



SOWAR MUHAMMAD HUSSAIN (SHAHEED)
Nishan-e-Haider
10 December, 1971 (Shakargah Sector)

53rd martyrdom anniversary of Sowar Muhammad Hussain Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider

The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Service Chiefs, and the Armed Forces of Pakistan solemnly observe the 53rd martyrdom anniversary of Sowar Muhammad Hussain Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, with profound reverence and gratitude.



With Assad gone, new era starts in Syria as the world watches

Damascus stirred back to life on Monday at the start of a hopeful but uncertain era after rebels seized the Syrian capital and President Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia, following 13 years of civil war and more than 50 years of his family's brutal rule. Assad's Prime Minister, Mohammed Jalali, told Al Arabiya TV he had agreed to hand power to the Salvation Government, an administration based in a small pocket of rebel-held territory in northwest Syria.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on law and order situation on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM directs swift action against agitators, vows to foil attempts of sabotaging economy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the relevant authorities to take swift actions against those involved in recent unrest, vandalism and chaos and damaging both public and private properties in Islamabad. However, he directed to make it sure that no innocent and law-abiding citizen was arrested

during the crackdown against those spreading chaos. Chairing a review meeting on law-and-order situation, the prime minister stressed that the government will not allow anyone to disrupt the stability of the rapidly improving economy through chaos. PM Shehbaz Sharif also ordered to make the process of identifying those inciting disorder more effective and to

gather solid evidence against them. "Provide all necessary resources to the task force formed to take action against such elements," he said. The prime minister also instructed to bring the Federal Prosecution Service under the Ministry of Law. He also asked the relevant authorities to complete the Islamabad Jail construction at

the earliest and ensure immediate release of funds for this purpose. During the meeting, it was informed that the scope of the Islamabad Safe City project was being expanded besides increasing the number of Safe City cameras. The meeting was also informed that the Islamabad Jail building will be completed by March next year.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Information Minister Attaulah Tarar, Advisor to PM Rana Sanaullah, Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Coordinator to PM Rana Ihsan Afzal and other high officials.

PM for ensuring safe evacuation of Pakistanis from Syria



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the authorities concerned to formulate an action plan for the safe evacuation of Pakistanis, wishing to return from Syria, via neighboring countries as soon as possible. The prime minister was chairing a meeting held here to review the current situation of Syria and safe evacuation of Pakistanis present in that country.

purpose. He also directed the Pakistan Embassy in Damascus to establish an information desk and a helpline to facilitate the Pakistanis. Until the security situation improves, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Crisis Management Unit and information desks at Pakistani embassies in Syria and its neighboring countries should remain operational round-the-clock, the prime minister directed.

He said: "All possible steps should be taken to ensure the safe evacuation of Pakistanis from Syria." "The safety of Pakistanis' lives and property in Syria is our top priority," the prime minister said while instructing to utilize all available resources for this

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, and senior officials from relevant departments.

Security forces target two more Khwarij in Dera Ismail Khan

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 09 December 2024, Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District on reported presence of khwarij. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location, as a result of which, two Khwarij were sent to hell, while one Kharji was apprehended in injured condition. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from these Khwarij, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against



the security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Barrister Danyal, Hanif Abbasi jointly prompt action to address Rawalpindi City's issues

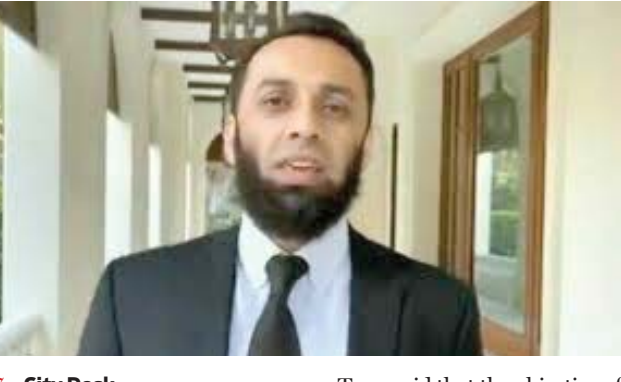


City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, and Member of National Assembly Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Monday jointly visited the WASA Rawalpindi headquarters to address urgent issues regarding the city's water supply. The meeting addressed the challenges in Rawalpindi, particularly in the NA-57 and NA-56 constituencies. The WASA team outlined their current efforts in water resource management, including rainwater harvesting projects, and suggested sustainable solutions for managing ground-

water. Barrister Danyal lauded WASA's efforts and emphasized the need for continued collaboration on ground-water investigations, water quality assessments, and staff training. WASA reiterated its commitment to resolving the water supply issues in the region. In a separate initiative, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, together with the City Traffic Police Rawalpindi and MNA Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, inaugurated a new Driving License Center on Rawal Road, Rawalpindi. This new facility aims to address the growing demand for driving licenses and provide much-needed convenience to the residents of Rawalpindi city.

Tarar for finding out solution of seminaries registration issue, acceptable to all stakeholders



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaulah Tarar said on Monday that extensive consultations were being done to find out a solution to seminaries registration issue, acceptable to all stakeholders. Delivering speech at Conference on Madrassa Registration and Reforms, he said that input of Ulama and Mashaikh regarding the registration and Madrassa reforms was important. The minister said a few years back, a system was devised after extensive consultations to bring religious seminaries into the mainstream.

Tarar said that the objective of that legislation was to bring seminaries into national mainstream, besides eradicating some negative perceptions in this regard. The most important aspect of that system was to ensure that the students graduated from seminaries do not face any discrimination and get equal opportunities, he added. "Registration of 18,000 Madrasahs is the result of the efforts of the Department of Religious Education", he said adding that efforts of the Director General of Religious Education were worth appreciation. He also thanked the role of Ulama and Mashaikh for their cooperation in this regard.

JUI-F rejects government's draft bill on religious schools



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman has rejected the draft of a government bill concerning religious schools (madrassahs), stating that the aim was not to confront the state but rather to facilitate the registration of seminaries. "Scholars are being pitted against each other in this matter," he told reporters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Charsadda on Monday. A meeting regarding the registration and reforms of madrassahs is taking place today in Islamabad, attended by prominent scholars from across Pakistan's various schools of thought. It aims to gather opinions from scholars regarding the registration and reforms of madrasahs. Fazl emphasized that the Islamabad meeting was a "conspiracy to divide scholars." The religio-political considered all scholars as part of their community and were committed to fighting for the rights of religious schools, representing all madrasahs and scholars, he added. Fazl pledged that his party would take every possible measure to safeguard religious schools and support their rights.

President, PM commend security forces for successful operation against Khawarij in DI Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday commended the security forces for successful operation against Khawarij terrorists in Kulachi area of Dera Ismail Khan. In separate statements, the president and the prime minister paid tribute to the officers and personnel of the security forces

for killing two Khawarij and arresting another during the operation. They expressed the resolve to continue operations until elimination of terrorism in the country. The entire nation stands behind its security forces in this war against terrorism, they added.



Faisalabad RPO issues orders for foolproof security of district and tehsil courts

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: RPO Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan has issued orders to establish foolproof security for courts across the region. Negligence in the security of district and tehsil courts will not be tolerated (RPO)

Taking strict notice of the murder in the Faisalabad district court, Regional Police Officer Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan has issued orders to the four district superintendents to ensure foolproof security of tehsil and district courts.

Regional Police Officer Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan while issuing orders said that the

four district heads should personally review the security arrangements inside and around the tehsil and district courts and prepare a systematic and comprehensive security plan after reviewing the shortcomings in them. In this regard, coordination with the concerned bar members and esteemed judges should be further organized.

Monitoring with CCTV cameras should be ensured at the entrance and exit points of the courts. Body searches should be carried out by ensuring the presence of walk-through gates and metal detectors. Elite and Dolphin forces should be deployed at appropriate locations so that they can immediately take action



in case of any untoward incident and maintain law and order. Additional police personnel should also be deployed in the courts so that any unusual situation can be immediately controlled. Briefing and debriefing

should be made necessary for the officers and employees deployed on security duty. The security of the district courts should be re-audited to remove the shortcomings and to anticipate the security threats and prevent them. The aim of this step is to improve the law and order situation in the courts and avoid any kind of unpleasant incident.

Regional Police Officer Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan issued orders that the security of the esteemed judges, bar members, civilians and accused appearing in various cases present in the tehsil and district courts should be ensured at all costs and no negligence will be tolerated in this regard.

Violation

LAHORE: Visitors arriving on mountain at Lahore Zoo in the Provincial Capital, as Zoo administration displayed a board banned on mountain due to maintenance work.



Photo: Online

FCCI will make concerted efforts in collaboration for beautification of city

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: FCCI will make concerted efforts in collaboration with concerned government departments for the beautification of Faisalabad and in this connection, an eight-member committee has been constituted, said Mr. Rehan Naseem Bharara, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). Addressing the concluding session of a joint meeting of FCCI Standing Committees on Traffic and Municipal Corporation, he said that this 8-member committee will be consistent of Mr. Qaisar Shams Gucha, Senior Vice President FCCI in addition to three members from traders and two each from traffic police and Faisalabad Municipal Corporation. He said that Faisalabad is the well-planned city of Pakistan but encroachments and traffic hazards have tarnished its beauty. He said that FCCI members are very cooperative but government departments must take them into confidence before taking any harsh steps. He said that the municipal corporation must regulate



the squatters and vendors to ensure smooth flow of traffic on city roads. He said that as SVP a few years ago, he had got the approval of canal road and service road from the then Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "Thousands of people are daily using these roads", he said and added that these are also facing traffic jams due to mismanagement and ignorance of the road users.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Farhan Aslam appreciated the efforts of FCCI to resolve issues of traffic and

encroachments in close collaboration with the MCF and traffic police. SVP Qaisar Shams Gucha appreciated the role of FCCI Standing Committees and assured that the business community would collaborate with concerned departments to make it a liveable city. Former SVP Dr. Sajjad Arshad, VP Haji Aslam Bhalli, Haji Abid, Executive member Ayub Aslam Manj, Muhammad Shehbaz, Waheed Khaliq Ramay, Shahid Malik, Mian Muhammad Anwaar, Aftab Butt, Rana

Ikramullah and other business leaders pointed out civic problems and vowed to cooperate with the traffic police and MCF. Deputy Chief Office Madam Azmat Firdous pointed out hurdles in the removal of encroachment and said that with the cooperation of the business community, the city could be made neat and clean and encroachment free. Later Rana Sikandar Azam offered vote of thanks while President Rehan Naseem Bharara presented FCCI shields to CO MCF and CTO Faisalabad.

3rd International Conference inaugurated at Women University Multan

Quaratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: The third International Conference organized by the Department of English at Women University Multan has commenced. According to the spokesperson, the annual three-day international conference, hosted by the Department of English, is titled "Linguistics and Multidisciplinary Research 2024" this year.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, including Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education Department Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry, Member of Provincial Assembly Shazia Hayat, and Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Kalsoom Paracha. The focal person of the confer-



ence was Chairperson of the English Department, Professor Dr. Maimoona Khan.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Kalsoom Paracha emphasized the need to educate the youth in accordance with the demands of the modern era rather

than the traditional system of education. She highlighted the Department of English's significant role in promoting regional and other languages. She also stated that Women University Multan has been actively striving to promote language, literature, and cultural activities for several years.

The Guest of Honor, Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education Department, Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry, emphasized that technological innovations, particularly AI, have significantly impacted all aspects of society. Integrating AI into education is crucial for building a sustainable future. He stated that teaching is more of a skill than mere knowledge, and mastering this skill makes educators true nation-builders.

Conference focal person Professor Dr. Maimoona Khan and Professor Dr. Mubeena Talat emphasized that linguistics is a tool, while Dr. Afzal, Dr. Asim Mahmood, Dr. Murtaza Mehdi, and other speakers also addressed the audience.

DC Hyderabad urges citizens to raise their voices against corruption



Qayyum Sarohi

HYDERABAD: "We must raise our voices against corruption," says Hyderabad Deputy Commissioner

A rally was organized from the Deputy Commissioner's Office Hyderabad to the Postmaster Office in observance of International Anti-Corruption Day. Addressing the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to raise voices against corruption and strive for its eradication from all aspects of life.

The rally was attended by Additional Commissioner-I Abdul Khaliq Baloch, alongside members of various government departments and civil society, who pledged their commitment to eliminating corruption.

Bilawal Bhutto fighting for human rights: Asia Gull

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Bilawal Bhutto is fighting for Pakistani People and human rights. The PPP is a party that stands for democracy, human rights and equality. Under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the mission of the Leader of the People, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and the Shaheed of Democracy, Benazir Bhutto, will continue. These views were expressed by District Vice President PLF Multan Asia Gull



Advocate in her message on the occasion of World Human Rights Day. She said that Bilawal Bhutto is fighting for human rights. The martyrs of the PPP sacrificed their lives for basic human rights. Under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the mission of the Leader of the People, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and the Shaheed of Democracy, Benazir Bhutto, will continue. The PPP is trying to provide basic human rights to farmers, workers and laborers. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will become the Prime Minister and provide them with basic human rights, which is a valuable asset of the working class and the labor party of Pakistan. She said that Israel wants to occupy Palestine.

Our Moral Duty to Serve Man. Qari Hafiz Ghulam Rasool

Zafar Chishti



TOBA TEK SINGH: Qari Hafiz Ghulam Rasool Sarwari, Qadri, Chishti from Kamalia, Talking to Our Correspondent said that it is our moral duty to serve man because the peace that comes from serving man is indescribable. Our religion also allows that if a person is in trouble, he should be helped. He further said that Muslim brothers should immediately help someone who is in trouble. Helping someone does not reduce a person's honor, but increases his honor in the eyes of man and in the eyes of Allah. Qari Hafiz Ghulam Rasool said that nowadays every human being is suffering from problems and this is the reason why we have left the path of Allah and are adopting the customs created by the world. I want to give a message to all my brothers that, Our God, let us live our lives in the way that our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us, that is the best Method.

Action against sellers of adulterated and non-standard food items

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of DG Punjab Food Authority Muhammad Asim Javid, action is being taken against the sellers of adulterated and non-standard food items. According to the details, the checking of various dairy units, sweets and bakers and other food businesses in Supervision by Deputy Director (Operations) Adnan Haider of Food Safety Team Toba Tek Singh. Due to serious violation of rules and regulations, 04 units were sealed and production was stopped until rectification. Apart from this, an FIR was also registered against 1 unit for adulteration of dairy items.



Fines of 83,000 were also imposed on various food points for violation of hygiene norms and other reasons. Substandard and adulterated food items were also destroyed on the spot. The cordon against counterfeiting and counterfeiting mafia has been tightened. Adnan Haider said that Food safety teams are working day and night to provide safe and quality food to the people.

HEC, PTA partner to promote effective social media practices among youth

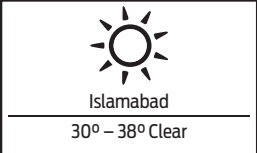
ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday to enhance collaboration in various areas including joint R&D activities, curriculum development for ICT subjects, academia-industry linkages, capacity building and curbing the misuse of media and increasing awareness regarding its effective use in the higher education sector.

The ceremony was attended by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman PTA Maj. Gen. (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, Executive Director HEC Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum and other officials from both sides.

The MoU was signed by Director Admin HEC Tariq Iqbal and Director Strategy & Development PTA Ikram Ul Haq, said a press release.

In the rapidly evolving digital era, where technology drives transformation, this collaboration symbolizes our shared vision to harness technology for advancing education, research, and innovation across the nation.

Under the MoU, both sides will make progressive efforts to curb the misuse of social media by the young generation due to lack of awareness, leading to spread of disinformation, hate, and violence in society. In addition to that, efforts will be made to equip youth with the tools and opportunities to thrive and to train them in the constructive use of social media and modern internet technologies.



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:32 am
Zohr	12:00 pm
Asr	3:22 pm
Maghrib	5:00 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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	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
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

Former PPP Senator Palijo blasts 6 canal scheme as step-mother' for Sindh

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: Former PPP Senator Sassui Palijo has termed the 6 Canal scheme hazardous to the Indus River and the people of Sindh. She asked members of the Sindh Assembly and the National Assembly to bring a resolution against the faulty scheme.

Ms. Palijo shared her views with local reporters at Village Pir Bux Brohi after offering condolences to senior journalist Mahboob Brohi on the demise of his father. The ongoing issue of the six canals has united the people of Sindh, she mentioned, adding that all political parties, including the ruling party, should play their part in halting the 6 canal scheme.

Regarding the 1991 water accord, Ms. Palijo stated that the Federal Government failed to ensure its implementation, and the controversial six canal plan would render Sindh barren. "A movement similar to the Kalabagh Dam movement is needed," she emphasized.

Ms. Palijo warned the Federal Government and IRSA to stop their step-motherly treatment of Sindh and its people. "The Larr region of Sindh holds significant importance, and the scheme would inflict huge environmental losses," she said, adding that all stakeholders should raise their voices for Sindh's riparian rights.



Negligence

ISLAMABAD: Students travelling in dangerous passion on pickup van on the way at a road which may cause any incident any time as needs to attention for concern authority, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab Govt recognizes the role of private educational institutions

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The government recognizes the role of private educational institutions. Education and health are the top priorities of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Steps are being taken to bring out-of-school children to schools.



Private educational institutions should play a role in bringing out-of-school children to schools. The problems of private schools will be resolved on a priority basis.

These views were expressed by Vice President PML-N Punjab, Member National Assembly and Chairman District Coordination Committee Rawalpindi Engineer Qamar-ul-Islam Raja while addressing a dinner organized by All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, District Rawalpindi, at the Rawalpindi. Qamar-ul-Islam Raja said that the role of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association in promoting education and raising the quality of education in the country is commendable. He said that private educational institutions will continue to play an exemplary role in the development of the country for the promotion of knowledge and raising the standard of education. CEO Education Rawalpindi Amanullah Khan assured to resolve the registration issues of private educational institutions without delay.

Also addressed by Central President Dr. Abrar Hussain, Ashraf Hiraj, Ilyas Kayani, Irfan Muzaffar Kayani, Malik Hafeez-ur-Rehman. The leaders informed the guests about the aims, objectives and performance of APPSCA. On this occasion, Information Secretary PML-N Rawalpindi Division Qais Qayyum Malik, General Secretary PPI0 Nazia Ilyas Kayani, District President of All Pakistan Clerks Association Raja Aftab, Patron-in-Chief of APSC Chakwal and Candidate Member BOG Colleges Wing Federal Board Professor Mehr Khan Mughal, Rana Sohail, Malik Din Muhammad, Raja Javed Iqbal, Muhammad Ibrahim, Muhammad Usman, Sardar Gul Zubair, Atif Kayani, Israr Shah, Colonel Atiq-ur-Rehman, Major Tariq Latif, Malik Irfan, Chaudhry Babar, Chaudhry Zahid Hussain, Aamir Ali, Abdul Qudus, Muhammad Waqas, Atif Kayani, Waqar Satti Qaiser Kayani, Figar Niaz, Muhammad Asif, Chaudhry Ifkhar, Imran Durrani, Chaudhry Ikram, Professor Ahsan Mahmood, Shaukat Shahzad, Chaudhry Ikram, Chaudhry Tasleem, Rashid Shah, Farrukh Dar, Shakoor Muhammad Idrees, Chishti, Muhammad Owais, Faisal Salahuddin, Bilal Kayani Advocate, Sheikh Umar, Ashraf Ali, Haji Naeem, Zafar Saeed, Munir Khan, Muhammad Owais, and district office bearers and executive members of UPSC were present in large numbers. Finally, Raja Ilyas Kayani, President of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association Punjab, presented a charter of demand to Member National Assembly Engineer Qamarul Islam Raja.

PTI question why Faisal Vawda refuses to name those who threaten Imran Khan's life

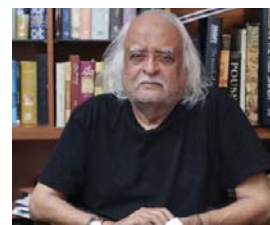
Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK 9TH DEC ATTOCK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Punjab, Syed Ijaz Hussain Bukhari Advocate, has questioned why Senator Faisal Vawda does not name those individuals who pose a serious threat to the life of PTI's founding chairman, Imran Khan. He stated that it is important to reveal the truth to the public rather than giving ambiguous names, and the elite's lavish lifestyles should also come to an end.

He expressed these views during a special conversation with media representatives at his residence, "Al-Murtaza House," in Attock Cantt. Syed Ijaz Hussain Bukhari Advocate emphasized that the formation of a negotiation team by Imran Khan to hold talks with the government and other institutions is a positive step, as issues cannot be resolved through government oppression. He also called for an end to the ongoing war of statements and urged for negotiations to begin in a conducive environment.

He highlighted the severity of poverty and hunger, stating that an empty pocket and an empty stomach can shake the foundations of institutions. Therefore, it is crucial to rise above personal interests and think solely as Pakistanis for the betterment of the nation. In response to a question, Syed Ijaz Hussain Bukhari said that the elite must reduce their privileges, expressing his willingness to take such steps for the sake of Pakistan. He stated that the country cannot progress through mere rhetoric; practical steps are needed, and the public deserves to see the truth. Commenting on the current national situation, he described it as worse than "virtual martial law" and remarked that this God-gifted country is running solely on the grace of Allah. He added that Pakistan's 240 million citizens are ready to make any sacrifices, including enduring hunger, to save the country. Therefore, the elite must also contribute their part, and as public representatives, it is their duty to stand by the people under all circumstances.

Anwar Maqsood Reads "Quaid-e-Azam's Letter to Karachi"



City Desk

KARACHI: Renowned intellectual and satirist Anwar Maqsood captivated the audience at the 17th Aalmi Urdu Conference - Jashan-e-Karachi by reading "Quaid-e-Azam's Letter to Karachi."

In this fictional yet thought-provoking letter, Anwar Maqsood shared Quaid-e-Azam's imagined reflections on Karachi's past, present, and future. Quaid's message expressed his vision for Karachi as Pakistan's capital, not just because it was his birthplace or his final resting place but because he believed in its potential to unite diverse communities and lead the nation toward progress.

"Visio Spark -2024" held at COMSATS University Wah Campus

Correspondent

WAH CANTT: The 20th episode of the mega national level IT event "Visio Spark" was organized by the Department of Computer Science and Department of Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Wah Campus.

This year, over 1,000 students from 50 renowned universities/institutions across Pakistan participated in 17 different competitions related to Information Technology (IT), and Engineering.

The Rector CUI, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar, Mr. Mukhtar

Ahmad, Operational Finance Lead, Crescent Bahuman Limited and Prof. Syed Kamail Tayabi, President ECO Science Foundation/Professor of International Economics inaugurated the event by cutting ribbon during the opening ceremony of the event.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abid (T. L.), Director, CUI Wah Campus welcomed the Rector CUI, Guests and participants in his opening remarks.

The Chief Guest, Rector CUI, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar in his remarks appreciated the management of the distant universities who participated in this mega event all over Pakistan. He lauded that the

Graduates of CUI are diligently playing their role for the progress of Pakistan as well as the international community through their projects and startups. He said that our graduates are not only shaping their career but also serving local as well as multinational communities with their best skill sets.

The Guest of Honor, Prof. Syed Kamail Tayabi, President, Economics Cooperation Organization (ECO) Science Foundation and Professor of International Economics in his remarks that it is an era of innovation and entrepreneurship led by the young graduates.

The participants from the 50 participating universi-

ties competed in a variety of contests, including Quiz Competition, Software Project, On Spot Programming, Poster Competition,

Mobile App Development, E-Gaming (FIFA), E-Gaming (TEKKEN), Web Development, Logo Design, Code Debugging, Speed Wiring, ROBO Race, MATLAB Guru, Circuit Troubleshooting, Idea Competition, Ad Competitions and CAD Clash.

The Chief Guest of the Closing Ceremony, Mr. Amir Anzur, Chief Marketing Officer, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), emphasized the critical need for strong Industry-Academia collaborations.

Researchers and experts from across the globe to gather at LUMS

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pathways to Development Conference is returning for its third year and will be hosted at LUMS from December 16-18. The flagship 3-day event promises to feature in-depth dialogue with scholars, policymakers, and practitioners from across the world on critical challenges faced by developing economies.

This annual event is jointly organised by the Chaudhry Nazir Muhammad Department of Economics and the Mahub ul Haq Research Centre (MHRC) at LUMS as well as the Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP), Institute for Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), Institute of Development Studies at Univer-



sity of Sussex (IDS), Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR), and International Growth Centre (IGC).

Speaking about the conference's

unique contribution to development discourse in Pakistan, Dr. Sanval Nasim, Assistant Professor at Colby College, said: "Pathways to Development brings together some of the top

researchers across the globe working on Pakistan and development issues in South Asia, creating a vital space for knowledge exchange between researchers and policy practitioners."

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Ethnic cleansing of Gaza: a story of injustice

Waleed Abdullah

The Nakba represents one of the darkest chapters in modern history as a massive campaign of ethnic cleansing that marked the beginning of a relentless cycle of violence in Palestine. These brutal events have etched themselves into the collective memory of Palestinians as an enduring nightmare, one that continues to shape their existence to this day. By the time Israel was established, entire Palestinian communities in cities such as Jaffa, Jerusalem, Haifa, Safed, and Tiberias were uprooted.

Families were forced to flee in terror or were violently expelled, their homes and histories obliterated in a calculated effort to erase their presence. Jewish settlers systematically replaced Palestinian villages, building new communities in their place, and enjoying both political support and military backing of the Israeli government. This process laid the groundwork for decades of suffering and displacement.

The human toll has been devastating. Since October 7, 2023, more than 44,000 Gaza's citizens have been killed, including women, children, and the elderly, who collectively make up 70% of the total killed. In addition, more than 105,000 individuals have been injured, many of them permanently disabled and more

than 10,000 are under the rubble. The scale of destruction has left Gaza teetering on the brink of collapse. Aid is systematically blocked, medical teams are prevented from operating, and even the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), a vital lifeline for Palestinian survival, has been banned calling it a "terrorist organization." This calculated isolation reflects a broader strategy of dehumanization and erasure. Israeli officials have not shied away from openly declaring their intentions. In October 2024, May Golan, Israel's Minister for Social Equality, chillingly stated, "We will hit them where it hurts— their land."

This sentiment underscores a deliberate and systematic policy aimed at driving Palestinians from their homeland. The tactics employed psychological warfare, overwhelming firepower, and the deliberate creation of unlivable conditions constitute a textbook case of ethnic cleansing.

These actions are not random acts of aggression but part of a well-orchestrated campaign to erase Palestinian identity and replace it with a settler-colonial narrative. Such actions blatantly violate international law, including Article II of the Genocide Convention, which prohibits acts intended to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.

Yet, even within Israel, voices of dissent have emerged. Former Israeli Defense

Minister Moshe Yaalon has criticized these actions, describing them as a campaign of ethnic cleansing in northern Gaza. Despite these acknowledgments, the international community remains largely silent, with many Western powers complicit in enabling these atrocities.

The role of Western nations, particularly the United States, in this crisis cannot be overstated. Between October 2023 and October 2024, the U. S. provided \$17.9 billion in military aid to Israel, effectively fueling the destruction of Gaza. Attempts to broker ceasefires at the United Nations were repeatedly vetoed by the U. S., showcasing a disturbing lack of accountability. President Joe Biden's past comments, stating that "If Israel didn't exist, the United States would invent it," reveal the deep-seated alliance between the two nations.

This partnership extends beyond military support to include political and moral backing, enabling Israel to act with impunity. Western hypocrisy is glaringly evident. While imposing thousands of sanctions on other nations within mere months, these same powers supplied Israel with tons of explosives and advanced weaponry. The Doctrine of Discovery, a colonial-era principle used to justify the seizure of Indigenous lands, now finds a disturbing echo in Gaza and the West Bank. This double standard not only underscores the complicity of Western powers but also exposes the inherent biases in their policies.

The plight of Gaza's women highlights another facet of this tragedy. Western feminists, who are often vocal about gender violence in other parts of the world, remain conspicuously silent about the physical and mental trauma inflicted on Palestinian women. This selective advocacy further compounds the suffering of those caught in the crossfire and reflects a broader failure of solidarity. The ongoing ethnic cleansing in Gaza reveals a fundamental failure of the international system. Concepts such as justice, solidarity, and trust have been eroded by geopolitical interests and short-term calculations. European powers, particularly the UK and Germany, stand isolated alongside the U. S. in their unwavering support of Israel's total war on Gaza. This alignment has alienated them from much of the global community, highlighting the growing divide between Western political agendas and the rest of the world. If the West wishes to preserve the international order it claims to uphold, it must take decisive action against Israel's campaign of ethnic cleansing. Failing to do so risks not only undermining global stability but also exposing the moral bankruptcy at the heart of the current system. The time for empty rhetoric has long passed. The world must choose between complicity and justice, between silence and action, and between the perpetuation of oppression and the promise of freedom. The stakes have never been higher.

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Syrians now have 'historic opportunity' to build peaceful future

After 14 years of brutal war and the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime, the people of Syria can now seize an historic opportunity to build a stable and peaceful future, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday.

As reports continued to emerge from Damascus where opposition forces declared victory overnight on State television, the UN chief said in a statement: "The future of Syria is a matter for the Syrians to determine."

There is much work to be done to ensure an orderly political transition to renewed institutions, Guterres, and noted that his Special Envoy, Geir Pedersen, will be working with all Syrians to this end.

Pedersen, who has been attending a high-level meeting of Arab States in Doha this weekend, has called for "urgent political talks" in Geneva to secure a peaceful future for Syria.

There was widespread backing for his appeal, he said on Saturday, from Iran, Russia and Türkiye along with the United States, France, Great Britain, Germany and the European Union.

In the meantime, the Secretary-General renewed his call for calm and avoiding violence at this sensitive time, while protecting the rights of all Syrians, without distinction. He also noted that the inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises and personnel must be respected in all cases in accordance with international law.

"We will need the support of the international community to ensure that any political transition is inclusive and comprehensive and that it meets the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria, in all their diversity," Guterres said, adding "Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity must be restored."

The UN, he said, will honour the memory of those who have borne the brunt of the 14-year conflict.

"We remain committed to helping Syrians build a country where reconciliation, justice, freedom, and prosperity are shared realities for all. This is the path to sustainable peace in Syria," the Secretary-General added.

The dramatic development in the Syrian capital follows a lightning advance by armed opposition forces, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), on 27 November from their stronghold in the country's northwest into Government-controlled areas, reportedly supported by rebel groups joining from the south.

"We will respond wherever, whenever, however we can to support people in need, including reception centres – food, water, fuel, tents, blankets," said Tom Fletcher, Emergency Relief Coordinator and head of the UN aid coordination office, OCHA.

The hostilities have uprooted more than 370,000 people inside Syria, according to OCHA, "with many seeking refuge in the northeast and others trapped in front-line areas, unable to escape", the UN's top aid official in Syria, Adam Abdelmoula, said on Saturday.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century: Evolving Dynamics and New Realities

Afeera Zahid

Strategic deterrence is a dynamic and colossal phenomenon that has evolved in the 21st century, depending on the changes in international relations, in technological processes and in the security concepts. Conventional armament theory employed in the past the concept of stalemate on the basis of overwhelming force, especially the atomic force. Today however, this basic understanding is shifting with regard to advanced technologies, power dynamics on a regional level and particularly non-nuclear deterrence approaches.

In the past, strategic deterrence was mainly an element of nuclear weapons with the MAD tactic popular during the cold war. The basic principle was simple: if two nuclear-armed states could devastate each other beyond recognition, no state would consider the trigger-happy option. The two world powers, the U. S. and the Soviet Union used this model in deterring the other in a careful equilibrium that would prevent the superpowers from going to an all-out war.

Applying the same concept of deterrence in contemporary security studies, there appears to be befitting applicability to regional security systems of the 21st century particularly in the Asia-Pacific Region. China's increasing capability of nuclear weapons also affects regional security because the countries in this region are required to change their security perspective. Earlier, several countries that were under the nuclear shield of the United States, including Japan and South Korea have shown much concern over the potential threat posed by China's nuclear capability which has led most of them to escalate their defense budgets and in few cases debate over the feasibility of the developing nuclear deterrents for themselves.

Further, the U. S. has deepened its partnerships towards East Asia into enhancing its position to

balance the Chinese influence. Under the mutual security agreement between the United States of America and Japan for instance any attack on Japan will draw a response from the United States of America even with nuclear power if need be. This strategic umbrella has been taken to other countries in the region such as India that also has its own myriads of nuclear issues with China and Pakistan. Because of the changing security setting in Asia, the predictability of strategic deterrence is increasingly coupled with the longevity of bilateral security partnerships as well as the plausibility of extended deterrence assurance.

The consensus is that the nuclear deterrence, for all its importance, is gradually being supplemented with non-nuclear deterrence. This shift is driven by several factors: prolonging the lifetime of weapons, the higher development of means for the missile defense, the possibility of computer virus attacks, and the changes that the kind of warfare has undergone recently. In reply, both the U. S. and China are looking for avenues that would augment their respective deterrence postures without using nuclear power.

Finally, looking at new developments, there is a rising significance of basically conventional precision-strike assets. For example, the United States has been funding hypersonic weapons that can hit targets faster than any other defenses and bypass missile defense. Low observable air vehicular systems like hypersonic missiles together with secure ISR is almost a leveraged power trip as it threatens an adversary's tactical and strategic military infrastructures without necessarily escalating to the nuclear level. China also has also developed its own hypersonic systems thus signifying a general trend in both countries of shifting away from nuclear strategic deterrence.

However, it is the escalation control problem that constitutes the core of strategic deterrence in the 21st century and these technologies. Whereas earlier threats of nuclear retaliation have helped

manage crisis escalation, the current weapon systems, including cyberspace and hypersonic missiles, hinder the management of access during crises. This particularly becomes the case given that many domains of warfare are intertwined: land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace.

This explains why arms control agreements must be encouraged and why mechanisms for the management of crises must be put in place. Largely due to the proliferation of new technology and the ongoing modernization of both the US and Chinese military forces, the requirement for more open communication between the two countries over their respective concepts of deterrence is becoming increasingly pressing. Missile defense and nuclear weapons were among the articles of arms control and, therefore, could be crucial to avoid misinterpretation and unintended escalation.

In the 21st century, strategic deterrence has gone beyond simple throwing weight of a country's nuclear weapons. It is no longer a simple, one-level prospect, but a multiple level concept that involves cyberspace, space and actual weaponry. Especially due to new changes in the power distribution in the world where both China has become a global power to reckon with, the U. S. as well as China, have realized the essence of upgrading and updating the concept of deterrence as a means of maintaining order and stability in the world today. However, sophistication of weapon systems and the modern shape of conflicts provides quite a challenge to the management of escalation, which underlines the necessity of the restart of the arms control and crisis management negotiations. In conclusion, it can be postulated that the probability of the strategic deterrence success in the twenty-first century will depend on the possibility of the states to provide balance and act in conditions of the noted challenges.

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Champions Trophy Must Take Place in Pakistan: A Chance for Unity

Sports have an incredible power to unite people, even in the most divided times. Athletes are not just competitors; they are goodwill ambassadors who inspire peace and foster understanding. The upcoming Champions Trophy, set to be held in Pakistan, is a perfect example of how sports can bring nations together. Unfortunately, India's hesitation to participate threatens to overshadow this event. It's time for India to rise above political differences, set aside ego, and embrace the true spirit of cricket.

Recently, Pakistan's cricket team traveled to India to participate in the ODI World Cup. Despite the political tensions between the two nations, Pakistan fulfilled its responsibility and played in Indian venues. This act demonstrated a commitment to the game that transcends politics. Now, the question is simple: if Pakistan could take part in the World Cup in India, why can't India do the same for the Champions Trophy in Pakistan?

The common excuse of security concerns no longer holds ground. Pakistan has proven time and again that it can safely host international teams. Events like the Pakistan Super League (PSL) and tours by top teams, including England, Australia, and New Zealand, have been conducted successfully without any major incidents. Pakistan has developed a comprehensive secu-

urity plan for the Champions Trophy, ensuring the safety of all players and officials.

This tournament is about more than just cricket. It's an opportunity to promote goodwill and foster peace between two nations that share a rich cricketing history. The Champions Trophy could serve as a platform for healing and dialogue, showcasing the unifying power of sports. By participating, India could send a powerful message that cricket is above politics.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) and the global cricketing community must also step up and support Pakistan's right to host this event. Neutrality and fairness are crucial for the integrity of the game, and Pakistan's efforts to promote sports and healthy competition deserve recognition.

We cannot let politics overshadow the beauty of cricket. The Champions Trophy in Pakistan is a chance to celebrate the sport's ability to unite and inspire millions. India's participation would honor the game and pave the way for improved relations between the two nations.

Let's hope the Champions Trophy takes place as planned and becomes a shining example of what sports can achieve.

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Analysis

Aamir Ramzan Sidhu

Chinese, Pakistani companies sign MoU on smart agriculture

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Chinese company AI Force Tech and Punjab Agriculture Department of Pakistan on Monday to set up a robotic agricultural equipment manufacturing plant in Punjab.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab, during her week-long visit to China from Dec 8th to 15th, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

The Chief Minister dilated upon agriculture sector reforms in Punjab during her meeting with AI Force Tech founder Dr. Han and its CEO. She inspected the latest agricultural tools equipped with robotic technology. She observed the robotic machinery, and assured the company of her government's full cooperation in manufacturing the modern robotic agricultural machinery in Punjab.



She said, "It is our determination to make farmers prosperous by adopting modern agricultural technology," adding, "On my invitation, a delegation of AI Force Tech will visit Punjab soon for the purpose."

Pakistani Youth to Visit Japan under the JENESYS Program



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the invitation by the Government of Japan, the first batch of six Pakistani youth will be visiting Japan from December 10 to 17, 2024 under the JENESYS (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) program. A total of 41 youths have been invited from the SAARC countries to participate in this program which is being held under the theme of "Energy".

Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, the Ambassador-designate of Japan to Pakistan, while speaking on the occasion, hoped their stay in Japan will be a fruitful experience and advised the visiting group to make best use of this opportunity and learn as much as possible about Japan during this short period. He also mentioned that the homestay in Japan would be a highly valuable opportunity, not only to experience life in Japan but also to offer the Japanese people a unique chance to learn about Pakistan's rich and historic culture and gain a deeper understanding of the country.

The Government of Japan invites every year several groups of youth from SAARC countries to participate in this short term invitation. The program is expected not only to promote capacity building but also to develop mutual understanding among youths of Japan and that of SAARC countries.

Minorities caution against establishing a sham National Commission for Minorities

LAHORE: The Peoples Commission for Minorities' Rights (PCMR) has warned the government that establishing another ineffective and powerless minorities' commission will fail to achieve the purpose of meaningful inclusion of religious minorities in the policy-making. Hence, the proposed scheme of its constitution will not address the issue of their marginalization in the system. The autonomy of this body will lie in the independence of the constituting instrument and the strength of its composition and quality appointments. PCMR stated that a rights body failing to meet the UN Paris Principles, including having a competent composition, would be unacceptable to minorities.

In a joint statement given by Peter Jacob, the Chairperson, Justice (R) Kailashnath Kohli, Dr. A. H. Nayyar and Michelle Chaudhry, provincial heads of Punjab and Balochistan, referred to the ministerial meeting headed by Rana Sanaullah Khan, the Advisor to Prime Minister. The PCMR representative stated that for over 30 years, a powerless minorities' commission had been set up. As it was toothless, therefore it failed to address the grievances of the religious minorities. It is sad to note that the Federal government is repeating the mistakes, which will not serve the purpose of integrating religious minorities.

The proposed commission through legislation, should be a rights body therefore "we demand that its powers must be equivalent to those of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR). They cautioned that any attempt to weaken the commission, such as including unnecessary representation from the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), would make it contradictory and unequal to other human rights bodies functioning in the country. Since the constitution of Pakistan does not suggest a role of the CII in any matter related to religious minorities, therefore the government should avoid making CII part of any controversy.

The PCMR statement emphasized that the government must consult relevant rights organizations, especially since the commission will function as a human rights body. Moreover, that autonomy of the National Commission for Minorities' Rights. The PCMR representatives also demanded that the commission adhere to the directives of the Supreme Court of Pakistan's 2014 judgment, delivered by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry regarding the body for inclusion of minorities in the policy-making.



Syrian refugee Anas Modamani records a video with his phone in front of Aljoud bakery in Neukolln district in Berlin, Germany December 9, 2024. (Photo: Reuters)

UN urges new rulers in Syria to ensure stable power transfer, maintain institutions as world reacts

UNITED NATIONS: As Syrian rebels declared an end to President Bashar al-Assad's rule after seizing control of Damascus, UN's Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, said Sunday that the developments in the Arab country underscore the clear desire expressed by millions of Syrians that stable and inclusive transitional arrangements are put in place.

In a statement, he urged all Syrians to prioritize dialogue, unity, and respect for international humanitarian law and human rights as they seek to rebuild their society, adding he stands ready to support the Syrian people in their journey toward a stable and inclusive future.

Hassan Abdul-Ghani, senior commander of the opposition group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, claimed victory for the rebel forces that had stormed across Syria in a matter of days and entered Damascus overnight, forcing Assad to flee and ending his family's decades of rule after more than 13 years of civil war.

"Today marks a watershed moment in Syria's history - a nation that has endured nearly 14 years of relentless suffering and unspeakable loss... This dark chapter has left deep scars, but today we look forward with cautious hope to the opening of a new one - one of peace, reconciliation, dignity, and inclusion for all Syrians," Pedersen, the UN envoy, said.

The UN envoy, who has been attending a high-level meeting of Arab States in Doha this weekend, also issued an appeal for the new rulers in Damascus to ensure a stable transfer of power and to maintain the country's institutions.

This was the "clear desire" of millions of Syrians, Pedersen insisted, so that they can ultimately see their "legitimate aspirations" fulfilled "and restore a unified Syria, with its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in a way that can receive the support and engagement of the entire international community".

National Day of Qatar

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater cutting cake to celebrate, Qatar's National Day.



Photo: PID

Embassy of Sweden and UN Women Honor Pakistan's Gender Empowerment Champions

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Sweden, in collaboration with UN Women Pakistan, hosted an event at the Swedish Ambassador's residence to recognize Pakistan's Gender Empowerment Champions. The occasion celebrated the outstanding contributions of individuals and organizations dedicated to eradicating gender-based violence, promoting women's empowerment, and advancing gender equality in the country.

The event was a key part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign that emphasizes the urgent need to eliminate violence against women and girls. With the theme #KoiJawazNahi (#NoExcuse), the evening underscored a shared commitment to building a gender-equal society.

The program began with a warm welcome from the Ambassador of Sweden, highlighting the collaborative efforts of Sweden and Pakistan in championing gender equality. Swedish Ambassador Alexandra Berg von Linde stated, "Sweden has a long-standing commitment on working for gender equality and against gender-based violence - at home and globally. Combatting sexual and gender-based violence is not only a women's issue.

Jamshed Kazi, UN Women Pakistan Country Representative designate, also addressed the gathering, stressing the significance of joint action. He said, "The progress we seek in eliminating gender-based violence and achieving gender equality requires the unwavering commitment of every individual, organization, and institution. Events like these remind us of the power of collaboration and the impact of our combined efforts."

He further added, "Today, we honor the champions who have made their mission to advance women's rights and create safe, equitable spaces for all. Their unwavering dedication inspires us to continue working towards a society free of gender-based violence."

Germany, other European countries suspend decisions on Syrians' asylum bids after Assad's fall

News Desk

BERLIN: Germany and several other European countries said Monday they are suspending decisions on asylum claims by Syrian nationals because of the unclear situation in their homeland following the fall of Bashar Assad.

Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees said Monday that more than 47,000 applications are currently pending. It said it would reassess the situation and resume decisions once things in Syria have stabilized.

Interior Ministry spokesperson Sonja Kock noted that asylum decisions take account of the circumstances of each case, which involves assessing the situation in the applicant's country. She said the migration authority has the option of prioritizing

cases from other places if a situation is unclear, as it currently is in Syria.

More broadly, German officials said it's too early to tell what the fall of Assad will ultimately mean for the many Syrians who sought refuge in Germany in recent years, particularly in the mid-2010s.

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said it's not yet possible to predict "concrete possibilities to return" and "it would be unwise to speculate about this in such a volatile situation."

Her ministry said that, as of Oct. 31, there were 974,136 Syrian nationals in the country, the majority of whom had some kind of refugee or other protected status.

In neighboring Austria, Chancellor Karl Nehammer also tasked his interior minister with suspending

decisions on current asylum applications by Syrians, the Austria Press Agency reported.

"It is important to first establish facts, to put asylum and family reunion procedures on hold," Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said. "We need to wait until the dust settles, so we can see what is happening, what the next points are."

Sweden's Migration Agency said it will also pause decisions on Syrian asylum cases, arguing that it isn't possible at present to assess applicants' reasons for seeking protection. It didn't specify how long the pause would last, but said a similar decision was made in connection with the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021.

In Finland, the director of the Department for

International Protection at the Finnish Immigration Service, Antti Lehtinen, told public broadcaster YLE that decisions have been suspended there, and he can't immediately estimate when they will resume.

In Norway, the Directorate of Immigration announced a similar decision, saying that it has put asylum applications from Syria on hold "until further notice."

France says it was considering following Germany's example.

"We are working on a suspension of ongoing asylum files from Syria," the French Interior Ministry said. "We should reach a decision in the coming hours."

The ministry said 450 applications from Syrian citizens are pending in France.

Aga Khan University Hospital Wins the Prestigious American Hospital Association Excellence Award

City Desk

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) has been honoured with the prestigious American Hospital Association Excellence Award for Healthcare Workers' Well-being at the International Hospital Federation (IHF) Awards 2024 in the silver category.

This recognition underscores AKUH's dedication to fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for its employees, promoting their well-being through innovative and effective strategies.

The award ceremony took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where the IHF celebrated the best in global



healthcare excellence. The award was received by Ms Shehreen Ali, Nurse Manager, on behalf of Employee Health, Department of Family

Medicine, the Aga Khan University Hospital.

Dr Farhat Abbas, CEO, AKUH Health Services, Pakistan, expressed his pride in the team's achievement, stating, "This milestone is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our Employee Health team who take care of the wellbeing of our entire staff at AKUH. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of care not just for our patients, but also for our healthcare workers, who are the backbone of our institution. I urge all stakeholders in Pakistan to support the healthcare industry and its workers, as their wellbeing is the building block of our nation's healthcare infrastructure."

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
109,970.38	109,053.95
Day's High	Day's Low
110,358.85	107,625.91
Index Value	Change
39,075,367,536	+916.43
Percentage	Time
+0.84%	9 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,352.08	+43.47
Percentage	Time
+0.52%	9 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
44,648.25	+5.73
Percentage	Time
+0.013%	9 Dec, 11:58 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,160.50	+69.33
Percentage	Time
+0.18%	9 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	177.30	179.55
Bahrain Dinar	733.95	741.95
Canadian Dollar	196.60	199.00
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	290.35	293.10
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.18	3.27
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	895.75	905.25
Malaysian Ringgit	61.75	62.35
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.4
Norwegians Krone	24.93	25.23
Omani Riyal	717.43	725.93
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.65	74.20
Singapore Dollar	207.25	209.25
Swedish Korona	25.1	25.4
Swiss Franc	312.72	315.52
Thai Bhat	7.95	8.10
U. A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	350.55	354.05
US Dollar	277.50	279.00

PTCL first ever in Pakistan to achieve prestigious EPI Data Center certification

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading telecom and integrated ICT services provider, Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has raised the data center industry benchmark by achieving the prestigious TIA-942-C data center certification form Enterprise Products Integration (EPI) – a global leader in data center certification.

The meticulously audited and certified milestone underscores PTCL's unwavering dedication to excellence and innovation in the mission-critical data center industry in Pakistan. PTCL's state-of-the-art data centers offer rack hosting services designed to accommodate servers, networking devices, and other data center computing equipment. The purpose-built facilities provide carrier customers with a secure, cost-effective, and space-efficient solution for housing essential infrastructure.

Strategically located in major cities across Pakistan, the data centers ensure high levels of security, resilience, and flexibility, helping businesses reduce costs, enhance IT value, and maintain efficient operational footprint.

Commenting on the development, Jafar Khalid, Group Chief Technology and Informa-



tion Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G said, "The prestigious EPI certification not only raises the bar for data center standards in Pakistan but also solidifies PTCL's position as a leader in the digital

infrastructure landscape. This recognition is a proud moment for our team, acknowledging our commitment to excellence in data center management. We are confident that this achievement

will further enhance customer trust in PTCL's capabilities, cementing our position as a leader in the industry, delivering services that meet the highest global standards.

PTCL's data centers enable enterprise customers through provision of secure environment for storing, processing, and managing data, with centralized management, disaster recovery, and backup power solutions. It also offers scalability, enhance security compliance, support cloud services, and help businesses avoid the high costs of building and maintaining their own infrastructure, so they can invest precious resources in growing and sustaining their business, while relying on a trusted partner such as PTCL.

Nausheen Ashraf, Country Manager, EPI Pakistan & Central Asia extended heartfelt congratulations to PTCL for achieving the esteemed TIA-942-C Data Center Certification. She Said, "This accomplishment is a testament to PTCL's sustained commitment to upholding the highest standards of excellence and innovation in data center services since their first certification in 2009. We as EPI commend PTCL's dedication to providing secure, resilient, and world-class data center solutions for businesses across Pakistan, solidifying their position as an industry leader."

Construction

ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in construction work of Jinnah Avenue Interchange at PTCL Chowk, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SECP registered 3,024 new companies in November 2024

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has achieved a significant milestone, registering 3,024 new companies in November 2024. This brings the total number of companies registered in the country to 236,611, reflecting growing confidence in Pakistan's corporate sector and its continued expansion.

Around 99% of the new company registration are now being processed digitally which, marks another step in the Commission's efforts to provide a seamless, tech-driven regulatory environment that promotes transparency and supports ease of doing business in Pakistan. Private Limited Companies accounted for 58% of the total new registrations, while single-member companies represented 39%. The remaining 3% included public unlisted companies, not-for-profit organizations, trade organizations, and limited liability partnerships (LLPs).

A closer look at sectoral growth reveals strong activity across a range of industries.

The Information Technology (IT) and E-commerce sectors saw the largest growth, adding 641 new companies. The Services sector followed closely with 599 new companies, Trading with 510 new companies, Real Estate Development & Construction recorded 315 new companies. Other sectors contributing to this growth included Food, Healthcare, and Pharmaceuticals with 345 new companies, Tourism and Transport with 213, and the Energy, Power & Fuel sector with 247 new registrations. 154 companies were registered in other sectors.

Foreign investment in the corporate sector also showed encouraging signs of growth, with 79 new companies receiving capital from international investors. These investors hailed from a diverse set of countries, including Austria, China, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Norway, Oman, Russia, Spain, Syria, Afghanistan and Turkey. Notably, China emerged as the largest investor, contributing to the establishment of 56 new companies, followed by Afghanistan with 7 and

Payoneer recognizes Pakistan's Top Export Talent and SMBs at XBorder Excellence Awards 2024

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Payoneer (NASDAQ: PAYO), the global financial technology company dedicated to empowering small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) to transact and grow globally, hosted the 4th edition of XBorder Excellence Awards in Lahore on December 5, 2024. Organized in partnership with JazzCash and Faysal Bank, the event brought together over 120 attendees to celebrate the achievements of top-performing



growth leaders, SMBs, content creators, and tech innovators shaping Pakistan's digital economy and making strides in the global market.

"The remarkable achievements of Pakistan's SMBs, growth leaders, tech innovators, content creators, and freelancers exemplify the transformative potential of our digital economy," said Mohsin Muzaffar, Country Manager of Payoneer Pakistan. "Through the XBorder Excellence Awards, we recognize these outstanding professionals who are expanding their global footprint. Their success reinforces our commitment to facilitating borderless payments for business growth and advancing the country's global expansion."

Habib University and L'Oréal Pakistan Launch a Strategic Partnership for Youth Development

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Marking an exciting milestone for academia-industry collaboration, Habib University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with L'Oréal Pakistan during a ceremony held at L'Oréal's Head Office in Karachi.

The progressive collaboration aims to support university students in becoming career-ready through deliberate exposure to real-world industry practices and skill-building opportunities, furthering Habib University's Career Curation Program while upholding L'Oréal's dedication to youth development (L'Oréal For Youth (L4Y)).

Speaking on L'Oréal becoming 'Habib University's Partner in Shaping Futures', Mr. Qawi Naseer, Country Managing Director of L'Oréal Pakistan, said, "We're

extremely thrilled that this partnership has come to fruition, and now serves as a key step in enhancing youth employability and aiding the creation of meaningful employment opportunities for the younger generation. This partnership's integration into the L'Oréal For Youth initiative and its multiple programs ensures that it remains tailor-focused on creating avenues through which young minds can push boundaries and shape the future of Pakistan's economy."

Under this three-year agreement, L'Oréal Pakistan will provide students with invaluable insights into the transition from academia to the workforce, industry expectations, and professional skills.

Ms. Yasmeen Bano, Vice President of Habib University, underscored the importance of this initiative "With the rapid pace of technological advance-

ment and the increasing demands of the job market, it's crucial to equip our students with hands-on experience and industry insights. Our collaboration with L'Oréal Pakistan gives us a remarkable opportunity to bridge the gap between our students' academic pursuits and the professional world. Working alongside an industry leader dedicated to investing in the future of Pakistan's youth and to preparing our students with the skills and perspectives they need to thrive is an immense source of pride."

Honoring this commitment, L'Oréal Pakistan has also extended opportunities for internships, projects, and full-time roles to Habib University's students, especially through Brandstorm - L'Oréal's prestigious international innovation competition through which student teams tackle real-world business issues faced by the beauty industry.



Unilever's 'Safety First' program provides health insurance, safety gear, and fair wages



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Unilever Pakistan has implemented new measures for 'skin fitters' in order to address safety and livelihood challenges in the outdoor advertising sector. Unilever Pakistan's 'Safety First' program includes enhanced safety standards, increased wages, and access to health and life insurance, making it an industry-first initiative.

Advertising skin fitting is a high-risk job that involves working at significant heights, often without adequate safety equipment or financial safeguards. Historically, Pakistan's out-of-home (OOH) advertising workers have faced poor remuneration and limited access to essential protections. This is a workforce tasked with installing and maintaining outdoor advertisements under hazardous conditions.

Amir Paracha, Chairman and CEO, Unilever Pakistan, highlighted, "These steps reflect a broader industry need to prioritize the safety and livelihoods of workers who play a vital role in our operational processes. While our initiative is a start, we hope that our industry counterparts reflect on these efforts, evaluate at their own pace and perhaps implement similar measures so that workforce safety and well-being can benefit across the industry."

DG Sports Punjab visits different sports venues to review Sports Board Punjab training camps

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry visited different sports venues including Punjab Stadium, Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) Gymnasium Hall, Body Contact Centre and Elite Training Center to review Sports Board Punjab (SBP) training camps.

These training camps are being organized for the preparation of Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games to be organized at federal capital Islamabad from December 13 to 19, 2024.

During the visit, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry reviewed the performance and fitness of camp probable and training methods of coaches at girls volleyball, girls/boys karate, athletics, football



and boxing camps. Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry was accompanied by Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Director Sports Rana

Nadeem Anjum and other officials during his inspection visit.

Talking on this occasion, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that full training of Punjab athletes is underway at various venues of Nishtar Park Sports Complex. "The male and female athletes of 15 games are being imparted best training in morning and evening sessions daily," he added.

Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry further said that Punjab contingent will participate in the upcoming Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games with full preparation. "We are quite upbeat that our contingent will exhibit satisfactory performances in all events of Quaid-e-Azam Games and return as winners".

Medicam Group will fully cooperate with Regional Cricket Association Karachi



Sports Desk

KARACHI: in the opening Match of the Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at KCCA Stadium. The highlights of the days play Brilliant Century 106 by Harris Naveed and Deadly bowling by right arm leg spinner Sagheer Ahmed captured 5/12.

Earlier, the Chief Guest, Zafar Riaz Bari, Director Admin and External Affairs, Medicam Group of Companies inaugurate the Tournament in the Colourful Ceremony in the Presence of hundreds of Young Cricketers and their parents at the opening ceremony of 2nd of RCAK Talent Hunt Programme Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament on Sunday at KCCA Stadium. on this occasion He said our Department Medicam Group of Companies full cooperate to Regional Cricket Association Karachi for the Promotion of Cricket in Karachi. Khalid Nafees, Chairman Tournament Committee rich tribute paid to Khalil Ahmed Nanitalwala and Junaid Khalil Nanitalwala for their valuable Contribution for the Young Cricketers Cricketers. M. Touseef Siddiqui, Tournament Secretary in his speech, thanked the Medicam Group of Companies to Sponsor RCAK Talent Hunt Programme, especially to Khalil Ahmed Nanitalwala, Junaid Khalil Nanitalwala and Jawed Alhtar Kayni and gave the details of the Tournament. The tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

Scores in Brief: Zone-II Whites beat Zone-V Blues by 162 runs. Zone-II Whites 229/8 in 40 overs. Haris Naveed 106 9xr, Azan Ahmed 38, Mahad Furqan 31. Muhammad Ahmed 2/26, Sheikh Abdullah 2/39. In reply Zone-V Blues 67 all out in 19.5 overs. Muhammad Maaz 24. Sagheer Ahmed (rlb) 5/12, Muhammad Nadeem 2/11, Jawwad Ahmed 2/22. After the end of the Match Haris Naveed and Sagheer Ahmed received the Medicam Man of the Match from Wahid. On this occasion Mr Muhammad Ahmed Naqvi Assistant Secretary, Zonal Presidents Ajmal Naseeb, Jameel Ahmed Muhammad Raees, Zia Ahmed Siddiqui, Mazhar Ali Awan other Zonal officials Arif Waheed, Afzal Qureshi, Abdul Rauf, Zafar Ahmed, Muhammad Asghar, Nawaid Alamin, S. M. Asim, Nusrat Mehboob, M. Afzal Sheri, Huzaifa Alvi, Muhammad Hassan and other distinguish Guest. Scrutiny done by Abdul Wahid, Arif Waheed, and Comparing done by Shahid Nawab.

Men in Green not awed by Proteas home record, says Mohammad Rizwan

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan has said that the Men in Green are not awed by the home record or past performances of the Proteas and are eager to do well in the three-match T20I series.

Talking to the media men outside the Kingsmead cricket stadium, Durban, he said Pakistan cricketers will not rest on their past laurels against the Proteas, adding that the team will focus on the current challenge.

Rizwan acknowledged the fact that the conditions pose a challenge in an away series as the pitch-conditions and weather are totally alien from the home



surfaces, adding that they must perform well as professional players in the South African conditions. 'As professional players, we must acclimatize quickly and perform well,' the skipper added.

On opportunities to the young players, the wicket-keeper batsman said the young talent has performed well in Australia and Zimbabwe and they have

proven their mettle, adding that they have added to the bench strength of the Men's team.

On team combination, he said Pakistan team had done well in the recently concluded white-ball series in Australia and Zimbabwe, adding that the bunch of players had proved their talent and helped in good team combinations.

"The young players have gelled well with the senior cricketers and are learning from the experience of the senior team-mates," he responded.

On the team selection, he said the team has been selected keeping in view the conditions in South Africa, adding, the selectors will definitely pick, somewhat, different bunch of players for the

ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India. He expressed the hope that PCB will be able to pick the best 18 from the bunch of players it has currently.

When asked about non-selection of Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Rizwan said that Fakhar Zaman is a game-changer and the whole country is aware of his capabilities as a batsman, adding that his absence from the squads for the South Africa tour does not involve any ill-will. He further said that Fakhar was not picked due to minor health issues and had been asked to perform in the on-going domestic T20 tournament under the constant care of the PCB's medical panel.

Pakistan V/S South Africa Cricket Teams Three Matches Series T-20

Pakistan Cricket Ply First T-20 Match Against South Africa Today 10th December in Durban

Asim Tanveer

DURBAN/SOUTH AFRICA: The Pakistan cricket team's tour of South Africa begins today (Tuesday). The team conducted an intense net practice session in Durban, focusing on bowling, batting, and fielding drills. The first T20 match of the three-match series between Pakistan and South Africa will be played on December 10 in Durban.

Pakistan vs. South Africa T20 Series: Schedule, Timings, and Previous Records As per the latest cricket updates, the three-match T20 International series between Pakistan and South Africa will commence on December 10. This will be the ninth bilateral T20 series between the two nations. Here are the series schedule, timings, and a summary of previous encounters:

Pakistan vs. South Africa T20 Series Schedule

- 1st Match**: December 10, Durban, 9:00 PM
- 2nd Match December 13, Centurion, 9:00 PM
- 3rd Match**: December 16, Johannesburg, 9:00 PM

Head-to-Head Record in T20 Series

Pakistan and South Africa have faced each other in 8 bilateral T20 series so far. South Africa has the upper hand, winning 4 series, while Pakistan has emerged victorious in 3. One series ended in a draw.

The first bilateral T20 series between Pakistan and South Africa was a single-match series held during Pakistan's tour of South Africa in 2007. South Africa won that match. The second bilateral T20 series took place in the 2010-11 season in the UAE, where South Africa won the two-match series 2-0.

In 2012, Pakistan toured South Africa again and won a two-match T20 series 1-0. This marked Pakistan's first-ever bilateral T20 series victory against South Africa. The next series was held in 2013 in the UAE, where South Africa emerged victorious in the two-match series. Later that year, Pakistan toured South Africa for another two-match T20 series, which ended in a 1-1 draw.

In 2019, Pakistan played a three-match T20 series in South Africa, which the hosts won 2-1. However, in 2020, South Africa toured Pakistan for a three-match series, where Pakistan secured a 2-1 victory. The most recent series between the two sides was held in South Africa in 2021, where Pakistan won the four-match series 3-1. This marked consecutive series victories for Pakistan

against South Africa, one at home and one in South Africa.

South Africa last won a T20 series at home against Pakistan in the 2018-19 season, winning 2-1. Out of the nine bilateral T20 series played so far, South Africa has won four, Pakistan has won three, and one series ended in a draw.

Pakistan's Record in South Africa

- 1. 2007: Single-match series, South Africa won 1-0.
- 2. 2012-13: Two-match series, Pakistan won 1-0.
- 3. 2013: Two-match series, ended in a 1-1 draw.
- 4. **2018-19 Three-match series, South Africa won 2-1.
- 5. 2021 Four-match series, Pakistan won 3-1.

Overall, Pakistan has a strong record in South Africa, having achieved multiple victories and series wins, especially in recent years.

The last T20 International match between Pakistan and South Africa took place during the T20 World Cup 2022 on November 3 in Sydney, where Pakistan

secured a crucial 33-run victory. Before that, Pakistan defeated South Africa by three wickets on April 16, 2021, in Centurion. In the same series, Pakistan won another match in Centurion on April 14, 2021, by nine wickets, while South Africa claimed a six-wicket victory in Johannesburg on April 12, 2021. The series opener on April 10, 2021, in Johannesburg was

won by Pakistan by four wickets. Since 2007, Pakistan and South Africa have faced each other in 22 T20 Internationals, with Pakistan winning 12 matches and South Africa securing 10 victories. None of their matches have ended in a tie or without a result, giving Pakistan a narrow edge.

Pakistan's Current Tour of South Africa (2024)

This marks Pakistan's first tour to South Africa since 2019 and includes matches across all formats.

- Schedule of Matches (Pakistan Time)
- 1st T20I December 10, Kingsmead, Durban (9:00 PM)
- 2nd T20I December 13, SuperSport Park, Centurion (9:00 PM)
- 3rd T20I December 14, The Wanderers, Johannesburg (9:00 PM)

secured a crucial 33-run victory. Before that, Pakistan defeated South Africa by three wickets on April 16, 2021, in Centurion. In the same series, Pakistan won another match in Centurion on April 14, 2021, by nine wickets, while South Africa claimed a six-wicket victory in Johannesburg on April 12, 2021. The series opener on April 10, 2021, in Johannesburg was

- 1st ODI: December 17, Boland Park, Paarl (5:00 PM)
- 2nd ODI December 19, Newlands, Cape Town (5:00 PM)
- 3rd ODI December 22, The Wanderers, Johannesburg (5:00 PM)
- 1st Test December 26, SuperSport Park, Centurion (1:00 PM)
- 2nd Test January 3, Newlands, Cape Town (1:00 PM)

Pakistan T20 Squad

- Mohammad Rizwan (Captain/Wicketkeeper)
- Abrar Ahmed
- Babar Azam
- Haris Rauf
- Jahandad Khan
- Mohammad Abbas Afridi
- Mohammad Hasnain
- Mohammad Irfan Khan
- Omair Bin Yusuf
- Saim Ayub
- Salman Ali Agha
- Shaheen Shah Afridi
- Sufiyan Muqem
- Tayyab Tahir
- Usman Khan (Wicketkeeper)
- South Africa T20 Squad
- Heinrich Klaasen (Captain)
- Ott Niel Bartman
- Matthew Breetzke
- Donovan Ferreira
- Reeza Hendricks
- Patrick Kruger
- George Linde
- Kevin Mafaka
- David Miller
- Anrich Nortje
- Ngaba Peter
- Ryan Rickelton
- Tabraiz Shamsi
- Andile Simelane
- Rassie van der Dussen

Key Highlights

- Pakistan's white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan returns after being rested during the Zimbabwe series, along with Babar Azam, Naseem Shah, and Shaheen Shah Afridi.
- Pakistan last won a bilateral T20 series against South Africa at home in February 2021 (2-1) and then followed it with a series victory in South Africa (3-1) in April 2021.
- Heinrich Klaasen will lead South Africa in place of regular captain Aiden Markram.
- Captain Mohammad Rizwan emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum, saying, "The return of Babar, Naseem, and Shaheen adds strength to the squad, and we look forward to challenging South Africa in their home conditions."

PHF announces 2nd COAS inter-club hockey championship from Dec 20



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has announced to start the 2nd Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) inter-club hockey championship from December 20 for the renaissance and promotion of the national sport and raw talent.

Addressing a press conference at the National Hockey Stadium here on Monday, PHF Secretary Rana Mujahid said that as many as 800 club will participate in the championship across the country, adding that the registration process will be held between December 11 and 15 while the scrutiny will be undertaken by the provincial hockey association till December 18.

Rana Mujahid, who was flanked by Pakistan Men's hockey head-coach Tahir Zaman, Olympians Asif Bajwa and Anjum Saeed at the press conference, said the final of the 2nd COAS Inter-Club hockey championship will be played on February 15, 2025.

The PHF Secretary said the COAS inter-club hockey championship will be held in four stages and district level competitions will be held from December 20 to January 5 in the first stage while the divisional and regional level matches will be conducted from January 8 -13. The third-stage competitions will see the teams compete at the provincial level from January 15 to January 22 and the 10 club will compete at the national level in the fourth and last stage of the COAS championship.

He further elaborated that four teams from Punjab, two each from Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) while one each from Baluchistan, Islamabad, Azad Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) will qualify for the national level last stage of the inter-club championship and all matches of the last stage will be played at National Hockey Stadium, Lahore.

Thanking Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir for his patronage of Pakistan hockey, PHF Secretary Rana Mujahid said the 2nd COAS inter-club hockey championship is an endeavor to discover raw talent among the youth of Pakistan so that these young players could serve the cause of hockey in future.



FAISALABAD: Players are in action during second semi final football match during second All Pakistan Three Legends Football Cup at Railway Ground in the city. Photo: Online

53rd HANGOR Day

LAHORE: Ex-Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Abdul Aziz Mirza addressing the audience on 53rd HANGOR Day at PN War College on Monday.



Pakistan Navy Celebrates 53rd HANGOR Day In Pakistan Navy War College

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Navy celebrated 53rd HANGOR Day to commemorate the historic event in which Pakistan Navy Submarine HANGOR sank Indian Navy Frigate KHUKRI and crippled INS KIRPAN during the 1971 war in a spectacular display of naval warfare. To pay special tribute, Pakistan Navy observes 9th December as HANGOR Day, a reminder of the unmatched courage and unwavering commitment demonstrated by Submarine

HANGOR during the war. This year, an impressive ceremony was held at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore. Former Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Abdul Aziz Mirza (Retd) graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Submarine HANGOR remains a symbol of pride for Pakistan Navy. Her gallant action during 1971 war was not only a remarkable tactical achievement that resulted in the sinking of Indian Navy's Frigate but also effectively thwarted and marginalized Indian aggression, particu-

larly on the Western front. The event holds a distinguished place in naval history as the first and only successful kill by a conventional submarine since World War II.

On the occasion, Vice Admiral Ahmed Tasnim (Retd), who served as the Commanding Officer of Submarine HANGOR during the operation, paid rich tribute to the valiant crew for their service in defending the motherland. He highlighted that HANGOR is a luminous chapter in Pakistan Navy's

history and will always be remembered. He also elaborated on the factors that contributed to the development of extraordinary leadership skills among all ranks and emphasized their significance in leading the nation during times of adversity.

Pakistan Navy Submarine HANGOR was the first of the Daphne Class submarines acquired from France. Commissioned in 1969, it served Pakistan Navy with honour until its decommissioning in 2006. In recognition of their bravery, the

valiant crew of HANGOR was awarded four Sitara-e-Jurat, six Tamgha-e-Jurat, and sixteen Intiazi Asnaad. To honour its legacy, the submarines being jointly manufactured by Pakistan and China have been named HANGOR Class submarines.

The ceremony was attended by a large number of serving and retired PN officers, CPOs/Sailors, Navy civilians, MARSEW participants, faculty members from various public and private universities, and students from Bahria College, Lahore.

PM reaffirms Pakistan's support for Lebanon's sovereignty, integrity

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday, condemning in the strongest terms of Israel's military aggression against Lebanon, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

During a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister of Lebanon Najib Mikati the prime minister welcomed the ceasefire agreement for Lebanon and called for a similar one for the people of Palestine.



Noting the brotherly and warm relations between Lebanon and Pakistan, the prime minister stated that the entire Pakistani nation stood

in solidarity with the people of Lebanon during these challenging times.

In this spirit, he noted, Pakistan provided humanitarian

assistance to its brothers and sisters in Lebanon and stood ready to provide all possible support in the future as well.

Both leaders exchanged notes on the evolving situation in Syria. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sought Mr. Mikati's personal intervention and support in facilitating the immediate evacuation of Pakistani nationals, currently stranded in Syria through Beirut.

Prime Minister Mikati thanked the Prime Minister for Pakistan's unflinching support and principled position on Israel's military aggression against Lebanon.

He noted that this exemplified the warm and brotherly ties between the two nations.

He assured the Prime Minister that Lebanon would wholeheartedly welcome Pakistani nationals from Syria and extend all possible support to them in their safe return home.

Thereafter, the prime minister spoke to Pakistan's Ambassadors in Syria and Lebanon and instructed them to extend all possible assistance and cooperation to the stranded Pakistanis in Syria and facilitate their safe return home.

FBR to ban bringing commercial quantities of goods from abroad

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has decided to ban bringing commercial quantities of goods from abroad, sources said. But individuals would still be allowed to bring mobile phones for personal use.

Any items valued at over \$1,200 would be considered commercial trade. All mobile phones except for one would be confiscated. Even if extra

items were declared with duty, taxes, and penalties paid, they would not be cleared.

Such regulations are designed to prevent the importation of goods for commercial purposes disguised as personal luggage.

Sources added that the FBR has prepared amendments to the Baggage Rules 2006 and seeking input from stakeholders. A seven-day period has been allocated for feedback, with any



late submissions being ignored. Stakeholders were invited to submit recommendations regarding

the amendments within seven days; proposals received after the stipulated period would not be accepted.

If no significant alterations are made during the period, the proposed regulations would be enacted through a gazette notification.

Travellers bringing items valued more than above mentioned bracket would be required to pay the relevant duties, taxes, and penalties to clear them.

Omar Ayub hints at starting civil disobedience movement

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub on Monday hinted at proceeding ahead with party founder Imran Khan's call for starting a movement of civil disobedience if the government didn't meet the demands put forward by the imprisoned former premier.

Speaking to media in Peshawar, Ayub said Pakistan was under the siege. He said unarmed people of Pakistan were not safe from the wrath of the state.

"The negotiations committee of the



PTI will try to persuade the government to redress our matters, otherwise we will start a civil disobedience movement," he added.

Faisal Vawda's Word of Caution

Earlier, Senator Faisal Vawda alleged that the PTI's call for civil disobedience was a strategy to pressurise proceed-

ings against former spymaster Faiz Hameed.

Vawda met MQM leaders during a visit to the party's central office in Bahadurabad, Karachi on Sunday.

He also criticised the alleged mismanagement by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, declaring that lawlessness would not be tolerated.

Vawda claimed that the PTI's civil disobedience call was timed to coincide with Faiz Hameed's case proceedings but noted that the hearing might begin earlier.

He urged the PTI to reform its approach and protect its founder, emphasising that his most genuine supporters are his sisters.

PM emphasizes stronger Pak-Qatar trade, investment ties



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has highlighted the strengthening economic ties between Pakistan and Qatar, emphasizing the potential for enhanced bilateral trade and investment.

"I am waiting for His Highness (Emir of Qatar)'s visit to Pakistan that will promote brotherly relations and convert the relations to the level, where we seek investments for mutually beneficial projects," the PM said while addressing the National Day of Qatar reception hosted here by the Qatari Embassy.

The PM said the Emir of Qatar was very keen and committed to promote investments in Pakistan as during his last visit to Qatar, the latter had productive meetings that garnered fruitful discussions.

Shehbaz Sharif spotlighted the fact that Qatar was very forthcoming in encouraging Pakistani youth highly skilled in information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI). "We are making a holistic program to send them (Pakistani skilled-youth) to Qatar and they will be great ambassadors of Pakistan in Qatar," he added.

He said with the commitment that these bonds of friendship between the two brotherly nations were unreach-

able, and both the nations would together further strengthen their bilateral relations.

PM Shehbaz Sharif felicitated the nation and Emir of State of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on their national day and praised the young and dynamic leadership of the Emir for remarkable progress made by the country.

The prime minister underscored that Pakistan and Qatar were two brotherly nations sharing fraternal bonds. "The FIFA World Cup successful hosting speaks volume of commitment and energy of His Highness," he said.

The prime minister also extended his gratitude to the Emir of State of Qatar and his sister Sheikh Al-Mayassa Bint Hamad Al Thani for facilitating successful and remarkable hosting of the exhibition titled "Manzar: Art and Architecture of Pakistan from the 1940s to Today" inaugurated by him at the National Museum of Qatar.

The PM while winding up his speech provided the update on his recent telephonic interaction with his Lebanese counterpart who assured his all-out support for safe evacuation of some 250 stranded Pakistani pilgrims in Damascus through land route.

China calls for political solution to restore stability in Syria



News Desk

BELJING: A Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson on Monday called on relevant parties to act in the fundamental interests of the Syrian people and find a political solution to restore stability in Syria as soon as possible.

In response to a question during a daily briefing that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ruling has ended and a new government is about to be established, how China views

the current situation in Syria and whether it will establish contact with the new government, Mao Ning said that China is closely following developments in Syria and hopes that all relevant parties will act in the best interests of the Syrian people and quickly find a political solution to restore stability in Syria as soon as possible.

Responding to a question on how China views the future of Syria, Mao said that the future and destiny of Syria should be determined by the Syrian people themselves.

"We hope that all relevant parties, with a sense of responsibility for the long-term and fundamental interests of the Syrian people, can quickly find a political solution to restore stability and order," said Mao.

DPM expresses govt's full support for AJK's socioeconomic development



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday met with the current and former Prime Ministers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The Deputy Prime Minister

expressed the Government's full support for socioeconomic development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, a Foreign Office news release said.

During the meeting, development projects in AJK were discussed.