



President Zardari details objections to Madressah Bill

President Asif Ali Zardari has vetoed a bill mandating the registration of madrasahs (religious schools), expressing concerns about potential negative consequences for Pakistan's international standing and internal stability.



JUI-F responds to President Zardari's objections on Seminary bill

According to JUI-F spokesperson, the President's objections were not submitted within the timeframe stipulated by the constitution. The spokesperson further stated that the objections were not accompanied by any proposed amendments or solutions, which is a requirement for such objections. Moreover, the objections were not sent to the Speaker of the National Assembly, as is the standard procedure.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting on Electricity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to evaluate and discuss the future electricity and power plans of country on Friday.



Photo: Online

Security forces kill 43 terrorists in KP, Balochistan: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Since 9 December 2024, 43 terrorists have been sent to hell by the Security Forces during extensive Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs) conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan causing a major setback to Fitna-Al-Khawarij & other terrorist groups operating in Balochistan.



fire exchange, successfully neutralized ten terrorists in two separate IBOs conducted in Musa Khel and Panjgur Districts. Since 9 December, twenty five terrorists have been sent to hell in Balochistan.

On night 12-13 December, security forces conducted an IBO in Lakki Marwat District. Own troops effectively engaged the khawarij location and resultantly six khawarij were killed. Since 9 December 24, eighteen khawarij have been sent to hell in KP Province.

These operations will continue till peace in the area is restored and khawarij are eliminated, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

In Balochistan, on 13 December, the security forces, after an intense exchange of

PM directs further reduction of power tariff

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the relevant authorities to further reduce power tariffs and expedite the implementation process of the action plan of the future power generation projects.

Chairing a meeting to evaluate and discuss the future electricity and power plans of the country, the prime minister stressed to prioritize the low-cost power

projects based on local resources. During the meeting, the prime minister was informed about the progress of the ongoing hydro power projects across the country.

PM Shehbaz said that the low-cost power project produces environmentally friendly and affordable electricity.

He further directed that the current electricity generation capacity should also be shifted to solar energy.

Globally, electricity is being produced from environmentally

friendly, low-cost solar energy, he noted, adding that Pakistan was fortunate in this regard as the country had vast potential for solar energy.

The prime minister was also briefed on the progress of phasing out inefficient power plants that consume more fuel but produce less electricity.

He ordered the immediate closure of such outdated power plants adding that closing these plants would not only save valuable foreign exchange, but

also reduce electricity costs for consumers.

The Prime Minister instructed that immediate action be taken against all officials deliberately obstructing reforms in the power sector.

He also directed that reforms in the electricity transmission system be expedited.

The power transmission system should be upgraded according to international standards, the prime minister further directed.

He further directed swift

implementation of a system based on modern technology for the selection and transmission of low-cost electricity.

The prime minister issued instructions to complete all measures for the reform of the power sector within the specified timeline.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Dr Musadik Malik, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik and other relevant high officials.

Tarar for 'acceptable to all' AI regulatory framework

News Desk

ISTANBUL: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday made a passionate call at an international conference to work out a comprehensive and inclusive AI regulatory framework which is "acceptable to all".

"As the world is progressing with AI advancement, we must come up with a regulatory framework that upholds ethical standards and works for the collective good of humanity which has common goals and objectives," said the minister while addressing the Startcom Summit 2024.

"We must come together on common terms and make a regulatory framework which is acceptable to all," he said while advocating for encouraging the positive use of AI, and discouraging the negative ones.

"What I would like to achieve from AI... in the field of agritech, we would like to have more productivity and high yield crops through inducement of technology



because we are rice exporting country and we have the agriculture as a backbone of economy," he said while underlining the need for AI advancement in education, skill development, fintech and healthtech

sectors as well.

"With regard to education and skill development, we would like to see the AI advancement in distance learning so that those students who do not have

access to these good universities could gain higher education," he said, adding the AI should be used in increasing the children enrolment in school, and eradicating the diseases like hepatitis and polio.

PTI founder responsible for Rangers personnel deaths: FIR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has been named in an FIR filed over the deaths of three Rangers personnel during the party's protest in Islamabad on November 26.

According to the FIR, registered at Ramna Police Station, Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, along with other party leaders, are accused of murder, terrorism, and other charges.

The FIR states that the plan to attack the Rangers personnel was hatched in Adiala Jail, where Imran Khan had met with his party leaders. The plan was executed by Bushra Bibi and other party workers, who incited the protesters to attack the Rangers personnel.

The FIR also named other PTI leaders, including Omar Ayub, Sheikh Waqas Akram, Salman Akram Raja, Ali Amin Gandapur, Murad Saeed, Zulfi Bukhari, Raouf Hassan and Hammad Azhar, who

allegedly conspired to attack the Rangers personnel.

The incident occurred during PTI's recent protests in Islamabad, where a car driven by an unidentified driver ran over three Rangers personnel, killing them on the spot.

The FIR has been registered under various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code and the Anti-Terrorism Act.

It's worth mentioning here that at least four Pakistan Rangers soldiers were

martyred when miscreants ran them over with a vehicle on Srinagar Highway in Islamabad during PTI protest.

As per details, four Rangers personnel were martyred, while five others including policemen were injured in the incident.

The late-night incident was quickly followed by the deployment of the Pakistan Army to the streets of Islamabad. The army, deployed under Article 245 of the Constitution, was given shoot-at-sight orders, the sources said.

26th Amendment disrupted balance in judicial appointments: Justice Mansoor

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court senior judge Mansoor Ali Shah has written to Justice Jamal Mandokhail, head of the rules-making committee, urging an urgent revision of the judicial appointment process.

In the letter, Justice Shah noted that the judiciary historically played a pivotal role in appointments, but this balance has shifted significantly post-26th Amendment. "The executive's enhanced role in appointments has disrupted the equilibrium," he stated.

Justice Shah warned that even a single irregular appointment could erode public trust in the judiciary. To address this, he submitted detailed proposals to the committee, emphasizing the need for rules that uphold judicial independence.

Citing Article 175(4) of the Constitution, he highlighted



that the Judicial Commission has the constitutional mandate to develop such rules. Without them, he cautioned, the Commission's proceedings on appointments could lose legitimacy.

He also expressed concerns over the judiciary's minority position in the Commission after the amendment, warning that executive dominance risks politically influenced appointments.

Transparent and impartial rules, he stressed, are essential to safeguard judicial autonomy and public confidence.

Sindh govt extends best support to Rescue 1122: Nasir Hussain Shah

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KARACHI: The Sindh government has been extending the best possible support to Rescue 1122 and KMC's Fire Department to protect lives and properties whenever fire emergencies threaten Karachi's high-rises and industries.

Sindh Minister for Planning & Development and Energy Minister, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, stated this while speaking as the chief guest at the 14th Fire Safety & Security Convention-2024 organised by the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH).

The Planning and Development Minister stated that the provincial government has been meeting the needs of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and the Rescue 1122 service. This effort ensures that both agencies have access to the latest fire-fighting and rescue equipment and machinery, helping to minimize losses



during fire emergencies, he added.

He said the industries and multi-storeyed commercial buildings in Karachi should have adequate safety arrangements against fire incidents. These safety measures should have been taken given the recurring fire emergencies in Karachi causing massive loss of lives and precious prop-

erties, he said.

The Planning and Development Minister proposed the formation of a task force to implement fire safety laws by industries and businesses in Karachi. He said the proposed task force should comprise representatives of the government, relevant civic agencies, industrialists and businessmen

to discuss and finalise the strategy to ensure compliance with the fire safety laws by the private sector.

Ahmed Azeem Alvi, President SITE Association of Industry, suggested that the curriculum for school education and vocational training in Pakistan should include fire safety as a compulsory subject to ensure that the younger generation is trained to deal with fire emergencies.

He said the government should incentivise small businesses and industries to adopt the fire safety protocol to protect their workforce and assets.

NFEH President, Naeem Qureshi, said the private sector, NGOs, and government agencies should work together to prevent fire disasters in urban areas.

Ruqiya Naeem, NFEH General Secretary, stressed the need for modernising Karachi's fire brigade service.

Nadeem Ashraf, NFEH Vice President also spoke.

Special Anti-Narcotics Court sentences drug smuggler to life imprisonment in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Special Anti-Narcotics Court sentenced the accused to life imprisonment and a fine in a drug smuggling case. The criminal was arrested by the Anti-Narcotics Force in 2022 for the crime of drug smuggling. ANF personnel recovered 56 kg of hashish from the criminal's rickshaw. A case was registered against the criminal under Section (c) 9 of the Narcotics Control Act at ANF Faisalabad police station. Upon being found guilty, the judge of the Special Anti-Narcotics Court sentenced the criminal Ali Shah to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500,000.



Mayo National Solidarity Council Meeting to be held on 16 December in Multan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Salim-ur-Rehman Mayo, founder and chief organizer of the Mayo National Solidarity Council Pakistan, has called a meeting on December 16 at Chaudhry Muhammad Jamil Mayo's local marriage hall on Nawabpur Road to prepare for and organize the participation in the Usury Abolition Gaza Conference in Mirpur Khas, Sindh, on December 20. He was talking to local journalists in his office. He announced the central and provincial office bearers and said that Chaudhry Riaz Shakir Mayo has been nominated as the central vice president and Chaudhry Ahmed Farooq Mayo as the president of Central Punjab. The organizing committee for Gujranwala division and a committee for Lodhran district has been announced consisting of Chaudhry Muhammad Ibrahim Mayo, advocate, and Sajid Mahmood Mayo, advocate, and Tahir Yamin, advocate. The Multan city district and division office bearers will be elected in the December 16 meeting, while a convoy will leave for Mirpur Khas on December 19 and the Usury Abolition Gaza will attend the conference



Appreciations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal, along with Chinese Ambassador Mr. Jiang Zia-dong, awarded the staff working on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at the Chinese Embassy for their outstanding performance and contributions to the success of the initiative on Friday.



Photo: PID

DPO Ibadat Nisar Jama Masjid Ghala Mandi Kamalia conducts open court

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the Orders of Inspector General of Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar and the special instructions of RPO Region Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan, District Police Officer Toba Tek Singh Ibadat Nisar is continuing to take steps to establish a strong relationship with the citizens. DPO Ibadat Nisar set up an open court in Jamia Masjid Ghala Mandi area of Police Station City Kamalia after Friday prayers to listen to the problems of the people and solve them. A large number of local people attended the open court. DPO Ibadat Nisar listened to the problems of Silen and issued instructions on the spot for their immediate resolution.

On this occasion, DPO Ibadat Nisar said that the purpose of the open court is to establish direct contact with the public. An open court will improve the communication between the police and the public.

After listening to the problems of the people in the open court, effective steps are taken to solve them and providing justice to the people at their doorstep is the first priority. In order to promote community policing, all the SDPOs also Organized open houses in various mosques across the district to strengthen direct ties with the citizens.

Traffic jam at Sabzi Mandi Chowk due to negligence of district administration

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Due to the negligence of the District Administration Attock and MC Attock officers, traffic jams have become a norm on the internal and external roads of Sabzi Mandi Chowk and Sabzi Mandi. Traffic jams last for hours at Sabzi Mandi Chowk because traffic coming from all sides gathers at Sabzi Mandi Chowk. Some encroachment mafias have occupied the entire road, causing severe difficulties for pedestrians. Sabzi Mandi and Sabzi Mandi Chowk have become a nuisance for people. The silence of MC employees has become a question mark. Traffic police are nowhere to be seen. MC Attock's market in Sabzi Mandi Chowk is not closed. If more routes are not closed, more problems will arise. Sources say that MC employees are meeting some traders to propose opening new routes inside the market. If the district administration opens these routes, more problems will arise for the people.

Federal Board organise national conference on examination system

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) hosted the third National Conference of Examination Controllers and Heads of IT Departments from educational boards across Pakistan. The event took place at the Federal Board Auditorium and was attended by key stakeholders from the education sector.

Dr. Ikram Ali Malik, Chairman of the Federal Board, warmly welcomed the participants and emphasized the critical role educational boards play in promoting quality education in the country.

He highlighted how examination systems directly influence the overall standard of education and stressed the importance of implementing a uniform examination framework nationwide.

During the conference, participants were briefed on various initiatives undertaken by the Federal Board to improve examination systems and enhance accessibility to facilities.

A detailed discussion was held on aligning examination papers with the national curriculum, the establishment of an item bank, the introduction of a new grading policy, subject selection, and on-screen marking systems. The use of modern technology within the Federal Board was also showcased. Dr. Malik encouraged other boards to learn from the Federal Board's experiences and assured them of full cooperation in implementing similar advancements.

Participants lauded FBISE's efforts and expressed their commitment to adopting similar practices within their respective institutions.

The Chairman emphasized that collaborative efforts among educational boards are crucial for elevating the country's educational standards to meet international benchmarks.

The conference was attended by key officials, including Federal Board Secretary Bashir Khan, Controller of Examinations Aqel Inman, Director of Sports and Registration Fatima Tahira, Director of Academics Mirza Ali, Director of Affiliation Sajid Ali Abbasi, Controller of Technical Affairs Shafaq Jabeen, and other board officers.

Takhte Bhai Hospital strives to provide best medical services for its residents

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Medical Superintendent of Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Takhte Bhai, Dr. Imran Johar, emphasized the importance of professional and compassionate healthcare. Dr. Imran Johar stated that doctors are healers and must be skilled and capable, as diagnosing illnesses is impossible without expertise. Along with providing treatment, a doctor should also possess a kind and polite demeanor. Keeping these professional principles in mind, we strive to provide the best medical facilities to the public despite limited resources, considering it an act of worship. Tehsil Takhte Bhai is a densely populated area, and its population is increasing day by day. This population growth is placing additional pressure on the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital. After the District-level Mardan Medical Complex (MMC), the outpatient department (OPD) at Takht Bhai Hospital serves the highest number of patients.



Dr. Imran Johar expressed these views during a visit by a delegation of journalists from the Takht Bhai Press Club to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital. Alongside Dr. Imran Johar, other officials present included Deputy

Medical Superintendent (DMS) Sajjad Khan, Dr. Siraj, Dr. Syed Qasim Shah, Dr. Aqil, senior physician Dr. Mumtaz Ashraf, Dr. Shafiq, Dr. Kashif, Officer Khan, and technician Farhad Ali. The delegation of journalists

included senior journalist and president of Takht Bhai Press Club Muslim Khan Sabir, senior journalist Izzat Muhammad Khpalkw, Dr. Jan Alam, Faisal Zada, Zahid-ur-Rehman, and Matiullah.

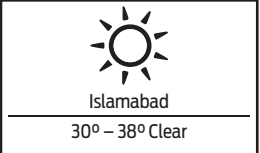
District Quality Control Board meeting held under the chairmanship of ADCG

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Quality Control Board meeting was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Toba Tek Singh Zeeshan Labbha Masih. In which, CEO Health Dr. Kashif Mehmood Kamboh, Secretary District Quality Control Board Muhammad Irfan, Member Prof. Dr. Ijaz Bashir, Dr. Hassan Mehmood, Drug Inspectors Muhammad Zeeshan, Athar Farooq Watto, Arif Shahzad attended. 11 cases were presented in the meeting, 6 were given



warnings. 2 cases were postponed till next appearance, 3 cases were ordered to revisit the drug inspectors.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:35 am
Zohr	12:02 pm
Asr	3:23 pm
Maghrib	5:00 pm
Isha	6:29 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

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

“IBA Karachi: Powering the Future with Green”

City Desk



ing the charge toward a sustainable future with its ambitious green initiatives. As part of its ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, IBA has introduced several groundbreaking projects aimed at reducing its carbon footprint and promoting renewable energy across its campuses & hostels.

IBA has successfully installed a total solar capacity of 926 kWp across its campuses. The solar infrastructure includes an 826 kWp system at the Main Campus, along with newly commissioned projects of 200 kWp at the Boys Hostel and 100 kWp at the Girls Hostel. Together, these installations generate an impressive 1.235 million kWh of clean energy annually, resulting in a 33% reduction in energy costs and significant cuts in carbon emissions. The savings from these projects are further being reinvested into student scholarships, demonstrating IBA's dedication to both sustainability and community impact.

Alpine Club of Pakistan Celebrates International Mountain Day 2024 with Eco Hike

Muhammad Amin

ISLAMABAD: The Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) commemorated International Mountain Day 2024 by organizing an Eco Hike on Trail-3 of Margalla Hills, Islamabad. The event resonated with this year's global theme, "Mountain Solutions for a Sustainable Future – Innovation, Adaptation, and Youth," emphasizing the youth's critical role in fostering sustainable mountain ecosystems through innovative and adaptive strategies.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from a diverse group of students and young nature lovers representing notable institutions such as RIPHAH University, the College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM), and Islamabad Model Post-graduate College, H-8. Their involvement underscored the growing awareness among youth about environmental preservation and the significance of Pakistan's mountain heritage.

The President of ACP, Abu Zafar Sadiq, inaugurated the event with a thought-provoking address. He highlighted the ecological, economic, and social importance of mountains, urging young people to actively engage in outdoor activities like hiking and trekking. He emphasized the necessity of cultivating a sense of environmental

responsibility and stewardship in Pakistan's mountainous regions.

Renowned mountaineer Ashraf Ali Sadpara, hailing from Baltistan and known for summiting K2 (8,611m) three times, attended the event as a special guest upon the invitation of the ACP President. Speaking to the participants, Sadpara expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's natural blessings, including its towering peaks and glacial resources. He stressed the importance of preserving these mountains, which are vital sources of water and food for humanity.

ACP Secretary Karrar Haidri elaborated on the event's theme, emphasizing that youth must play a pivotal role in overcoming challenges related to mountain sustainability. He called for innovative approaches and adaptive measures to protect mountain ecosystems for future generations.

Ayaz Ahmed Shigri provided an insightful perspective on the multifaceted importance of mountains, highlighting their role as biodiversity hotspots, natural resource reservoirs, and cultural heritage symbols.

Aftab-ur-Rehman, Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), graced the event as Guest of Honour. In his speech, he shed light on Pakistan's unparalleled mountain wealth. He emphasized that Pakistan



is home to three of the world's most iconic mountain ranges—the Karakoram, Himalayas, and Hindu Kush—alongside over 7,000 glaciers, making it the

largest repository of glacial ice outside polar regions.

The event was also attended by key figures, including ACP Vice President

Rehmat Ullah Quraishi and Executive Member Najeeb Ullah Khattak, who contributed to the day's success with their presence and support.

Opening ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Famous TV actor Fahad Mustafa speaks during opening ceremony of 9F Nine Figures "Meet and Greet" at a local Mall in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Strengthening bilateral trade in the dyes sector, says Arif Balgamwala

Spokesman Report

GUANGZHOU, CHINA: Pakistan has marked its participation in the prestigious ChinaCoat Industrial Exhibition held in Guangzhou, China's largest commercial hub, with a focus on strengthening trade ties in the dyes sector. During the event, Chinese businessmen expressed a strong desire to promote bilateral trade with Pakistan and enhance ties with Pakistani entrepreneurs. This sentiment was conveyed during a one-on-one meeting between Arif Balgamwala, a prominent businessman and former chairman of the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA), and Adrian Ho, the General Manager of the ChinaCoat



Industrial Exhibition. Adrian Ho noted that trade between

China and Pakistan in the dyes sector is currently below its full potential and can be significantly increased through mutual cooperation. He stated, "We are eager to support Pakistani businessmen and foster stronger trade relations in the dyes sector. All possible facilities will be provided to Pakistani counterparts wishing to participate in the China Coat exhibition, and we will also assist in visa facilitation."

Arif Balgamwala emphasized the importance of the exhibition, describing it as a key event where renowned companies from around the world have set up stalls. He highlighted the valuable opportunity for networking with traders in the dyes industry and engaging in business-to-business meetings.

Children face increased exposure to violence and scams on internet: Kaspersky Reports

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: According to a recent survey by Kaspersky, 54% of children have been exposed to violent content on the Internet. 18% of parents surveyed also reported alarming situations when unknown adults tried to befriend their children in digital space. Another 25% even lost money as a result of their children's online behavior – including cases of accidentally downloading paid games, buying something online without asking permission, or experiencing online scam.

According to Kaspersky experts, by staying informed about the latest threats and actively monitoring their children's online activities, parents can create a safer online environment for their kids. To help parents introduce their children to cybersecurity amidst the evolving threat landscape, Kaspersky experts have developed the Kaspersky Cybersecurity Alphabet with key concepts from the cybersecurity industry. In this book, children will learn about new technologies, the main cyber hygiene rules, how to avoid online threats and recognize fraudsters' tricks. After reading this book together, parents will be sure that their children will know how to distinguish phishing websites, how VPN and QR-codes work, and even what honeypots and encryption are and what role they play in modern cybersecurity. Parents can download a pdf version of the book for free or view it online and go through the basics of cybersecurity with their child, building their cybersafe future.

Zong 4G collaborates with Alkhidmat Foundation to deliver free healthcare services in Sindh

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecom operator, continues to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to corporate social responsibility by addressing critical healthcare challenges faced by underserved communities. On December 7th, Zong's Sustainability Team visited Kotri Jamsoro to observe the operations of a mobile health unit established in collaboration with the Alkhidmat Foundation.

An Alkhidmat Foundation representative highlighted the dire need for healthcare in these areas, stating, "At Alkhidmat Foundation, we believe in breaking barriers to healthcare access, ensuring that no community is left behind. Through our Mobile Health Unit initiative, we're reaching underserved areas with essential medical services. This partnership with Zong represents a powerful collaboration, uniting technology and humanitarian efforts to create lasting change. Together, we're not just delivering healthcare — we're delivering hope." Said Dr. Syed Tabassum Jaffri—President Alkhidmat Foundation Sindh.

Andleeb Aslam, Dy. Director Communications and Sustainability at Zong 4G reinforced the company's commitment to bridging this gap, remarking, "Access to healthcare is an issue that must be taken seriously. While we can't help everyone, we try to reach as many as we can through our partnership with Alkhidmat. This initiative is just one step in our journey towards creating a healthier, more equitable future for all."



Largest Departmental Store 'Chase Up' opens 19th branch in Hyderabad

Abdul Ghafoor Sorohi

HYDERABAD: The largest departmental store in the history of Hyderabad, Chase Up, has inaugurated its 19th branch on Auto Bhan Road in Hyderabad. Now, like residents of other cities in Pakistan, the people of Hyderabad can also shop for household items and other necessities at highly affordable prices.

Right from the opening of Chase Up's 19th branch, a large crowd of Hyderabad residents gathered to take

advantage of the discounted offers and purchased daily necessities at reasonable prices. On this occasion, residents expressed their joy, stating that the arrival of Chase Up in Hyderabad allows them to buy everything under one roof at low prices. Now, like people in other cities, Hyderabad residents will also benefit from this departmental store in their city.

In addition to the general public, the inauguration was attended by DIG Tariq Razaq Dharejo, business personalities, and many other

esteemed guests. Chase Up directors, Jawad Bashir and Mustafa Bashir, shared that Hyderabad is a commercial hub with rapidly growing business opportunities. People from various regions of Pakistan are coming to Hyderabad for business, which will contribute to the development of both Hyderabad and the country.

Chase Up is a trusted name, and today the people of Hyderabad have shown their trust in it, fulfilling a significant need of the city.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Phone: +92 51 2227123,
 WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
 Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
 Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

Landmark Judgment: Supreme Court cracks down on environmental destruction

In a watershed moment for environmental justice, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has delivered a landmark verdict, cracking down on the destruction of the Margalla Hills National Park and exposing the corrupt alliance between powerful individuals, institutions, and authorities who have been exploiting the law for personal gain. The judgment in Islamabad Wildlife Management Board versus Capital Development Authority has sent a strong message about the importance of upholding the law and protecting the environment. On August 22, 2024, the court ordered the Wildlife Management Board to take possession of the Monal Restaurant premises on September 11, 2024, with the help of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police. The judgment, authored by Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, emphasized the protection of fundamental rights under Articles 9 and 14 of the Constitution, which guarantee the right to life, liberty, dignity, and freedom from torture. The court has also ordered the protection and restoration of the Margalla Hills National Park, which has been ravaged by illegal construction and encroachment. SC has held that the destruction of the park violates the fundamental rights of citizens and is a constitutional obligation of the state to protect.

The court has directed the demolition of the Navy Golf Course, built illegally on encroached land, and the restoration of the area to its original state. The court has also ordered an inquiry into the encroachment and unauthorized construction within the park and directed the recovery of losses from those responsible. The destruction of the Margalla Hills National Park has resulted in the loss of several species, including the Grey Goral and Cheer Pheasant, and has harmed the human species across the globe. The decision highlighted the conspicuous disregard for regulations by powerful individuals and institutions, including Mr. Luqman Ali Afzal, who signed two illegal lease agreements with the CDA and Remount, Veterinary, and Farms Directorate (RV&FD), leading to the destruction of the Margalla Hills National Park. The court has criticized Mr. Luqman Ali Afzal, the lessee of a property within the park, for unilaterally discarding his lessor, the Capital Development Authority, and entering into a new lease with the Remount, Veterinary, and Farms Directorate, a non-legal entity and cultivating relationships with powerful individuals and violating the law for years.

The activities such as hunting, felling trees, and polluting water within the National Park have also been prohibited as per given judgement. This landmark decision sets a precedent for environmental protection in Pakistan, emphasizing the need to preserve and conserve national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. It is a victory for environmental justice and the rule of law in the country. The judgement exposed the involvement of CDA, RV&FD, and other institutions in facilitating these illegal activities, which have harmed the environment and threatened the survival of various species. The verdict

has clearly uncovered the corrupt alliance between powerful individuals, institutions, and authorities in exploiting the law for personal gain. Mr. Luqman Ali Afzal, the owner of Monal Group, in collusion with the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Remount, Veterinary, and Farms Directorate (RV&FD), and other facilitators, illegally occupied a land of national park in the Margalla Hills, violating law and causing irreparable harm to the environment and wildlife.

Wildlife Management has been ordered to reclaim possession of the Monal area and to restore the crept land and demolish the illegal Golf Course outside Sector E-8, but its implementation remains a challenge. The case has far-reaching ramifications, revealing a rotten system where institutions and authorities prioritize personal interests over the law and public interest. The decision has set a ray of hope for a better future, where the law yields the scepter and the environment is protected, it is a turning point in Pakistan's struggle for environmental justice and the rule of law, and its implementation will determine the country's commitment to protecting its natural resources and wildlife for future generations. The time for action is now, and the nation's future depends on it. We must break free from the chains of greed and incompetence that have held us back for so long and work towards a brighter future for all, where the savage destruction of wildlife is a thing of the past.

Writer is law analyst and she can be reached at fizazia344@gmail.com
Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect Daily The Spokesman's point of view



Analysis
Fiza Zia

Turkiye, Gulf states can play key role in Syria's future

Syria has gone through multiple phases, each marked by severe repercussions for both the Syrian people and other states in the region. Today, the war-torn country is at a crucial juncture: The Assad regime, which ruled the country for five decades, has finally faced its inevitable end.

The regime's rapid collapse presents opportunities for Türkiye and the Gulf states to play a pivotal role in the future of Syria by focusing on two key areas: Streamlining the political and military opposition, and organizing the political and economic reconstruction of the country. These efforts will not only enhance Syria's stability, but will also create conditions for the safe and voluntary return of Syrians to their homeland. Türkiye and the Gulf states can contribute effectively to the creation of a new and stable political order in Syria by supporting Syrians in securing a peaceful transitional government. This stable order will in turn provide a conducive atmosphere for post-Assad reconstruction efforts spearheaded by Ankara and the Gulf capitals.

The first phase is the streamlining of the fragmented Syrian opposition. Türkiye and the Gulf states, with their political and financial leverage, can foster greater coordination among both political and military opposition groups. By establishing "coordination committees" that include representatives from diverse opposition factions, they can help streamline efforts, create a platform for healthy dialogue, help to reconcile differences, and present a unified voice for an inclusive and well-represented civic framework that is vital for the reconstruction phase. Within this context, the new government must build a governance structure that is able to establish dialogue with everyone. Additionally, Türkiye and the Gulf states could facilitate forums to integrate civil society leaders into the opposition's political and governance structures, ensuring that all Syrians, including minorities and women, have a stake in the future of their country.

Reconstruction of Syria cannot be achieved without reconciliation, reform, and rule of law. Türkiye and the Gulf states can depend on Syrians who have experienced how rule of law has been implemented in countries where they have taken refuge during the past decade or more. For years, both Türkiye and the Gulf states have hosted Syrian intellectuals, former officials, and business leaders who could be key assets for Syria's future governance. Working together with these individuals to form a national transitional government is significant at the reconciliation phase. The summit that is scheduled to take place in Jordan on Saturday between foreign ministers of Türkiye, Gulf states, and Syria's neighbors is a significant attempt to show a collaborative regional effort for Syria's future.

Reconstruction of Syria will not only pave the way for the return of refugees, but also contribute to the economic stability of the entire region. With a stable government in Syria, Türkiye and the Gulf states can make investments that will provide a new market for goods and services, leading to economic benefits and quality services for Syrians.

The court has also ordered the protection and restoration of the Margalla Hills National Park, which has been ravaged by illegal construction and encroachment. SC has held that the destruction of the park violates the fundamental rights of citizens and is a constitutional obligation of the state to protect.

The court has directed the demolition of the Navy Golf Course, built illegally on encroached land, and the restoration of the area to its original state. The court has also ordered an inquiry into the encroachment and unauthorized construction within the park and



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

'Fertilizer Right' Project: Advancing Sustainable Agriculture in Pakistan

The agricultural sector in Pakistan is set to benefit from an innovative initiative called the "Fertilizer Right" project. Launched through a collaborative partnership between the United States and Pakistan, this four-year, \$ 4.5 million endeavor aims to revolutionize fertilizer use among Pakistani farmers. By adopting advanced and efficient practices, the project intends to enhance crop productivity, promote sustainable farming, and mitigate environmental challenges. This initiative is a cornerstone of the broader U. S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance" framework, which fosters bilateral cooperation to tackle climate change's impacts on agriculture while reducing carbon emissions. By focusing on sustainable agricultural practices, the "Fertilizer Right" project underscores its commitment to improving the resilience of farmers and ensuring food security for communities across Pakistan.

The project acknowledges the crucial role that fertilizers play in boosting agricultural productivity. However, it also acknowledges the potential negative consequences that can arise from their improper use, such as adverse impacts on soil health, water quality, and the delicate balance of ecosystems. By advocating for a more educated and thoughtful approach to the application of fertilizers, the initiative seeks to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between the demands of agriculture and the imperative of environmental sustainability. Capacity Building for Farmers A core focus of the project is to enhance the capacity of Pakistani farmers to use fertilizers efficiently and responsibly. By employing innovative techniques and providing education on best practices, the initiative seeks

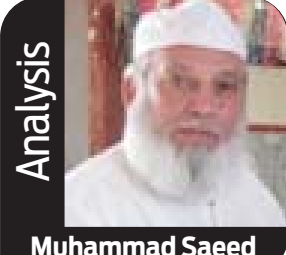
to achieve higher agricultural productivity without causing adverse effects on the environment. Through this collaboration, farmers will receive training, resources, and technological support to optimize fertilizer use, reduce waste, and protect soil health. This training will cover various aspects, including soil testing, understanding nutrient requirements for different crops, and the timing and method of fertilizer application. By equipping farmers with this knowledge, the project aims to foster a culture of responsible farming practices that prioritize both yield and sustainability. Addressing Food Security and Climate Change The ultimate goal of the "Fertilizer Right" project

is to empower agricultural communities with the tools they need to address the dual challenges of food security and climate change. As climate change continues to pose significant threats to agricultural productivity, initiatives like this are crucial in helping farmers adapt to changing conditions. By promoting sustainable practices, the project not only aims to increase crop yields but also to enhance the resilience of farming systems. It represents a proactive approach to addressing the complex challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the agricultural sector, which is vital to Pakistan's economy and livelihood. By investing in initiatives like this, the U. S.-Pakistan partnership continues to set an example of international cooperation in achieving sustainable development goals. The project is not only an investment in agriculture but also a significant step toward fostering resilience and adaptability in the face of an ever-changing climate. Future Prospects and Impact

In the foreseeable future, the "Fertilizer

Right" project holds the promise of triggering a transformative wave across the agricultural landscape in Pakistan. As farmers embrace and implement sustainable practices, the positive outcomes have the potential to transcend individual farms and resonate throughout entire communities. Enhanced soil health and minimized environmental footprint can pave the way for improved water quality and biodiversity, fostering a more robust and resilient ecosystem. Furthermore, the knowledge and expertise acquired through this initiative can empower farmers to emerge as champions for sustainable agriculture within their localities. By sharing their achievements and insights, they can serve as catalysts for change, inspiring others to join in the journey towards a collective shift towards sustainable agricultural practices in Pakistan. In conclusion, the "Fertilizer Right" project stands as a pivotal milestone in propelling sustainable agriculture practices in Pakistan to new heights. Through its emphasis on promoting judicious fertilizer usage, empowering farmers with knowledge and skills, and tackling the pressing issues of food security and climate change, this initiative serves as a shining example of the transformative potential of global cooperation in nurturing a sustainable tomorrow. As the project unfolds, diligent monitoring of its progress and impact will be crucial to ensure that it stays on course towards achieving its objectives and making a meaningful contribution to the enduring resilience of Pakistan's agricultural landscape. It is through the implementation of such forward-thinking endeavors that we can aspire to construct a more sustainable and food-secure world that will endure for generations to come.

Writer is a former PRO in PARC and holds a Master of Mass Com. He can be reached at Saeed87alam@gmail.com, Cell # 03005369396



Analysis
Muhammad Saeed

'Seminary Reforms in Pakistan: A Clash of Power, Politics, and Education'

The ongoing debate about the registration of seminaries in Pakistan has sparked significant tensions between political and religious factions. At the center of this controversy is the question of which government body should oversee these institutions. Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, a prominent cleric

initiative could also be seen as an attempt to counter extremism and promote a narrative of tolerance and moderation, which has long been a challenge in the country's religious discourse.

The situation has led to a bifurcation within the religious community. On one side is Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, who represents a traditionalist view and is fighting to maintain the status quo. On the other side is Tahir Ashrafi, a cleric who supports the government's vision of reform. This division reflects deeper ideological and political fault lines within the country's religious leadership. While Fazal-ur-Rehman represents a faction that sees the government's move as a direct attack on their influence, Ashrafi and his supporters believe that reforms are necessary to bring religious education into the modern era.

The outcome of this power struggle remains uncertain. It could lead to a compromise, where seminaries are given some autonomy under the Ministry of Education, or it could result in a prolonged deadlock. There is also the possibility that the government's push is part of a broader strategy to weaken the political dominance of the JUI-F, though this remains speculative at this stage.

One thing is clear: the registration of seminaries is more than just an administrative matter—it is a battle over the ideological and political future of Pakistan. The stakes are high, and the repercussions of this debate will likely shape the country's religious and political landscape for years to come.

Writer is student at University of Sargodha. He can be approached at azam-tariqalihaider@gmail.com



Analysis
M Azam Tariq

IS Maryam Nawaz Sharif's Visit Huawei

CM Punjab vows to make Lahore Pakistan's first smart city with Huawei's help

Spokesman Report

SHENZHEN: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif reached Huawei Technologies's Bantian headquarter in Shenzhen longgang district, where she was warmly welcomed by Huawei authorities. She met Huawei's Government Affairs Director Mr. Wang Chengdong to discuss various initiatives to make Lahore a modern digital city. She also discussed with him issues relating to e-commerce, ecosystem and ICT infrastructure development, digitalization of health and education department.

Madam Chief Minister was briefed in detail by Huawei President Wang Chengdong about Huawei's ongoing projects in Pakistan, especially in Punjab. She took keen interest and discussed with him Huawei's projects in the health and education sectors. She apprised him of the Safe City projects in different cities of Punjab, and vowed to make Lahore Pakistan's first modern smart city with the help of Huawei. She invited Huawei to invest in Pakistan,

especially in Punjab, and offered them full cooperation to set up Huawei office in Nawaz Sharif IT City.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif also assured Huawei to set up Huawei office and after-sales service center across Punjab. She said, "The vision of Digital Punjab will be realized with the cooperation of Huawei." She added, "We want to benefit from Huawei's expertise in telecommunication and digitalization." She highlighted, "Punjab's first full-fledged AI university will benefit from Huawei's professional skills."

Madam Chief Minister said, "Huawei will assist in capacity building and IT research at Nawaz Sharif IT City." She added, "We want to introduce Punjab's youth to the latest digital technologies with Huawei's assistance." She underscored, "Huawei will also assist Punjab in ecosystem development."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Lahore's first Safe City project was established in collaboration with Huawei." She visited Huawei Technologies and saw its various sections.



WB approves \$240 million to support investments in water, sanitation and hygiene services in Karachi

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank today approved on Thursday \$240 million in financing for the Second Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project (KWSSIP-2) to provide safely managed water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in the city of Karachi.

"Safely managed WASH services are the foundation of public health and quality of life and are central to addressing the stunting crisis in Pakistan," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "KWSSIP-2 will expand the scope of investments in bulk water augmentation, water treatment, wastewater treatment and reuse, water distribution, and sewer network rehabilitation. About half of all beneficiaries will be women, 58 percent will be youth (age 15-24),

as well as over half a million people in Katchi Abadis (informal settlements)."

The project builds on KWSSIP-1 and will finance and expand on several investments to strengthen Karachi's water supply, sewerage, sanitation, and treatment infrastructure throughout the city. In addition, it will improve water and wastewater infrastructure and help expand safe drinking water and sanitation services in several Katchi Abadis (informal settlements), benefiting over half a million people. The long-term benefits of the project include reduced cost of using alternative water sources, reduced time spent collecting water, and health benefits from reducing waterborne diseases.

"KWSSIP-2 will also continue to address the gender gap in employment, representation, and leadership at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corpora-

tion (KWSC) through gender-inclusive recruitment plans to hire more women in technical and decision-making positions," said Khairy Al-Jamal, Task Team Leader for the project. "It will support technical training for women, institutionalize an internship program for women graduates and create pathways for them to find employment within the utility, and support promoting women employees to higher-grade positions."

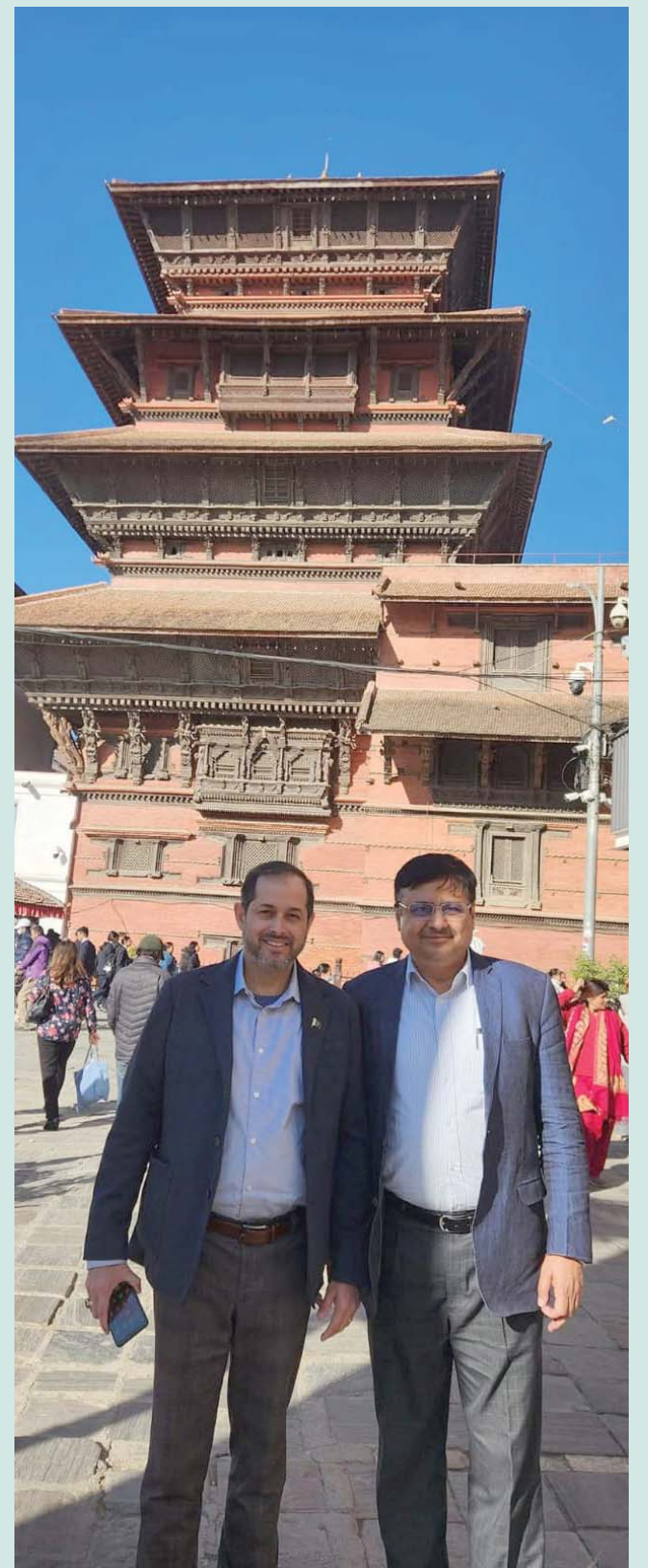
The project will provide safely managed water supply to nearly 16 million people and sanitation services to nearly 7.5 million people in Karachi by 2030. It will also improve the performance and financial sustainability of KWSC and promote private sector partnership in delivery of WASH services.

This project is the first phase of the [World Bank's support for the] Pakistan Urban WASH Services Program

that aims to reach 33.5 million people with safely managed WASH services by 2035. KWSSIP-2 will be co-financed by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with \$240 million. In addition, there will be Government contribution of \$250 million and expected private sector and commercial finance of \$269 million.

This project is part of a World Bank South Asia regional initiative or program of programs to provide Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services to about 100 million people across the region by 2035. The World Bank in Pakistan has been a member of the World Bank since 1950. Since then, the World Bank has provided over \$48.3 billion in assistance. The current portfolio has 54 projects and a total commitment of \$15.7 billion.

Welcomed



KATHMANDU: Former Ambassador of Nepal in Pakistan Mr. Tapas Adhikari welcomed Isphanyar Bhandara Member of National Assembly of Pakistan and CEO Murree Brewery Company to Nepal.

AlHuda CIBE Organized 'Global Islamic FinTech Awards' in Dubai, UAE

Spokesman Report

DUBAI - UAE: "Global Islamic FinTech Awards" distribution ceremony in UAE was celebrated on 9th December, 2024 on the occasion of Global Islamic FinTech Forum organized by Al-Huda Center of Islamic Banking & Economics (CIBE) at Dusit Thani Hotel, Dubai, UAE with a specific purpose to encourage Islamic FinTech Industry as well as to recognize and celebrate outstanding achievements and contributions of individuals and institutions within Islamic FinTech industry. Al-Huda CIBE congratulates all winners of Awards. "Our congratulations to all of the winners and nominees of the Global Islamic FinTech Awards at Global Islamic FinTech Forum" said Mr. Zubair Mughal Chief Executive Officer Al-Huda CIBE. "Global Islamic FinTech Awards" are truly showcase those organizations and individuals that are driving innovations in the rapidly emerging



Islamic Finance and FinTech industry. We thank all of our entrants, judges, sponsors and partners for supporting the "Global Islamic FinTech Awards".

Delegates from various countries participated in the forum. The dignitaries including H. E. Ali Zaib, Trade & Investment Counsellor Consulate General of Pakistan, UAE and Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal,

CEO of AlHuda CIBE FZ LLE, UAE handed over the awards to the winners. Various award categories conferred upon the winners include: award for the Best Islamic Insurtech Company to B4E Insurtech Inc; Best Islamic Financial Product Innovation to Masryef Advisory; Best Islamic Blockchain Solution to InvoiceMate; Best Islamic Investment Platform to IMAN Group Ltd; Best

Digital Microfinance Product to SkyReliance; Global Financial Inclusion Award to SkyReliance; Fintech Innovation Challenge Awards to LycanChain; Best Islamic Fintech Startup to Fasset; Best Islamic Fintech for Islamic Inclusion to WAAFI SAS; Innovation in Virtual Islamic & Digital Banking Transformation to Greens Fintech; Excellence in Islamic Digital Investment to Taqwa Invest; Emerging Fintech Organization for Corporates to Team Authentic Commercial Broker; Excellence in Strategic Investment and Partnership Approach to Global Sphere; Leadership in Shari'ah-Compliant Financial Services to Salama Islamic Insurance; Leading Fintech Platform for Forex Trading to Wayone Capital; Best Innovative Financial Solution to High Professional Consultancies Banking; Best Digital Payment Solution to UZCARD; Best Islamic Edutech to TAIF Digital Institute; Best Islamic Fintech

Innovation to Sharjah Islamic Bank; Best Islamic Fintech in Africa to Supersonic Financial; Visionary leader in Islamic Banking and Finance to Blink; Best Islamic Digital Solution Provider to Tontine Trust Retirement Technologies Limited.

Mr. M. Zubair Mughal, CEO of Al-Huda CIBE, expressed his gratitude to all the participants, speakers, and sponsors who contributed to the success of the event. He emphasized the importance of fostering innovation and collaboration within the Islamic FinTech industry to address global challenges and promote sustainable development.

The Global Islamic FinTech Forum 2024 was a resounding success, showcasing the immense potential of Islamic FinTech to drive economic growth and social impact. Al-Huda CIBE remains committed to organizing such events and supporting the growth of the Islamic finance industry.

Serena Hotels, Embassy of Switzerland and Canadian High Commission host high-profile summit on protecting mountain ecosystems

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, in collaboration with the Embassy of Switzerland and the Canadian High Commission in Pakistan, hosted a Raabta panel discussion to commemorate International Mountain Day. The event, titled "Preserving Mountain Ecosystems Amidst Climate Change - Strategies for Adaptation and Empowering Mountain Communities," brought together experts at Islamabad Serena Hotel to address the pressing challenges faced by mountain ecosystems and communities.

Canada, as a global leader in climate action, reiterated its commitment to combating climate change and supporting

vulnerable communities, with a particular focus on empowering women and youth through initiatives like Eco-Leaders and partnerships with Booni Environmental Academy Chitral. Similarly, the Swiss Embassy highlighted its sustainability initiatives to reduce carbon footprints in various industries, aligning with global climate goals.

Moderated by renowned journalist Sidra Iqbal, the panel featured notable speakers, including Billi Bierling, a Swiss climber and author, who shared insights on balancing human activity with environmental preservation. Nazir Sabir, the first Pakistani to summit Mount Everest, reflected on the visible impact of climate change on

mountain environments. Nusrat Nasab, CEO of the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), discussed community-driven solutions to enhance climate resilience for mountain populations.

Daniel Arsenault, Canada's Political, Economic, Public Affairs, and Commercial Counselor, emphasized Canada's partnerships in Pakistan, promoting grassroots climate solutions and gender-inclusive strategies.

The event also spotlighted Sirbaz Khan, the first Pakistani to summit all 14 peaks over 8,000 meters, whose expeditions Serena Hotels proudly supports. Serena's sustainability efforts were further highlighted through initiatives like the Green Impact Cleanup Drive at Rakaposhi Base Camp,

where 130 kilograms of litter were removed in collaboration with local communities and mountaineers.

Speaking on the occasion, Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, reaffirmed the organization's dedication to promoting sustainable tourism and empowering mountain communities. "Through initiatives like this panel discussion and our support for mountaineers such as Sirbaz Khan and Samina Baig, we remain committed to safeguarding our mountains and the livelihoods they sustain," he said.

The Raabta panel concluded with a call to action, urging collaboration among governments, NGOs, international



organizations, and local communities to implement sustainable practices and strengthen resili-

ence in mountain regions. Serena Hotels continues to lead efforts to foster meaningful dialogue and

inspire collective action to protect these vital ecosystems for generations to come.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
114,301.80	114,180.50	
Day's High	Day's Low	
115,172.44	112,609.25	
Index Value	Change	
44,316,484,562	+121.30	
Percentage	Time	
+0.11%	13 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,293.58	-18.77	
Percentage	Time	
-0.23%	13 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
43,916.09	+1.97	
Percentage	Time	
+0.0045%	13 Dec, 11:13 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
39,470.44	-378.70	
Percentage	Time	
-0.95%	13 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	178.75	181.00
Bahrain Dinar	734.65	742.65
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	896.86	906.36
Malaysian Ringgit	61.75	62.35
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.4
Norwegians Krone	24.93	25.23
Omani Riyal	719.04	727.54
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.70	74.25
Singapore Dollar	204.99	206.99
Swedish Korona	25.04	25.34
Swiss Franc	311.20	314.00
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	351.30	354.8
US Dollar	277.60	279.15

Chinese Delegation visit FPCCI

Chinese delegation announced plans for \$1 billion Medical City in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the federation has hosted a high-profile Chinese delegation at its Head Office in Karachi; where the visiting delegation announced the plans to establish a mega medical city in Karachi - with an investment of \$1 billion. It will be transformational for the healthcare system of Pakistan in general and for Karachi in particular, he added.

It is pertinent to note that the announcement was made during a joint meeting of FPCCI's Pakistan - China Business Council and FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Investment. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI and Mr. Meng Xiao Wei, President of China - Pakistan Research and Innovation Enterprises Alliance.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon stressed that the proposed grand medical city will be collectively developed by 35 Chinese business groups listed on the Chinese Stock Exchange



— aiming to upgrade Pakistan's healthcare system to make it at par with international

standards. Mr. Meng Xiao Wei, President of China - Pakistan Research and Innovation Enterprises Alliance, said that the project will include manufacturing facilities for medical equipment; a world-class medical college; training programs and other healthcare-related businesses. With an investment of over \$1 billion and a timeline of three years, the initiative is expected to generate over 50,000 jobs in Pakistan. The project will also have support of the Pakistan - China Medical Association.

Mr. Shabbir Mansha, Chairman of FPCCI's Pakistan - China Business Council, informed that the representatives from leading Chinese industries; including medical industry, agricultural fertilizers, solar energy, heavy trucks and electric vehicles, were part of the visiting Chinese delegation.

Ms. Mahin Khan, Convener of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Investment also spoke on the occasion

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: 11th Board Meeting of Trade Development Authority chaired by Mr. Jam Kamal Federal Minister for Commerce held at TDAP Office. MNA Asad Alam Niazi, Senator Bilal Ahmed Khan Member, Mr. Nasir Hamid Additional Secretary Trade Diplomacy, Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Sheryar Taj, Secretary TDAP, Mr. Muhammad Zubair Motiwala Chief Executive, TDAP, Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI, Mr. Muhammad Naseer, Director General TDAP Islamabad and others attended the meeting..



TCL reinforces its leadership in air conditioning with cutting-edge



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's No. 1 LED TV brand successfully hosted its first ever exclusive industry gathering in Wuhan, China. Bringing together key dealers, media representatives, and influencers from the Middle East & Africa region for the TCL Air Conference - "Air to Future, Sail to Success.", this milestone event showcased TCL's technological excellence, revolutionary air conditioning innovations, and the precision engineering of its cutting-edge Wuhan Intelligent Manufacturing Centre. The event captivated attendees with an immersive exploration of TCL's latest air conditioning technologies, including the renowned FreshIN 3.0 and TCL VoxIN series. Designed to meet the specific challenges of the Middle East & Africa regions, these products prioritize energy efficiency and user comfort, offering innovative solutions for high temperatures and health-conscious consumers. A total of 300 attendees, including prominent media representatives and business leaders, gathered to experience the exceptional capabilities of TCL's air conditioning technology.

InfraZamin, Saudi Pak sign landmark transaction for 12 MW of solar power

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: InfraZamin Pakistan and Saudi Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Co Ltd signed a landmark transaction to provide an 11.5-year Distributed Solar Financing Facility to Acumen Energy Limited (Acumen) for PKR 1.28 billion. The Facility will be backed by a PKR 1.04bn credit guarantee to Saudi Pak and will mark InfraZamin's first foray into renewable energy. The transaction, supported by Private Finance Advisory Network ("PFAN") and Capital Resource as the advisors, will enable Acumen Energy Limited to finance the development of approximately 12 MW of solar power projects across Pakistan.

Maheen Rahman, CEO of InfraZamin Pakistan, stated: "This transaction represents our mission to enable private sector participation in sustainable infrastructure development. By providing a credit guarantee for renewable energy projects, InfraZamin is paving the way for affordable and clean energy solutions that align with



Pakistan's climate goals.

Sharing his thoughts, Naeem ul Hasan, Director and CEO of Acumen Energy Limited, remarked: "We are grateful for InfraZamin's support in making this project a reality. By enabling cost-effective solar power solutions, we aim to transform energy access for customers across the country, driving economic growth while

reducing environmental impact.

Adding his thoughts on the development, Rizwan Ahmed, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of Saudi Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company Ltd. commented: "This collaboration underscores our commitment towards advancing renewable energy projects in the country.

UBG leadership meets Rawalpindi Parliamentarians

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: United Business Group (UBG) Patron-in-Chief S. M. Tanveer and Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari attended a dinner hosted by PML-N leader and prominent businessman Wajid Ayub at his residence, where they held an important meeting with Rawalpindi's parliamentarians. The meeting focused on improving the national economy and the role of the business community. Attendees included MNAs Malik Abrar, Raja Qamar-ul-Islam, Anjum Aqeel Khan, MPAs Malik Iftikhar, Raja Hanif, Ziaullah Shah, Malik Mansoor Ashraf, and PML-N leader Rahat Masood Qudusi.

During the meeting, S. M. Tanveer highlighted the business community's efforts to strengthen the economy

and emphasized the need for immediate steps to resolve issues related to Independent Power Producers (IPPs). He described the reduction in interest rates as crucial for economic stability and called for robust policies from the government and the State Bank.

Zafar Bakhtawari briefed the participants on the business community's efforts to revive the economy, noting that despite challenging circumstances, the private sector continues to support economic growth. He urged the government to take immediate steps to create a favorable business environment.

Parliamentarians lauded the efforts of the business community, acknowledging that the private sector's collaboration is essential for economic progress. They assured



their full support to the business community.

MNA Malik Abrar praised the business community's contributions to economic improvement, emphasizing the private sector's vital role in national development. Raja Qamar-ul-Islam highlighted the importance of reducing interest

rates and resolving issues faced by the business sector as a top priority for the government. Anjum Aqeel Khan appreciated S. M. Tanveer's proposals for agricultural development and said that increasing cotton production would not only boost foreign exchange but also positively impact other sectors of the economy.

MPAs Raja Hanif, Ziaullah Shah, Mansoor Ashraf, and Rahat Qudusi stressed the importance of development efforts for economic development. They noted that the reduction in interest rates is encouraging for businesses and highlighted the need for further reductions. They also emphasized adopting modern agricultural techniques and providing facilities to farmers to strengthen the economy.

The meeting concluded with an agreement that close cooperation between the government and the private sector is indispensable for economic stability and agricultural growth. S. M. Tanveer and Zafar Bakhtawari reaffirmed UBG's commitment to addressing the business community's concerns and striving for the revival of the national economy.

OGDCL announces gas and condensate discovery at Bettani-02 Well in Lakki Marwat, KPK

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's leading exploration and production company, on Friday announced a significant gas and condensate discovery in the Samanasuk Formation, an exploratory zone, at the Bettani-02 (Slant) well located in the Laki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. OGDCL is the operator of the Wali Exploration License with a 100% working interest.

The Bettani-02 (Slant) well was spudded as an appraisal effort and drilled to a depth of 5,080 meters into the Shinawari Formation. Subsequent testing of the well, using the Cased Hole Drill Stem Test (DST-1), revealed a flow rate of 2.14 Million Standard Cubic Feet per Day (MMSCFD) of gas and 74 barrels of condensate per day (BCPD) on a 32/64" choke, with a wellhead flowing pressure of 435 psi.

This marks the first-ever hydrocarbon discovery in the Samanasuk formation within the Wali Exploration License.

BankIslami achieves the 2024 Euro Clearing Quality Recognition Award

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: BankIslami recently won the "2024 Euro Clearing Quality Recognition Award" from J. P. Morgan for achieving an impressive MT202 STP Rate of 99.37%.

Mr. Amin Khawaja, CEO of J. P. Morgan Pakistan, presented the award to BankIslami's President & CEO, Mr. Rizwan Ata, along with Deputy CEO Mr. Imran H. Shaikh and other prominent individuals of BankIslami. This award showcases the achievements of the bank while being fully Shariah compliant and aligning with the essential role it plays in financial institutions for its customers.

Beyond Boundaries: Australia empowering girls through cricket

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commission (AHC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), with the support of Serena Hotels, today hosted the 8th AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup in Islamabad.

The event brought together young players from Islamabad's schools, celebrating girls breaking barriers and battling for gender equality.

Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, joined 60 girls from four schools to watch the final match of the tournament. In the week leading up to the final match, PCB first-class coaches conducted an intensive five-day coaching clinic, preparing the girls to shine on the field and feel more confident off the field.

High Commissioner Hawkins celebrated the enthusiasm and confidence of the players and congratulated the schools, and all involved for making this event possible.

"The smiles on the girls' faces say it all. Sport is a great motivator – it builds teamwork and confidence. Of course,



cricket is a passion that binds Australia and Pakistan, it makes perfect sense for us to support this wonderful event."

The Australian High Commission has been sponsoring girls' cricket in Pakistan since 2016, starting with one tournament in Islamabad. Today it has grown

to Lahore and Karachi, empowering girls across the nation.

"It's not just about boundaries on the pitch but also overcoming boundaries in life. Every ball bowled, every catch taken, helps promote gender empowerment. Pakistan faces many challenges as we

all know, but they can only be overcome if the potential of ALL Pakistanis – men and women – is utilised." Mr Hawkins said.

Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, echoed the sentiment: "This is an outstanding platform that empowers young girls by providing access to professional coaching and opportunities to develop their cricketing skills. This initiative not only nurtures future talent but also serves as a launchpad for their cricketer careers. Serena Hotels, in collaboration with the Australian High Commission and the Pakistan Cricket Board, conceived this idea seven years ago to inspire and empower young girls through the transformative power of sports."

The AHC-PCB Girls' Cup Islamabad featured teams from four schools: Mashal Model School Bari Imam, SOS Children's Village H-11, Islamabad Model School for Girls – F-6/1 and Islamabad Model School for Girls I-9/1 Islamabad.

With cheers echoing through Islamabad, these girls showcased not just their cricketing skills but also the promise of a brighter, more inclusive future.

Punjab contingent to feature in 15 games during Quaid Games

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab's 374-member contingent on Friday has left for Islamabad to participate in the Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games under the leadership of Director Admin Dr M Kaleem and Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum.

The Punjab contingent will participate in 15 games – athletics, football, hockey, badminton, table tennis, taekwondo, weightlifting, wrestling, swimming, squash, volleyball, boxing, karate, judo and kabaddi during the Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games scheduled to be organized at federal capital till December 19, 2024.

DG Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry sent off the contingent with best wishes and prayers.



He went to every bus of the touring convoy to elevate the spirits of Punjab players.

Talking on this occasion, Khizar Afzaal

said that Punjab is a two-time champion of the Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games. "We are quite determined that Punjab contingent will retain its trophy

in the mega event," he maintained.

He said that best facilities have been provided to the players in the training camp. "Such a quality facilities including food and accommodation have never been provided to athletes in the past," he added.

He further said that our expert coaches have trained the touring players on modern lines in the 8-day training camp. "The talented players, who impressed in the Quaid-e-Azam Games, will be beneficial for Punjab in the grand event of National Games."

The members of touring contingent, on this occasion said that Sports Board Punjab has provided best facilities at the training camp. "We will return from Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games as title winners," they expressed their resolve.

From village to victory

Tulsi Meghwar's Rise as Pakistan's First Female Hindu Sports Champion

Ramesh Raja

Tulsi Meghwar, from the small village of Sadhu Paro Kotri by the Indus River, is Pakistan's first female Hindu softball and baseball champion. Her journey has been one of determination and courage. Growing up in a conservative society, where girls were discouraged from sports, Tulsi pursued her dreams despite the challenges. "I was confident and ambitious," she says, urging other girls to dream big.

In 2016, while still in school, Tulsi joined a softball trial, worried her family might not approve. Her father, Harji Lal, a journalist, supported her. "My parents deserve all the credit for my success," Tulsi says. Her hard work paid off when she was selected for the provincial squad at the National Women's Softball Championship. Since then, she has won many medals and awards.

Though criticized by her community for playing sports, Tulsi never gave up. She believes that stepping onto the field frees a woman from social obstacles. Her success has inspired other girls. "If I can do it, so can they," says her coach, Aisha Iram.

Tulsi's father recalls the criticism he faced for sending her

to school, as educating girls was frowned upon. But her achievements have shown that girls can succeed when given the opportunity.

Tulsi believes sports in Pakistan, especially for women, need more attention and support. Despite the challenges, she dreams of representing Pakistan internationally. "It's only the beginning for me," she says, staying hopeful.

Her achievements have not only challenged stereotypes about girls in sports but also shown that girls can break barriers. "It's not just about playing; it's about making a statement," she says. Tulsi hopes to prove that a girl from a marginalized community can rise above limitations.

Tulsi's story is a beacon of hope, especially for girls from conservative backgrounds. "I am proud to be the first girl from my Hindu family to make a name in sports," she says. She is paving the way for others, showing that with determination and support, anything is possible.

Starting her sports journey in 2016 at a school-based baseball camp, Tulsi had never heard of softball or baseball but wanted to try something new. Little did she know, this decision would make her a national champion



in both sports. Despite many obstacles, she faced, including criticism from her community, Tulsi persevered. "When I started practicing for the national games, people questioned why a girl from my community would play sports. They thought it was only for boys," she recalls. But over time, her critics became her supporters.

Tulsi's first big achievement came when she was selected for the national baseball games. Since then, she has won many medals, including gold and bronze at national and regional tournaments. "Winning my first medal was a moment of immense pride for me and my

family," she says.

As the first batter for her team, a position earned through her exceptional performance, Tulsi is now a symbol of hope for girls in her community, where traditional gender roles are often enforced. "I was always told that if you work hard, respect and recognition will follow," she reflects.

Though she faces challenges, including a lack of dedicated practice fields for girls, Tulsi practices with what she has and uses online videos to improve. "The field is not ideal, but I've learned to practice with what I have," she says.

Tulsi's story challenges the norms of a conservative society, proving that women can achieve great things despite the odds. "People didn't believe a girl from my community could achieve so much. But I believe in myself, and I want other girls to believe in themselves too," she says.

With the unwavering support of her parents, especially her father, Tulsi has shown that

with belief and perseverance, anything is possible. "My father has always believed in me," she says, crediting him for her success.

Tulsi's journey is not just about sports; it's about overcoming obstacles and breaking barriers. She continues to work toward her dream of representing Pakistan internationally, aiming to show the world that women from her community can compete at the highest level.

Tulsi's story is an inspiration to women everywhere, encouraging them to break free from societal norms and pursue their dreams. "I hope my journey helps other girls realize they too can break the barriers that hold them back," she concludes.

Tulsi Meghwar is a true trailblazer, and her perseverance, courage, and determination inspire us all. We wish her continued success in her journey and hope she achieves all her dreams on the global stage.

Imad Wasim announces retirement from international cricket



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan all-rounder Imad Wasim on Friday, left his fans stunned as he officially announced his retirement from international cricket.

Imad took to X (formerly Twitter) and announced his decision to bid farewell to international cricket after a nine-year-long career.

"To all fans & supporters, after much thought and reflection, I have decided to retire from international cricket," he posted. "Representing Pakistan on the world stage has been the greatest honor of my life, and every moment wearing the green jersey has been unforgettable."

"Your unwavering support, love, and passion have always been my biggest strength. From the highs to the lows, your encouragement has pushed me to give my best for our beloved country.

"While this chapter comes to an end, I look forward to continuing my journey in cricket through domestic and franchise cricket, and I hope to keep entertaining you all in new ways. "Thank you for everything, Pakistan."

For the unversed, Imad Wasim previously retired from international cricket in November 2023, however, he reversed his decision in March earlier this year and declared his availability for the ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

The all-rounder managed three wickets in three games at an average of 14.66 and scored a meagre 19 runs in two outings during Pakistan's disastrous World Cup campaign as they crashed out of the tournament from the group stage.

Notably, Imad Wasim, who made his international debut in 2015, represented Pakistan in 75 T20Is and 55 ODIs. He scored 1540 runs across formats with the help of six half-centuries and claimed 117 wickets.

He was also part of the Pakistan side that won the ICC Champions' Trophy in 2017, under the inspired leadership of Sarfaraz Ahmed.

Darwood Sports, Shamil CC, Azeempura and Eaton CC secure victories in Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Four more matches were decided in the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at various grounds.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricant.

Scores in Brief:

Dawood Sports beat National Gymkhana by 5 wickets at KCCA Stadium. National Gymkhana 95 all out in 34.2 overs. Aliyan Mehmood 24, Abdullah Jawed 22. Obaidur Rehman 2/7, Taha Waqar 2/8, Sain Rais 2/8.

Dawood Sports 96/5 in 13 overs. Sohail Khan 67 7x4 4x6. Darain Faraz 2/29.

In the 2nd Match Shamil Cricket Club beat Student Sports by 6 wickets at Student Ground. Student Sports 166 all out in 38.2 overs. Umer Zafar 63 4x4 5x6, Asghar Haider 26. Muhammad Luqman 4/34, Anir Mukhtar 2/41.

Shamil CC 169/4 in 21.2 overs Touseef Khan 62 10x4, Muhammad Salman 44, Rana Adrish 30.

In the 3rd Match Azeempura Gymkhana beat Landhi Gymkhana by 3 wickets at Landhi Gymkhana. Landhi Gymkhana 309 all out in 39.1 overs. Faizan Khan 111 11x4 3x6, Hassan Iqbal 61 8x4 1x6, Wajid Ali 40, Sufyan Usmani 37, Hassan Khan 37. Lal Kumar 3/43, Areeb Ali 2/54, Ghulam Mohiuddin 2/56.

Azeempura Gymkhana 313/7 in 38.5 overs. Lal Kumar 81 4x4 7x6, Waleed Ahmed 70 10x4, Shoab Shakeel 42, Muhammad Arfat 38, Ghulam Mohiuddin 23. Hafiz Musafir 3/50, M. Abiss 3/52.

In the fourth Match Eaton Cricket Club beat Jinnah Cricket Club by 2 wickets at Young Fighter Ground. Jinnah CC 180 all out in 34.3 overs. Talah Sheikh 48, Ahmed Modi 41, Nouman ullah 31. Anees Raza 2/23, Sami Ghouri 2/32, Osama Hussain 2/43.

Eaton CC 182/8 in 34.4 overs. Saad Faisal 51 6x4 1x6, Osama Hussain 31, Sami Ghouri 26. Sahil Khan 2/29, Ali Shinwari 2/33, Waheed Khan 2/40.

Champions Trophy 2025: ICC 'gives nod' to Pakistan-proposed hybrid model

The controversy surrounding the next year's Champions Trophy has come to an end as the International Cricket Council (ICC) reportedly greenlighted a "tit-for-tat" hybrid model proposed by Pakistan over India's refusal to send its team to the neighbouring country, Indian media claimed on Friday.

The development — deemed as a victory of Pakistan's stance — came following an agreement between the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), according to a report published in India Today.

The eight-team tournament hit a snag last month when the BCCI told the ICC that their side would not compete in Pakistan over security fears and political tensions.

Under the hybrid model, Pakistan will host the group matches but its high-profile clash with India will be played at a neutral venue. The final would be held at neutral venue or Lahore depending on whether the Indian side makes it through.

Furthermore, the publication — in its report — stated that both cricket boards have reached a consensus on the 2026 T20 World Cup, deciding that Pakistan will not travel to India for the league-stage clash against India, which will instead be held in Colombo.

It was reported that the PCB will not receive any "financial compensation" for this arrangement, while Pakistan also secured hosting rights for an ICC Women's tournament to take place after 2027.

"The agreement has been well-received by all stakeholders, ensuring smooth planning for these marquee events while addressing logistical and geopolitical concerns," it added.

The 2025 Champions Trophy is scheduled to take place from February 19 to March 9, with eight teams divided into two groups. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals, followed by the final.

Bilateral Trade

ISLAMABAD: Jam Kamal Khan discusses bilateral trade opportunities with Tajik Energy Minister at Pak-Tajik Business Forum on Friday.



Photo: PID

Tajik Minister calls on PM Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD, DEC 13 (APP): Energy Minister of Tajikistan Daler Jumma Friday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House and discussed matters of mutual interests.

During the meeting, regional connectivity projects, including CASA-1000, were discussed.

Both sides agreed to further promote cooperation in sectors such as communications, particularly land-based connectivity, energy, education, and agriculture.

Daler Jumma is visiting Pakistan to participate in the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission.

The prime minister welcomed Daler Jumma to Pakistan and expressed satisfaction with the progress made in bilateral cooperation between the two coun-



tries in various sectors during the Joint Commission.

Recalling his visit to Tajikistan and his recent meetings with Tajik President

Emomali Rahmon in Riyadh and Baku, the prime minister

extended his best wishes to the Tajik President and expressed hope that Presi-

dent Rahmon would visit Pakistan soon.

He expressed satisfaction with the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and

agreements reached during his visit and emphasized that timely implementation of these agreements would further strengthen bilateral relations.

The Tajik Minister thanked the Prime Minister for the warm welcome and hospitality and emphasized the importance of enhancing relations and cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for investment and communications Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Energy Awaiz Ahmed Leghari, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Advisor to the PM Tariq Fatemi and relevant government officials.

BISP And Nestlé Pakistan discuss expanding economic empowerment measures

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, and Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, met with the Corporate Head of Nestlé Pakistan, Waqar Sheikh, at the BISP Headquarters today. During the meeting, Nestlé Pakistan Manager, Aatekah Mir Khan, provided a detailed briefing on the ongoing partnership between BISP and Nestlé.

The briefing highlighted



that under this partnership, 3,500 BISP beneficiaries are currently working as sales agents in 29 districts across the country.

On this occasion, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the need to further expand the scope of the existing partnership between BISP and Nestlé to create better employment opportunities for BISP's deserving women. She underscored the importance of increasing the number of women in the Women's Financial Inclusion Program

to ensure that more women can benefit from this initiative.

In response, Nestlé Corporate Head Waqar Sheikh assured that 500 additional beneficiaries will be included in the program next year.

Senator Rubina Khalid directed BISP officers to collaborate with the Nestlé team to develop a strategy for launching new initiatives aimed at women's economic empowerment, with the goal of initiating the pilot phase soon.

Evidence-based data crucial for driving development wheel in Pakistan: PM's climate aide

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, has said reliable and evidence-based data plays a crucial role in driving development across various sectors—be it economic, social, technological or environmental. Because, it fosters innovation by providing insights into trends,

consumer behavior and market needs.

"The role of data in driving socio-economic development has become increasingly vital in many countries, particularly for developing countries like Pakistan, where gaps for credible data continue to block efforts for achieving various development goals and evidence-based policy and decision making," the PM's climate aide said in her keynote

address to the concluding ceremony of the three-day capacity-building workshop 'Data for Development' organized here on Friday by UN Population Fund in collaboration with the Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Ministry, Sustainable Development Policy Institute and other development partner organizations.

Highlighting the unprecedented

significance of the evidence-based and credible data, she told the participants from various governmental and non-governmental organisations at the event that as the country grapples with challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, and climate change, data is the foundation for crafting policies, designing programmes and ensuring accountability in development efforts.

Central Leader of PTI, Asad Qaiser, denies media reports about negotiations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Central leader of PTI, Asad Qaiser, stated that he wants to clarify that the news circulating in the media about negotiations or dialogues regard-

ing him are completely false. He said that he had visited the residence of Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's sister to offer condolences, where no negotiations or dialogues took place. He further mentioned that

when reports surfaced yesterday claiming talks had occurred with the government, he once again clarified that there were no discussions or dialogues with the government. He stated that a committee has been

formed for negotiations, and talks will take place only when the government shows seriousness and when Imran Khan gives his consent. These remarks were made during his address to the National Assembly session.

Addressing the Deputy Speaker, he said, "I want to draw your attention to the fact that one of our MNAs from Punjab, who is sitting in the National Assembly hall, was told to go to the Speaker's office

and submit his resignation. Is this the respect of a parliamentarian? A committee was formed to safeguard the rights of parliamentarians, so where is that committee? I salute all our members of Assembly from

Punjab. He further stated that PTI MNAs are being threatened, their homes and businesses are being attacked, and their families are being intimidated. He added that, in effect, martial law has been imposed in Punjab.



Commerce Minister proposes Pak-Tajikistan bilateral PTA

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Friday said that the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Tajikistan is need of the hours and after signing the agreement bilateral trade volume will be increased manifold.

"We have already signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan and we want to follow suit with Tajikistan," he said.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan said this while addressing the "Pakistan Tajikistan Business Forum" along with Minister for Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Jum'a Daler Shofaqr and President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Quraishi in Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry here.

In order to further tap the potential of our regional proximity between brotherly countries

it is imperative to establish more frequent direct flights, enhance cooperation in the logistics sector, and arrangements for using Pakistani seaports to cater Tajik imports, he said.

The commerce minister said that the Transit Trade Agreement (TTA) has undoubtedly provided a robust framework for growth and collaboration, however, to truly realize the potential of this agreement, it must be complemented by dynamic business forums and proactive business-to-business (B2B) engagements and providing market access to each other through a PTA.

He said that Tajikistan Minister, official and business community presence here today at this business forum is a testament to the enduring and mutually beneficial relationship between our nations.

On this occasion, the Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf described the role of the business community as key for increasing the bilateral economic relations between the two countries.

Khawaja Farooq Ahmed called on president Barrister Sultan Chaudhry



Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD/MUZAFFARABAD: Opposition leader Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Khawaja Farooq Ahmed called on president Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry here today.

During the meeting the duo discussed in detail the issues of mutual concern and prevailing political and human rights situation in Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Voicing their concern over the simmering situa-

tion in the disputed territory, they agreed to further strengthen the ongoing freedom movement, highlighting the plight of Kashmiri people and exposing India's ugly face to the world. Urging the international community, particularly the UN to take effective notice of Indian state terrorism and its terrible consequence on the Kashmiri society, the president said that it was high time that the world body should discharge its moral and legal obligations to get the UNSC resolutions on Kashmir implemented.

Iranian ambassador called on Minister for privatization



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a meeting between Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Raza Amiri Moghadam and Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan it was said that Pakistan and Iran are bound by deep and strong religious and historical ties. Possibilities of increasing trade and investment between the two

countries were also been discussed comprehensively in this meeting.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan discussed about the road infrastructure and trade corridors with the Iranian Ambassador and said that it is necessary to remove all obstacles hindering trade and investment.

He assured the Iranian Ambassador that the problems faced in the transportation sector will be resolved on priority basis.