: Activates of Baluchistan Union of Journalist hold protest against PECA Act outside Quetta Press Club (QPC).

PML-N's Irfan Siddiqi says negotiation process 'practically' at an end amid PTI's absence from 4th round

NEWS DESK: PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqi said on Tuesday that the negotiation process with the PTI was "practically" at an end after the opposition party skipped today's fourth round of meetings.

Talks between the government and the PTI commenced in the last week of December to bring down political temperatures, but despite weeks of negotiations, the dialogue process stalled on major issues — the formation of two judicial commissions and the release of PTI prisoners.

Senator Siddiqi, the government committee's spokesperson, had indicated a day ago of ending the dialogue if the opposition skipped today's meet after the PTI called off talks with the government last week, citing a delay in the latter's response to its demands presented in the third meeting.

Karachi traders should approach me, not complain elsewhere: Bilawal

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhattu Zardari has called on Karachi's business community to directly address their grievances with him rather than complaining to others, asserting that Sindh remains under PPP's stewardship.

Speaking at an event held in honour of Karachi's traders, Bilawal assured them of his full support in resolving their challenges.

"If you have complaints against the Chief Minister, ministers, or bureaucrats, bring them to me. There's no need to seek resolution elsewhere," he said. Bilawal spoke about the port city's transformation, stating that the days of extortion and forced closures of industries are over.

"What Karachi experienced in the past is history. Businesses now operate without fear, and labourers are no longer coerced into political rallies," he added.

Addressing traders directly, he questioned, "Have I ever caused you trouble? Why would I want you to face issues under my or this government's name?"

Bilawal criticised the federal government for excluding Sindh in key policy decisions, especially in energy tariffs and electricity supply. Decisions are made in Islamabad without consulting us, leaving provinces to bear the consequences," he stated.

Senate's approval of contentious Peca amendments bill triggers protests across country

Manan Mandokhail, NEWS DESK:

The Senate on Tuesday passed controversial amendments to the country's cybercrime laws — the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) 2016 — triggering nationwide protests by media bodies who fear the changes would be used against journalists.

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Bill, 2025 adds Section 26(A) to Peca, which seeks to penalise perpetrators of "fake news" online. It says anyone who intentionally spreads, displays, or transmits false information likely to cause fear, panic, or unrest in society may face up to three years' imprisonment, a fine of up to Rs2 million, or both. The bill now awaits the president's assent to become law.

Journalists have assailed the legislation as an "attack on freedom of expression", while the opposition PTI has accused the PPP, an ally of the ruling coalition, of hypocrisy, slamming its support for the bill.

Following the Senate's greenlight to the widely criticised amendments, journalists across all provinces of Pakistan staged protests, vowing to hold further rallies against the legislation.

The Peca bill was moved in the

Senate by Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on behalf of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. As the bill was introduced, journalists present in the Senate's press gallery staged a walkout in protest, recreating scenes witnessed last week when the amendments were passed by the National Assembly.

QUETTA: The Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) and Quetta Press Club staged a joint protest on Tuesday evening, denouncing the Pakistan Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025. The protesters vowed to continue their struggle against the implementation of the PECA Amendment Bill, emphasizing its detrimental impact on democracy, media independence, and freedom of expression in Pakistan. Members of labor associations and civil society also joined the demonstration, expressing solidarity with the journalist community in their fight to uphold press freedom in the country. This protest highlights the growing resistance against the federal government's attempt to stifle dissent and restrict media freedoms under the guise of electronic crime amendments.

Journalists in Balochistan Protest Against PECA Amendment Bill

Journalists and civil society members gathered outside the Quetta Press Club, chanting slogans against the federal coalition government and the controversial bill, terming it an attack on freedom of expression and democracy. Khaliq Rind, the President of

High-Level U.S. Investment Delegation Visits Pakistan

News Desk:

ISLAMABAD: A high-level U.S. investment delegation, led by Gentry Beach, manager of a Texas Hedge Fund and a close business associate of the Trump family, has arrived in Pakistan for a pivotal two-day visit.

This visit is the first by a U.S. delegation since the new U.S. administration took office and is expected to strengthen economic cooperation and bilateral ties between the two nations.

Sources reveal that several investment agreements between Pakistan and the United States have been signed during the delegation's visit, marking a significant diplomatic achievement for Pakistan.

Gentry Beach, a key figure in President Trump's past election campaigns, has expressed his admiration for Pakistan on multiple occasions. During a recent event at Mar-a-Lago, he



praised Pakistan's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, saying, "the people of Pakistan have made immense sacrifices, and thousands have fallen victim to terrorism. Pakistan is a remarkable country with a conducive environment for investment."

Beach further urged former President Donald Trump to foster stronger and more col-

laborative ties with Pakistan, emphasizing the country's eagerness to work with the United States as an equal partner. The visit is being hailed as a positive step forward, expected to create new opportunities for investment across various sectors, enhancing the economic partnership between the two countries.

School Meal Program in Balochistan – A Step Towards Better Education and Nutrition Continued to page 2

Govt prioritizing healthcare access across country: PM Shehbaz Continued to page 3

5 Terrorists Eliminated, 2 Soldiers Martyred In Gulistan Attack

News Desk:

RAWAL PINDI: On the night of 27/28 January 2025, terrorists attempted to attack a security forces post in the general area of Gulistan, Qila Abdullah District, Balochistan. The attempt to breach the post was successfully thwarted by security forces, forcing the terrorists to detonate an explosive-laden vehicle against the perimeter wall. In the ensuing exchange of fire, all five terrorists, including two suicide bombers, were eliminated. Tragically, two brave soldiers,

Naik Tahir Khan (39 years old, resident of Tank District) and Lance Naik Tahir Iqbal (26 years old, resident of Karak District), embraced martyrdom after fighting gallantly. A sanitization operation is underway in the area to apprehend the facilitators of this heinous attack. The security forces of Pakistan remain resolute in their mission to eradicate terrorism, with such sacrifices further strengthening their determination. This statement was issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).



28-01-2025

LANCE NAIK TAHIR IQBAL SHAHEED

Dr. Noor Yaseen Passes Away at 90, Remembered as a Symbol of Humanity

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Dr. Noor Yaseen, a renowned and respected doctor in Quetta, passed away at the age of 90. He was laid to rest in the provincial capital, with neighbors and patients mourning the loss of a compassionate healer. Known for his dedication to serving humanity, Dr. Noor Yaseen earned widespread admiration for his selfless service to the ailing. Unlike many contemporary doctors, he avoided prescribing excessive medicines and unnecessary tests, ensuring affordable healthcare for all. Dr. Noor Yaseen was a rare gem. He always went out of his way to support poor and needy patients. He never charged fees from deserving individuals, said Anjad Aslam, a long-time neighbor. In an era when healthcare costs have skyrocketed, particularly in



Balochistan, Dr. Noor Yaseen's approach stood out. He was not only a physician but also a beacon of hope for those in need. The loss of Dr. Noor Yaseen has left a void in the medical community, with many recalling his lifelong commitment to humanity. His legacy of kindness and compassion will continue to inspire generations.

Pakistan, China resolve to strengthen bilateral ties as Dar meets Chinese ambassador

NEWS DESK: Pakistan and China reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador Jang Zaidong on Tuesday, the Foreign Office said.

participation in an event sponsored by the New Federal State of China (NFS), an anti-China group.

The FO described the One-China Policy as a consistent cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, emphasizing that the



A day earlier, the FO rejected "baseless and unfounded" allegations targeting Pakistan's commitment to China's policies, stressing that Beijing continued to be Islamabad's "all-weather strategic partner".

The development came in response to growing criticism of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's

country's stance remains the same.

Pakistan has held strong bilateral relations with China which has supported it through many investments and development projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project which was termed as a "lifeline" for the country's economy.

NA Speaker urges govt, opposition to continue talks amid PTI's absence from 4th round Continued to page 4

OPINION VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

School Meal Program in Balochistan – A Step Towards Better Education and Nutrition

Editorial:
The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Balochistan Education Department and the World Food Programme (WFP) marks a significant step towards addressing critical issues of malnutrition and low school enrolment in Balochistan.
Under this two-year initiative, 20,000 students in 65 schools will benefit from 5 million nutritious meals, aiming to combat nutritional deficiencies, improve attendance, and enhance learning outcomes.
Balochistan, despite being resource-rich, faces severe developmental challenges. Malnutrition, stunting, and anaemia, particularly among women and children, are widespread.
Hidden hunger—a condition where essential nutrients are lacking—contributes to high child mortality rates. Poverty and unemployment exacerbate these issues, leaving millions of children vulnerable.
Education Minister Rabeela Hussain Khan Durani emphasized the transformative potential of this program in boosting enrolment and improving student health.
However, with over 3 million out-of-school children and 1 million enrolled in schools across the province, this initiative must be expanded.
Global organizations like the WFP should extend their support beyond the initial 20,000 students to reach marginalized neighborhoods and backward districts.
Providing free meals to all school-going children could significantly improve enrolment, retention, and overall well-being.
This program not only addresses nutrition but also promotes education as a tool for empowerment in Balochistan. Scaling up such initiatives is essential to secure a healthier, more educated future for the province's children.

Informal learning

By Nazir A. Jogezari:

SHADOW education refers to informal learning. It is meant to supplement formal learning. It is a global trend and has been expanding as more candidates take competitive international, regional, and local exams as well as entrance tests to gain access to elite educational institutes and good jobs.
Covid-19 added a new dimension to shadow education in the form of virtual lessons and tutoring, leading to a third model of learning that makes shadow education more needs-based, self-paced, and personalised with the integration of technology. Shadow education also offers an alternative career path and an additional earning avenue for educated youth and is a potential source of learning for educational institutes.
While such informal learning has been accepted, there is little debate about its potential and shortcomings. Traditionally, shadow education is used interchangeably with 'tuitions', which are managed beyond school hours, with additional costs and in private settings.
Shadow education comprises diverse learning events such as summer camps, extra evening classes, preparation for competitive exams, and institutional entry tests. The focus is on addressing learners' deficiencies in particular subjects, all of which come at an additional cost.
The financial cost makes it accessible to the wealthy, with many others not able to afford it. Shadow education is a global trend and has been expanding as more candidates take competitive international, regional, and local exams as well as entrance tests to gain access to elite educational institutes and good jobs.
Effective education takes place in a more diverse social ecology. The larger social cost is that the educational landscape becomes vulnerable to greater learning inequalities, with education becoming more of a commodity. The resort to shadow education also reflects how schools may not be catering to their children.
Moreover, teachers in shadow education settings are more responsive to learners' needs than they may be in schools, and the students thrive as compared to those who study only in school.
Thus, there is a level of parental trust associated with shadow education, even though the latter only deepens the gap between itself and formal education.
This is an angle to aspect to dwell on: children pay a price for having to experience both formal and shadow education settings. Being part of a controlled environment—whether in formal or informal settings—can negatively affect their intellectual and social potential. In Pakistan, in both spaces, they are often likely to find themselves a part of a reduced canvas of learning filled with homogeneous content, and pedagogy that compromises true learning and prepares them only for tests and exams.
Effective learning requires the cultivation of more diverse social ecology and is driven by genuine curiosity on the part of learners, and a committed approach to teaching by their instructors. In shadow education settings, after a hectic day at school, students may experience symptoms of burnout and come to look upon learning as a burden rather than an exercise in curiosity and exploration. They may appear bookish but are not able to apply the knowledge that they have gained to real-life situations.
We should ask ourselves whether our children really need additional time to learn if they already spend a good part of their day at school—despite the advantages of shadow education. And whether this adds to their learning or is just an extra burden.
How does it affect their social life and their interactions with family, friends, and society?
One of the biggest questions for 2025 is whether education and not just in monetary terms—to prevent the excesses of shadow education and the exploitation of families.

Egypt's victory against malaria

By Muhammad Moazzam Tauheed:

On Oct 20, 2024, Egypt received a certificate from the World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring it malaria-free. A disease that once plagued the pharaohs is now history. Health experts noted that this milestone marked the end of malaria as a threat to Egypt. Achieving malaria-free status requires three consecutive years without a single case of local transmission, and Egypt met this rigorous criterion. Maintaining this success, however, remains a priority.
For countries like Pakistan, where cases of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases are on the rise, Egypt's success offers valuable lessons. Why has Egypt been able to achieve this victory, while nations like Pakistan continue to struggle?
What lessons can be learnt from Egypt's approach to eliminating malaria, and why is it crucial for Pakistan to take similar steps? Understanding Egypt's journey can help policymakers and health professionals in Pakistan identify what may be hindering progress and the potential consequences of not acting swiftly.
Egypt's victory against malaria represents the culmination of decades of concerted efforts spanning nearly a century. This achievement relied on a multifaceted and multidimensional approach encompassing public awareness, vector control, disease management, and environmental improvement.
Key initiatives included large-scale drainage projects aimed at removing stagnant water from the Nile delta, agricultural fields, and irrigation canals. Stagnant water serves as a breeding ground for Anopheles mosquitoes, the primary vectors of malaria. Additionally, irrigation systems were modified to ensure continuous water flow, significantly reducing breeding sites.
To minimise environmental harm and prevent mosquito resistance, Egypt implemented the rotation of safer insecticides. This ensured that mosquitoes did not develop immunity to control measures. Biological control methods also played a crucial role. Mosquito-eating fish were introduced into irrigation canals and other water bodies, while specific vegetation was planted to attract natural mosquito predators, fostering an environment where mosquito populations could be naturally suppressed.
Year after year, Pakistan does not develop immunity to control measures. Biological control methods also played a crucial role. Mosquito-eating fish were introduced into irrigation canals and other water bodies, while specific vegetation was planted to attract natural mosquito predators, fostering an environment where mosquito populations could be naturally suppressed.
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Health workers collected data, tracked potential outbreaks, and ensured prompt action. Public health campaigns educated rural communities on the importance of eliminating mosquito breeding sites near homes, using bed nets, and seeking early treatment for symptoms. Community participation was another cornerstone of the strategy. Residents were trained to identify mosquito breeding grounds and encouraged to report stagnant water. This active involvement turned local populations into malaria-endemic regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, strict screening protocols were implemented. Imported cases were promptly treated to prevent re-establishment of local transmission.
In Pakistan, the battle against vector-borne diseases like chikungunya, dengue haemorrhagic fever, and malaria has escalated into a national health crisis. Despite support from WHO and numerous government and NGO campaigns, these infections continue to exact a heavy toll. All segments are affected—from rural communities to urban populations—underscoring these diseases' pervasive nature. Year after year, Pakistan sees the tragic loss of lives across all age groups due to these diseases.
An extremely concerning factor is the limited availability of vaccines for most vector-borne diseases, leaving prevention efforts heavily reliant on vector control. While promising vaccines for diseases like malaria are under development globally, they remain inaccessible to many in Pakistan, highlighting the urgent need for proactive measures to nip the spread of diseases in the bud.
Given today's interconnectedness, the concept of 'no one is safe until everyone is safe' rings especially true for Pakistan. As part of the global community, it is imperative for the country to adopt practical and evidence-based measures, inspired by success stories like Egypt. A foundational step in this direction is to address mosquito-breeding sites, a common factor in the spread of most vector-borne diseases in the country. Stagnant water, heaps of garbage, and unattended litter provide ideal conditions for mosquitoes to thrive. Taking control of these breeding grounds can mitigate the spread of disease.
Educational initiatives must also be prioritised. Raising awareness at schools, colleges, universities, and in rural communities is crucial for long-term success. Media outlets, with their extensive reach, can play a transformative role by broadcasting public health messages and encouraging preventative practices. Media can play a pivotal role by educating the public through schools, universities, and rural outreach programmes, ensuring that no area is overlooked by the health authorities.
Community involvement is equally critical. Encouraging citizens to report mosquito-breeding sites and fostering a sense of environmental responsibility can amplify the impact of government and NGO efforts.
Additionally, livestock and domestic animals, which often serve as hosts for fleas and ticks that transmit diseases, require focused attention.
Collaborative efforts among the health authorities, NGOs, and agricultural agencies can help manage these diseases in the country. The generation and maintenance of comprehensive biostatistical data on vector-borne diseases is essential. Work with regularity updating and analysing this data, policymakers and health professionals can identify trends, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and adapt strategies to emerging challenges.

A volatile world in 2025

By Malecha Lodhi:

THE world seems more already disordered world. Among the top geopolitical developments to watch will be how the US under Trump deals with allies, adversaries and competitors. The future course of relations between the US and China will continue to be the most significant strategic dynamic in the year ahead. Given Trump's unpredictable and mercurial personality, Sino-US relations will see further escalation in tensions or some kind of grand bargain driven by Trump's transactional approach.
Nevertheless, his threat of imposing higher tariffs on China as well as other countries with a trade surplus with the US, prompts many experts to warn that a more intense global trade war will ensue. The London-based risk consultancy firm, Control Risks, predicts that the coming year will see a 'national security' as the guiding principle of international trade and investment.
How far Washington will go in trade protectionism remains to be seen. Trump will be consequential for Sino-US relations, as well as for the global economy. Major trading partners especially China, are, however, already working on how to hedge against their strategies. The Economist, in its annual publication 'The World in 2025', notes that Chinese firms are already expanding abroad to get around trade barriers and to tap new markets in the Global South. An assessment by BlackRock sees acceleration in technology decoupling between the US and China as a high risk.
The year ahead will see rising geopolitical tensions, challenges to global economy and tech disruption.
2025 will also determine how wars in Ukraine and the Middle East will play out. Trump's statements on Ukraine suggest a policy seem to be making European governments nervous. Often claiming he can end war 'in a day', Trump is expected to push Ukraine into negotiations with Russia. Major though he has not offered any concrete plan to end the conflict, Trump may not be averse to a negotiated outcome that advantages Moscow. While he has avoided specifics, this will almost certainly be on Israel's terms. He has said the US should stay out of Syria, but it is hard to see what it can do that given the complex regional dynamics of regime change there.
Democracy will continue to be under challenge across the world. The trends expected to carry over from previous years are not encouraging—continuing political polarisation in many countries, with politics becoming increasingly fractured and volatile. The erosion or even disappearance of the middle ground and weakening of the political centre seem to have become a worldwide phenomenon. This is closely associated with the rise of right-wing populism, which is continuing to sweep across much of Europe and is evident elsewhere too.
Democracy has declined in almost all regions of the world. This global trend of democratic erosion, recorded by many international organisations, is expected to persist, with 'n e c r a s i n g 'autocratisation' and backsliding in democratic rights and freedoms.
Global think tanks that evaluate the health of democracies across the world are all quite pessimistic about the future.

Trump's likely pressure on Iran

By Shahid Javed Burki:

As President-elect Donald Trump is planning to take office on January 20, 2025 as the 47th President of the United States, his country's approach towards Iran would be one of the priority areas for his administration. According to David Sanger, writing for The New York Times and published by the newspaper on the Christmas day, "In interviews over the past two weeks, American and foreign officials have said that the memorandum of Iran's nuclear future could take a dramatic turn in the next few months." That assessment came after the United Nations' top nuclear inspector warned that Iran was accelerating its enrichment of near-bomb-grade uranium.
Iran's new president Masoud Pezeshkian and Donald Trump have indicated willingness to a nuclear deal, though the other side has indicated its terms. This was the deal that Trump walked out of when he was president for his first term in office.
That deal had been negotiated by then President Barack Obama who was in the White House from 2009-2017.
The deal was signed in 2015 by Iran, the United States, Russia, China and the European Union. It had a number of key elements, most important of which was Iran's agreement to surrender 97 per cent of its enriched uranium. It also committed Iran to stop the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, to inspect all the nuclear related facilities in Iran.
This deal was not allowing the agency to do after Trump walked out of the 2015 deal.
Pezeshkian and Trump know that the military balance has shifted because of the military actions taken by Israel to weaken, if not altogether destroy, what Tehran had called the "axis of resistance".
The axis was made up of the Iran-trained militia men in the groups called Hezbollah active in Lebanon, Hamas based in Gaza and the Houthis operating from Yemen.
The change in the Israel-Iran situation was one of the subjects that came up for discussion between President Biden's National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and senior Israeli officials.
In the public comments, Trump's aides have made, they promised renewed "maximum pressure" campaigns to contain Iran.
"The change you are going to see is more focus on Iran," said Michael Waltz, whom Trump has designated as national security adviser in his administration. "Maximum pressure, not only will help stability in the Middle East, but it will help stability in the Russia-Ukraine theater as well, as Iran provides bal-

listic missiles and thousands of drones that are going into the theater."
Sullivan did not discuss the specifics of his conversation with Israel but current and former Israeli officials have publicly debated whether to cease the moment of a decisively weakened Iran.
Yair Golan, the former Israeli defence minister who was fired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, recently said that "there was a window to act against Iran" before it can take the last few steps to producing nuclear weapons.
Experts are of the view that an Israeli strike might only delay Iran's development of a nuclear programme. Such a move would set back not the programme. It would harden Iranian resolve and could lead to a change in Iranian nuclear intentions—going from a covert to an overt weapons programme. However, "it is highly unlikely that this time Israel's would be a fashion it into warhead.
But a crude bomb that could be delivered by a freighter would probably take only six to eight months. A more sophisticated one that would be delivered by a ballistic missile would possibly take a year and a half. There is an open debate in Iran that the country should take now that a man who is openly hostile to Iran will be in charge in January 2025.
His designated Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been known in the Senate as an Iran hawk and he fought against the Obama-era Iran deal.
The argument over the bunker busters led to the development of a huge covert operation known as "Operation Games", a highly classified Israeli-American programme to destroy Iranian nuclear facilities by cyberwarfare. More than 1,000 centrifuges were destroyed by what became known as the Stuxnet virus setting back the Iranian nuclear programme at least a year.
"The nuclear target is a very difficult target," said General Frank McKenzie, who was in charge of the Iran war plans when he ran the United States Central Command.
"There are a lot of other alternatives to that target and many of them—including energy infrastructure—would be easier to hit."
"What is different now is that Iranians at this time are incredibly vulnerable," said Eric Edelman, a former senior US Defense Department official in the George W. Bush administration. He recently published an analysis calling Trump to give Iran a negotiated way to surrender its nuclear programme in exchange for a lifting of sanctions or face a direct attack on its nuclear facilities.
"This means going from the shadow fleet that moves oil on a global part of this is sold to China." are working deep underground, a large bunker bomb would be needed that only the Americans have. The bomb would need a B52 bomber to deliver "They now have come to office a former president who was apparently tried to assassinate, and a prime minister in Israel who has every incentive to want to strike, partly to restore his rotation," said Edelman.
"If together they really crank up the economic heat, the diplomats present at the military backup, you will really test the proposition that you can end the Iranian nuclear program[me]."
The perfect pressure campaign must squeeze Iran further, particularly by cutting Iran's oil revenue," Beth Sanger, Trump's CIA brief during part of his first term, wrote recently. "This means going over the shadow fleet that moves oil on a global part of this is sold to China."

UNHCR donates CT Scan machine to Institute of Kidney Diseases in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (INP): UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency has donated a state-of-the-art CT Scan machine to the Institute of Kidney Diseases (IKD) in Peshawar bringing relief for patients in the city. The hospital was in need of better diagnostic tools to serve the community more effectively, and this life-saving machine is already making a difference in patients' lives, reads a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Providing medical practitioners with advanced coloured imagery, the CT machine has improved the visualization of the affected area, making it easier to detect the patient's medical issue, and improve diagnosis for better surgical planning and/or treatment. Patients at IKD Peshawar no longer need to travel to expensive private laboratories where an advanced CT scans can cost up to 10,000 Pakistani rupees. In addition to the financial implications, it often took days to get results, delaying diagnosis and costing patients precious time until their treatment could get underway. Now, patients receive faster, more accurate diagnoses within the hospital's grounds for about a third of the price, while those in financial need can be treated for free, regardless of their status. The intervention is part of a dedicated effort by UNHCR to strengthen public services for all in refugee hosting areas. The support to IKD Peshawar was made possible thanks to a contribution from Global Affairs Canada, in solidarity for the continued generosity of the Pakistani people. The hospital is now better equipped to serve its patients more effectively, ensuring better treatment, and continue on its mission to provide quality kidney care to everyone.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan Mr. Akamatsu Suichi called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

Several projects in limbo as United State (US) halts aid to Pakistan

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has confirmed halting aid to Pakistan, leaving several projects related to development, health and education in limbo, says in media reports. A US official said the aid will remain suspended for Pakistan until a review is conducted. The move has caused suspension of work on five projects related to energy sector. It has also affected four economic development programmes and five agriculture-related projects besides sustaining aid for human rights and governance.

temporarily. The foreign aid has initially been suspended for 90 days and it would be resumed after a review by the US authorities. Earlier, the US, the world's biggest donor, froze virtually all foreign aid, making exceptions only for emergency food and military funding for Israel and Egypt. Secretary of State Marco Rubio sent an internal memo days after President Donald Trump took office vowing not to continue the policy of tightly restricting assistance overseas. "No new funds shall be made available for awards or extensions of existing awards until each proposed new award or extension has been reviewed and approved," said the memo to staff. The sweeping order appears to affect everything from development assistance to military aid - including to Ukraine, which received billions of dollars in weapons under Trump's predecessor Joe Biden as it tries to repel a Russian invasion. The directive also means a pause of at least several months of US funding for PEPFAR, the anti-HIV/AIDS initiative that buys anti-retroviral drugs to treat the disease in developing countries, largely in Africa.

But the memo explicitly made exceptions for military assistance to Israel whose longstanding major arms packages from the United States have expanded further since the Gaza war - and Egypt, which has received generous US defense funding since it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Rubio also made an exception for US contributions to emergency food assistance, which the United States has been contributing following crises around the world including in Sudan and Syria.

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Head to replace Konstas as opener against Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (INP): Travis Head will replace Sam Konstas at the top of Australia's batting order for the first Test Lanka Test despite the teenager's heroics in the triumphant India series. Captain Steven Smith would not rule out finding a place for Konstas elsewhere in the order for the match that begins in Galle on Wednesday, with a vacancy now open at No. 5. Konstas impressed in his first two Tests, helping Australia secure a first series win over India in a decade. But Head's supreme efforts as an opener on the previous subcontinent tour in 2023 were enough to win him the spot next to Usman Khawaja.

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Smith won't need strapping on his elbow after a minor BBL injury of his own healed "much better than expected". But he will be unable to throw in the towel. "Fortunately, this part of the world will be parked in the slips for the entire time," Smith said. "If I have to chase one to the boundary, hopefully my mates come with me."



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Sardar Awais Leghari Highlights Power Division Reforms at Pakistan Business Council's Dialogue on the Economy.

Melbourne Renegades sign Jason Behrendorff in first BBL free agency move

MELBOURNE (INP): Jason Behrendorff has become the first major free agent signing in the BBL's new player movement window with Melbourne Renegades securing the left-arm seamer on a three-year deal after Perth Scorchers were not able to guarantee him a contract. Behrendorff, who turns 35 in April, has won four BBL titles with Scorchers over a 13-year 106-game career. He had an excellent 2024-25 BBL season, making the team of year for the 2019 season as the competition's leading wicket-taker with 17 wickets at 17.41 and an economy rate of 5.55. Only Mark Steketee had a better economy rate among the top 10 wicket-takers this season. It is understood that Behrendorff was hopeful of being a one-club player in the BBL, having played his entire domestic career in Western Australia since moving from Canberra as a 19-year-old, and is second behind AJ Tye on Scorchers' all-time leading wicket-takers list with 140.

But with Scorchers missing the finals for the first time in five seasons and only the third time in franchise history, the BBL's most successful club made some decisions to make around the future of their list with Behrendorff, Tye and Mitchell Marsh all coming out of contract. Scorchers decided not to contract any of them among the maximum of 10 players they could lock in prior to the player movement window opening on Tuesday. Scorchers did something similar in 2019 when they last missed final with Scorchers' title-winning veterans Shaun Marsh and Nathan Coulter-Nile departing as it did not mean to be," Behrendorff said. "I leave the club knowing I have given my all, I have seriously enjoyed my time as an individual player and as a team-mate. As a team we've been able to enjoy a lot of success, being a part of 4 BBL trophy's has been a career highlight. "To all the players, it's been so much fun and we have achieved so much together. I have so many wonderful memories that I'll never forget. Thank you to all of the staff, what an amazing group of people you all are. No one knows more than I do how hard you work behind the scenes and to help me be match fit, some seasons more than others. To the fans, without your support playing the game wouldn't be the same. The noise inside the Fumeax when the team is on a roll is something to behold. I appreciate those of you who came along to fan days and stayed behind after games, getting to meet you and talk to you has been a privilege. You support is something I certainly haven't taken for granted and you really are some of the best fans in the league. Melbourne has been something Juvelle [Behrendorff's wife] and I have talked about as a goal of success, being a part of my career happened so I was able to continue my career and play cricket in a city we both love is a blessing."

Govt prioritizing healthcare access across country: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has instructed the Ministry of National Health Services to modernize the healthcare institutions under the federal government's pur-

view and make Islamabad a model for healthcare facilities for the entire country. Chaired a meeting to review the matters about the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER. Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered at Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Executive Engineer II Provincial S&H District Kharian invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the year 2025 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates. Tender Fee 1500/- and Bid Security 2%.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER. The Chief Officer, Municipal Committee Omara invites sealed percentage tender based on composite schedule of rates 2023. Category C-5 OR ABOVE - relevant discipline and registration with the authorities i.e. NTN and Sales Tax Department/Registration at Balcanton Revenue Authority (BRA), Relevant Work Experience, Turn-over of last three years. The bidding firm must be backed by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Method of Procurement: Single stage - One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bidding / Tender Documents: Issuance: The contractor/firm interested to obtain the bidding documents from the address mentioned below on production of Pay Order/Cash Deposit Receipt for an amount of Rs. 1,000/- (Non-refundable) or can be downloaded from website of BPPRA, from the date of publication of NTN till 01 February 2025 at 11:00 AM. In the office of the undersigned. Tender will be opened on same day 16th February 2025 at 12:00 PM in the presence of prospective bidders and the contractors or their authorized representatives/agents. Place of issuance & submission will be: Office of the Municipal Committee Omara. Phone:0663-319124

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Govt to challenge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's verdict in contempt of court case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has decided to challenge Supreme Court (SC) judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's verdict in the contempt of court case against the apex court's Additional Registrar Nazir Abbas.

During the hearing of the case related to the Customs Act on Tuesday, Attorney-General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan informed the constitutional bench of the SC about the government's decision. "We have decided to file an appeal against the decision."

The SC had on Monday disposed of the contempt of court case against the additional registrar and referred the matter of determining the powers of constitutional and regular benches to the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) for the formation of a full court.

According to media reports, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, while

announcing the reserved verdict, withdrew contempt proceedings against the additional registrar (judicial) for not fixing a case regarding the jurisdiction of regular benches.

The case, reserved for the judgment on January 23, centered around the additional registrar's failure to schedule a matter regarding the jurisdiction of constitutional and regular benches, rather it was transferred to the constitutional bench for further hearing.

The case was originally heard by a two-member bench comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbas.

During the hearing, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah noted that the bench deliberated on two questions — one about delimiting cases and the other about invalidating a court order through an administrative order.

The SC judge remarked, "The court did not find any such proof that showed that the additional registrar (judicial) had any personal interest in the case."

Noting that neither was any evidence found of any "ill-intent" of the SC official, the senior judge announced the withdrawal of the show-cause notice on the contempt of court against Abbas.

The verdict said that prima facie the contempt of court proceedings should be initiated against judges committees, but the court was not issuing notices due to the court's sanctity.

The controversy arose when the additional registrar failed to fix a plea filed by the federal government concerning whether regular Supreme Court benches can rule on constitutional matters, particularly Article 191-A introduced through the 26th Amendment.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the matters related to Ministry of National Health Services.

Govt focusing on reforming Pakistan's power sector: Awais Leghari

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Power Sector, Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari has said that the government is focusing on reforming Pakistan's power sector by operationalizing a competitive electricity market, privatizing distribution companies (DISCOs) and addressing key challenges such as circular debt.

Speaking at the Pakistan Business Council's Dialogue on the Economy, he said the privatization of electricity distribution is underway, marking a transformative shift in the country's energy sector.

By 2025, the government will no longer be involved in the electricity trade, enabling consumers and power companies to negotiate directly for affordable electricity, he explained.

The minister highlighted the government's commitment to reducing electricity taxes on the power while promoting eco-friendly energy solutions. He mentioned the introduction of the National Electric Vehicle

(EV) Policy, which aims to offset the adoption of electric vehicles. As part of the initiative, tariffs at electric charging stations have been significantly reduced to make EVs more accessible.

To minimize reliance on imported coal, he said, Chinese companies operating coal-fired power plants in Pakistan will transition to using locally mined coal from the Thar region. This shift is expected to lower import costs and promote the use of domestic resources, he added.

The minister said the government is currently working on revising agreements with all Independent Power Producers (IPPs). He added that the next step would be to renegotiate contracts with government-owned IPPs.

He said, that the government has finalized Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the power sector, aiming to enhance operational efficiency and ensure better service delivery. He said that uniform tar-

iffs will no longer be sustainable post-privatization, and new service-level agreements have been introduced for the power sector. Additionally, industrial estates and economic zones will now manage their distribution systems.

Leghari reaffirmed the government's commitment to reducing circular debt and ensuring stability in the energy sector.

He said that efforts to lower electricity costs and promote renewable energy remain top priorities. The minister said that December witnessed a 7 percent increase in power demand, attributed to affordable energy initiatives introduced by the government.

Highlighting the importance of the energy sector for economic stability, Leghari reiterated the government's resolve to sell surplus power to prevent wastage. "Our focus is on fostering a sustainable, efficient and consumer-friendly energy sector," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Minister Ahsan Iqbal presides over the CDWP meeting, driving forward Pakistan's development agenda with vision and determination.

NA Speaker urges govt, opposition to continue talks amid PTI's absence from 4th round

ISLAMABAD (INP): After the PTI called off dialogue with the government, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday said his doors remain open, and expressed hopes that the government and the opposition would hold talks to find a way forward.

Talks between the government and the PTI commenced in the last week of December to bring down political temperatures, but despite weeks of negotiations, the dialogue process stalled on major issues — the formation of two judicial commissions and the release of PTI prisoners.

After the PTI last week called off talks with the government, citing a delay in the latter's response to its demands presented in the third meeting, the government committee's spokesperson, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, yesterday indicated ending the dialogue if the opposition skipped today's moot.

While speaking to the media regarding the fourth round

of talks, Sadiq said: "This committee has come together today. We waited for about 45 minutes for our friends in the opposition to come."

"We messaged the secretary to leader of the opposition who said 'it seems like they won't be coming to the meeting'. We have it saved."

He went on to say: "We were hoping that negotiations are the only way to proceed", and noted that the prime minister formed a negotiating committee the same day PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar made the request.

"We had prepared for the talks, I wish they had come," he said, noting that the talks are within the ambit of the constitution.

He added his hopes that the opposition would contact the National Assembly Speaker and attend the committee meeting. "We do not want to make any unilateral statement."

While speaking to the media outside Parliament House, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif was asked whether the negotiating committee would be dissolved if PTI did not attend the talks.

put forward conditions first — you sit [for talks] and negotiate, where decisions are made on what is accepted and what isn't, whether there is an alternate proposal."

Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said while speaking to the media in Islamabad that the government had come to the meeting with an answer to the PTI's demands.

"We had prepared for the talks, I wish they had come," he said, noting that the talks are within the ambit of the constitution.

He added his hopes that the opposition would contact the National Assembly Speaker and attend the committee meeting. "We do not want to make any unilateral statement."

While speaking to the media outside Parliament House, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif was asked whether the negotiating committee would be dissolved if PTI did not attend the talks.

"In negotiations, you don't

Government vows to address PIA flight suspension, ATR shortage

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif assured the Senate on Tuesday that the government is taking concrete measures to address the operational challenges faced by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), including the temporary suspension of flights to destinations like Chitral and Larkana, exacerbated by harsh weather conditions and a shortage of ATR aircraft.

Responding to concerns raised by senators, Asif acknowledged the airline's limitations, noting that PIA currently operates only three ATR aircraft, of which one is grounded. "Efforts are underway to bring the grounded aircraft back into service to resume flights to underserved areas," he said, adding that discussions with

private airlines are also in progress to ensure connectivity to remote regions.

Highlighting systemic challenges, the minister said, "PIA has faced significant setbacks, including bans on flights to lucrative routes in the UK and Europe. However, we are optimistic as audit teams are currently evaluating operations, and we expect these routes to reopen soon."

Asif emphasized the government's commitment to subsidizing flights to residents of remote areas and revamping smaller airports to make them operational.

"Private airlines are being encouraged to operate from smaller airports like Chitral and Larkana, ensuring affordable and accessible air travel for the local

population," he stated. Addressing broader concerns about the state of PIA, Asif explained that the government is actively working to restructure the airline. "A privatization attempt is being revisited to improve operational efficiency and service delivery," he said, adding that the revival of PIA requires significant resources and time.

Senators, including Falak Naz and Saifullah Abro, voiced concerns about the lack of spare parts for ATR aircraft and questioned the timeline for resuming services to remote areas. Senator Shahzaib Durani suggested upgrading Chitral Airport to accommodate larger aircraft, a proposal Asif agreed to explore despite the operational challenges posed by the region's terrain.

PTI issues notification of Aliya Hamza as Chief Organizer Punjab

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has appointed Aliya Hamza Malik as the chief organizer for Punjab, officially issuing a notification confirming her new role.

According to the channel report, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan signed the notification, stating that Aliya Hamza's appointment was made under the directives of PTI's founding chairman, Imran Khan.

PTI sources revealed that Aliya Hamza has been assigned the responsibility of restructuring the party's organisational setup in Punjab and Lahore.

Additionally, she has been instructed to prepare for PTI's

scheduled protest on February 8, the channel reported.

Two days ago, Imran Khan appointed Aliya Hamza to this key position, calling for unity among opposition parties across Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while simultaneously focusing on mobilising political support in Punjab.

Imran Khan also delivered a strong message regarding ticket allocations for upcoming elections, stating,

"Only those leaders who are visible on the ground and actively engaged with workers will be considered for party tickets."

"I am closely monitoring everyone's performance.

Leaders who stand with the workers will secure party tickets," he asserted in a message shared with PTI leaders.

In addition, Imran Khan directed PTI leadership to actively engage in discussions regarding the appointment of a new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

Sources confirmed that he instructed PTI leaders to consult with opposition parties to finalise a consensus nominee for the position.

He specifically emphasised collaboration with the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) and other political groups under the Tehreek-e-Tahafuz A'in-e-Pakistan banner.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan presents a souvenir to EU Representative for Human Rights Ambassador Olaf Skoog during a meeting in Islamabad to discuss strengthening Pakistan-EU partnership through trade, economic cooperation.

Asad Qaiser reaffirms Ali Amin as KP CM, says no talk of removal

PESHAWAR (INP): In an interview with the Channel Asad Qaiser, a central leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former speaker, addressed various political developments within the party.

He emphasized that Ali Amin Gandapur will remain the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating, "There is no talk of removing him at the moment." He further noted that the province is currently facing significant challenges, but there are no plans to replace the Chief Minister at this stage.

Qaiser also revealed that he has met with PTI's founder, Imran Khan, to discuss party matters. He explained that the newly appointed provincial president would be responsible for making changes to other positions within the party.

Reflecting on his political journey, Qaiser explained his decision to step down as the elected

provincial president after he became the Speaker of the National Assembly.

It was decided that official and party posts should be separated, so I left my party position after a year and a half," he shared. He also mentioned the changes within PTI's leadership, citing that Pervez Khattak resigned as Secretary General and was replaced by Jahangir Tareen, while Azam Swati took over as provincial president in Qaiser's place.

Qaiser made it clear that he does not belong to any specific faction within the party, stating, "I am in Imran Khan's group." He reiterated his loyalty to PTI and Imran Khan, saying, "Imran Khan is PTI."

The former Speaker also addressed the topic of corruption in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, asserting that there is no corruption in the province under PTI's leadership. He praised Imran Khan's zero-tolerance policy toward corruption

and insisted that if there were any corruption, the evidence should be brought forward.

Referring to the ongoing investigations into Atif Khan, he clarified that the notices against him were issued during the interim government, further stressing PTI's firm stance on taking action against corruption, should any evidence arise.

Asad Qaiser also commented on the role of Bushra Bibi, Imran Khan's wife, in the political landscape, asserting that she is primarily a housewife with no direct involvement in politics.

He noted, however, that when the situation demands, it is her responsibility to raise her voice for her rights and in support of her husband.

Finally, Qaiser hinted at further changes within the party structure, confirming that the new provincial president will be instrumental in reshuffling other party positions.



ISLAMABAD: Police personal scuffle with journalist during a protest organized by PFUJ against PECA Act at D chowk.