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PM orders swift privatisation of govt depts

Shehbaz Sharif says process must be transparent, with legal hurdles addressed by hiring reputable lawyers

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has instructed officials to expedite the process of privatising government departments, ensuring its completion within the designated timeframe.

The directive was issued during a review meeting in Islamabad on Thursday, where the Task Management System for monitoring the privatisation process was discussed.

The PM emphasised that the process must be carried out with full transparency and that any legal hurdles should be addressed by engaging reputable lawyers. "The services of reputable lawyers should be hired to remove legal obstacles in the privatisation process," he said.

PM Shehbaz added that the privatisation initiative is part of the government's "Uraan Pakistan" programme, underlining that the

role of the government is to facilitate business and investment, rather than engaging directly in business operations.

"The government's job is not to do business, but to take policy measures and facilitate business and investment," he stated.

He further noted that the country is progressing rapidly towards economic improvement thanks to timely reforms and called for collective efforts to advance Pakistan's development.

During the meeting, the PM was briefed on the Task Management System for privatisation and was informed about the timeline for the privatisation of various government departments.

The privatisation process has been divided into three phases: ten departments will be privatised in the first phase, thirteen in the second, and the remaining departments in the third phase.



BEIJING: : President Asif Ali Zardari meeting with the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Li Qiang at Great Hall of the Peoples in Beijing.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah stresses urgent need for climate justice, financing

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the Supreme Court's most senior judge, has emphasised that the world is facing severe climate challenges, making environmental justice a crucial necessity.

Speaking at an international conference on climate change in Islamabad, he stated that he would present the judiciary's stance on climate justice.

"Floods have caused Pakistan a loss of Rs30 billion, making it one of the most climate-affected countries. Natural disasters have significantly impacted the nation."

Justice Shah pointed out that rapidly melting glaciers were affecting the Indus River system, posing threats to agriculture and farmers. He stressed the need for understanding climate science and finding home-grown solutions, including the establishment of a climate court.

He further called for an immediate response to environmental issues and a system for climate accountability to ensure

transparency in funding.

"Those responsible for pollution are often beyond national borders, making global cooperation essential," he added.

Discussing the judiciary's role, Justice Shah mentioned that when climate issues were raised in the High Court, the government was unaware of their severity. He emphasized that climate justice requires financial resources, and without proper funding, addressing climate change remains a distant dream.

He also noted that climate change affects every aspect of human life, making climate finance a fundamental right.

"Pakistan urgently needs a Climate Change Authority and a dedicated Climate Change Fund, yet no funds currently exist," he maintained. Justice Shah concluded that global funds were not arriving, necessitating local financial solutions. He introduced "nature finance" as a new concept and highlighted the importance of "climate democracy," suggesting that Sukuk funding could be an effective financial tool.

Finance minister calls for swift implementation of climate-resilient policies

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday stressed the need to adopt policies framed to address climate change-related issues on a fast-track basis, moving beyond "policy prescriptions."

"There is no dearth of policy prescriptions; it is all about how and who."

I sincerely hope this two-day conference will address the operationalization issues," he said speaking at the international climate change conference titled "Breathe Pakistan." He said Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and urgently needed to address its mitigation efforts. However, he noted that the real and bigger issue was the adaptation of policies in both letter and spirit.

The minister referenced the existing National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the

National Climate Finance Strategy (NCFS) that Pakistan announced in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024.

The launch of the strategy took place at the UN-led global climate conference, COP29, setting forth a framework to scale up climate-related investments, attract international finance and strengthen domestic financial systems.

It also emphasized enhancing sectoral resilience, clarifying institutional roles, and improving access to diverse funding channels. He said the NCFS had been aligned with Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, with an aim to close the estimated \$348 billion climate finance gap by 2030.

The minister expressed gratitude to the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) group, which was working on a comprehensive Climate Prosperity plan, expected to be unveiled in April.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with the President of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman.

FO condemns Trump's 'deeply troubling and unjust' Palestinian displacement plan

"The Palestinian land belongs to the Palestinian people:" FO spokesperson affirms

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday condemned US President Donald Trump's "deeply troubling and unjust" remarks that the United States would take over the Gaza Strip and develop it economically after Palestinians were resettled elsewhere.

Trump unveiled his surprise plan, without providing specifics, at a joint press conference on Tuesday with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The plan envisions the US taking over Gaza, resettling Palestinians in other countries — seemingly whether they wanted to leave or not — and turning the territory into "the Riviera of the Middle East."

The world reacted with derision and insisted upon the creation of a Palestinian state following the shock announcement. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio clarified today that Trump's proposal to resettle Gaza's population would only be temporary, according to the BBC. Trump, however, had said on Tuesday the displacement would be permanent.

Reacting to the development, the FO said in a press release issued today: "The proposal to displace the people of Gaza is deeply troubling and unjust. The Palestinian land belongs to

the Palestinian people and the only viable and just option is the two-state solution, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions."

The FO said Pakistan would continue to stand by the people of Palestine in their "just struggle for self-determination", as well as for the establishment of a sovereign, independent and contiguous Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

"Any attempts to displace the Palestinians from their land as well as to continue illegal settlements would be a blatant violation of the international law, and undermine the peace and security of the entire region."

"Pakistan reiterates its call for the return of all displaced Palestinians to their homes, including in Gaza; complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied territories, upscaling of the humanitarian assistance and end to all obstructions, as well as concerted international efforts for the early reconstruction of Gaza," the FO said.

In his weekly press briefing, FO Spokesperson Shafiqat Ali Khan condemned Israel's undue restrictions impeding the flow of aid, shelters and necessary medical equipment to Gaza in violation of the ceasefire deal.

"Amidst dire humanitarian needs, Israel's undue restric-

tions are an outright violation of the ceasefire agreement, and it will have dangerous and unprecedented implications for the entire region."

Pakistan called on the international community to ensure that the ceasefire agreement was honoured and to "hold Israel accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity".

The FO spokesperson called for enhanced and unhindered humanitarian assistance to those in urgent need, the opening of all access points of supply to Gaza and for allowing all UN and international agencies, including UNRWA, to operate fully in Gaza.

Pakistanis stranded in Congo amid ongoing conflict

The FO noted that approximately 150 Pakistanis were previously stranded in

Goma due to the escalation of the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"With the active engagement of Pakistan's High Commissioner, the Rwandan authorities have allowed the entry of stranded Pakistanis into Rwanda," the FO said, adding that it was expected that more Pakistanis would cross the Rwandan border in the coming days.

Last week, the FO confirmed that 75 Pakistanis had been moved to Rwanda amid the conflict.

Pakistan and Maldives commit to strengthening defence ties

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Maldives, while underscoring the need to strengthen defence ties, have reaffirmed commitment to broaden and expand existing collaboration, including military engagements and joint initiatives.

The resolve was expressed as Chief of Defence Staff of Maldives, Major General Ibrahim Hilmy, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza in Rawalpindi today.

Major General Ibrahim Hilmy remained appreciative of the high professional standards of Pakistan Armed Forces, their achievements and sacrifices in fight against terrorism.

Earlier, upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent presented Guard of Honour to the visiting dignitary.

Pakistan rejects Gaza displacement, urges a just two-state solution and urgent aid

ONLINE

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Trump says Israel would hand over Gaza after fighting, no US troops needed

Bureau Report

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said that Israel will hand over Gaza to the United States after the fighting is over and the enclave's population is already resettled elsewhere, which he said meant no US troops would be needed on the ground, Reuters reports.

Trump, who had previously declined to rule out deploying U.S. troops to Gaza, clarified his plans in comments on his Truth Social web platform.

"The Gaza Strip would be turned over to the United States by Israel at the conclusion of fighting," he said. Palestinians "would have already been resettled in far safer and more beautiful communities, with new and modern homes, in the region."

"No soldiers by the US would be needed!" he said.

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"No soldiers by the US" would be needed!" he said.

"On the question of Gaza, the definition of insanity is attempting to do the same thing over and over and over again."

Hegseth said before the start of his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Pentagon.

"The president is willing to think outside the box, look for new and unique, dynamic ways to solve problems that have felt like they were intractable."

KP to send jirga to Kabul after taking Centre on board: CM Gandapur

INP

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur announced on Thursday that a Jirga would be sent to Afghanistan, after taking the federal government into confidence, to address the increasing incidents of terrorism in the province.

CM Gandapur said KP was affected by Afghanistan, a country that had been a victim of wars for decades. KP and Afghanistan share a border of more than 2,600 kilometres long.

With authorities in Kabul are reluctant to take decisive action against terrorists' sanctuaries, militants from across the border have repeatedly targeted Pakistan's security forces and innocent civilians.

Recently, the son of the deputy governor of Afghanistan's Badghis province was among four terrorists killed in KP, Radio Pakistan reported.

CM Gandapur said today that they would form a Jirga, comprising representatives of different tribes, to hold talks with the interim government in Kabul. Meanwhile, Adviser to KP Chief

Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said: "Peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan is interlinked."

Barrister Saif said they wanted peace and brotherly relations between the two countries. Both countries enjoy economic, political, and cultural relations, he said, adding that they want to increase the business ties between the two sides.

Sources privy to the matter said the Afghan authorities had contacted the provincial government in this regard, adding that a grand Jirga would be held after initial talks between the two sides.

Last month, the KP CM announced that he would send a delegation of tribal elders to Afghanistan for talks, saying: "The federal government has not achieved any success in talks with Afghanistan."

"We will find a solution to the problems," he had added. "I hope they [the Afghan side] will cooperate with our Jirga," said the KP CM. Earlier this week, the military's top brass expressed grave concern over the continued use of Afghan soil against Pakistan by terrorists and demanded "concrete and tangible actions" by the interim Afghan government.



JEDDAH: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, meets with Abdul Aziz Alsakran, Deputy Governor of the General Authority of Foreign Trade, at the Made in Pakistan Exhibition in Jeddah to discuss enhanced trade and investment cooperation..

JI to observe black day on Feb 8

INP

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami will observe black day on February 08, the party's chief Hafiz Naem ur Rehman said in a statement on Thursday.

"The JI will stage strong protest outside the election commission's office in Karachi," Hafiz Naem said.

JI Ameer also suggested that the matters will be streamlined if the judicial commission being constituted, and it takes decision on the basis of the Form 45.

He said the government was not intending to tackle the issue in this manner. "The opposition was also not prepared to launch a movement on the basis of Form 45.

JI Ameer said that the suggestion to hold fresh elections would

be boosting the government and approving the rigging in the polls.

Hafiz Naem ur Rehman, remains vocal about alleged rigging and irregularities in 2024 elections held in Pakistan on February 08 last year.

He vacated his Sindh Assembly seat from Karachi, citing discrepancies in the vote count that favored his opponent. He emphasized the importance of a fair and just electoral process.

Adviser to CM for WDD Dr. Rubaba meets with Secretary Saira Atta

APP

Quetta: Adviser to Balochistan Chief Minister for Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi met with the Secretary of the Women Development Department (WDD), Saira Atta on Thursday. The meeting included a detailed discussion on departmental matters, ongoing projects, and the challenges being faced by women. Additional Secretary Naseebullah Khan was also present during the meeting. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that the development and welfare of women is the government's top priority, and all possible resources are being utilized for this purpose. She emphasized that practical steps are being taken to protect women's rights, enhance their economic independence, and provide them with better opportunities. She further mentioned that reforms in the Women Development Department are essential to make women more active, ensuring quicker solutions to their problems.

One Killed in Quetta Firing Incident

APP

QUETTA: One person was killed in a firing incident that took place near Raisani road area of Quetta, tv channels quoting police reported on Thursday.

According to details, unidentified motorcyclist opened fire and killed a person travelling by car near Raisani road area and escaped from the scene.

A police team rushed to the site and shifted the dead identified as Gull Muhammad to the hospital.

Police started search operation for the perpetrators.



QUETTA: Health workers administering polio drop to child during 5 day anti-polio campaign in Provincial capital.

Marco Rubio Confirmed as Secretary of State in Trump's Second Term

By Khawaja Farooq

WASHINGTON: In a move signaling a firm stance on foreign policy, President Donald Trump has appointed Senator Marco Rubio as the United States Secretary of State. Rubio, a Republican from Florida, was confirmed unanimously by the Senate with a 99-0 vote on January 20, 2025.

Rubio's confirmation was notably smooth, receiving bipartisan support during his Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on January 15, 2025. During the hearing, Rubio emphasized the challenges posed by China, describing it as "the most potent and dangerous near-peer adversary this nation has ever faced."

He criticized the Chinese Communist Party for having "lied, cheated, hacked, and stolen their way to global superpower status at our expense."

Following his swearing-in by Vice President JD Vance on January 21, 2025, Rubio became the first Hispanic individual to hold the office of Secretary of State. He promptly engaged with foreign ministers from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations—Australia, India, and Japan—to discuss strategies aimed at strengthening economic opportunities and ensuring peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

In alignment with President Trump's executive orders, Rubio has already enacted significant policy changes. On January 22, 2025, he directed State Department staff to freeze passport applications request-



ing "X" sex markers, affecting some transgender applicants. This move led to confusion among applicants and those who had already obtained such passports.

Additionally, on January 24, 2025, Rubio implemented a 90-day freeze on all U.S. foreign aid, with limited exceptions.

effective January 28. This action has halted numerous USAID humanitarian, development, and security programs worldwide.

Rauf Rind expresses sorrow on demise of Prince Karim

APP

Quetta: Senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and former provincial Minister Mir Abdul Rauf Rind expressed his deep sorrow and grief over the demise of Prince Karim Agha Khan IV, the 49th spiritual leader of the Ismaili sect. In his condolence message, he said that Prince Karim Agha Khan's social and welfare services around the world are unforgettable. Mir Abdul Rauf Rind said that Prince Karim Agha Khan rendered numerous services in different fields

including education, health, poverty alleviation and human development. He said that under his leadership, the Agha Khan Development Network (AKDN) completed health,

education, agriculture and infrastructure projects in many countries of the world, including Pakistan which benefited millions of people.

He noted that Prince Karim Agha Khan's services would always be remembered, especially in Pakistan where his development projects and welfare work are a shining example.



QUETTA: Green Kissan Ittihad Balochistan President Agha Lal Jan Ahmedzai addressing a press conference .



PCB, ICC silent over Champions Trophy gate-money sharing formula

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: It remains unclear about who will pocket the gate money coming in from ticket sales of the Champions Trophy.

Pakistan Cricket Board and tournament organisers International Cricket Council with the query, but neither had responded by the time this story was filed.

With India's matches of the Champions Trophy set to be held in Dubai as per a "hybrid model" — agreed upon due to its government refusing to allow the team to travel across the border — there is a substantial difference between the ticket prices of the matches in Pakistan and those in Dubai.

Principally, the PCB reserves the right over gate money of all Champions Trophy matches as the host board but its silence over the matter and so of the ICC has created suspicion, with a hefty revenue potentially at stake.

The most expensive ticket for the matches in Pakistan costs Rs25,000, which, as compared to ticket prices in Dubai is extremely cheap.

According to a media report, the Pakistan-India match has fetched a record revenue of Rs3.47 billion in ticket sales, while the total revenue to be earned from India's group matches against Bangladesh and New Zealand is estimated to be Rs6.73 billion.

The report said the minimum price of the ticket for the Pakistan-India was AED500, while the maximum a ticket costed for the match was AED12,500.

All the tickets of the marquee fixture were sold out within an hour. There are chances that strong financial parties might have bought maximum tickets to sell out at higher prices later.

In a recent press conference, PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi had disclosed that the ICC had agreed to hand more amount to the PCB than what the event will generate through gate money. But whether the agreement covers the Dubai revenue is yet to be clarified.

Mohsin had also said that the extra share coming from the ICC would help settling up the exceeded costs for the ongoing stadium upgradations in Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi.

The PCB had set a budget of Rs12.80 billion for the purpose but it is learnt that it has exceeded to around Rs21 billion. Dawn had reported earlier that the ICC had deemed all the three venues ready to hold Champions Trophy matches even before the upgradation, but the PCB still decided to carry on with its ambition.



LAHORE: Pakistan batter Babar Azam plays a shot as skipper Mohammad Rizwan looks on during an intra-squad practice match at the Ghani Glass Ground.

Aaqib rules out changes in Champions Trophy squad, defends Faheem, Khushdil's selections

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: While defending the selection of all-rounders Faheem Ashraf and Khushdil Shah in the Pakistan squad for the upcoming tri-nation series and the ICC Champions Trophy, interim head coach and de facto chief selector Aaqib Javed has ruled out the possibility of changes in the roster before the tournament.

Seemingly nowhere near Pakistan reckoning three months ago, Faheem and Khushdil were picked up for the high-stakes tournament despite having no real performances to show for in the recent past.

The duo's selection triggered heavy criticism from fans and critics, but Aaqib has stuck to his stance, saying that there was no chance of them being dropped after the tri-nation series — which involves South Africa and New Zealand along with hosts Pakistan and is to precede the Champions Trophy.

"It's not right to make changes based on the performances of two matches and therefore it will most likely be the same team for the Champions Trophy," the former Test pacer told reporters on the sidelines of Pakistan's training session at the Ghani Glass ground here on Wednesday.

Aaqib believed Faheem fitted into Pakistan's requirement for a fast-bowling all-rounder.

"And when you look into it specifically that you have three pool matches against New Zealand, India and Bangladesh, you need top seven batters with four bowling options, including two all-rounders," he said. "Both Faheem and Khushdil are better choices to play in the sub-continent conditions as compared to Australia or South Africa."

He explained that the absence of Saim Ayub due to fitness issues could not simply be filled by a batsman, but required an all-rounder who could also bat at number

seven. He also noted that wicket-keeper Haseebullah, who had been with the national team in South Africa, could not remain with the squad due to injury, making Usman Khan a better option for selection.

In response to a question, Aaqib emphasised that his team's goal should be to consistently put up totals of 325 or more in each match — a target he believed is entirely achievable in modern cricket.

"In recent years, 200 runs have become the benchmark in T20 cricket, so a score of 325 or even 350 is quite possible in ODIs,

especially with the change in fielding restrictions that allow only four fielders outside the circle in the early overs," he explained.

Aaqib further highlighted that the upcoming tri-nation series would serve as an excellent opportunity for the Pakistan team to prepare for the Champions Trophy.

Asked about India's chances without their star fast bowler, Jasprit Bumrah, who is sidelined due to injury, Aaqib noted that it was a concern for the Indian side. While Bumrah is undoubtedly a key player, Aaqib pointed out that no team should rely on one individual to secure victories.

Regarding the selection of fast bowler Aamer Jamal, Aaqib confirmed that the option had been discussed, but since Aamer had only played Test cricket and not ODIs, he was ultimately not considered.

Meanwhile, the New Zealand cricket team arrived in Lahore to participate in the tri-nation series and later the Champions Trophy.

Both Pakistan and New Zealand are scheduled to hold practice sessions at Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday, marking the first cricketing activity at the newly-renovated venue. Workers are still putting the final touches on the stadium, which is set to be completed in a record 119 days.

England win toss, bat against Kohli-less India in ODI opener

SPORTS DESK

England skipper Jos Buttler won the toss and elected to bat against India, who were without injured Virat Kohli for the first of three one-day internationals on Thursday.

The visitors welcomed back Joe Root, who last played an ODI at the 2023 World Cup, for the match in Nagpur.

England were well beaten 4-1 in a preceding T20 series.

The ODIs come ahead of the Champions Trophy starting February 19 in Pakistan and Dubai.

India handed ODI debuts to opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and pace bowler Harshit Rana after star batsman Kohli missed out with a sore right knee.

Skipper Rohit Sharma and Kohli returned to the ODI set-up after the two struggled in Test matches with both lacking runs in a 3-1 loss in Australia last month.

Kohli was walking gingerly in the group with a strapped right foot.

Teams:

India: Rohit Sharma (capt), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shreyas Iyer, Shubman

Gill, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Harshit Rana, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami.

England: Ben Duckett, Phil Salt, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jos Buttler (capt), Liam Livingstone, Jacob Bethell, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer, Adil Rashid, Saqib Mahmood.

Umpires: KN Ananthapadmanabhan (IND), Sharfuddoula (BAN)

TV Umpire: Chris Brown (NZL)

Match Referee: Javagal Srinath (IND)



England's Joe Root (R) plays a shot as India's KL Rahul looks on during the first one-day international cricket match between India and England at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur.

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No time left

PAKISTAN teeters on the edge of an environmental abyss. Ranked among the most climate-vulnerable nations, it endures extreme heat, apocalyptic floods, prolonged droughts, and choking air pollution.

The annual smog that engulfs urban centres is not merely an inconvenience — it is a broader governance failure. Meanwhile, rural communities watch helplessly as their worlds disintegrate: glaciers retreat, monsoons become erratic, and fertile lands turn to dust.

Yet, climate change concerns continue to remain a footnote as politics dominates the national discourse, surfacing only when disaster strikes. A proactive approach, built on long-term resilience, is the obvious way forward. But what are we willing to do about it?

Dawn's 'Breathe Pakistan' campaign is one attempt to make it central to the national conversation. However, Pakistan needs much more — it needs a revolution in environmental governance.

This demands unprecedented coordination among stakeholders: government bodies, industry leaders, international partners, researchers, CSOs, and communities. The time for symbolic gestures and non-binding commitments has passed.

The path forward requires fundamental shifts. First, climate change must be elevated to the highest tier of national security concerns, alongside terrorism and economic stability. This means overhauling environmental protection frameworks with substantial fines for polluters, stringent emissions controls, and massive investment in public transportation.

Urban planning must pivot from concrete-jungle expansion to green development, with strict preservation of remaining urban forests. Agriculture, both a casualty and a contributor to climate change, also requires urgent reform.

Pakistan's excessive reliance on water-intensive crops has depleted underground reserves. The solution lies in introducing drought-resistant crop varieties, implementing water-smart irrigation systems, and incentivising farmers to adopt climate-resilient techniques. This revolution must be supported by a parallel energy transition, leveraging our abundant renewable resources — solar, wind, and hydroelectric power.

The private sector, often seen as part of the problem, must be brought into the solution. Corporate accountability on carbon footprints should be non-negotiable, with tax incentives for sustainable business practices.

Pakistan's international partners, too, have a role — debt relief mechanisms tied to green development, knowledge transfers, and climate finance must be expanded to help chart a sustainable path. Environmental education needs radical reimagining. Pakistan requires comprehensive climate literacy programmes integrated into school and university curricula.

Media outlets must move beyond disaster coverage to sustained environmental journalism, investigating root causes and highlighting solutions. Change begins at the grassroots, and public participation is indispensable.

Pakistan's survival hinges on its ability to treat climate change as the defining challenge of our time. Either we act now, or we surrender to a future of escalating disasters.

By Khawaja Farooq

No Event, No Protest – Complete Silence on Kashmir Day in the U.S.

Trioka has made the Kashmir issue a joke; a so-called meeting of a few individuals brought embarrassment Ignoring Kashmir is a betrayal of the martyrs; diplomats should be replaced: Community, Kashmiris

No event, no protest—complete silence on Kashmir Day in the U.S. The incompetent "Trioka" has turned the Kashmir issue into a joke. While events, protests, rallies, and demonstrations were held across Pakistan and worldwide on Kashmir Solidarity Day, there was complete silence in the U.S. A so-called meeting of just a few individuals became a source of embarrassment for Pakistan globally. Frustrated by the incompetence of the "Trioka" and their disregard for the Kashmir issue, no Kashmiri or Pakistani deemed it appropriate to participate in any protest. The Pakistani government's Kashmir policy has become a laughingstock in the U.S.

According to sources, Indian circles expressed satisfaction over yet another

failed protest, reporting to their government that there is no one left to raise their voice for Kashmir in the U.S. The incompetence of Pakistani diplomats has further strengthened India's stance. On the other hand, Kashmiris and Pakistanis living in the U.S. expressed strong reactions, saying that yet another chapter of diplomatic failure has been written. The failure to remove the "Trioka"—Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Permanent Representative to the UN Munir Akram, and New York Consul General Aamer Atozai—despite their incompetence, raises serious questions.

Overseas Kashmiris and Pakistanis further stated that these incompetent diplomats openly claim that after India's revocation of Kashmir's special status, the issue is buried and nothing more can be done.

They believe the focus should shift to economic matters and increasing trade with India.

These diplomats do not even bother to meet with Kashmiris.

Quaid-e-Azam declared Kashmir the lifeline of Pakistan. Thousands of Kashmiri brothers, sisters, children, and elders sacrificed their lives for freedom. Ignoring the Kashmir issue is

a betrayal of these martyrs.

These incompetent diplomats are only working for their personal interests. The Prime Minister and Army Chief must take immediate notice and replace the ineffective diplomatic staff with individuals who genuinely care about the country, the nation, and the Kashmiris. A clear stance on Kashmir should be taken, and the thousands of Kashmiris and overseas Pakistanis in the U.S. should be engaged to raise their voices on every platform.

If action is not taken now, Kashmiris will be compelled to take extreme measures.

Overseas Pakistani Kashmiris have stated that the protest by the Pakistani government on the Kashmir issue is being observed in the same manner as the strong condemnations of drone attacks, while at the same time allowing the U.S. to carry out those attacks. The symbolic protests in America indicate that Pakistan's "jugular vein" was sold out by Qamar Javed Bajwa, and the current regime is covering up his crime. Furthermore, Pakistan's Foreign Office has not provided diplomats with any clear policy on Kashmir, which is nothing short of a serious cause for concern.

By F.S. Aijazuddin

Fatal decisions

TIMING is everything, especially in politics. Mistiming can be fatal, as three recent leaders, now out of power, have learned. In October 1999, PM Mian Nawaz Sharif decided to remove COAS Gen Musharraf, even while Musharraf was returning home from Sri Lanka. In June 2019, PM Imran Khan transferred the then head of ISI, Gen Asim Munir. Both prime ministers paid for their misjudgment.

On July 21, 2024, US president Joe Biden stepped aside in favour of his vice-president Kamala Harris, a few months before the elections. His selfish delay cost their Democratic party the presidency.

Americans may recall the 1980 presidential elections that lost Jimmy Carter the presidency. A year earlier, on Nov 4, 1979, Iranian students seized the US embassy in Tehran and detained 66 American diplomats and staff. Fourteen managed to escape. The remaining 52 were held hostage for 444 days.

Carter ordered two rescue missions, which failed. In September 1980, a US-friendly Iraq invaded Iran. Two months later, Carter contested the presidential election and suffered a landslide loss to Ronald Reagan. Immediately after Reagan was sworn into office, the Iranians obliged him by releasing the embassy hostages. Palestinians have lost both their lives and land.

That scenario has been replayed 45 years later, this time with different actors. Donald Trump replaces Reagan, and Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas the hostage holders.

Over a year ago, on Oct 7, 2023, 250 hostages were captured by Hamas when it attacked Israel. The attack triggered Israel's retaliatory military offensive which, over the next 15 months, killed over 47,500 Palestinians, injured more than 110,000, and destroyed everything above the ground in the Gaza Strip.

On Jan 15, 2025, five days before Trump's swearing-in, it was announced that an agreement had been reached between Hamas and Israel. Hamas agreed to release 33 out of 98 hostages in the first phase. In exchange, Israel would release more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. Not all the hostages were

Israelis. Almost half were citizens from other countries: Thailand, Nepal, Philippines, the US, Russia, France, Germany, UK, Ireland and Argentina.

Over the period of their incarceration, these hostages were visited by the International Red Cross and other NGO teams.

One report was bureaucrats at its best, or worst. Who but someone luxuriating in Geneva would describe the condition of the hostages in Gaza with this euphemism: they were "prone to immediate mortality"?

The unwise might be tempted to ask why Israel had not tried to rescue the hostages. It certainly had the capability. It had with precision targeted and then annihilated Hamas's top leadership.

According to a recent BBC report, specific Hamas victims were: Yahya Sinwar (the architect of the Oct 7 attacks); Ismail Haniyeh who was killed during a visit to Tehran; Mohammed Deif, the head of Hamas's military wing, the al-Qassam Brigades; Marwan Issa, the deputy commander of al-Qassam Brigades, killed in a tunnel beneath the Gaza Strip; and Mahmoud Zahar, who was injured when an Israeli plane dropped a bomb on his house in Gaza City in 2003.

Perhaps the most intriguing was the botched attempt in 1997 to kill Khaled Meshaal (one of the founders of Hamas). Under direct instructions from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israel's Mossad spy agency entered Jordan on forged passports and injected, KGB-style, a toxic substance into Meshaal. The BBC disclosed: "The late King Hussein of Jordan asked Israel's PM for the antidote for the substance Meshaal was injected with. Facing pressure from then US President Bill Clinton, Mr Netanyahu provided the antidote."

Given such murky depths in international politics, it is not inconceivable that Hamas kept the hostages in a place known to the Israelis and perhaps also the countries whose nationals had been abducted. That may explain why the impression was created that the hostages were primarily Israelis and therefore bargaining counters between Israel only and Hamas. Why

did Hamas need to hold citizens of Thailand, Ireland, Argentina and the Philippines? Unless it was done at Israel's behest.

An Israeli-British hostage released recently said that she and other hostages were kept at facilities run by UN's agency for Palestinian refugees. Interestingly, the day after being sworn in, President Trump halted support for UNRWA. Israel proposes to ban it.

A generation ago, during the peace talks in Shimla after the 1971 war over Bangladesh, Mrs Indira Gandhi offered Mr Z.A. Bhutto return of 5,000 square miles (approximately 13,000 square kilometres) of captured land, or 93,000 Pakistani PoWs & CUPCs. He opted for the land. He knew she could not hold the hostages indefinitely. Israel and the US gave the Palestinians no such choice. The Palestinians have lost both their lives and their land.

Since legislators are public figures and mostly lead a fish-bowl life, it is natural that their emoluments and raises invite much greater attention. However, populist rhetoric aside, much of the criticism on the recent increase is not justified. Being a legislator is more than a full-time job, and a member who has to do justice to his or her duties within the assembly, parliamentary committees, a large constituency and parliamentary party, has to put in considerable time and effort, often at a huge cost to his or her personal life.

It is true that, in general, legislators' performance leaves much to be desired and that is what prompts most of the criticism, but it is also the strong preference of their constituents which forces them to spend a major part of their time outside the assemblies focusing on resolving the personal issues of their constituents and trying to secure development projects

for the constituencies. Unless the quality of our governance considerably improves and local governments become effective, it is unlikely that the legislators' time will be spent differently.

If we wish to attract accomplished and professional persons to our legislatures, we should be prepared to pay them salaries closer to market rates.

DAILY MIRROR

"No One is coming to Save Us: Sherry Rehman Warns of Climate Crisis at Dawn Climate Conference

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman, delivered a compelling keynote address at the Dawn Breathe Climate Conference on Thursday. She emphasized the urgent need for a national reckoning on climate action, stressing that Pakistan can no longer afford to treat climate change as an external crisis. She lauded Dawn Media for this important initiative in fostering public dialogue on the existential threat of climate change.

Senator Rehman underscored that while Pakistan's energy mix now comprises 55% renewables, critical policy issues such as the National Clean Air Policy must be at the forefront of national discourse. "Air pollution is a serial killer," she stated, citing that 128,000 deaths annually in Pakistan are attributed to air pollution, reducing life expectancy by an average of 3.9 years. Smog alone affects 11 million children, while air pollution costs Pakistan \$47 billion annually, nearly 5.88% of its GDP.

Highlighting that climate change does not respect borders, Senator Rehman drew attention to recent wildfires in Los Angeles, likening them to the devastating 2022 Balochistan fire that burned over 26,000 acres of ancient chiloza

pine forests, causing losses of \$20 million to local communities. These forests contribute \$30-40 million annually to Pakistan's economy; yet climate-induced disasters continue to wipe out natural capital. "This is a quantum shift," she warned. "The climate clock is ticking, and inaction will bring devastation to our doorstep."

She stressed that climate change is no longer a future threat but a structural issue defining global and national choices. "What happened in Pakistan will not stay in Pakistan," she said. "The world saw what unfolded during the 2022 floods, which submerged one-third of the country. Many other nations are now experiencing similar climate catastrophes."

Speaking about international climate negotiations, Senator Rehman remarked that despite 29 global climate conferences, climate financing remains a bottleneck for developing nations. "At COP27, Pakistan secured a Loss and Damage Fund, but even if that fund gets completely capitalized, we won't be able to extract those funds easily," she said. Citing World Bank estimates, she stated that Pakistan requires \$348 billion by 2030 to address climate change challenges, yet the financial architecture remains heavily skewed against vulnerable nations.

"The biggest issue is that Pakistan continues to look at climate as an exter-

nal problem," she said. "We go to multilateral tables seeking climate finance, but this is not just about money. It is about rejecting business-as-usual (BAU) approaches and treating climate as the core development lens for all national policies."

She warned against the growing retreat of multilateralism, noting that the rules-based order of the post-World War II era is in ICU. "Developing countries need \$1.3 trillion annually for climate finance, but every time we ask where this money will come from, we are met with silence. Meanwhile, in 2022 alone, fossil fuel subsidies amounted to a staggering \$7 trillion globally. The irony is stark, the money exists within the global financial system, but it is funneled elsewhere propping up industries that drive the crisis rather than supporting those on the frontlines of its impact."

Senator Rehman underscored Pakistan's water crisis, calling for an urgent shift in the country's relationship with water. "Pakistan is the fourth largest per capita user of water globally and has already entered water scarcity in 2025," she noted. "Only 1% of wastewater is treated, while 9 million gallons of sewage are dumped into Rawal Dam. The Indus River, Pakistan's lifeline, is now the second most polluted river in the world due to industrial waste and plastic pollution."



Islamabad: Acting Chairman Senate, Mr. Syedaal Khan, called on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pakistan, China sign three MoUs in RE, cement, fertilizer sectors

ONLINE

BEIJING: Pakistan and China on Thursday signed three different Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to enhance cooperation in the areas of renewable energy, cement and fertilizer manufacturing sectors.

President Asif Ali Zardari along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah witnessed the MoU signing ceremony here.

An MoU was signed between Pakistan's Thatta Cement Company and China's Zhonggang Construction Group to help establish an additional production line at Thatta Cement to increase cement production by 5000 tons per day in Pakistan utilizing the locally sourced Pakistani coal.

Another MoU was signed between the Sindh Energy Department and China's Ming Yang Renewable Energy Company that would promote cooperation on various renewable energy projects in Pakistan. It also aims at facilitating the two sides to explore several renewable energy projects, fulfill the goals of carbon peaking, carbon neutrality, and emission reduction.

Opposition parties yet to decide on formal alliance: Hafiz Hamdullah

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: JUI-F leader Hafiz Hamdullah on Thursday said that the opposition parties yet to decide to establish a formal alliance.

He was talking about a sitting of major opposition parties at the residence of former speaker Asad Qaiser. "A sitting held at Asad Qaiser's residence in which political situation was discussed," Hafiz Hamdullah said.

"All political leadership including Maulana Fazlur Rehman attended the meeting,"

JUI-F leader said. "The leaders agreed that there was neither politics nor democracy in the country", he said.

The meeting was attended by JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman, PkMAP head Achakzai, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, Omar Ayub, and other leaders of opposition parties.

Secretary Agriculture emphasizes promotion of oilseed crops in Balochistan

APP

QUETTA: Secretary Agriculture Balochistan, Noor Ahmed Pirani on Thursday emphasized the promotion of oilseed crop seeds and measures for plant protection to ensure sustainable agricultural growth in the province.

Noor Ahmed Pirani during his visit to the Directorate General of Agriculture Extension Balochistan, highlighted the promotion of oilseed crops and provided awareness regarding plant protection.

The Director General of Agriculture Extension, Masood Baloch, along with various department directors, welcomed the Secretary. He presented the performance of various departments and discussed the challenges they are facing, said a news release.

The Secretary was informed about various Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) schemes aimed at introducing modern methods, addressing climate change, and promoting agricultural development. The performance of different agriculture extension directorates was also discussed.

He assured that in the upcoming fiscal year's PSDP, efforts would be made to support the Department of Agriculture

Extension.

The secretary reaffirms the government's commitment to strengthen agricultural services, promoting modern reforms, and address the challenges faced by farmers.

Director General Masood Ahmad Baloch emphasized the need to regulate pesticides in different districts to ensure that the farmers receive the correct pesticides while maintaining environmental protection. Additionally, the creation of a Market Committee Board was discussed for better organization of agricultural markets.

The meeting also decided that efforts would be taken for improving and strengthening the collaboration between agricultural research and extension, enabling the development and promotion of new crop varieties for farmers.

Furthermore, the issue of job service structure within the department was also brought up, emphasizing the need for reforms. The Secretary also acknowledged the role of women in agriculture extension, emphasizing the need for their greater inclusion in advisory services, farmer training programs, and field activities to ensure gender-responsive agricultural development.

Kash Patel: Championing Integrity and Loyalty as FBI Director

By Khawaja Farooq

WASHINGTON: In a recent Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Kash Patel, President Donald Trump's nominee for FBI Director, demonstrated unwavering support for the President while emphasizing his commitment to uphold the Constitution and ensure the FBI's impartiality.

Patel, a seasoned legal professional with a background as a public defender and a counterterrorism prosecutor in the National Security Division under President Obama, addressed concerns regarding potential biases and retribution. He firmly stated that he does not possess an "enemies list" and pledged to protect FBI employees from any form of political retribution.

Throughout the hearing, Patel faced rigorous questioning from Senate Democrats about his past statements and affiliations. He clarified that his previous comments had been taken out of context



President Donald Trump in a meeting with Kash Patel.

and reiterated his dedication to leading a non-partisan FBI. Patel's responses highlighted his loyalty to President Trump, showcasing a steadfast alliance with the administration's vision for the nation's premier law enforcement agency.

Republican senators expressed strong support for Patel, citing his extensive legal experience and commitment to justice. They emphasized that his leadership would reinforce the FBI's mission to uphold the rule of law without political bias.

Four people killed, several injured in Kalat road accident

INP

Kalat: Four people were killed and several others injured in a devastating road accident in Surab District, Kalat Division, Balochistan, on Thursday, after three vehicles crashed into each other, causing widespread destruction.

According to levies forces, the accident occurred due to speeding and reckless driving where three vehicles were traveling at a high speed when they collided, resulting in the tragic loss of four lives on the spot and injuring several, a private news channel reported.

The sources added that the injured were being treated at a local hospital and their condition was stated to be stable.

An official statement from the Levies forces confirmed the details of the accident and assured that a thorough investigation was underway to determine the cause of the crash.

Senate Body Reviews WAPDA Audit Inquiries

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources, led by Senator Shahadat Awan, convened Thursday to receive a comprehensive briefing concerning the inquiries conducted by the ministry upon the recommendations of the Departmental Accounts Committee and Public Accounts Committee in the audit paras of WAPDA.

The officials informed that 56 inquiries were conducted on the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), of which 43 are completed, 10 are in progress, and the remaining three are being investigated by NAB. Additionally, 381 inquiries were initiated upon the recommendations of the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC), of which 308 are completed and 67 are pending, said a press release.

Senator Shahadat Awan stated that 187 audit paras are pending, with some having been pending since 1985, and surprisingly, the ministry didn't have any records in some cases.

Secretary Water Resources apprised that the inquiry on all the audit paras will be conducted in chronological order; however, priority is given to foreign-aided projects.

After detailed deliberation, the Committee recommended that the ministry provide the details of cases pending before the courts.

The Committee also recommended providing the details of individuals against whom responsibilities have been fixed upon the conclusion of inquiries.

Govt Enacts PECA Law in Good Faith to Regulate Digital Media: Atta Tarar

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar said the government had enacted the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) law in good faith, primarily to regulate digital media.

Addressing the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting, the minister warned that unchecked digital media could lead to serious societal issues, including incitement to violence.

Atta Tarar made these remarks in response to the NA panel's call for broad consultations with all stakeholders, including press clubs, to address concerns related to media regulation.

The meeting was presided over by MNA Pullain Baloch who announced that a follow-up meeting would be held next week, involving the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, the Chairman of the National Assembly Committee on Information and Broadcasting, and media stakeholders to devise a comprehensive solution to the issue. The NA body also reviewed the matters related to the Public Sector Development Programme of the Ministry for the ongoing year.

While briefing the committee on the matter, the minister said that the Ministry had worked out comprehensive plan to equip the Radio Pakistan and the

Pakistan Television with the modern technology.

He added that the additional budget was needed to expand the network of official media to the rural areas.

Tarar said the additional budget would also be utilised to upgrade the existing electronic tools.

He also announced the establishment of a think tank comprising 14 experts recruited from the market. The total budget allocated for this initiative was Rs 204 million, he added.

The minister highlighted that significant progress has been made in resolving internal issues within the national tv.

"We have ensured timely payment of salaries to employees, unlike some private media organizations that fail to pay their staff on time," he stated.

The minister also revealed plans to establish a major pvt Center in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, offering internships to students in the region.

He expressed concerns over foreign-backed campaigns aimed at inciting rebellion among the youth in these areas. "Through media, we will address these issues and guide the youth towards a positive direction," he asserted.

The minister further elaborated on the improvements in the PTV sports Channel, stating that corrupt elements have been removed, and a strong team has been assembled, yielding positive results.



Islamabad: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with former caretaker Minister for Finance, Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, at the Finance Division.

Development, Women's Welfare Govt's Top Priority: Adviser to CM

APP

QUETTA: Adviser to Balochistan Chief Minister for Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi met with the Secretary of the Women Development Department (WDD), Saira Atta on Thursday.

The meeting included a detailed discussion on departmental matters, ongoing projects, and the challenges being faced by women. Additional Secretary Naseebullah Khan was also present during the meeting.

Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that the development and welfare of women is the government's top priority, and all possible resources are being utilized for

this purpose.

She emphasized that practical steps are being taken to protect women's rights, enhance their economic independence, and provide them with better opportunities.

She further mentioned that reforms in the Women Development Department are

essential to make women more active, ensuring quicker solutions to their problems.

Dr. Rubaba assured that the department would receive all necessary governmental support at every level and promised that the timely completion of women welfare projects would be ensured.

Imran's letter to army chief has 'shaken ruling' party: Barrister Saif

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) claims that a letter written by Imran Khan to the army chief has unsettled government officials, and drawn strong reactions from the governing coalition.

Without referring to the army chief, Barrister Dr Muhammad Ali Saif, spokesperson for the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government, alleged that the letter had created panic within the federal government, though he did not name any specific officials.

He claimed that ministers from the "fake government" had launched propaganda even before the letter reached its intended recipients.

"The ruling party's leaders have lost sleep over Imran Khan's letter," Saif said in a statement, adding that senior Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) figures were "visibly disturbed." PTI has repeatedly accused the government of using legal and administrative tactics to suppress the opposition.

Saif asserted that once Khan is released, his party will hold the governing coalition accountable for what he described as "unlawful actions and political victimisation."

The letter, reportedly addressed to senior military leadership, has yet to

receive an official response.

Earlier this week, contrary to the claims made by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), security sources have revealed that no letter from former prime minister Imran Khan was received by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir.

Sources familiar with the matter stated that the news regarding Khan's letter reached the military leadership through the media, not through any formal communication. The controversy began when PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Khan's lawyer, Faisal Chaudhry, informed the media that Khan had written a letter to the army chief, urging him to "reevaluate policy."

Speaking outside Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, Chaudhry elaborated that the former premier, in his capacity as PTI supreme and ex-prime minister, had sent a six-point letter to General Munir.

Contrary to the claims made by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), security sources have revealed that no letter from former prime minister Imran Khan was received by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir.

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QUETTA: Anjuman Tajran Balochistan President Abdul Rahim Kakar addressing a press conference.