



**UN chief slams deadly attack in KP's Kurram district, urges probe**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has strongly condemned Thursday's attack in the Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and called for bringing the perpetrators to justice. At least 45 people, including seven women and a nine-year-old girl, were killed in Lower Kurram.



**Putin says Ukraine war is going global**

President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that the Ukraine war was escalating towards a global conflict after the United States and Britain allowed Ukraine to hit Russia with their weapons, and warned the West that Moscow could strike back. Russia, Putin said, had responded to the use of U.S. and British missiles by firing a new kind of hypersonic medium-range ballistic missile at a Ukrainian military facility. More could follow, Putin warned. He said civilians would be warned ahead of further strikes with such weapons.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Security arrangements**

ISLAMABAD: Heavy shipping containers at D Chowk for road block ahead of upcoming PTI protest in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online Sultan Bashir

**Army Chief visits Peshawar following Apex Committee meeting**

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited Peshawar today, as a follow up of the National Apex Committee meeting held on 19 November 2024 and prelude to Provincial Apex Committee Meeting to be held soon. COAS was provided a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing security situation and the progress of ongoing counter-terrorism operations in the region. Chief Minister KPK and field commanders were also present at the occasion.



resolve to dismantle hostile terrorist networks and eradicate the illegal spectrum undermining national security.

Paying profound tribute to the Shuhada and Ghazis, COAS emphasized the unparalleled sacrifices being rendered for the defense of the motherland. He remarked that these sacrifices serve as a cornerstone of national resilience, inspiring and unwavering dedication of the Armed Forces and of Law Enforcement Agencies.

COAS commended the high morale, operational readiness, and unyielding commitment of the troops in effectively countering all forms of threats. He reiterated the Army's firm

Highlighting the collective determination of the nation and its security forces to combat terrorism, COAS stressed that thwarting the nefarious designs of inimical elements remains a top priority. He assured that through synchronized and robust operations, Pakistan Army in collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) will relentlessly hunt down the enemies of peace to ensure lasting stability and security.

Upon his arrival, COAS was received by the Corps Commander Peshawar.

**PM Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Kachi Canal Restoration Project at Taunsa Barrage**

Asim Tanveer

TAUNSA BARRAGE/KOT ADDU: Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Kachi Canal restoration project, stated that spewing venom against Saudi Arabia is an unforgivable crime. He emphasized that any attempts to hinder the strong bond between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would be met with severe consequences, and those who try to disrupt this friendship will be dealt with decisively.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, while praising Saudi Arabia's unconditional financial and diplomatic support for Pakistan, categorically stated that it is an unforgivable crime to spew venom against such a brotherly country. He said that any hand that tries to create an obstacle in Pakistan-Saudi friendship will be broken by the nation. He further emphasized that no one would be allowed



to jeopardize Pakistan's interests by spreading baseless propaganda against Saudi Arabia, a long-standing ally. He urged that political interests should not be pursued by sowing seeds of hatred and putting Pakistan's welfare at risk. To achieve the development and prosperity of the people of Pakistan, the nation must unite

and firmly confront the enemies of the country. He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Kachi Canal rehabilitation project in Taunsa on Friday.

The Prime Minister said that Saudi Arabia is a friend and brotherly country of Pakistan, whose praise is never enough. In

every era and under every government, Saudi Arabia has supported the people and government of Pakistan financially, economically, and diplomatically without any discrimination. It has always fought Pakistan's case on the global stage and provided unparalleled support in every field. In return, over the course of 77 years, Saudi Arabia has never made any demands or political ambitions. It has always helped us unconditionally, like a brother.

The Prime Minister congratulated the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Sardar Sarfraz Bugti, for his personal efforts and interest in the restoration of the project, which was completed with the support of the Punjab Government, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, and WAPDA. He stated that the feasibility study for this project began in 1998 during Nawaz Sharif's tenure, and during General Musharraf's era, the project was handed over to contractors without a tender, leading to the reckless wastage of

the poor nation's money.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif welcomed everyone to Punjab, stating that this is not just a canal, but a path to the prosperity of Balochistan through Punjab. She mentioned that this project was initiated during Nawaz Sharif's tenure and completed during his time as well.

Chief Minister of Balochistan, Sardar Sarfraz Bugti, said that the project was approved in 2002, but it became a dead project. After Nawaz Sharif came to power, its completion was achieved, and the region experienced a period of prosperity. In 2022, the area was devastated by floods, and people from our regions had to migrate. Once again, at our request, this dream has now been realized.

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Energy, Musadik Malik, Chairman WAPDA, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Sajjad Ghani also highlighted the Kachi Canal restoration project.

**Islamabad police block roads to halt PTI supporters marching towards Islamabad**

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad administration blocked roads leading to the federal capital to halt Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters who are scheduled to march towards the city on Sunday for the "restoration" of democracy and their party founder's release.

"The government is committed to upholding the law and will fully comply with the Islamabad High Court's ruling," Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi told reporters in Islamabad on Friday.

Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan has asked his supporters to

march towards Islamabad on November 24 for democracy and judiciary. But Defence Minister Khawaja Asif believes the protest is akin to "insurrection" as the former ruling party allegedly wants to usurp the federal capital.

The PTI founder has set four demands for ending protests while his wife has stated that the date would only change if Khan is out of jail.

Khan's PTI encountered a significant setback on Thursday when the Islamabad High Court ruled that no protests or rallies violating a recent law on public gatherings would be permitted over the weekend due to the visit of the Belarusian president.

**PM constitutes committee to resolve issues between PMLN & PPP**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday constituted a committee to ensure cooperation in political and other matters, and to resolve the issues between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

The members of the committee include Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema.

Other members include Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human

Resource Development Engineer Amir Muqam, Prime Minister's Advisor Rana Sanaullah, Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan, Senior Minister of Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Jaffer Khan Mandokhel, and Bashir Ahmed Memon.

According to a press release issued by the PM Office, the prime minister has tasked the committee with the responsibility of political cooperation and resolving issues after detailed consultations with the Pakistan Peoples Party.

The committee will engage in discussions with the members designated by the Pakistan Peoples Party to determine the future course of action.

**Internet likely to be suspended in Islamabad, Punjab during PTI protest**

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Mobile and internet services are likely to remain suspended in various parts of Pakistan, particularly in Islamabad and Punjab, amid Pakistan

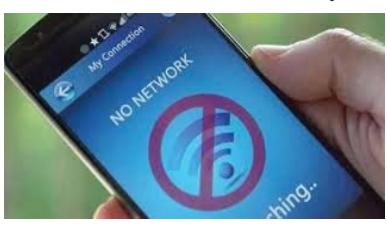
Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest on November 24. According to sources, the suspension may affect some districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Islamabad.

Sources within Pakistan Telecommunica-

tion Authority (PTA) have claimed that mobile internet services will be suspended from November 22, with firewalls activated to slow down internet speeds and impact social media apps.

The authorities may also

block internet and mobile services in specific locations, depending on the situation, sources added.



**Motorway to remain closed for repair ahead of PTI Islamabad protest**

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Motorway will remain closed from six points for repair until further notice, according to a notification issued by the authorities.

As per the notification, the Motorway will be closed from Pindi Bhattian to Multan, Peshawar to Islamabad and Lahore to Islamabad starting tonight at 8 pm, Motorway Police announced.

The notification stated that the Motorway will be closed for maintenance and repair work.

Earlier today, the government of Punjab imposed section 144 across the province ahead of PTI protest in Islamabad on November 24.

As per details, the Punjab Home Department has banned public



gatherings and rallies for three days. According to the notification, issued here today, section 144 will be in effect from Saturday, November 23 to Monday, November 25.

It is to be noted that incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan has given a call for countrywide protests on November 24.

In a separate development, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) presented 'conditions' to hold negotiations to withdraw its November 24 protest call.

The PTI demanded immediate relief for party founder Imran Khan, the sources said. "In exchange for relief to its founder, the PTI is ready to call off the protest," they added.

The party asked from the government to quash all 'fabricated' cases against Imran Khan and his immediate release. "If legal proceedings delay his release, Imran Khan should be transferred to Peshawar Jail," one of the conditions set by PTI read.

The party also demanded an immediate release of other leaders imprisoned in various jails. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur said that negotiations on the November 24 protest will only be commenced after the release of PTI founder Imran Khan.

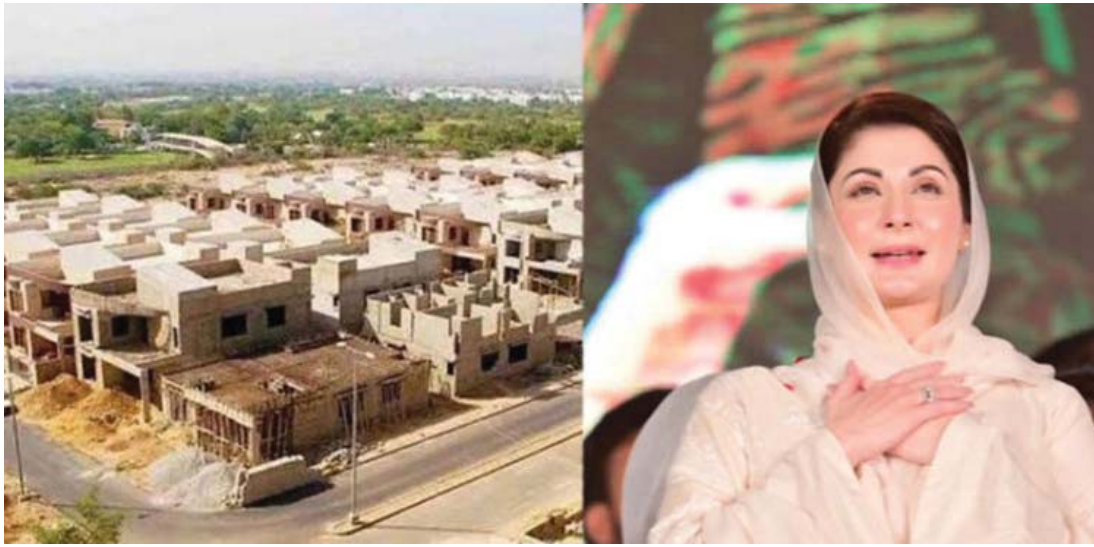
# CM Maryam Nawaz orders urgent completion of Apni Chhat Apna Ghar Programme

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: "Speed up the completion of 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar Programme,'" Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned while chairing a special meeting to review progress of 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar Programme'. She added, "Apni Chhat Apna Ghar is a dream of every common man, we will definitely materialise it."

Madam Chief Minister said, "Payment of 1st instalment of loan to 927 applicants under 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar Programme' in Punjab has been completed." She was briefed, "More than 800 houses under the scheme have entered the final stage of their completion." She directed the related authorities to complete the payment of the 2nd loan instalment to the beneficiaries as soon as possible.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was apprised, "Data of 50,000 applicants was transferred to Akhuwat for verification. Verification of 38,000 applicants has been completed, while 20,900 applicants have submitted



the required documents, out of which 8,424 applicants have successfully completed the required papers." The updated Madam Chief Minister, "The number of registered users on 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' portal has exceeded 600,000, whereas more than 3.25

lakh applications have been received via portal to construct houses under the scheme." They briefed further, "The target of building 47,000 houses by June 2025 and 100,000 houses by next December will be completed."

Madam Chief Minister gave

approval to present furniture and other goods as gifts to the owners of the first 05 houses completed under the scheme. She also gave in-principle approval to launch a 3-Marla plot scheme in Punjab, which will be started by giving 666 plots in Chishtian.

## EPI Big Catch-Up campaign progress reviewed in Dadu: Deputy Commissioner

**Azad Baloch**

DADU: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Dadu, Mukhtiar Ali Abro, at the Camp Office, DC House Dadu, to review the progress report of the ongoing EPI Big Catch-Up campaign. During the meeting, which focuses on providing immunization against 12 major diseases to children under five years, NSTOP Officer Deedar Hassan Khaskheli briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the campaign's progress.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the performance of the teams and commended their efforts.

On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Mukhtiar Ali Abro conveyed a message to the public, stating that health department teams are reaching cities, neighborhoods, and villages to administer free immunization to protect children from fatal diseases. He urged citizens to cooperate with the teams. He also requested parents to support the visiting teams in their neighborhoods and villages.

Mr. Abro said, parents could get their children immunized at the nearest EPI center. The Deputy Commissioner directed parents and the health department's concerned staff to work together to ensure the campaign's success, making the district free from diseases.

The meeting was attended by DHO Dadu, Syed Imdad Ali Shah, Dr. Javed Ahmed, Dr. Junaid Ahmed, Dr. Rafiq, Dr. Abdul Jabbar Babar, and others.

## Huge Financial Loss to AJK Public Property Highlights Urgent Need for Insurance

**Bureau Report**

MIRPUR: An accident on November 21, 2024, in Kotli, a district of Mirpur Division in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K), resulted in significant damage to public property.

The District Magistrate of Kotli reported that the fire destroyed a police prison van, a Rescue 1122 pickup truck, a parked motorbike, and a vehicle belonging to an NGO. In addition to this incident, numerous state-owned vehicles have been damaged in previous road accidents and similar events, causing a cumulative financial burden.

These recurring incidents have reignited critical discussions about the need for insurance of "public property" to mitigate such financial losses. Experts emphasize that the lack of adequate insurance coverage for state-owned property leaves local governments ill-prepared for unforeseen events, compounding the strain on limited public resources. Addressing this issue is imperative, as it concerns the welfare of the public at large.

Global frameworks, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), advocate for public asset insurance as a cornerstone of disaster risk reduction and financial resilience. Such measures align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which emphasize protecting critical infrastructure and ensuring sustainability. Despite clear statutory requirements of the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, and the AJK Insurance Act, 2007, mandating the insurance of public property, compliance has remained inconsistent. This negligence continues to expose public assets to unnecessary risks, underscoring the urgency of action in this regard.



## Protest

KARACHI: People chant slogans during a protest to condemn the brutal killings in Parachinar, Kurram, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## In Attock, protest rally condemns 'barbaric' attack on Parachinar passengers



**Syed Raza Haider Naqvi**

ATTOCK: In a heinous act of terrorism, passengers traveling from Parachinar to Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram Agency were brutally attacked by terrorists. This tragic incident resulted in the martyrdom of 42 individuals, including women and innocent children, and left 25 others injured. This act of barbarity and savagery has written a new chapter in the history of cruelty. The peaceful protests of a peace-loving nation should not be mistaken for weakness.

These views were expressed during a protest rally organized by Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen, the Shia Ulema Council, and Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Fiqh-e-Jafaria. The rally took place after Friday prayers, beginning at Jamia Masjid Sadat in Kamalpur Syedan, Attock Cantt, and concluded at Kacheri Chowk, Attock.

On the occasion Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Member of Punjab Assembly Syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhari Advocate, Maulana Niaz Hussain, Maulana Imran Naqi, Asad Abbas Alvi, Niaz Bukhari, Cantonment Board Member Syed Mehdi Naqvi, Syed Mustajab Naqvi, Syed Waqar Naqvi, Agha Zafar Zafri, Maulana Niaz Amin Madbari, and Maulana Zafar Zafri were also present.

Participants of the rally carried placards condemning the targeting of innocent passengers in Parachinar. At Kacheri Chowk, speakers including Maulana Niaz Bukhari, Maulana Imran Naqi, Asad Abbas Alvi, Waqar Naqvi, and Maulana Zafar Zafri addressed the participants.

The speakers strongly condemned the tragic incident in Parachinar and expressed discontent with the government for delaying the news of the martyrs' tragedy, which was only broadcast on electronic and print media a day later. They emphasized that the teachings of the Imams prohibit shedding the blood of any innocent person, regardless of their religion or sect. However, the lack of accountability has emboldened terrorists.

They further stated that mere words of patience and traditional condolences cannot heal the wounds inflicted by this tragedy. Federal and provincial governments must take concrete action.

The speakers also expressed their grief, stating that every conscientious individual is shedding tears of blood over the Parachinar tragedy.

They criticized the authorities for consistently shelving investigations into such atrocities. The speakers reaffirmed that the lesson of martyrdom learned from Karbala is part of their heritage.

Finally, they called upon their allied political party to conduct a thorough investigation into the Parachinar incident and bring the truth to light immediately.

# Govt leaves no stone unturned in ensuring timely provision of passports to citizens: RPO

**Rafiullah Mandokhel**

ZHOB: Assistant Director Regional Passport Office (RPO) Zhub Yousuf Rasheed has said that a passport is an important travel document, which is provided to Pakistani citizens by the Directorate General of Immigration—the Ministry of Interior. The Zhub regional passport office in Zhub is delivering its services in a very efficient manner. Efforts are underway to ensure timely provision of passports to citizens.

He expressed these views while talking to this scribe here on Friday.



The Regional Passport Officer Yousuf Rasheed, who worked on the key positions at the passport office

in different parts of the country, including the federal capital Islamabad, further said that as per the

instructions and policy of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports (DGI&P), special arrangements have been made for the citizens, especially senior citizens and women, and obtaining a passport has been made easiest, providing a smooth and hassle-free environment to the applicants.

"In order to address concerns and resolve issues promptly, the government has introduced another category, 'Fast Track', in addition to 'Urgent', for the citizens traveling abroad in emergencies. The decision has been made obtaining a passport," he added.

# Coastal communities in crisis, Sujawal fishermen narrate their plight

**Kamran Khamiso Khawaja**

SUJAWAL: The fishing communities along the coastline of Sujawal, Thatta, and Badin districts are facing numerous challenges, despite claims of development in the region. Fishermen from various villages in Taluka Jati, Sujawal, expressed frustration over the indifferent attitude of government authorities and civil society towards their plight.

They pointed out that substantial aid and funding for fishermen communities are being received by government departments and NGOs, but none of these organizations have taken concrete steps to improve the lives of fisher folk.

The coastal areas of Sujawal and Thatta have suffered significantly

due to natural disasters, including the 1999 cyclone, 2003 heavy rains, and 2010 flash floods. The region continues to bear the harsh consequences of climate change, with no meaningful rehabilitation efforts by the government.

While acknowledging the efforts of the Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum and its founder, the late Syed Muhammad Ali Shah, in raising awareness among fishermen, the coastal inhabitants emphasized that these efforts alone are insufficient to bring about meaningful change for the marginalized community.

Wali Muhammad Temro, a local activist, said that several lakes of fresh water had been destroyed in the wake of persistent natural disasters, mainly

heavy rains and water scarcity that led to shrinking livelihood opportunities for the fishermen.

"The famous natural lakes of the past – Chaubhati, Til, Chann Bhelo, Karr, Kalkaan Channi and many others – vanished in the sea and today there is no sign of their existence"; He said and added that the coastal areas possess a large number of expert fishermen who spent majority of their time fishing in high seas.

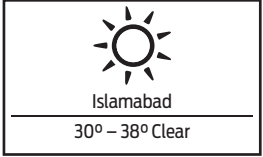
Pir Muhammad Malah believed that overfishing and destruction of fish species had been a long standing challenge for fishermen during the past two decades.

Nawaz Sheikh, a senior columnist and researcher, said that water scarcity in the Indus River and sea intrusion

compelled thousands of fishermen families in Keti Bunder, Jati Shah Bunder and Kharochan to abandon their ancestral job of fishing and resort to some other work to make ends meet.

Haji Zahid Ishaque Somro a social activist and writer deplored the scheme of six canals and called it a devastating Plan for the fisher folk of Sindh. He further said that the scheme of 6 canals would exacerbate water shortage in the coastal region.

Noor Muhammad Themore, Ghani Malah and Ibrahim Dandaid said that the ecology of the coastal areas was also at stake and the government as well as civil society should take measures for the preservation and rehabilitation of coastal ecology.



Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES  
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:20 am
Zohr	11:54 am
Asr	3:23 pm
Maghrib	5:01 pm
Isha	6:28 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224

PML-N-  
Rawalpindi  
condemns  
terrorism:  
Tahseen Fawad



Rawalpindi

Pakistan Muslim League-N Rawalpindi City Senior Vice President and President of National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony, Rawalpindi District Begum Tahseen Fawad said that we strongly condemn terrorism in our beloved homeland. Terrorists are enemies of the country and nation, who have no connection with humanity, Pakistan and Islam.

In her address, Pakistan Muslim League-N Rawalpindi City Senior Vice President and President of National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony, Rawalpindi District Ms. Tahseen Fawad said that the entire nation is united against the eradication of terrorism, which stands by our brave security forces. She said that terrorists will never be allowed to sabotage the country's development and peace. The enemy wants to achieve its goals by dividing Muslims into different units. The people of country will have to create unity and consensus in their ranks. Ms. Tahseen Fawad further said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz stands like a leaden wall against enemy elements. The party's top leadership and the Pakistani armed forces will continue the fight until terrorism is eradicated.

# ISSI hosts Roundtable on 'Pakistan-U.S. Relations' with CSIS delegation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a Roundtable Discussion on "Pakistan-U.S. Relations," with delegation from Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), comprising Senior Vice President Daniel Runde and Senior Associate Ambassador Robin Raphael. The event was attended by practitioners, academics, think-tank experts, and researchers. In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the significance of CSIS as a renowned U.S. think-tank, particularly in shaping the discourse and influencing U.S. policy. He noted that the timing of the visit was crucial, as it coincided with the conclusion of the U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections and the time of Cabinet formation before the new Administration takes office in January 2025.

With global attention focussed on what Trump 2.0 would mean for America and the rest of the world, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood dilated on the historically cyclical pattern of Pakistan-U.S. relations — alternating between engagement and estrangement. He emphasized the need for long-term sustainability and stability, including through efforts to broaden the relationship's scope that would benefit both nations. He also highlighted the vital importance of economic relations with the U.S. for Pakistan, suggesting that besides the traditional areas of bilateral trade and investment attention should be focused on new areas of cooperation such as energy, IT, and climate change. Participants also identified various areas for enhanced bilateral collaboration — including trade, IT, education, energy cooperation, agriculture, water management, health, and climate change. The dialogue reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to pursuing multi-dimensional foreign policy, with due importance



accorded to a stable and cooperative relationship with the U.S.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, table by presenting the Institute's souvenirs to the guest speakers.

## Welcome

ISLAMABAD: A view of the National flags of the Pakistan and Belarus hanging on the poles along the Constitution Avenue ahead of 3 days visit of President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko to Pakistan from 25-27 November.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## A four-day national training workshop on 'Art of Parenting' concluded

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The comprehensively articulated and concerted efforts of character-building of kids initiated from the platform of Allama Iqbal Open University will soon transform Pakistani society into a peaceful abode for the countrymen, said Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, while addressing the closing ceremony of the four-day workshop on "The Art of Parenting" at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU). He said that nations with a passion and zeal for progress among their youth are destined for success. Rana Mashhood congratulated AIU's Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, for organizing the workshop which aimed to prevent children from falling into wrongdoings and to guide them toward a virtuous life. He said that the master trainers of the workshop represent the vision of Pakistan for which Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah struggled, Allama Iqbal envisioned, and the elders of the nation sacrificed. Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Planning and Development, Wajih Akram, addressed the ceremony as the guest of honor. She remarked that



development does not come from wealth but from raising children to become responsible citizens. During the event, a signing ceremony was also held between AIU and the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) to collaborate on efforts to promote peace in the country. On behalf of the university, the agreement was signed by the Director of the Department of International Affairs, Dr. Zahid Majeed, while NACTA was represented by its Director General, Dr. Khalid Chauhan. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Khalid Chauhan highlighted their focus on human development. He mentioned that creating awareness among the new generation to counter extremist ideolo-

gies and mindsets faces challenges like globalization and social media. Senior Professor of AIU's Faculty of Science, Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad, stated that AIU has always been at the forefront of advancing the educational landscape. He shared that the master trainers of this workshop have been equipped with essential skills to train children effectively. Dr. Muhammad Athar Hussain noted that the workshop comprised a total of 24 sessions, with six sessions conducted daily. A total of 75 master trainers were trained, who will now work within the community to promote harmony, brotherhood, and love. At the conclusion of the ceremony, certificates were distributed among the master trainers of the workshop.

## Bakhtawari family pay visit to Quaid's Mausoleum



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zafar Bakhtawari, member of the Board of Governors of the Ideology of Pakistan Institute, Zahid Bakhtawari, health advisor to the Punjab government, and Abid Bakhtawari, director of the D. Watson Group, along with their families, paid a visit to the Quaid's Mausoleum in Karachi. They prayed for the elevation of the soul of Quaid-e-Azam and for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. During the visit to the mausoleum, the Pakistan Air Force contingent stationed there presented them with a salute, which further enhanced the grandeur of this memorable moment. On this occasion, the Bakhtawari family praised the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam and reaffirmed their commitment to conveying his message to the younger generation. Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Bakhtawari, and Abid Bakhtawari's father, Ghulam Nabi Bakhtawari, was a gold medalist of the Pakistan Movement. He received this gold medal from the Pakistan Movement Workers and the Ideology of Pakistan Trust. Speaking during the visit to the mausoleum, Zafar Bakhtawari stated that Quaid-e-Azam's vision is still a source of guidance for us and that we must work for Pakistan's development in the light of his principles and ideologies. He said that the nation must understand and practice the power of unity, faith, and discipline. "Quaid-e-Azam's dream of a free, self-governing, and prosperous Pakistan remains a great source of guidance for us. We must serve our country by following his ideologies and principles so that we can turn his dream into reality." He further stated that the secret to Pakistan's development lies in the underlying principles of faith, unity, and discipline, which should reside in the hearts of every Pakistani. Zahid Bakhtawari and Abid Bakhtawari also paid tribute to the personality and services of the Quaid. Zahid Bakhtawari said, "It was the guidance of the Quaid that led us to freedom, and thanks to his vision, we obtained our country. Today, we must walk the paths shown by this great leader to propel Pakistan further along the path of development."

## 10Pearls launches Pakistan's first AI-enhanced virtual internship



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: 10Pearls has launched 10Pearls, Shine, Pakistan's first fully remote, AI-powered internship program for 8 weeks with a multi-tiered curriculum encompassing both technical and soft skills. 10Pearls' unique internship offers students the chance to learn in-demand technical and leadership skills from anywhere within the country, preparing them with a strong foundation for a future career in technology. Students are assigned dedicated technical mentors who guide them through hands-on projects based on their chosen domain. The virtual edition received an overwhelming response, with over 10,000 students registering. Through a rigorous selection process, 100 top-tier students were chosen across two dynamic cohorts, empowering them to grow and excel in the tech industry. Drawing participants from top universities, including LUMS, IBA, and FAST, brings together Pakistan's brightest minds. It is a fantastic opportunity for students to learn and grow their professional network, form communities and build lasting connections that will help them throughout their careers. 10Pearls Shine "My experience with 10Pearls Shine has been truly amazing! The mentorship I received and the collaborative environment made this internship truly stand out. I have learned so much, formed valuable connections, and gained a deeper understanding of how the tech industry operates." — Izma Khan, Software Development Intern. The 10Pearls Shine program goes beyond the mastery of just technical skills. Students attend weekly sessions teaching them critical soft skills including time management, teamwork, critical-thinking, and more, preparing them not just to be software experts but also effective leaders.

## PHOs, PYCA, PIPS lead high-level parliamentary roundtable on industrial trans fats

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-level Parliamentary Roundtable on "Industrially Produced Trans-Fatty Acids (iTTFAs), Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHOs), and Human Health" was held at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS). The event, organized collaboratively by Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), and PIPS under the TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign, brought together parliamentarians, health experts, civil society representatives, and regulatory authorities to discuss urgent measures for protecting public health through robust regu-

lation of iTTFAs and a legislative ban on the production and distribution of PHOs. The session commenced with welcome remarks from Mr. Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, Executive Director of PIPS, who emphasized the institute's commitment to bridging civil society and parliamentarians for meaningful discourse. PYCA's Executive Director Ms. Areebah Shahid set the agenda, highlighting the alarming health risks associated with industrial trans fats and the critical need for regulatory and legislative action. Mr. Munawar Hussain, In-country Coordinator for the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), who

presented international best practices. "63 countries have already adopted the best practice policy to curb iTTFAs in food supply through regulatory or legislative measures. Pakistan remains in WHO's less restrictive list, which means some progress has been made but still need to ensure significant measures to eliminate iTTFAs from all foods. At the end of the first session, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Member of the National Assembly, acknowledged the issue and pledged her support. The second session shifted focus to strengthening Pakistan's regulatory framework. Civil society leaders, including Mr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director of the Center

for Peace and Development Initiatives, highlighted the need for strategic partnerships. Dr. Saba Amjad, CEO of Heartfile, pointed out the disparities in industrial practices. "Many industries already have the technology to produce trans fat-free foods and they are producing them for export. However, the items they sell inside Pakistan are laden with industrial trans fats," she stated. Dr. Noor Hassan Kakar, Director Technical at the Balochistan Food Authority, Mr. Ashraf Palari, Director, PSQCA, Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan, Member of the National Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr. Zulfiqar Bhatti, MNA, also spoke





# Sultanate of Oman marks fifty-fourth glorious National Day with milestone accomplishments

## Spokesman Report

**O**n the eighteenth of November of each year, the Sultanate of Oman celebrates its National Day, which is the fifty-fourth glorious National Day this year and marking milestone accomplishments in different areas.

The citizens of Oman and various state institutions have rendered an indispensable contribution to the continuous achievements in the path of the comprehensive development during the renewed renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, who has outlined a wise and sound vision that leads to progress and prosperity in all fields.

His Majesty's directives to all state institutions to continue improving the missions entrusted to them and to develop appropriate conditions to upgrade performance at all levels have contributed positively over the past five years to achieving success in various targets of Oman Vision 2040.

The government of His Majesty the Sultan has managed to improve the state's economic and financial performance and reduce debt and increase the gross domestic product; as



This has led to a remarkable improvement in the credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman by credit rating agencies, as Standard & Poor's raised its second credit rating for the Sultanate of Oman to "BBB-" from "BB+"

the Environmental Performance Index after being ranked 149th in the 2022 ranking.

In the education sector, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) achieved a remarkable progress in the 2025 World University

to its ranking in the 2022 index.

Meanwhile, the volume of foreign direct investments (FDI) in the Sultanate of Oman until the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 amounted to RO 25.05 billion, an increase of 21.6 percent compared to the same period in 2022, which amounted to RO 20.59 billion.

Regarding the government investments, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) is exerting sincere efforts to make the Sultanate of Oman an attractive investment destination and achieve sustainable economic development. The Authority's assets increased to RO 19.2 billion compared to about RO 17.9 billion at the end of 2022. It contributed to achieving profits exceeding RO 1.7 billion, and supporting the state's general budget with an amount of RO 800 million, and repaid RO 300 million of loans from its subsidiaries before their due date in 2023.

The OIA invests in 13 global funds, such as the Platinum Investment Fund and the Global Infrastructure Fund, in addition to direct investments in global companies, such as the American "Our Next Energy" Company and the Australian "Hysata".

One of the most important strategic projects that were inaugurated at the beginning of this year (2024) is the Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The refinery is the largest joint investment project between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait, integrated between the Omani OQ Group and Kuwait Petroleum International Company, with a capital exceeding RO 3.5 billion.

The Sultanate of Oman has witnessed the implementation of many projects in the field of renewable energy, most notably Manah Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 1,000 megawatts located in A'Dakhiliyah Governorate, Ibri Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 500 megawatts located in A'Dhahirah Governorate, Barka Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 500 megawatts located in South Al Batinah Governorate, the Amin Solar Power Plant Project with a production capacity of 100 megawatts located in Dhofar Governorate, Sohar Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 100 megawatts in North Al Batinah Governorate and Dhofar Wind Farm with a production capacity of 50 megawatts located in Dhofar Governorate.

The Sultanate of Oman is pressing ahead with boosting public and private sectors partnership, as the private sector is the key driver of the economic development and GDP growth in various sectors. The private sector also contributes remarkably to the economic diversification efforts, as it is a peer to the public sector in social development through the contribution of its institutions to education, health and social investment.

Oman Vision 2040 has placed the private sector in a position to lead a competitive national economy linked to the global

cities, of whom Omanis constitute 38 percent, while the total area of existing and new industrial cities reached 163,176,459 square meters.

The volume of cumulative investment in Sohar Free Zone, Salalah Free Zone and Khazaen Economic City amounted to RO 1.33 billion, covering several sectors, most notably the pharmaceuticals, food, petrochemicals, plastics, logistics, renewable energy sectors and others.

As far as the ports sector is concerned, the ports of Sohar, Salalah and Duqm, which enjoy a globally integrated infrastructure, continue to boost their operational efficiencies to become major berthing stations on various global shipping lines. During the first half of 2024, these ports maintained their operational volumes, handling about 1.8 million containers with a general cargo volume of up to 13 million tons. This figure reflects the ports' effective contribution to supporting the national economy and enabling Omani exports to reach international markets with a high competitive capacity.

The dry dock in the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (SEZAD), which is classified as the second largest dry dock for ship repair and maintenance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA Region), was able to implement 106 projects from about 70 countries around the world during the first half of 2024, thanks to its strategic location close to global shipping lines.

In the tourism sector, the Sultanate of Oman has achieved remarkable results in recent years, as the number of tourists increased by 36.7 percent to nearly 4 million tourists in 2023 compared to 2022. The number of visitors coming to the Sultanate of Oman by the end of the first half of 2024 amounted to about 2 million, an increase of 3.2 percent. Meanwhile, the number of hotel establishments stands at 895, including 34,378 hotel rooms.

various facilities and services. The progress made by Oman in the Sultanate of Oman in many global indicators reflects the determination of the country, as a government and people, to achieve its future aspirations to be among the advanced countries.

Among these indicators is the progress made by Oman in the media index for the second year in a row, ranking 40th globally after advancing 6 ranks in the Global Soft Power Index issued by the British Brand Finance Agency for 2024, compared to the 46th place in 2023.

It also advanced in other sub-indices, such as advancing 10 ranks in the Sustainable Future Index and 5 ranks in the Positive Impact Index.

The Sultanate of Oman also achieved qualitative progress in the Global Environmental Performance Index for 2024, advancing 99 places from the previous ranking (where it was ranked 149th globally), to occupy the 50th place globally in 2024 ranking, which was announced by the Yale Center for Environmental Policy and Law at Yale University in the United States.

The Royal vision of His Majesty seeks to uplift the human thought by furnishing the appropriate environment for establishing qualitative cultural and intellectual institutions. Laying the foundation stone of Oman Cultural Complex at the Airport Heights in Muscat Governorate represents a vivid example of this approach. Oman Cultural Complex seeks to promote cultural, literary, theatrical and research activities through the enhancement of relevant programmes. The move aims to expand the scope of engagement in highlighting Oman's cultural heritage and exploring the country's accomplishments. The complex includes three main buildings, namely the National Theatre, the National Library and the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA).



the state's public revenue at the end of August 2024 amounted to RO 8.106 billion, up by RO 183 million compared to RO 7.923 billion registered over the same period in 2023.

The state's general budget until August 2024 achieved a surplus of about RO 447 million, while the public debt portfolio declined by the end of June 2024 to RO 14.4 billion, compared to RO 20.8 billion in 2021.

The Sultanate of Oman also launched this year (2024) the

with a stable outlook. Further, Moody's revised its outlook for the Sultanate of Oman from a stable to a positive, confirming the credit rating at "Ba1".

These ratings affirm that the Sultanate of Oman is a safe investment environment, as it returned to this rating category after a decline of nearly 7 years (since 2017) due to the repercussions of the crises resulting from the slump in global oil prices and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the Sultanate of

Rankings to obtain the 362nd place, advancing 92 places from its previous classification.

The Sultanate of Oman also advanced 10 ranks in the Global Innovation Index issued by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), to obtain the 69th place globally out of 132 countries included in the index; as Oman achieved the highest performance in: (human capital, research, and infrastructure). Oman also advanced 9 ranks in innovation outputs and



social protection system by unifying and merging pension funds, and restructuring the schemes.

Oman succeeded in reducing the ratio of public debt to GDP from 62.3 percent in 2021 to 35 percent in mid-2024 and achieving a budget surplus for consecutive years, recording 2.7 percent and 2.2 percent in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Oman has also advanced in many international indicators, as it rose 39 ranks in the 2024 Index of Economic Freedom issued by the Heritage Foundation to obtain the 56th place globally after being ranked 95th globally in 2023. In the Entrepreneurship Index, it came in the 11th place globally, advancing 27 places from its ranking in 2022/2023. It also came in the 50th place globally in

came among the top 20 countries globally in 5 sub-indicators, including: second place globally in the percentage of government spending per student, in addition to the 16th place globally in the availability of information and communication technologies, and the 19th place globally in doing business, as it jumped 93 ranks in the growth rate of labour productivity compared



On the domestic front, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq continues his Royal meet-the-people tours to engage with citizens all over the Sultanate of Oman and listen to their visions and proposals about measures to promote the development of their respective governorates and upgrade economic and service projects.

In continuation of this Royal approach, His Majesty the Sultan held a meeting at the Royal Camp in Saih Al Mahasin in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate, with sheikhs and dignitaries of Musandam, some members of the Council of Oman and members of the Municipal Council and the businessmen community in the Governorate.

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## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
97,798.23	97,328.39	
Day's High	Day's Low	
99,623.03	97,471.11	
Index Value	Change	
34,190,274,257	+469.84	
Percentage	Time	
+0.48%	22 Nov, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,262.08	+112.81	
Percentage	Time	
+1.38%	22 Nov, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
44,296.51	+426.16	
Percentage	Time	
+0.97%	22 Nov, 4:20 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,283.85	+257.68	
Percentage	Time	
+0.68%	22 Nov, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180.25	182.50
Bahrain Dinar	731.05	739.05
Canadian Dollar	198.60	201.00
China Yuan	38.58	38.98
Danish Krone	39.58	39.98
Euro	288.60	291.35
Hong Kong Dollar	35.37	35.72
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.80	1.86
Kuwaiti Dinar	891.20	900.70
Malaysian Ringgit	62.5	63.10
New Zealand \$	163.14	165.14
Norwegians Krone	24.78	25.08
Omani Riyal	714.75	723.25
Qatari Riyal	75.62	76.32
Saudi Riyal	73.65	74.20
Singapore Dollar	206.27	208.27
Swedish Korona	25.82	26.12
Swiss Franc	311.45	314.25
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	346.75	350.25
US Dollar	277.30	278.80

# Jam Kamal Khan Reviews Quarterly Trade Figures, stresses execution of export-led growth strategy

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan (JK) chaired a high-level meeting to review Pakistan's quarterly trade figures, where he was briefed on the latest trends in international trade and strategies being devised to bolster exports.

During the meeting, Commerce officials provided a comprehensive overview of trade performance with key trading partners, highlighting emerging export destinations and newly introduced export items.

The briefing also covered practical suggestions to enhance market access and address technical barriers to trade, ensuring Pakistani products reach a broader global audience.

The impact of external factors, such as global economic fluctuations and geopolitical uncertainties, was also discussed. Strategies to mitigate these challenges and sustain export growth were presented for consideration.



Lauding the efforts of Commerce officers, Jam Kamal emphasized the central role of the Ministry of Commerce in advancing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision of an export-led growth strategy.

He stated, "The success of our economy depends on a strong export base. This demands serious commitment and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including provinces and relevant departments."

Jam reiterated the importance of executing the export-led growth strategy with seriousness, urging all sectors to work cohesively to unlock Pakistan's full trade potential. "We must act decisively to enhance our market share globally and ensure our exports become the driving force of economic development," he concluded.

The meeting underscored the need for a unified approach to overcoming trade barriers and achieving sustainable economic growth through exports.

## Difficulties

ISLAMABAD: Worker busy in closing a busy station with tent at Faizabad in the Federal Capital. Islamabad authorities have announced strict security plans for November 24 due to a planned PTI protest at D-Chowk. All entry and exit points to the city will be sealed, and transport services will remain shut.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Shell Pakistan celebrates young Pakistani entrepreneurs at the 11th Tameer Awards



**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Recently acquired by Wafi Energy, Shell Pakistan—one of the country's longest-standing multinational corporations—hosted the grand finale of the 11th Tameer Awards 2024. The event celebrated and honored enthusiastic and aspiring entrepreneurs of Pakistan.

The 11th edition of the Tameer Awards attracted over 400 applications, with 30 finalists selected across six categories. The event brought together a distinguished jury panel, comprising business leaders, industry professionals, and academic experts, who played a key role in evaluating the candidates. Following in-depth pitches to the respective jury members, the winners and runners-up in each category were chosen for their innovation and excellence.

The Chief Executive & Managing Director of Shell Pakistan Limited, Waqar Siddiqui, stated: "Each year, we continue to be inspired by the exceptional talent and creativity displayed by these young entrepreneurs. We take immense pride in supporting their journeys through our Tameer program. It is uplifting to witness the wealth of talent emerging within our country. We are confident that these bright minds will drive innovation, progress, and prosperity, paving the way for a brighter tomorrow for all."

## Dr. Sidhu meets Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ishaq Dar stressed that a robust competition framework is vital for economic growth, fostering innovation, and attracting both domestic and foreign investment.

In a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Dr. Kabir Sidhu, Chairman of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), briefed him on initiatives undertaken to enhance the effectiveness of the Commission in enforcing competition laws. These efforts focus on identifying cartels, market abuse and manipulation and the abuse of dominant position.

Mr. Ishaq Dar commended CCP's proactive approach in resolving long outstanding cases in the courts. Dar called on the Commission to intensify efforts against cartels and price manipulation, which harm consumers and distort markets. He assured CCP of the government's



continued support in ensuring transparency and fairness.

Dr. Sidhu apprised the Deputy Prime Minister of the establishment of a Market Intelligence Unit, designed to monitor market trends and swiftly identify

anti-competitive behaviours such as price manipulation, cartel formation, and other unfair practices. Since its inception last year, the unit has identified over 150 cases using advanced data analysis and media monitoring tools.

## New Study Reveals Solar Surge Costing Over PKR 200 Billion Impact on Grid-Dependent Consumers

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A new report, "The Distributed Divide - How Solar Expansion Affects Non-Adopting Consumers and Utility Economics" by Arzachel, reveals that non-solar consumers have borne a staggering burden of PKR 200 billion in FY 2023-24 due to the rapid expansion of solar energy adoption. This transition has caused an estimated tariff increase of PKR 2 per kWh for grid-dependent consumers, underscoring the financial burden and inequities stemming from the insufficiently managed expansion of solar adoption through



behind-the-meter systems and net metering. Without immediate regulatory intervention, the financial burden on non-solar consumers is projected to escalate further. For the current fiscal year, a 5% reduction in grid demand driven by solar integration is expected to shift additional

PKR 131 billion in costs annually to non-solar consumers, doubling to additional PKR 261 billion if grid demand reduces by 10%, according to the study.

To address these pressing challenges brought by the rapid and underregulated solar adoption, the report calls for

immediate regulatory reforms and targeted policies to ensure equitable cost distribution and grid stability. The report recommends transitioning from net metering to net billing or Feed-in Tariff (FIT) systems on lower rates and system marginal costs, introducing fixed grid access fees to reflect actual service costs, and establishing an ancillary services market to enhance grid stability. It also advocates revising the Distribution Code to manage bi-directional power flow and ensure energy equity through fair cost allocation, balancing renewable energy benefits with grid sustainability.

## S. M. Tanveer condemns Parachinar and Quetta incidents

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: S. M. Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief UBG-BMPP, has strongly condemned the heinous attack on passenger vehicles from Parachinar to Peshawar, resulting in precious loss of lives and injuries.

He said that these incidents are a stark reminder of the deteriorating security situation and the unfriendly business environment in Pakistan.

Patron-in-Chief UBG has also expressed deep concerns over the kidnapping of an 11-year-old student in the provincial



capital of Balochistan. He said the subsequent shutdown and protests have brought the Quetta city to a standstill, causing immense difficulties for the business community and residents alike.

## State Bank of Pakistan issue coin on Baba Guru Nanak Birth Anniversary



**Asim Tanveer**

ISLAMABAD: the important occasion of the 555th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the federal government is issuing a commemorative coin of Rs 55 denomination, which has the following metal composition, shape and features

The state of Pakistan is the heir to diverse religious identities. Baba Guru

Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of the Sikh tradition, is one of the greatest figures born in the land that is now part of Pakistan. Sikhism is a global religion with millions of followers worldwide, and its holiest sites are located in Pakistan.

This coin is being issued through exchange counters of all field offices of SBP Banking Services Corporation from November 22, 2024.

## Zong 4G Unveils Pakistan's First Locally Developed Large Language Model

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, a leader in digital innovation has developed Pakistan's first locally created Large Language Model (LLM), a breakthrough in the nation's telecom sector. As the only telecom operator in Pakistan to have developed an advanced AI-driven model in-house, Zong is set to transform digital interactions and elevate customer service standards, cementing its position as the technological leader in the industry.

Zong's proprietary LLM is meticulously designed for the unique linguistic, cultural, and contextual nuances of Pakistani users,

offering an AI-driven solution tailored specifically for the local market. This landmark initiative is part of Zong's ongoing commitment to usher in world-class digital experiences, responding to the growing demand for AI-powered solutions and empowering Pakistani customers with technology-driven interactions that are faster, more intuitive, and highly personalized. "Zong is leading the technology innovation by localizing and implementing latest technologies like AI to serve its 50 million subscribers and setting benchmarks for the industry," said Ali Waqas, Executive Director, Digital Technologies at Zong 4G.



## Group photo

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani along with Mr. Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, Senator from Balochistan visited National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) at NDMA Headquarters on Friday.



Photo: PID

## Sweden envoy calls on DPM Dar



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan, Alexandra Berg von Linde Friday called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed matters of mutual interests.

In the meeting, the deputy PM

welcomed the Ambassador and conveyed best wishes on her assignment.

He expressed appreciation for the positive trajectory in bilateral relations between Sweden and Pakistan.

He stressed on the importance of enhanced collaboration in trade, investment, education, and people-to-people exchanges.

## Azam Nazir Tarar calls on UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary Hamish Falconer

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law, Justice, and Human Rights, held a meeting with H. E. Hamish Falconer MP, the UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, representing the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in human rights, justice reforms, and addressing climate change challenges.

During the meeting, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar outlined Pakistan's progress in human rights, particularly emphasizing the National Action Plan on Human Rights, which provides a robust framework for policy reforms and the implementation of international conventions.

He highlighted the critical role of independent commissions, such as the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), in safeguarding human rights and advancing gender equality across Pakistan.

The Minister discussed steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to prevent the misuse of laws, including the Blasphemy Law, and to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including minorities. He referenced the recently developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) aimed at ensuring justice and curbing exploitation. These SOPs emphasize forensic investigations, credible witness protection mechanisms, and ensuring impartiality in cases of alleged violations.

Furthermore, the meeting addressed the effective protec-



tion of minority rights under Articles 20-36 of the Constitution of Pakistan. The Minister detailed government initiatives, such as investigating incidents of violence against minorities and fostering inter-faith harmony. He also highlighted the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM), a statutory body working to promote minority rights and ensure their participation in nation-

building.

On climate change, the Minister briefed the UK delegation about the recent constitutional amendment that recognizes the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a fundamental right. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to combating climate change by integrating environmental protection into its governance framework and ensuring adherence to global

climate commitments.

The Minister underlined the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing countries like Pakistan and stressed the need for international cooperation to address the shared challenge effectively.

H. E. Hamish Falconer commended Pakistan's proactive measures to improve human rights and justice systems and welcomed the constitutional recognition of climate action as a fundamental right. He assured the UK's continued support in advancing these priorities, particularly through technical assistance and collaborative programs aimed at achieving global human rights and environmental goals.

The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their shared commitment to fostering mutual cooperation for a more inclusive and equitable society.

## Death toll in Kurram vehicle firing incident reaches 45

## Monitoring Desk

KURRAM: The death toll in Lower Kurram attack reached 45, where a passenger van came under firing in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa merged district, ARY News reported.

As per details, the incident occurred in Lower Kurram yesterday where vehicles coming to and from Peshawar and Kurram came under fire resulting in the death of 38 on the spot and several injured in critical condition initially.

The spokesperson of DPO Kurram stated that the Deputy Commissioner and DPO have reached the spot of incident. The SHO Yar Muhammad said the injured were rushed to a nearby hospital.

Sources said that over 37 injured are currently under treatment in several hospitals of the district whereas the dead bodies have been moved to Parachinar for funeral.



Moreover, the Toori tribe has announced a three-day mourning in the honour of yesterday attack's martyrs.

Last month, at least 11 people lost their lives after clashes erupted between two tribes in Upper Kurram

district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the 11 dead

also include children and women whereas six others also sustained injuries.

Earlier, at least seven people dead in a firing incident over a land dispute in Lower Kurram district.

The incident occurred in the lower Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, however, the police are making efforts for a ceasefire between the two groups.

In a separate development, the security forces gunned down seven khawarij during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in Kurram district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

The military's media wing in a statement said that the killed terrorists were actively involved in numerous attacks against security forces and innocent civilians.

It added that five khawarij were also injured in the IBO.

## Bushra Bibi's non-bailable arrest warrants issued in £190m case

## City Desk

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court in Rawalpindi issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi in £190 million case.

As per details, the case was heard by accountability court judge Nasir Javed Rana, and issued Bushra Bibi's non-bailable arrest warrants.

Former prime minister Imran Khan was also presented before the court in £190 million case.

It is important to mention here that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has already granted bail to PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA) settlement reference.

A two-member bench, comprising IHC CJ Aamer Farooq and Justice

Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, reserved the verdict after the completion of arguments.

In its short order, the IHC ordered the authorities to release the PTI founder against the surety bond of Rs1 million.

In a separate development yesterday, Bushra Bibi issued a video message regarding the party's Nov 24 protest call, urging PTI workers and supporters

to participate in the much-hyped Nov 24 protest dubbed as 'final or do-or-die' against the government.

She claimed that propaganda began against them following their visit to Madinah in Saudi Arabia and the subsequent calls.

The PTI founder's wife went on to add the calls were followed by her character assassination and Khan being called a Jewish agent.

## Bushra Bibi's statement taken out of context, says Imran Khan

## City Desk

RAWALPINDI: "Bushra Bibi's statement was deliberately taken out of context to draw our brotherly country KSA into a needless controversy," Khan was quoted as saying in a statement on his X account. "She didn't mention Saudi Arabia at all."

His clarification comes a day after Bibi in a video message on Thursday alleged that after Khan visited Medina barefoot as the prime minister, he began receiving calls from former army chief General

(ret'd) General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

The former first lady alleged that Bajwa was informed about attempts to dismantle the system of Sharia, raising concerns about Khan's advocacy for Islamic law.

The former army chief denied the ex-first lady's claims in conversation with journalist Mohammad Malik. Bajwa stated that no such calls were received upon "Khan's return from Saudi Arabia". He said that Bibi "is mistaken and that he did not receive any communications" regarding the matter.

## Bullish trend continues at PSX as benchmark index closes at 97,798.23 points

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) experienced a significant surge on Friday, with the benchmark KSE-100 index closing at 97,798.23 points after gaining 469.84 points.

It climbed by over 2,000 points during the intraday, reaching an intraday high of 99,000 points.

This marks a continuation of the market's record-breaking performance.

The recent upswing is attributed to a positive macroeconomic outlook and increased liquidity from mutual

funds, banks, and insurance companies, which has fostered a favorable environment for investors.

Analysts note that rising foreign exchange reserves and speculation regarding government economic

reforms and privatization efforts have also contributed to the market's robust performance.

