

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
پی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہے  
مہنگے کانوں سے بچو صحابہ نے عرض  
کیا یا رسول اللہ! وہ کیا ہیں؟ پی کریم صلی  
اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ اللہ کے ساتھ شکر  
کرنا اور دوسروں کی جان لیوا باتوں کو نہ  
کرنا ہے، سو کہنا، تم کمال کا ہے، جنگ  
کے دن پیچھے پھرتا اور پاک دامن خائف مومن  
مورتوں کو تمہارا ہے۔  
(6857) حدیث صحیحہ  
Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited



### G7 ready to support political transition in Syria

The G7 said a political transition after the end of Bashar al-Assad's 24-year authoritarian rule had to ensure "respect for the rule of law, universal human rights, including women's rights, the protection of all Syrians, including religious and ethnic minorities, transparency and accountability".



### KSE-100 gained over 3,000 points to cross 114,000 mark

The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) maintained its bullish momentum as it closed in a green zone on Thursday. The KSE-100 index gained 3,370.29 points, or 3.04 percent to settle at 114,180.51 points, from 110,810.22 points on the last trading day at the stock market. Analysts at Topline Securities attributed the improved sentiments to a significant decline in T-bill auction yields.

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## Safely returned

LAHORE: A group of 81 Pakistanis, out of 300 who were stranded in Syria, safely returned to Lahore.



## Pakistanis stranded in Syria return home

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A group of 81 Pakistanis, out of 300 who were stranded in Syria, have safely returned to Lahore.

As per details, the group, which was part of around 300 Pakistani pilgrims in Syria, travelled from the Syrian border to Beirut Airport and then flew to Dubai before finally arriving in Islamabad.

According to one of the returnees, Salman, the group was residing in the suburbs of Damascus. He lauded the PM Shehbaz's contacts with the Lebanese government for their safe return.

Salman also thanked the Pakistani authorities for the cooperation at the embassy in Beirut, however, all the Pakistanis returned bore the expenses of their travel from Syria to Lebanon themselves, he said.

Earlier, around 350 Pakistani nationals including 245 pilgrims, who were stranded in Syria, crossed the Lebanon border.

Hundreds of Pakistani pilgrims are still trapped in Syria following the crisis triggered by the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's government.

The Foreign Office said in a statement that under the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, the Embassy of Pakistan in Damascus facilitated the repatriation process.

Deputy Head of Mission in Syria Umar Hayat accompanied the Pakistani nationals to the border, as Deputy Head of Mission in Beirut, Nawab Adil, received fellow citizens in Lebanon.

PM Shehbaz Sharif on Monday reached out to his Lebanese counterpart Najib Mikati, seeking urgent help in the immediate evacuation of Pakistani nationals stranded in Syria.

PM Shehbaz personally contacted PM Mikati, requesting his support in facilitating the safe return of Pakistani nationals stranded in Syria through Beirut.

## 'OICCI report highlights significant improvement in foreign investor confidence': PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed satisfaction over the recent report by Overseas Investors Chambers of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), which highlighted a significant improvement in foreign investors' confidence in Pakistan.

According to the report, foreign investors' confidence in Pakistan has increased, the business-friendly environment in the country has improved while the international perception in this regard has shifted from this regard had significantly improved from negative 10% to positive 31% which is highly encouraging, the prime minister said in a press statement issued by the PM Office.



Further, the prime minister pointed out that according to the report, the employment opportunities in Pakistan had increased, the manufacturing sector growth also surged from 2% to 6%, whereas, the services sector growth also witnessed a sharp increase from 7% to 30%, marking a significant success.

The prime minister noted that sales of cement, auto sector, fertilizer and petroleum products had also increased.

These outcomes are a positive message for the investors at the international level, he said adding that the report reflected

that Pakistan was a hopeful and trusted destination for investment.

The prime minister emphasized that during the previous few months, the confidence of foreign investors in Pakistan had significantly improved as the country posted record exports and inflow of foreign remittances.

He expressed the government's resolve to provide all possible relief to the people on priority and said that the benefits of the government's improved economic policies and the hard work of the economic team had begun to materialize.

## Tarar reaches Istanbul to represent Pakistan in Stratcom Summit



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attallah Tarar on Thursday arrived in Istanbul, Turkey on a three-day visit.

He will represent Pakistan at Stratcom Summit 2024 being held in Istanbul. During his stay in Istanbul, the minister for information will meet the Head of Media and Communications of Turkish Presidency, Prof. Fahrettin Altun.

He will also visit TRT World Headquarters and Albayrak Media Group.

During his visit, the federal minister will also hold meetings with DG International Broadcast and CEO Albayrak Media Group.

## Syrian people have right to decide future sans foreign interference: FO

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said that it is the right of the Syrian people to determine their own future and make decisions about their destiny which any foreign interference or external imposition should not determine.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch made these comments in light of the current situation in Syria after rebels ousted Syrian president Bashar al-Assad in a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and its allies, which brought a spectacular end to the five-decade-rule.

Following Assad's ouster, Sharaa's fighters took power in Syria and appointed Mohammed al-Bashir to lead an interim administration until March.

"We are following developments in Syria and are

concerned about the escalation in violence. We express full support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria," Baloch said during weekly press briefing on Thursday.

Baloch said that Islamabad has always supported the efforts

aimed at finding a comprehensive solution to the crisis in Syria. Expressing Pakistan's concerns at the Israeli aggression, illegal seizure and widespread destruction in Syria, Baloch said this assault on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria is a grave breach of international law.

"We express support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and reject Israeli acquisition of territory by force. We reaffirm our support for the UN Security Council Resolution 497, which declares Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights null and void and without international legal effect," said the spokesperson.

Regarding the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis from Syria, the spokesperson said that the foreign ministry and Pakistan's missions in Syria and Lebanon remained actively engaged in facilitating the process.

"Around 475 Pakistanis including around 250 zaireen have crossed the Syrian border into Lebanon. They will be transferred from Beirut to Islamabad. We appreciate the support extended by the Government of Lebanon in facilitating the safe return of the stranded Pakistani nationals from Syria," said Baloch.

## Imran, Bushra formally charged in Toshakhana case



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A special court in Islamabad has charged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in the Toshakhana-II case.

Khan was produced before the court, while Bibi appeared with her lawyer. Both pleaded not guilty.

The case, initially investigated by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), was transferred to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) following amendments to the NAB Ordinance.

The FIA submitted the charge sheet to the court in September 2024, after completing its investigation.

The court has summoned prosecution witnesses to record their statements on December 18. This marks a significant development in the ongoing Toshakhana case.

## SC judge questions legitimacy of trying civilians under armed forces' discipline

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail raised questions over the legitimacy of trying civilians under the armed forces' disciplinary framework.

His remarks came during the hearing of intra-court appeals against military courts' decisions.

The seven-member constitutional bench of Supreme Court conducted the hearing.

The bench was led by Justice Aminuddin Khan. Other members of the bench included Justice Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan.

Senior lawyer Khawaja Haris represented the federal government in the case.

During the hearing, Justice Musarrat Hilali said that the copies of FIRs of those detained by the military courts were not provided to the Supreme Court. Justice Jamal Khan

Mandokhail gave remarks that the entire case revolved around the Article 8.

"How a civilian can be tried under the discipline of armed forces," questioned Justice Mandokhail.

He remarked that the discipline of agriculture department would be applicable if a person is employed in the same department.

"Will it not be the violation of Article 8 to bring a civilian in the military trial," Justice Mandokhail remarked.

Advocate Khawaja Haris said that civilians can be tried under Army Act in some specific cases.

Earlier on Monday, the constitutional bench had dismissed the federal government's plea seeking permission for the military courts to announce verdicts of civilians' cases.

"If we give permission to the military courts to announce verdicts, it will amount to recognising the authority of military courts," contended Justice Musarrat Hilali.

## Madressah registration bill has become law, claims JUI-F chief Fazl

Correspondent

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The madressah registration bill has become an Act after 10 days passed following President Asif Ali Zardari's objection to the legislation, Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Thursday.

"The bill has already become an Act, and if there are no signatures for 10 days, does it not automatically convert into an act?" he said at a press conference in Dera Ismail Khan.

He claimed that the Societies Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2024 "is now an Act" and pointed out that when former President Arif Alvi did not sign it, a notification was still issued.

The JUI-F chief explained that the Senate passed the bill



before being presented in the National Assembly. He criticised the "unnecessary complications" surrounding the issue, questioning why the signing of the bill has been delayed despite the constitutional amendments being finalised.

Conversations had taken place with President Asif Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal and there was consensus during talks with PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he said and noted that both the PML-N and the PPP were involved from the government's side.

# Ghazi Kashmir Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh 'mountain of perseverance': Sardar Attique

**Bureau Report**

RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, on the occasion of the forty-sixth (46th) death anniversary of the late Ghazi Kashmir Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh, a renowned leader of the Muslim Conference and the Kashmir Independence and Accession Movement for Pakistan and a long-time associate of Quaid-e-Millat and Mujahid e Awwal, has said in a message that the late Ghazi Kashmir was a mountain of perseverance in politics whose entire life was surrounded by association with the Muslim Conference.

The role of the late Ghazi Kashmir Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh in the struggle of Kashmiris for independence and the movement for accession to Pakistan is a golden chapter in the history of



the state.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that Ghazi Kashmir Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh is counted among the ideo-

logically inclined companions of Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas (RA) and Mujahid-e-Awwal Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan (RA)

whose sacrifices have given the people of Azad Kashmir respect, dignity and a system.

He said that Ghazi Kashmir endured the hardships of imprisonment many times in his life but did not accept any pressure in the face of oppression and oppression and played an important role in the development of ideological, movement and political role by taking the lead in the war of communities and tribes within the free region. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that Ghazi Kashmir Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh was an effective voice of Kashmiris against Dogra tyranny.

When Kashmiris started their political and ideological struggle under the leadership of Rais-ul-Ahrrar Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas (RA) and under the platform of Muslim Conference, the late Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh was one of the leaders of the vanguard of this movement.

## Pakistan Peoples Party accuses India of 'black laws' in occupied Kashmir

**Bureau Report**



ISLAMABAD/KOTLI: President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that India is an oppressor country and wants to seize the properties of Kashmiris under the guise of black laws and destroy them economically and settle RSS goons with Hindus. India and Israel have the same mindset. We strongly condemn Indian actions and appeal to the international community to take notice of India's continuous violations of international laws. He said that India has turned occupied Kashmir into a prison where serious human rights violations are being committed. He has called on the United Nations and international human rights organizations to stop the ongoing atrocities in occupied Kashmir and play their role in giving Kashmiris their right to self-determination. He said that serious human rights violations are being committed by Indian troops in the occupied territory to suppress the struggle of Kashmiris for their right to self-determination.

## Potential of 26th Amendment depends on balance, transparency, and institutional unity: Experts

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The 26th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan has the potential to address longstanding challenges, provided that transparency, inclusivity, and institutional harmony are prioritized. While debate is inevitable in constitutional developments, and there is a critical balance between judicial independence and parliamentary oversight, it is essential that the amendment be critically evaluated to ensure the development of law, constitutional principles, and effective justice delivery.

Legal practitioners and scholars noted this during a roundtable titled "The 26th Amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan: Significance and Impact," held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad.

The session, chaired by Ahmer Bilal Soofi, advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, was addressed by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Jam Muhammad Aslam, Ministry of Law and Justice, Syed Ahmad Hassan Shah, advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, Hafiz Ahmed Waqas, Shariah Academy, International Islamic University, Islamabad, and Dr Shahzad Iqbal Sham, research fellow, IPS.

## GC University Faisalabad, Int'l Seminar on Humanization and Anthropology

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Building a positive character of students in universities and awareness of anthropology is a guarantee of important positive changes in society. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rauf Azam

A one-day international seminar on the tradition of humanization and anthropology in Urdu poetry and literature was organized by the Department of Urdu, Government College University Faisalabad. The seminar was presided over by Vice Chancellor, Government College University Faisalabad, Prof. Dr. Rauf Azam.

The chief guest of the seminar was Prof. Dr. Taqi Abidi, who came specially from Canada. Prof. Dr. Khawaja Ikramuddin participated in the seminar online from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. Other speakers included Prof. Dr. Rashid Hameed, Prof. Dr. Humayun Abbas Shams, Dr. Tariq Hashmi and Dr. Sadaf Naqvi. Head of the Urdu Department, Dr. Rabia Sarfaraz said that such seminars and conferences are very important in shaping the personality of the young generation and the Urdu Department has organized five international and national seminars from April to December this year, the main objective of which is to promote the tradition of dialogue among the young generation.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Rauf Azam, while highlighting the importance of humanization and anthropology in society, termed it an important need of the hour. He said that we need to take stock of ourselves so that we can learn to respect the opinions of others by coming out of the circle of our own ego and selfishness. Professor Dr. Taqi Abidi, while presenting examples of humanization and anthropology from Iqbal's poetry, laid special emphasis on the understanding of Iqbal's words in the present era.

## NUML Hosts Special Anti-Drug Awareness Campaign in Collaboration with ANF

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages hosted a significant Anti-Drug Awareness Campaign today, which is part of the collaborative effort of ANF and HEC to launch Anti-Drug Awareness in academic institutes.

The event, aimed at raising awareness about the alarming rise of drug abuse among youth, included an insightful lecture delivered by Director General ANF Major General Abdul Moeed HI(M), a proud NUML alumnus, and an awareness walk. DG ANF was the chief guest at the event and spoke passionately on the theme, "Drugs: A Menace; How to Counter It." Addressing a large gathering of students and faculty, he expressed deep concern over the increasing prevalence of drug use among the youth, who constitute 65% of Pakistan's population.



## Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Visitors take keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition by Nazia Ejaz, title "Ghosts of Place" at Tanzara Art Gallery, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Hands Organization is doing social service and serving the suffering humanity in all over Pakistan

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Secretary Services South Punjab Amjad Shoaib Tareen has said that Hands Organization is doing social service and serving the suffering humanity in all over Pakistan. Serving God's creation gives success and peace of mind in this world and the hereafter.

On this occasion, Executive Manager South Punjab Mrs. Sadia Nawaz said that our aim is to serve the suffering humanity and bring prosperity to their homes and spread smiles on their faces. The organization is doing countless such projects all over Pakistan. Whenever the people of Pakistan needed us, we worked hard.

On this occasion, the Head HR of Hands Organization, Huma



Siddiqui, gave details of the ongoing projects and expenses across Pakistan

through a projector. On this occasion, former MNA Sheikh Tariq Rashid,

former MPA Usman Bhatti, Malik Arshad Iqbal Bhatta, former MBA, Rana Tahir, former MPA Malik Asif Rafique, Rajwana Nader Khan and others also spoke. Finally, awards and commemorative shields were distributed among the workers and special representatives. The entire Mainstream team participated enthusiastically, Madam Rizwana Malik Ahmed Bhatti and a large number of dignitaries of the city participated. (Caption)

Amjad Shoaib Tareen, Mrs. Sadia Nawaz, Ajmal Khan Chandio, Huma Siddiqui, Sheikh Tariq Rashid, Asif Rafique Rajwana, Usman Bhatti, Arshad Iqbal Bhatta, Muhammad Majid, Rana Tahir and others are addressing the National Annual Award Distribution Ceremony of Multan Hands Organization.

# 4th International Conference on Economic issues held at Women University Multan

**Quratul Ain Asim**

MULTAN: The Department of Economics Women University Multan opened its three days, 4th annual International Conference on management of the Pakistan economy themed "Economic Issues and Sustainable Development" inaugurated by Vice Chancellor, Emerson University Prof Dr Muhammad Ramzan and Vice Chancellor WUM Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha at Katchery Campus. The open-

ing ceremony saw prominent academics, researchers, social scientists, practitioners, policymakers, and great minds from the Pakistani diaspora gather at WUM to discuss issues vital to sustainable development in Pakistan. The conference opened with welcome remarks by VC Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha.

The guest speakers session featured engaging presentations on diverse topics aligned with the conference theme. Mahmood Ahmad discussed the impact of

good health on low back pain in females, followed by Nauman Abbasi's framework for sustainable supply chain performance. Other notable presentations included insights on business sustainability by Hassan Bucha, the role of artificial intelligence in sustainable development by Muhammad Omer Chaudhry, and a dynamic analysis of financial development and macroeconomic performance in Asian economies by Muhammad Zahir Faridi. A vibrant Q&A session

facilitated interaction between speakers and attendees. Parallel concurrent sessions were held at different venues. Notable presentations included research on gender-inclusive rural transformation, financial stability in Pakistan, and the interplay of resource rents and innovation. Each session concluded with a Q&A, remarks by session chairs. Focal person Chairperson Department of Economics, Dr. Hina Ali said the core objective of this conference is to foster a



platform for meaningful discussions and knowledge exchange. We aim to explore how the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) can serve as a driving force for positive economic change in Pakistan. At the end VC Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha

and VC Prof Dr Muhammad Ramzan distributed shields among the participants of the conference.

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:34 am
Zohr	12:01 pm
Asr	3:22 pm
Maghrib	5:00 pm
Isha	6:29 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 445122
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
Cannt 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

**CBD Punjab completes sewerage connections**

City Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA) also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), has completed major connections and made Disposal Station One fully functional as part of the Walton Road upgradation project.

Work on Disposal Station One was temporarily halted following directives from the Lahore High Court (LHC) and the Government of Punjab to combat smog.

With the relaxation of smog restrictions, construction activities have resumed in full swing and the critical backfilling process has commenced.

The disposal stations backfill, a technical and intricate job, is progressing in line with standard engineering practices and is expected to be completed soon.

**Naunehal Assembly meeting**

**Quaid-i-Azam exemplifies discipline, integrity: Sadia Rashid**

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Quaid-i-Azam embodied discipline and integrity in a truly practical way. Through his leadership, principles, and character, he not only inspired the nation's pursuit of freedom but also imparted vital life lessons. His life stands as the ultimate example for us as a nation. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, shared these views during her address at the Hamdard Naunehal Assembly meeting in Karachi. The event, held at the Bait-ul-Hikmah Auditorium in Madinat-al-Hikmah, was titled "Quaid-e-Azam: A Practical Example of Discipline." The chief guest for the occasion was Prof. Dr. Syed Jafar Ahmed, General Secretary of the Pakistan Historical Society.

She further said "Quaid-i-Azam's leadership taught us that a divided nation can never achieve progress. For a nation to develop, unity, faith and discipline are essential. Today, it is crucial to incorporate the principles of Quaid-i-Azam into your life—value time, embrace honesty, and foster discipline."

"If we adhere to these principles, nothing can prevent Pakistan from advancing on the path of development.

Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said was deeply inspired by Quaid-e-Azam's character and philosophy, and he made punctuality a cornerstone of his life," she added.

Prof. Dr. Jafar Ahmed said: "Nations are shaped within schools, where the process of nation-building truly begins. Quaid-e-Azam stands as the greatest figure for the Muslims of the 20th century, having achieved the creation of Pakistan through legal arguments."

Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said established a valuable tradition through the Hamdard Naunehal Assembly, offering children a chance to participate in an assembly-like experience.

"As you grow and eventually take on leadership roles, you will remember the contributions of Hakim Mohammed Said and Ms. Sadia Rashid in your lives," he added.

Young speakers from various schools paid heartfelt tribute to the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam. They reaffirmed their commitment to serve the nation with dedication and work towards fulfilling the vision of the founding fathers by strengthening Pakistan. The event concluded with students from Hamdard Public School and Hamdard Village School reciting Dua-i-Said.



**National Day of Kenya**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Productio Rana Tanveer Hussain, Ambassador of Kenya to Pakistan Lt Gen (Ret) Peter M Njir, and others cutting the cake during 61st National Day ceremony of Kenya, at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**Education cannot be treated as a commodity amidst the education emergency with 26million out of schools**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: "Education cannot be treated as a commodity delegated to private sector rather it is a fundamental right guaranteed by state, for which it must be held accountable", stressed speakers at a policy dialogue titled "Citizen's Agenda for Gender-Responsive, Inclusive, and Resilient Education" organized by Society for Access to Quality Education (SAQE) during the

15th Annual Convention. The theme was "People's Agenda for Transforming Education; from Silos to Systems".

Zehra Arshad, Executive Director, SAQE highlighted that addressing the education emergency requires inclusive policy planning with every stakeholder meaningfully engaged and guided by up-to-date gender-disaggregated data. She stated, "Political will remains central to ensuring access to quality

education and urged the adoption of a 'Charter of Education' to build consensus on long-term education policies." She called on the government to commit to scaling up education financing to a minimum of 4% of GDP, compared to the current 1.9%, and significantly increase development budget allocations to catalyze inclusive education transformation.

Harris Khaliq, President of Board of SAQE, Muhammad Ali Kemal, Chief SDGs, Plan-

ning Commission,

Dr Shahid Soroya, Director General, Pakistan Institute of Education, Sana Isa, Coordination and Implementation Expert & Lead, Gender and Safeguards, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Abid Gill, Deputy Chief Advisor, JICA AQUAL, Dr Faisal Bari, Dean School of Education and

Khadija Bakhtiyar, CEO, Teach Pakistan also spoke and highlighted the issues.

**IIUI and Karwan-E-Ilm Foundation Sign MoU to Offer Scholarships to Students**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and Karwan-e-Ilm Foundation, on Thursday, aimed at providing scholarships to academically able and deserving students of the university, as well as creating opportunities for their professional growth.

The MoU signing ceremony was held at IIUI's new campus, where Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, President IIUI, and Khalid Irshad Sufi, Executive Director of Karwan-e-Ilm Foundation, signed the document. The agreement underscores to support five financially needy students who demonstrate exceptional academic performance. Additionally, the MoU includes provisions for financial and logistical assis-



tance to differently-abled students, covering hostel and other associated requirements. Both parties also agreed to organize career counseling seminars through collaborative efforts.

During the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed expressed gratitude on behalf of the IIUI community. He highlighted the transparent

scholarship scrutiny system in place at the university and emphasized the importance of such initiatives in building the society.

Speaking on the occasion, Khalid Irshad Sufi shared that Karwan-e-Ilm Foundation was among the pioneers in initiating scholarships in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission. He reiter-

ated the foundation's dedication to providing merit-based scholarships as a guardian of students' educational journeys.

Earlier, Nuzhat Zareen, Director of University Advancement and Financial Aid (UAFA), briefed attendees about the office's activities, focusing on scholarships and institutional linkages. Dr. Abdul Rashid, Director General of the International Institute of Islamic Economics (IIIE) and Head of the Scholarship Committee, elaborated on the strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) followed in scholarship selection and the robust merit criteria employed during the process.

The ceremony was also attended by Dr. Sajid Mehmood, Vice Chairman of the IIUI's Scholarship Award Committee, members of the Karwan-e-Ilm Foundation delegation, and officials from IIUI.

**PML-N's Azhar Naeem sworn-in as Vice President of Chaklala Cantonment**

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: PML-N Member Canton Board Malik Azhar Naeem became the Vice President Chaklala, President Cantonment Board Brigadier Ahmed Nawaz took oath from him in a dignified ceremony, Cantonment Board Chaklala officers and all board members participated in the ceremony. Minority member Alexandrolim also took the oath of office, according to the details of the Muslim League Under the agreement, Jamaat-e-Islami Vice President Chaklala Cantonment Board Khaled Mahmood Marzane had already resigned from his position.

CEO Chaklala Amir Rashid, Member of the National Assembly Malik Abrar Ahmad, Member of the Provincial Assembly Malik Mansoor, Members of Kent Board Chaudhry Chingiz Khan, Raja Irfan Imtiaz, Chaudhry Khurram Siddique, Raja Pervez Akhtar, Mohammad Jameel, Khalid Mahmoud Mirza, Yasir Qureshi, Chaudhry Numan Shaukat, Chaudhry Shahzada Ahmad, Ajmir Khan were also present. 6 members of Muslim League-N, Jamaat-e-Islami were also present in the Chaklala Kent Board House. 3 members, 2 members of PTI while one is an independent member, the agreement of PML-N and Jamaat-e-Islami. According to Jamaat-e-Islami, George Shahzad, a minority member of the cant board, also resigned after the expiry of his term.

**AIOU Provides Free Education to Persons with Disabilities: Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: "Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is making every possible effort to bring prosperity and convenience to the lives of persons with disabilities. To help them lead dignified and successful lives, the university offers free education from matriculation to PhD level," said the Vice-Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, in his statement on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Dr. Nasir further stated that the university has also established an "E-Learning Accessibility Center" in its library specifically for visually impaired students. This state-of-the-art center is equipped with specialized computers, headphones, and advanced software, enabling students with disabilities to easily access HEC's digital library, e-books, research articles, journals, and theses.

It is a matter of pride that AIOU is the only public-sector university in the country providing free education to persons with disabilities up to the postgraduate level. Additionally, various scholarships are available for students with disabilities, supported by a dedicated fund allocated in the university's annual budget.

**NACTA announces result of its first-ever 60-seconds reel competition**



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Counter Terrorism Authority announced its first-ever reels competition, 2024. The theme of the competition was "Cultivating a Culture of Peace." Contestants from across the country participated by submitting their reels to NACTA. Jury to select finalists consisted of distinguished professionals with recognized expertise in the field of video production.

Sharing her views on the occasion, Director General Communications and Outreach Branch, Saleha Zakir Shah stated that the youth of Pakistan has always demonstrated their talent in every field and have proven their creative potential. She further mentioned that NACTA is not only promoting the message of peace but it also provides an opportunity to the youth to showcase their skills in front of larger audience.

Judges for the competition included Assistant Professor Dr. Aqeel Ahmed, PTV Producer Matti-ur-Rehman, and Assistant Director of the Punjab Council of the Arts Rawalpindi Division, Muhammad Salman. Deputy Director of the Punjab Council of the Arts, Murree, Anam Khalid, Analyst Haider Abbas, Jr. Analyst Mohammad Idrees Khan, and other professionals from various sectors were also present at the event. As per final results Wasim Ashraf's team from Bhakkar won first place, reel by Munazir Hussain got second whereas Maryam Maheen clinched the third position. The winner will receive prize money of Rs. 75,000, Rs. 60,000 and Rs. 40,000 for first, second and third position respectively.

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# Unpacking the ISPR's Press Release on Faiz

In a brief but fully loaded press release issued on 10th December 2024, the ISPR announced that the process of a Field General Court Martial (FGCM) had been initiated against Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid (Retd) under the provisions of the Pakistan Army Act on several notable charges. Among these, the most intriguing was the allegation that Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid (Retd) was engaged in political activities.

Perhaps ISPR should revisit the press conferences it has conducted over the years. None of these press conferences were strictly confined to professional matters or the operational readiness of the armed forces. Instead, they often revolved around political issues, with the Army visibly siding with one political party or another. These conferences frequently involved either defending the Army's political maneuvering or criticizing the government, parliament, or judiciary for their perceived lack of performance.

Moreover, political maneuvering, whether overt or covert, has long been a pivotal part of the ISI's activities. The institution has been involved in the creation and dissolution of political parties, pressuring political leaders deemed adversarial by the Army to abandon their parties and join others. Instances have also surfaced of Army chiefs dictating decisions to elected prime ministers, including what actions to take and which to avoid.

The wiretapping of prime ministers, presidents, judges, and businessmen, along with the use of these recordings for blackmail to achieve political objectives, is another well-known phenomenon. If political activities are to be considered a chargeable offense, then it would be difficult

to find a general who has not been involved in similar actions.

This, in any case, cannot be termed as an act detrimental to the safety and security of the state if the information was shared within the power corridors of Pakistan and among Pakistani nationals. No matter what the information was, it is implausible to argue that sharing it internally could compromise the safety and security of the state, provided it stayed within trusted circles.

He was also charged with misuse of authority. This is another interesting charge. In fact, the ISI and its operatives allegedly do not adhere to the laws of the land. Over the years, they have been accused of abducting Pakistani citizens—Baloch, Pathans, Sindhis, journalists, politicians, judges, and businessmen—and allegedly torturing, threatening, and harassing their targets without following any judicial process. If misuse of authority were removed from the ISI's modus operandi, the agency might lose much of its feared and hated reputation.

If this charge is being levied against Lt. Gen. Faiz, it raises the question of whether the entire ISI should also be charged with the same crime, as such actions are often systemic rather than individual.

Another charge concerns the use of government resources and causing wrongful losses to individuals during the process. This charge is equally intriguing. Stories have long circulated about generals and brigadiers cultivating relationships with businessmen, industrialists, and

real estate developers to acquire plots and constructed houses for themselves and their relatives. Consider the example of General Bajwa, whose declared wealth reportedly amounted to billions, or General Asim Bajwa, who was revealed to own 15 companies. The list goes on.

We have also seen the public confession of a General \* Aslam Baig admitting to distributing millions of government funds to political parties. If this charge is to be applied, then no Army Chief or general may be free from scrutiny. Like Lt. Gen. Faiz, they too should be investigated, tried, indicted, and punished if found guilty. Additionally, the ISI was accused of being involved in the Mehran bank scandal, in which high-ranking ISI and Army officers were allegedly given large sums of money by Yunus Habib, owner of the Mehran Bank, to deposit the ISI's foreign exchange reserves in his bank.

The next charge against Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid (Retd) that he was involved in events related to creating agitation and unrest, culminating in multiple incidents, including but not limited to the 9th May 2023 incident, allegedly fomenting instability at the behest of and in collusion with vested political interests.

This is perhaps the most absurd charge. Since the inception of Pakistan, the Army leadership and ISI have collaboratively fomented unrest against governments they deemed adversarial, often using their assets. These assets have included religious parties like PAT and TLP, regional and

ethnic parties such as MQM, and mainstream political entities like PML(Q), Istekam-e-Pakistan Party, and Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI).

The 1990 elections are widely believed to have been rigged by the ISI in favor of the IJI, a coalition of nine predominantly right-wing parties, orchestrated under Lieutenant General Hameed Gul. This maneuver was aimed at ensuring the defeat of Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) at the polls.

More recently, during the 2024 elections, allegations surfaced of the ISI and the Army manipulating the electoral process. This reportedly involved discarding Form 45s, announcing fabricated results based on Form 47—a derivative of Form 45—and tampering with the electoral outcome to install their selected individuals in the assemblies by manipulating and engineering the election results.

Interestingly, in all civilized countries, a retired general alleged to be involved in political activities is tried in civilian courts, whereas in authoritarian regimes, such cases are often handled by military courts. The court martial proceedings against Lt. Gen. (Retd) Faiz Hameed appear to have been initiated with a larger purpose in mind. His court martial may serve as a precursor to bringing high-profile political figures under the jurisdiction of military courts, potentially paving the way for a repetition of the military-cum-judicial actions that led to the controversial execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

*Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Retd), Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC. He is currently living in Macomb, Detroit, Michigan*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## 'It is now time for unity,'

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has termed the fall of the Assad regime in Syria a cause for hope in the Middle East, and called for a smooth political transition in which minority rights are respected.

"The UN is totally committed to supporting a smooth transition of power, with an inclusive political process in which the rights of all minorities will be fully respected, and paving the way towards a united sovereign Syria with its territorial integrity fully reestablished," the UN chief told reporters in Pretoria, South Africa, where he met with Government officials in connection with the country's presidency of the G20 group of industrial nations.

"I fully trust Syrian people to be able to choose their own destiny," he added.

"As we speak, we are witnessing the reshaping of the Middle East, with the changes in the correlation of forces among the key regional actors," Guterres said, stressing that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood must be constantly reaffirmed.

"But we also see some signs of hope, and signs of hope mainly coming from the end of the Syrian dictatorship," he added.

The Secretary-General said his Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, is engaging with all the key actors on the way forward, and I fully trust the Syrian people, to be able to choose their own destiny.

Guterres was asked if he thought world leaders understood that 'the Middle East question' must be resolved as the entire region will be affected.

He underlined that the international community has a duty to 'do everything to support the different Syrian leaders' to ensure that they come together and guarantee a smooth and inclusive transition.

"The alternative doesn't make any sense," he said. "Syrians had enough divisions. It's time for unity, and it's time for the reestablishment of its territory."

The UN chief was also asked about Israel's further advancement into the Golan in southwest Syria, which it has occupied for decades, and a response to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly saying that the region will be part of Israel 'for eternity'.

Guterres said 'the concept of eternity' is difficult to define.

He noted that the Golan is occupied by Israel, 'but that occupation is not internationally recognized. And so, I would say that eternity would not solve the problem of the violations of the law'.

Meanwhile, the security situation in Syria remains volatile as Israeli airstrikes and localized hostilities continue to affect many areas, the UN humanitarian affairs office, OCHA, said on Wednesday.

OCHA expressed concern over the risks of explosive ordnance to people moving around the country.

Humanitarian partners have identified more than 50 minefields over the past 10 days, which is curtailing the movement of civilians and impeding the delivery of goods and services.

The UN and partners continue to support humanitarian response across the country and are resuming activities as security conditions allow.



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

## Harnessing youth potential for nation building

Tasawer Hussain

With approximately one third of country's population falling in 15-29 years bracket out of total 64% below 30 years, the coming years will pose serious challenges to governments for harnessing this potential amidst fluctuating economic situation.

As the lesser education and employment opportunities make the youth easily lured by vested interests and extremists to sabotage activities. So, this bulge can only be fruitful if political parties ensure continuity of policies, cordial atmosphere to education and employment and an overall political will for a strong democracy in the country.

Statistics and findings of experts reveal that out of over 60 million young Pakistanis between 15-29 years of age, a vast majority either is illiterate or left schools and colleges prior to reaching 12th standard with a marginal number out of whom more than half still searching for jobs.

Like many other parts of the world, being young in Pakistan is also both exciting and frustrating. The space for young in Pakistani society is vast and full of possibilities if the potential in different sectors of economy is fully exploited. But there are fears as well in view of a major chunk generally being intolerant as recently seen in protests of political parties.

The youth bulge can have positive impact if economy is strong enough to absorb new entrants in the labor force. Otherwise, the idle and frustrated youth would raise the incidence of crime, violence and embrace radical political and religious views.

"Our educated youth is mostly zealous in pursuit of career building and excelling in practical life," stated Prof. Anwaar Ahmad Khan, Former head of National Language Authority. "They become mature once in practical life and like to be productive, if groomed properly. Earning livelihood and leading a respectable life is always their foremost

priority."

"But, when they have limited resources and opportunities amidst growing poverty, they detract from their mission and engage in different unhealthy activities," Prof. Anwar said. "Therefore, we need comprehensive strategies to harness this potential through access to education and employment."

Before exploring the significance of youth involvement in nation-building, the challenges of formulating better strategies and policies must be addressed. For fostering their participation in fruitful activities, we must heed youth's demand of justice and merit in all arena of life.

"Youth are often less constrained by established norms and more open to creative solutions that may lead them to innovative ideas in technology, climate change, education, healthcare and social justice," noted Senior Lawyer Chaudhry Waqas Anjum.

"Democracy also thrives when its citizens especially youth actively engage in political process. But, this needs awareness that emanates from literacy otherwise they can be swayed by any extremist political entity or sectarian factions," he pleaded.

"Empowering them through education, entrepreneurship and employment would help them contribute directly to nation's economic development," Waqas said. "By investing in their skills and fostering a congenial environment they can unlock new opportunities of growth and progress."

After the social media onslaught in recent years, we have seen a bulk of our youth engaging in anti-social, immoral and irresponsible activities. Since, they were not properly educated and trained to use this medium for constructive activities, they not only distracted from their actual goal but also physical and healthy activities.

"Younger generation is always ambitious to exhaust their energies and this craving, previously used to lead them to sports grounds," said Chaudhry Farooq Latif, a sports official. "But, unfortunately

internet, social media and lack of opportunities detracted them from healthy activities."

Mentioning to an old narrative that 'Healthy body keeps mind healthy,' Farooq suggested to engaging youth in healthy activities and referred to Punjab government's steps like training programs, scholarships and leadership initiatives to encourage youth in pursuit of their passion for sports, personal growth, teamwork and excellence.

"Discipline must be our core value in youth upbringing besides their education and employment to properly guide their inclination and thought process," he pleaded. "But when we fail in this, most of young souls fall victim to despair and lured by vested interests."

Youth can be empowered to earn their livelihood and contribute to nation-building if equipped with right skills, opportunities and values. Therefore, skill based education can be a foundation to prepare a job-ready squad who is also adaptable to market demands.

"Promoting global competencies through language skills, digital literacy and cultural exchange programs enables youth to compete in international markets," stated another educationist, Prof. Rao Babar Khalil. "Programs that instill civic values and leadership qualities encourage them to engage in social causes, volunteerism and community development, strengthening social fabric of a nation."

"Investments in science, technology and innovation also prepare youth to compete globally and elevate their country's reputation," he added. "Training in digital skills would also allow them to engage with day-to-day challenges in contemporary style."

Since, youth is our future, harnessing their potential for nation building requires active engagement with them. All our efforts must be diverted to preparing and empowering them to contribute positively within the country and win accolades internationally.

## National Food Security of Pakistan & Role of Balance Fertilizer - II

Rao Hassan Raza / Liaqat Ali Wahla

There is a consensus among researchers that balanced use of fertilizer could increase yields by 40-50%. Mineral fertilizers combined with the use of organic sources (like green manuring, compost, and biofertilizers) are crucial to maintaining soil fertility and nutrient supply at an optimum level for sustaining crop yields and preserving soil health.

Balance fertilizer usage not only provides crops with essential nutrients that help boost growth, health & yields but also, can significantly reduce environmental impact. The International Fertilizer Association (IFA) estimates that mineral fertilizers are responsible for more than half the food produced worldwide, in Pakistan owing to lesser use of the organic fertilizer, the role of inorganic or chemical fertilizers is even more than the world average.

Fertilizers are helping us in boosting crop yields and reducing the gap between current and potential yields. For instance, adequate use of fertilizers coupled with efficient nutrient management can significantly contribute to national food security. Control/ Slow release fertilizers like Boron coated DAP and ZN Coated Urea may further enhance the role of fertilizers in food production. As a leading fertilizer manufacturer of the country, the impact of FFC's alone in helping about 120-150

million people in Pakistan with market share of around 60-70% in phosphorus and around 50% in Nitrogenous fertilizers. It's estimated to cater to the daily dietary requirements of a whopping 120-150 million people of Pakistan.

The United Nations is giving massive priority to food security. Zero Hunger is the second of the total seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The food journey from 'field to fork' is often a lengthy one, and the concept of food security is highly complex. As the population continues to grow, compounded by the challenges of climate instability, the demand for sustainable food solutions has never been more pressing. Fertilizers, an age-old solution, remain at the epicenter of addressing this challenge. However, the future of fertilization hinges not just on its usage, but on its judicious and sustainable application. Balanced fertilizers use improves yields in tandem with quality of the produce. Better nutrition is the key to achieve the desired targets, hence analysis-based fertilizer use is key to success. FFC is providing free of cost soil & water analysis to promote balanced fertilizer use in Pakistan. Capacity building of farmers and stakeholders is another effort of FFC Farm Advisory centers to improve the economic condition of farmers through better and quality yield. Balanced & Responsible fertilizer use not only promises healthier crops, higher yields, and more nutritious food, but also ensures environmental conservation and socio-economic upliftment, painting a brighter, greener, and better future for all.

Promotion of Mountaineering and Trekking in Pakistan

# Mountain panel discusses promotion of Mountaineering and Trekking in Pakistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: 4th International Conference on Adventure and Sports Tourism in Mountain Areas of Pakistan, focused on the "Promotion of Mountaineering and Trekking in Pakistan." Moderated by Abu Zafar Sadiq, President of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, this session featured prominent panelists, including Shehroze Kashif, the youngest Pakistani mountaineer to climb all 14 peaks above 8,000m; Sarbaz Khan, the first Pakistani to achieve the same milestone; Rehmatullah Qureshi, an amateur mountaineer, skier, and head coach of the Alpine Club of Pakistan; and Khalid Mehmood, a trekker, adventure documentary maker, and Head of Explore & Exped. The session concluded with a call for collaborative efforts between the government, private sector, and local communities to position Pakistan as a premier destination for adventure and sports tourism.

The fourth session covered the discussion on 'Mountain Solutions for a Sustainable Future,' and the panelists shared diverse yet relevant ideas and recommendations. The Secretary Department of Tourism (Punjab), Farid Ahmed Tarar, gave a comprehensive



overview of the provincial government's efforts to partner with the private sector, develop alternate tourist destinations in Punjab, and strengthen the destination management of developed mountain sites such as Patriata. Ali Ibrahim, Vice President of Marketing, Communications & Digital Transformation (Hashoo Group), shared the vision of his Group behind local

community participation in the hospitality industry through job creation and skills enhancement. Mahmood Akhtar Cheema, Country Representative (IUCN Pakistan), highlighted the need for sustainable solutions for the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. Shakira Bibi, Representative of Kalasha Culture, expressed the need to promote tourism while ensuring

respect for culture and local ethos. These panel discussions underscored the need for collaborative and innovative approaches to address the challenges facing Pakistan's mountain ecosystems while tapping into their immense tourism potential. The highlight of the event was the award ceremony, recognizing the winners of the Mountain Photography



Competition 2024. The competition, held in professional and amateur categories, received an overwhelming response, with stunning entries showcasing Pakistan's majestic mountain landscapes:  
**Professional Category Winners:**  
1. Asad Sajjad – First Prize  
2. Muzammil Hussain Toori – Second Prize  
3. Muhammad Asmar Hussain – Third Prize  
**Amateur Category Winners:**  
1. Akhtar Zaman – First Prize  
2. Abdullah – Second Prize  
3. Sajid Ali – Third Prize  
On this occasion, high achievers in mountaineering, trekking, and rock

climbing were also awarded medals and shields by the Alpine Club of Pakistan. The event concluded with a vote of thanks, recognizing the contributions of all panelists, guest speakers, and participants for their valuable insights and engaging discussions. As a token of appreciation, souvenirs were presented to the esteemed panelists and guest speakers, acknowledging their efforts in making the event a success. The distribution of these souvenirs symbolized PTDC's gratitude for their commitment to promoting sustainable mountain tourism and fostering innovative solutions for the preservation of Pakistan's majestic mountain ecosystems.

## Indonesian Pavilion at the 6th International Consumer Product Fair, Karachi

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: An Indonesian delegate of 12 business persons from various lines of business are participating in the annual Consumer Product Expo in Karachi, 12-15 December 2024.

The delegates are exhibiting at the Indonesian Pavilion located at the centre of the Hall 5 of the Karachi Expo Centre. Situated at around 60 squaremetre, the Pavilion offers business opportunities for Pakistani agents, distributors and importers of such Indonesian products as: tea, coffee, soap, food and beverages, snacks. The agricultural products are also part of main attraction in the Pavilion, for example: ginger, potatoes, coral gum, and many other.

Indonesian Acting Consul General, Teguh Wiweko, appreciated the commitment and determination of the Indonesian business delegate who visits Karachi and explores the potentials of the Pakistani market.

"We have to admit that there has been gap of communication and less interaction between our two communities. Indonesia is only known for its



CPO (palm oil) in Pakistan. Indeed, we have more than that," stressed Mr. Wiweko. He is convinced the expo will be able to promote greater trade cooperation between the two countries.

In the same occasion, Dr. Ahmad Syofian, Consul for Economic Affairs, highlighted that the Indonesian government supports the participation of the delegates at the Expo. "This is a

breakthrough in our effort to increase business engagement between Indonesia and Pakistan. Let's wait for fruitful result of the expo," continued Syofian.

## Chairman PRCS Advocates Resilient Communities at International Seminar in China

News Desk

GUIYANG, CHINA: Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, proudly represented Pakistan at the International Seminar on Red Cross Resilient Communities, held on December 11-12, 2024, in Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China.

The seminar brought together key officials and leaders from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies from Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, Tajikistan, and Mongolia.

In his opening remarks, His Excellency Mr. He Wei, President of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC), welcomed participants and commended their active involvement in fostering resilience. Highlighting Guizhou's vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, he shared insights on the province's Climate Resilience Model Village initiative and health and livelihood programs aimed at mitigating the suffering of vulnerable communities.

Prominent speakers at the seminar included Mr. Boris Kelecevic, Deputy Head of the Regional Delegation for East Asia at ICRC, Ms. Olga Dzhumueva, Head of the East Asia Regional Delegation for IFRC; and Dr. Luis C. Rodriguez, Lead for Climate and Environmental Crises at the Asia Pacific Regional Office. Discussions focused on sustainable approaches to enhance community resilience, institutional strengthening, and responses to disasters and climate-induced challenges.



## The future in focus

# World is shrinking, the value of truly understanding one another's cultures and histories has never been more crucial



China's diplomatic approach is deeply rooted in peace, mutual respect and the belief in shared prosperity. For decades, the country has pursued a foreign policy of non-alignment affairs, preserve sovereignty and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships. Launched a decade ago as a bold testament to China's commitment to global cooperation, BRI provides a way for countries to strengthen their ties, engage in common development and tackle complex challenges together in an increasingly interconnected world. It does not disappoint.

The 2024 meeting of the Sichuan Belt and Road International People-to-People Friendship Organizations, organized by the China International Friendship Association, assembled a diverse array of countries from all around the world. About 130 representatives from 19 global organizations across 15 countries convened in Sichuan, China, for a significant event honoring the region's cultural heritage, economic potential, and collective aspirations for global unity. The meetings combined cultural

exchange, economic dialogs and youth involvement to strengthen global cooperation. Exhibitions on Sichuan's history and assets showcased the province's cultural richness and economic vibrancy, while discussions covered topics such as mutual understanding, sustainable development and the promotion of youth exchange. The gathering emphasized teamwork aimed to overcome cultural differences to create a better, more connected global community.

The event attracted a spectrum of prestigious organizations, including Anglo-China Understanding, Irish Asia Matters, the 48 Group Club, Association at Antique Nantes-China, and the Pakistan-China Friendship Associations, to name just a few. Also in attendance were influential foreign business representatives, underscoring the multifaceted nature of the dialogue that was about to unfold — one that spanned not only culture and history but also trade, youth, and the future of global cooperation.

As visitors from various parts of the world interacted and shared ideas, they enjoyed a range of fascinating exhibitions highlighting Sichuan's cultural legacy and economic strength. The "Beautiful Sichuan" and "Charming Sichuan" Intangible Cultural Heritage exhibitions vividly illustrate the province's rich, extensive history — a narrative that extends over thousands of years, immersed in tradition and artistry.

More than just a presentation of art and commerce, these exhibits offered attendees an



opportunity to engage directly with Sichuan's cultural and economic identity. As one of the foreign entrepreneurs put it, "What we're witnessing here is not just a display of products, but the living spirit of Sichuan — a microcosm of China's dynamic future." The heart of the event lay in the spirited dialogue that took place, where Chinese and international delegates delved into three pivotal themes — each offering a roadmap for cooperation and mutual growth.

Sichuan's ancient heritage — encompassing its 2,000-year-old tea cultivation practices and the vibrant folklore associated with the Sichuan Opera. More significantly, it acted as a venue to explore how these cultural heritages can promote greater comprehension between nations. A Chinese delegate expressed beautifully, "In our present world, where misunderstandings frequently lead to tensions,

these interactions enable us to overcome cultural barriers and gain insights from each other's pasts."

Economic cooperation took center stage during sessions, with leaders engaging in frank discussions about shared development opportunities. The importance of creating sustainable, inclusive economies was emphasized, with leaders from the European Council on Foreign Relations and the Pakistan-China Friendship Association echoing similar sentiments: "The future is not one where nations compete for scarce resources; it is a future where we share opportunities, collaborate, and create mutual prosperity."

Participants explored ways to build stronger economic ties, not only between Sichuan and the world, but among all nations represented at the event. Whether discussing trade, innovation, or infrastructure, it became clear that the road to a better future



requires both collective action and commitment.

Perhaps the most poignant theme was the call for fostering greater youth exchanges — a recognition of the critical role young people plays in shaping the future of global relations. "The youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow," one foreign delegate remarked, urging nations to invest in cross-cultural programs that would help future generations build bridges, not walls. This idea of a united world — a "wonderful world" — struck a chord with everyone there, highlighting the importance of education and cultural awareness as the basis for worldwide harmony.

When the event came to an end, the feeling of optimism was unmistakable. Leaders praised

the meeting as an important advancement in fostering more robust international alliances, honoring both cultural diversity and economic interconnectedness. "These conversations are more than a mere symbolic act; they serve as a practical guide for addressing the issues we encounter in a connected global community," remarked a participant.

In Sichuan's discussion symbolized China's overarching aim to promote cooperation across cultural, political, and economic boundaries. The province, combining tradition and modernity, acted as an ideal setting for this international exchange — highlighting both its vibrant history and its promising future. "This occasion served

as a reminder that although we may have numerous differences, our common objectives — peace, prosperity, and progress — unite us," wrapped up one of the event coordinators.

As the global community grapples with worldwide issues, it becomes evident that gatherings like this go beyond mere diplomatic formalities; they serve as the foundation for future collaboration, where understanding, respect, and teamwork transform from high-minded concepts into practical, achievable routes toward a better world.

(The writer is the Secretary General of the Pakistan China Friendship Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter, and can be contacted via email at syed.gilani@gmail.com.)

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
114,180.50	110,810.21	
Day's High	Day's Low	
114,408.62	111,308.65	
Index Value	Change	
33,427,561,120	+3370.29	
Percentage	Time	
+3.04%	12 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,311.76	+10.14	
Percentage	Time	
+0.12%	12 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
44,070.76	-77.80	
Percentage	Time	
-0.18%	12 Dec, 11:45 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
39,849.14	+476.91	
Percentage	Time	
-1.21%	12 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	179.75	182.00
Bahrain Dinar	734.14	742.14
Canadian Dollar	197.60	200.00
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	289.85	292.60
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.18	3.27
Japanese Yen	1.84	1.90
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.31	905.81
Malaysian Ringgit	61.75	62.35
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.4
Norwegians Krone	24.93	25.23
Omani Riyal	718.54	727.04
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.70	74.25
Singapore Dollar	207.75	209.75
Swedish Korona	25.13	25.43
Swiss Franc	313.96	316.76
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	352.20	355.7
US Dollar	277.75	279.25

# Pakistan Paving Way for Islamic Financial Ecosystem: SECP Chief

✉ **Khurram Jafrani**

KARACHI: Pakistan, through holding the international Islamic capital market conference, is paving the way to transition into a sustainable, equitable, and interest-free financial ecosystem.

This was stated by SECP Chairman Akif Saeed in his welcome address at a dinner jointly hosted by the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC), Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL) for the delegates and speakers of the Second International Islamic Capital Markets Conference and Expo that started in Karachi today.

The Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC), Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), and National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL) proudly hosted a grand welcome dinner in honor of the esteemed delegates and speakers attending the Second International Islamic Capital Markets Conference and Expo.



In his welcome address, SECP Chairman Mr. Akif Saeed emphasized the remarkable progress of Pakistan's Islamic finance industry

and highlighted SECP's pivotal role, alongside strategic partners such as CDC, PSX, and NCCPL, in promoting Shariah-compliant finan-

cial practices and fostering collaboration with international players. The Chief Guest, Shaikh Ebrahim Bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, Chairman

of the Board of Trustees of the Accounting & Auditing Organizations (AAOIFI) and the founding chairman of Meezan Bank, commended Pakistan's dedication to advancing Islamic finance.

Mr. Badiuddin Akber, CEO of CDC and Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Central Securities Depository Group (ACG), Mr. Farrukh Sabzwari, CEO of PSX, and Mr. Imran Ahmed Khan, Acting CEO of NCCPL, presented traditional souvenirs to the conference's distinguished speakers.

Under the theme 'From Tech Transformation to Realizing Sustainability: Building an Inclusive Islamic Capital Market,' the conference will address critical challenges and opportunities in building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Islamic capital market.

More than 20 distinguished international experts and policymakers from various countries—including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Türkiye, Oman, Iran, and the United Kingdom will attend.

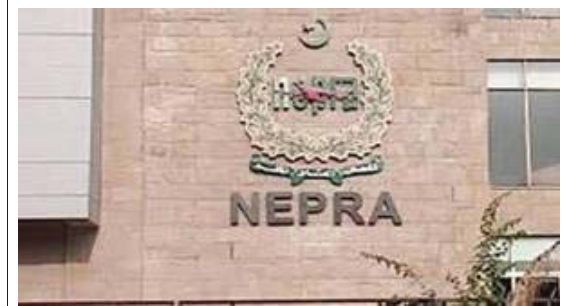
## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan H.E. Yetzan Kistafan meets Minister of State for IT and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja at Ministry of IT and Telecommunications on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Million Relief Request for October FCA



✉ **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) concluded a public hearing on December 12, 2024, regarding K-Electric's petition for a provisional monthly fuel charge adjustment (FCA) for October 2024. The expected relief of PKR 461 million will translate to a reduction of PKR 0.27 per unit in customer bills. NEPRA will issue its decision clarifying the FCA amount to be passed on and the month in which it will be charged in customers' bills. Fuel charge adjustments

reflect variations in global fuel prices and changes in the generation mix. These adjustments are applied to customer bills only after NEPRA's detailed scrutiny and approval. Customers benefit from negative FCAs in their bills during periods of declining global fuel prices. The rates applied are determined by NEPRA and notified by the Federal Government.

This FCA adjustment underscores KE's commitment to optimizing its fuel mix and ensuring transparency in energy costs operating in a regulated environment.

## FPCCI Demands level playing field for Export Finance Scheme for local Industry

✉ **Commerce desk**

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), has called upon the federal government to immediately provide level playing field in Export Finance Scheme (EFS) to its pre-Finance Act 2024 form. The Act's amendments, which withdrew sales tax exemptions and zero-rating on local supplies used for export manufacturing, have adversely impacted the textile industry and related sectors.

Mr. Ikram expressed grave concerns over the widespread closure of spinning mills and the significant losses being faced by the industry. He noted that the misuse of EFS—through the diversion of imported cotton and blended yarns exempted from sales tax and duties into the domestic market—has resulted in substantial losses to the national exchequer and undermined the competitiveness of local manufacturers. "Our appeals have remained unad-



dressed," he stated, highlighting the dire consequences of inaction. "The domestic industry is on the brink of collapse, with over 40 spinning mills already forced to shut down, 60 more on the verge of collapse." He warned that the ripple effects could devastate upstream sectors such as

weaving and processing.

The President FPCCI emphasized that the withdrawal of zero-rating for local supplies used in export manufacturing was intended as a revenue-enhancing measure but has backfired. It has led to a reduction in business activity, further shrinking the government's revenue base. He called for a balanced and judicious approach to policymaking that protects both the industry and the national exchequer.

"Pakistan's textile sector once held a unique position globally, rivaling major exporters like India and China," Mr. Ikram said. "However, it is unfortunate that today, these strengths are being undermined by ill-conceived policies."

Mr. Atif Ikram concluded with a strong appeal to the government to take urgent and decisive action. "We must protect Pakistan's domestic industries and restore the level playing field needed for sustainable growth and employment creation," he urged.

## Shan Foods and SHINE Humanity partner to provide accessible healthcare

✉ **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Pakistan's leading food company, Shan Foods has partnered with SHINE Humanity to advance its goal of establishing an accessible and affordable healthcare infrastructure across the Kunri Tehsil in rural Sindh. Adhering to the UNSDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, this partnership is a part of Shan Foods' larger initiative "Growing Flavor", which aims to build a sustainable agricultural hub in Asia's largest red chil-

li production site at Kunri.

"We have an all-encompassing, holistic CSR vision for Kunri, where we not only train farmers and agricultural professionals to improve their chilli harvest and trade systems, but by on-boarding CSR partners such as SHINE Humanity, we are also ensuring that these communities have an improved quality of life, including the basics of healthcare, right in their locality" said Sammer Sultan, co-chairwoman of Shan Foods.

## Yasir Mushtaq Appointed DD in Food Authority



✉ **Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Yasir Mushtaq has been appointed as Deputy Director (Operations) Food Authority of District Toba Tek Singh, replacing Adnan Haider. Adnan Haider has been transferred to District Jhang as Deputy Director (Operations) Food Authority. Yasir Mushtaq has assumed charge of his new assignment as Deputy Director Operations. Meanwhile, Electronic and Print Media have welcomed Yasir Mushtaq's appointment as Deputy Director and expressed the hope that he would wholeheartedly work.

## SM Tanveer briefs MNAs on Islamabad's agriculture, seeks ways to boost exports

✉ **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: UBG Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer met with the four Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) from Islamabad—Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Anjum Aqeel Khan, Raja Khurram Nawaz, and Farah Naz—yesterday at the residence of UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari. During the meeting, SM Tanveer briefed the MNAs about the initiatives undertaken by the business community and took them into confidence regarding future plans.

SM Tanveer informed the MNAs that the way the business community has addressed issues related to IPPs (Independent Power Producers) will yield positive results in the next couple of months. He assured that electricity prices will, Insha'Allah, decrease, which will boost exports, promote industry, increase investment, and reduce unemployment. He added that, as a result of their practical efforts, the interest rate is also expected to soon drop to 9%, which will further accelerate industrial activity.

The MNAs assured SM Tanveer that they would raise the business community's voice in the assembly and discuss issues of national interest in parliament. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry suggested inviting SM Tanveer to the parliamentary standing committees on commerce and agriculture so that he could share his insights and ideas with the members of parliament, contributing to the country's development and prosperity. Anjum Aqeel Khan emphasized focusing on agriculture and utilizing professionals' expertise



to address national challenges. Raja Khurram Nawaz noted the various reasons for low cotton production and stressed the need to address these issues to enhance output. Farah Naz also assured her support in conveying

these concerns to higher authorities. Zafar Bakhtawari thanked the MNAs and SM Tanveer for their presence, stating that the business community plays a vital role in strengthening the national economy and that the govern-

ment should prioritize their recommendations in policymaking. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari added that stabilizing the national economy requires collective efforts, and the approach of "Pakistan First" will lead to success.

# Aqib Javed appointed as interim red-ball head coach of Pakistan

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Pakistan interim white-ball coach, Aqib Javed, has also been appointed as the interim red-ball head coach for the upcoming Test series against South Africa, according to sources

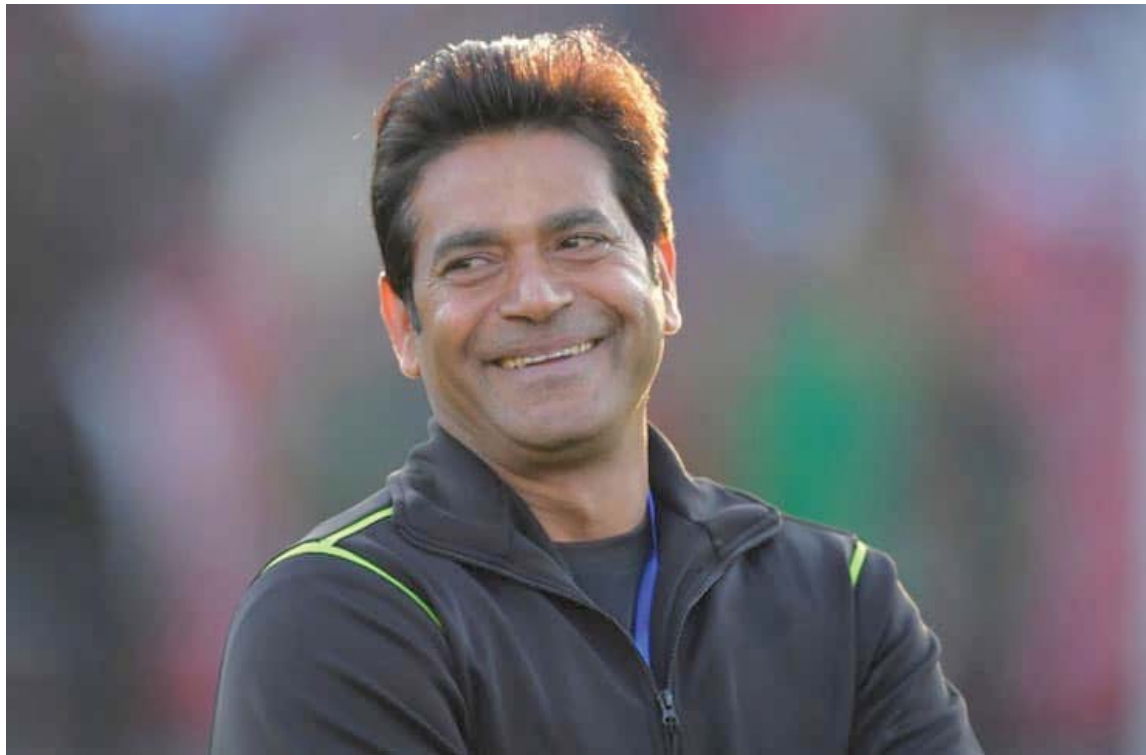
The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has reportedly confirmed the appointment of Aqib as the interim head coach, following the unexpected resignation of red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie.

Gillespie's decision to step down was primarily driven by growing differences with the PCB, creating a rift that ultimately led to his departure from the role.

Earlier today, news broke that the former Australian cricketer had declined to embark on a scheduled trip to South Africa, where he was set to oversee a specialized training camp in preparation for an upcoming two-match Test series against South Africa.

Sources familiar with the situation indicated that Gillespie's decision to abandon the trip, which he was meant to commence yesterday, was influenced by the PCB's choice not to extend the contract of red-ball assistant coach Tim Nielsen, a move that seemed to displease him significantly.

Although Gillespie cited personal reasons for his refusal to travel, many believe that his discomfort with the PCB is rooted in a series of recent administrative shifts.



Notably, in October, he was removed from the Test team's selection panel, with his role reduced to a "match-day strategist."

Aqib Javed, who is currently in South Africa with Pakistan's white-ball team, will kick-off his tenure as red-ball head

coach with the two-match Test series, which will kick off in Centurion on December 26. The second Test will start from January 3 in Cape Town.

Pakistan squad for Test series against South Africa: Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel

(vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Haseebullah (wk), Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha

## Quaid Games training camps conclude

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The week-long training camps of Sports Board Punjab teams for Quaid-e-Azam Games concluded on Thursday with all coaches and trainers gave final touches to the preparation of their respective squads especially the fitness and playing techniques of male and female athletes.

The training camps of Sports Board Punjab's 15 teams were organised for the preparation of Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games on the direction of Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry.

On the last day of camps, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry visited the male and female volleyball camp at the



Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall. He watched the practice match of the players and appreciated their game skills.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum and other official were also present on this occasion. The coaches of taek-

wondo, football, badminton etc also conducted final training sessions on Thursday.

Talking on this occasion, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that Sports Board Punjab coaches have given the best training to the players for the preparation of Quaid-e-Azam Games. "The game techniques and fitness of our athletes has improved a lot during the 8-day camp training," he added.

Showing his determination, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that the Sports Board Punjab contingent will grab the first place in the Quaid Games medals table. "All possible facilities were provided to all the athletes during the camp training," he described.

## Pakistan's red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie resigns ahead of Test series against South Africa

**Sports Desk**

Pakistan's red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie resigned from his position ahead of the Test series against South Africa as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) continues to see a flurry of changes.

Interim white-ball coach Aqib Javed would perform head coach duties in the longer format of the game after Gillespie's exit.

Pakistan cricket has seen a flurry of changes in the recent past, starting from the white-ball head coach's abrupt resignation from his position in October. Gary Kirsten quit after just six months in the role and a week before a tour of Australia.

After this, the PCB appointed Javed as the interim coach for the shorter format of the game.

The former Australian fast bowler's resignation was expected after the board dismissed Tim Nielsen from his position as assistant coach earlier in the day. The board did not renew his contract.

Reports suggested that Gillespie was



LAHORE: Pakistan Test head coach Jason Gillespie speaks during a press conference at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Oct 23, 2024. Reuters/File

surprised by the PCB's decision, as he was not consulted prior to Nielsen's termination. The national Test squad is set to depart for South Africa tomorrow (Friday) and Gillespie was expected to accompany the team.

In July this year, the former Australian fast bowler took charge as red-ball coach. The 49-year-old, appointed for two years, started his service with a two-match series against Bangladesh. The home side lost the series against the visitors.

Gillespie was one of the two foreign head coaches the board appointed this year. "Kirsten and Gillespie were world-famous coaches and their arrival gave 100 per cent confirmation of the trust they had in the team," PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said when he announced their names at a press conference on April 28, 2024.

But fissures started appearing in the management when the side showed a lacklustre performance in the T20 World Cup and the board limited the role of coaches in the selection panel.

After Bangladesh's historic Test series win against Pakistan, the board added retired international umpire Aleem Dar and former Test players Azhar Ali and Aaqib Javed to the men's national selection committee.

This change was short-lived as the board cut down the number of its members from 11 to just five a month later.

Reports said that the Test head coach was not satisfied after being removed from the committee.

## Islamabad's Sports Contingent: A Tale of Neglect and Disregard

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad contingent, set to participate in the Inter-Provincial Games, is facing a series of bureaucratic hurdles and administrative neglect. A recent directive from Shaid Islam, Deputy Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board, has added to the woes of these young athletes.

**The Absurdity of the Banking Mandate**

In a bizarre move, players have been instructed to open bank accounts solely to receive a meager daily allowance of Rs. 1500. This mandate, issued mere days before the event, has forced athletes to divert precious training time and incur additional expenses for account opening procedures.

**The Lack of Support and Infrastructure**

The Islamabad contingent is operating without the basic necessities. There are no dedicated coaches, no training camps, no practice grounds, and no special grants to support their participation. Furthermore, the absence of transportation services and clear guidelines for the event has further compounded their challenges.

**Islamabad's Sports Board: A Non-Existent Entity**

The Islamabad Sports Board, under the purview of Chief Commissioner Randhawa, appears to be a mere formality. Despite holding dual roles as Chief Commissioner and Chairman of the Capital Development Authority, Randhawa seems indifferent to the needs of Islamabad's athletes. The lack of dedicated staff, a separate office, and any meaningful support for the contingent reflects a systemic failure.

## Youngest Pakistani MMA Artist breaks record for most Elbow to Knee strikes

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Sufyan Mehsud, Pakistan's youngest five-time Mix Martial Arts (MMA) Artist has broken another Guinness World Record, this time surpassing India's previous record.

The 22-year-old accomplished the feat by performing 79 elbow-to-knee strikes in 30 seconds, eclipsing the previous record of 54 strikes held by India's Javeria.

Mehsud who is the son of Irfan Mehsud, the first Pakistani to set 100 Guinness World Records has now emerged as Pakistan's youngest Guinness World Record holder. This achievement comes after he had already broken a previous record held by India.



## Hafsa, Rameen shine as National Women's One-Day Cup resumes

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Rameen Shamim and Tuba Hassan's three-fors guided Stars to a comfortable nine-wicket win over Strikers in the National Women's One-Day Cup 2024 match here at the Marghzar Cricket Ground on Thursday afternoon.

Batting first, Strikers were bowled out for 106 in 30.5 overs, with Ayesha Bilal top-scoring 24 off 53 balls including three fours and a six. Right-arm off-spinner Rameen and right-arm leg-spinner Tuba bagged three wickets apiece, while right-arm fast bowler Waheeda Akhtar took two wickets.

In reply, it took 23.3 overs for Stars to achieve the target losing Sadaf Shamas (38, 38b, 8x4s) in the process. Sidra Amin returned undefeated on 33, while Soha Fatima also returned unbeaten on 26, which included five fours.

At the Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi, Syeda Aroob Shah's four-wicket haul and Hafsa Khalid's unbeaten 73 led Conquerors to a three-wicket win over Challengers. Batting first, Challengers were dismissed for 158 in 32 overs with captain Aliya Riaz scoring an unbeaten 71 off 87 balls hitting seven fours and four sixes.

In turn, Zaib un Nisa's three-for and two wickets by Umm-e-Hani went in vain as right-hand batter Hafsa struck 12 boundaries in a 90-ball 73 to help her side achieve the target in 36.3 overs.

**Scores in brief:**

11th Match - Conquerors beat Challengers by three wickets at the Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium

Challengers 158 all out, 32 overs (Aliya Riaz 71 not out, Natalia Parvaiz 32; Syeda Aroob Shah 4-28, Mahnoor Aftab 3-29)

Fatima Sana 2-28).

Conquerors 159-7, 36.3 overs (Hafsa Khalid 73 not out; Zaib un Nisa 3-31, Umm-e-Hani 2-27)

Player of the match - Hafsa Khalid (Conquerors).

12th Match - Stars beat Strikers by nine wickets at the Marghzar Cricket Ground

Strikers 106 all out, 30.5 overs (Ayesha Bilal 24; Rameen Shamim 3-17, Tuba Hassan 3-28, Waheeda Akhtar 2-29)

Stars 109-1, 23.3 overs (Sadaf Shamas 38, Sidra Amin 33 not out, Soha Fatima 26 not out).

Player of the match - Rameen Shamim (Stars).



## UMT Markhors, Nurpur Lions record wins in contrasting styles

**City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: UMT Markhors and Nurpur Lions recorded wins by three and 35 runs respectively, in contrasting styles on the sixth day of the Bahria Town Champions T20 Cup at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

Markhors scored 170-6 on the back of a rapid 32-ball 39 by opener Fakhar Zaman who shared a solid opening stand of 74 with Khawaja Mohammad Nafay who hit a 30-ball 36. While Fakhar smashed a six and five boundaries, Nafay was more aggressive with three sixes and a boundary.

No.3 batter Muhammad Shahzad struck 28 off 25 balls with the help of two sixes and experienced Mohammad Nawaz knocked an unbeaten 13-ball 28 with one four and two sixes to lift the total. Usman Tariq with 2-20 and Tahir Hussain, who returned figures of 2-36 were the pick of Stallions bowlers.

ABL Stallions lost Yasir Khan (17, 10b, 2x4s, 1x6) early but Maaz Sadaqat

(82, 53b, 10x4s, 2x6s) and Mohammad Haris rescued the innings with a strong 59-run stand off 41 balls for the second wicket.

Haris fell after scoring a fiery 16-ball 22 with a six and a four as it was left to Maaz to help the team cross the target. Team mentor Shoaib Malik chipped in with a 21-ball 16 as Stallions slumped from 127-2 in 15 overs to lose four wickets for 15 runs, including the well set Maaz.

Stallions needed 19 in the last over but fast bowler Mohammad Imran Jr conceded 15 to steal the match. This became the third consecutive win for UMT Markhors while ABL Stallions suffered their first defeat after two wins.

In the second match, Nurpur Lions scored 194-5 in 20 overs against Engro Dolphins. Their skipper Imam-ul-Haq knocked a brilliant 48-ball 65 and Hasan Nawaz hit 34-ball 50 in a solid 100-run partnership in 11.3 overs. Hasan, smashed three sixes and four boundaries while Imam's knock had

seven boundaries and a six.

Khushdil Shah, batting at No.5, blasted an unbeaten 22-ball 57 not out with six maximums and two boundaries as Nurpur Lions added a big 64 in the last five overs. Dolphins' Qasim Akram picked up three wickets for 21 runs in his four overs.

In reply, Sahibzada Farhan and Mirza Tahir Baig gave Dolphins a robust start of 57 in six overs. Tahir fell for 29 off 16 balls laced with a six and three boundaries. Muhammad Akhlaq fell without scoring. Farhan then added 51 for the third wicket with Umar Amin who made a 19-ball 25 with two fours and a six.

But once Farhan fell for 54 off 42 balls including three sixes and as many boundaries the chase fell apart. Skipper Faheem Ashraf tried valiantly with a cameo of 12-ball 27 with two sixes and as many fours but the asking rate soared beyond 15 an over.

Fast bowler Musa Khan was the pick of bowlers with 4-23 while Khushdil



and Shahid Aziz fetched two wickets apiece. Lions have now won two of their four matches while Dolphins are winless in three outings.

Scores in brief:  
Match 7 - UMT Markhors beat ABL

Stallions by three runs at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium

UMT Markhors 170-6 in 20 overs (Fakhar Zaman 39, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay 36, Mohammad Nawaz 28 not out, Muhammad

Shahzad 28; Usman Tariq 2-20, Tahir Hussain 2-36)

ABL Stallions 167-6 in 20 overs (Maaz Sadaqat 82, Mohammad Haris 22; Nisar Ahmed 3-23)

Player of the match - Nisar Ahmed (UMT Markhors)

Match 8 - Nurpur Lions beat Engro Dolphins by 35 runs at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium

Nurpur Lions 194-5 in 20 overs (Imam-ul-Haq 65, Khushdil Shah 57 not out, Hasan Nawaz 50; Qasim Akram 3-21)

Engro Dolphins 159 all out in 19.4 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 54, Mirza Tahir Baig 29, Faheem Ashraf 27, Umar Amin 25; Musa Khan 4-23, Khushdil Shah 2-22, Shahid Aziz 2-35)

Player of the match - Khushdil Shah (Nurpur Lions)

Tomorrow's fixtures: Allied Bank Stallions vs Engro Dolphins, Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium (11am); Lake City Panthers vs UMT Markhors, Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium (3.30pm).

## Fateha

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Mr. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Uzbekistan Mr. Alisher Tukhtaev and Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Avazbek Atakhanov offering fateha for the departed soul of sister of Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Islamic finance, capital markets road to macroeconomic stability: Finance Minister

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Thursday that Islamic finance and Islamic capital markets could play a pivotal role in helping Pakistan remain steadfast on the road to macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth.

Addressing virtually the inaugural session of the Second International Islamic Capital Markets Conference & Expo that opened in Karachi on Thursday, the minister said, Pakistan had faced significant economic challenges in recent years, however, those issues were now being effectively addressed, and the country was on the right trajectory towards microeco-

omic stability and sustainable growth.

He said Islamic finance, specifically Islamic capital markets, could play a pivotal role in this road to market as instruments such as sukuk, equity funds, and Shariah-compliant investment vehicles not only attracted investment but also reduced reliance on interest-based borrowing.

Shaikh Ebrahim Bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, Chairman, AAOIFI Board of Trustees, Dr. Sami Al-Suwailim, Acting Director General, Islamic Development Bank Institute, Akif Saeed, Chairman SECP, Saleemullah, Deputy Governor SBP, and other senior delegates attended the session.

The minister described the conference as reflective of Pakistan's growing commit-



ment to fostering a robust Islamic capital market, highlighting the country's dedication to transforming its financial ecosystem in line with Shariah principles.

The Finance Minister further noted that full realization of the potential of Islamic finance was not possible

without collective and collaborative efforts of scholars, financial institutions, regulatory bodies, and industry practitioners to address existing challenges, develop innovative Shariah-compliant financial products, and build public trust.

"We must ensure that

Islamic finance is not only rooted in Shariah principles but also practical, transparent, and capable of meeting the evolving needs of our people," he added.

He commended the efforts of SECP for advancing Islamic finance in Pakistan and its initiatives in creating an enabling regulatory environment to support Islamic finance in the non-bank financial sector as well as establishing Shariah-compliant indices, introducing Shariah governance frameworks, and developing guidelines for offering Islamic financial services.

He, however, urged the SECP to continue to make dedicated efforts toward innovation and inclusivity in Islamic capital markets.

## Any compromise on health tantamount to compromising national security, development: PM

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday recognising the provision of accessible healthcare to all citizens regardless of their socioeconomic status as a moral imperative of the government said that any compromise on health was tantamount to

compromising the security, prosperity, and development of where no risks could be taken.

The prime minister, in his message on Universal Health Coverage Day, annually observed on December 12, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the advancement of the global momentum towards Universal Health Coverage

(UHC).

He said that this year's theme, "Health: It's on the government," underscored the pivotal role of governments in ensuring that no one had to choose between essential healthcare and basic necessities such as food, shelter, or education.

He said that in pursuit of

this goal, the government had introduced transformative initiatives, such as the Sehat Sahulat Program, spearheaded by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination under the banner of "Sehat Sub Kay Liye" (Health for All).

He said that the program, which has garnered inter-



national recognition from esteemed organizations like the WHO, provided free health coverage to millions of families, prioritizing the most vulnerable segments of society.

## Charting the Resilient Economic Future for Pakistan Post-IMF: Challenges and Prospects

## City Desk

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, organised a seminar titled "Charting the Resilient Economic Future for Pakistan Post-IMF: Challenges and Prospects" on 12 December 2024. The event provided the platform for eminent economists and intellectuals to address the multifaceted economic challenges that confront Pakistan and discuss how Pakistan can attain future economic resilience. Ms Nida Khattak, a researcher at CASS Lahore, commenced the seminar with her introductory remarks.

The keynote speaker, Dr Rashid Anjad, director at Graduate Institute of Development Studies (GIDS), stated that the fundamental problem of Pakistan's economy is that when growth increases; balance of payments crisis



emerges. He highlighted that an educated youth, empowered women, efficient provinces, and Pakistani diaspora will be the drivers of economic growth in Pakistan.

Dr Khaqan Najeem, former advisor at the Ministry of Finance, emphasised human

resource and skill development as the missing link in Pakistan's economic revival strategy.

He advocated for enhanced agricultural productivity, reduced states' economic footprints, and export-oriented growth as ways to move

beyond the IMF. Mr Almas Hyder, Chairman of SPEL, said that the path to resilience requires embracing value addition and export competitiveness. Investing in education, infrastructure, and innovation is a precondition for Pakistan's prosperous, equitable, and

sustainable economy.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, emphasised that IMF support has been crucial; however, it should be viewed as a temporary and transitional phase. Moving forward, Pakistan must focus on reducing its dependence on external financial assistance through comprehensive structural reforms. He added that diversification is the way forward to set Pakistan's economic trajectory in the right direction, as it aligns with global economic realities.

The interactive session generated insightful discussions. The seminar stressed the complexities facing Pakistan's economic landscape and highlighted opportunities for economic reforms and prosperity, aiming not only for economic resilience but also sustainable economic growth.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

## Agricultural Cooperation takes center stage as Tajik Deputy Minister visits NARC

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Asozoda Nurali Mahmaddullo, First Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Tajikistan, visited the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC), Islamabad. During the visit, Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali highlighted the cutting-edge research being undertaken at PARC, including genome-based varietal development of various crops including rice, wheat, banana etc, virus-free seed potato production through Aeroponic technology, breed improvement and vaccine development for livestock, and speed breeding to accelerate the development of various crops. Dr. Ali also highlighted other significant research initiatives aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and ensuring food and nutritional security. He further said that agricultural ties between Pakistan and Tajikistan will help ensure food and nutritional security for both the countries.

Tajikistan's Deputy Minister commended PARC's cutting-edge research and hoped for enhanced cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture to ensure food and nutritional security. He emphasized that we look forward to benefiting from Pakistan's expertise in agricultural research and mutual technology transfer. He reiterated that scientific collaboration is vital for agricultural development in both the countries. H. E. visited NIGAB, Aeroponic facility, Livestock Research Station and Speed Breeding facility.

The visit aims to build on the earlier MoUs signed between Pakistan and Tajikistan for enhanced cooperation and mutual development in agriculture and other sectors. The two countries have identified areas of collaboration, including research and development, capacity building, and technology transfer, to promote sustainable agriculture practices and improve agricultural productivity.

## Siraj-ul-Haq demands free and fair election in Pakistan

## Chaudhry Asad Shakir

BAHAWALPUR: Former Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Siraj-ul-Haq, emphasized the need for a free and fair election in the country. He supported the demand of the people of Bahawalpur for the restoration of

Bahawalpur as a province, calling it entirely justified and rooted in the history of Pakistan's formation. He highlighted that Nawab Sadiq Abbasi of Bahawalpur contributed significantly to Pakistan with his resources. Despite the Punjab Assembly's resolution for Bahawalpur's restoration as a province, the region remains deprived of its rights.

Speaking at a press conference in Ahmadpur Sharqia, Siraj-ul-Haq criticized the establishment-backed

governments of PTI and PDM for their failures. He noted the country's worsening situation, with instability in the economy and governance. He remarked that even national leaders, including the President, Prime Minister, and Army Chief should admit the country's dire circum-



stances. He stated that government authority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan has eroded, leaving people at the mercy of terrorists.

## IG Punjab's visit to CPO Complex Multan: A Step Toward Excellence in Public Service



## Zain ul Abideen Abid

Multan IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited the CPO Complex in Multan, accompanied by Additional IG South Punjab, RPO Multan, MD Punjab Safe Cities Authority, CPO Multan, CTO, and other senior officials. During his visit, IG Punjab inspected various sections, including the CPO Office, SSP Operations and Investigation Office, Organized Crime Wing, Police Khidmat Markaz, CTO Office, and the Traffic Police FM Radio Station Unit in Multan. He interacted with police officers and staff, inquiring about their working environment and the facilities being provided to citizens. The IG appreciated the development of infrastructure and the quality of services in the CPO Complex and other offices. He directed the officials to ensure that the state-of-the-art offices are used to provide the best facilities and deliver justice to the public efficiently and effectively.

Public trust is the foundation of an effective and harmonious relationship between law enforcement and the community. Unfortunately, a significant dilemma persists in Multan, where citizens often express a lack of trust in the police. This distrust stems from various factors, including allegations of corruption, delayed justice, and a perceived lack of empathy in addressing public grievances.

Reports of bribery, favoritism, and misuse of authority have tarnished the image of the Multan police. These issues undermine public confidence and create a sense of injustice, making citizens hesitant to approach the police for help.

Many citizens feel that their concerns are not taken seriously by the police. The absence of a compassionate approach in dealing with public complaints further widens the gap between law enforcement and the community.