

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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مجھ سے محمد بن عباس نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے
ابو اسامہ نے ان سے بڑے بن محمد اللہ نے
ان سے ابو ہریرہ نے ان سے ابو موسیٰ اشعری
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شخص اللہ سے ملے کو پندرہ سو ہے اللہ بھی
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RAWALPINDI



December 16 reminds nation to unite against terrorism: President Zardari

President Asif Ali Zardari said the day of December 16, 2014 reminded the nation to get united against terrorism and increase their efforts to eliminate this menace. In a message on the tenth anniversary of the Army Public School Peshawar attack, he said on 16th December, 2014 the terrorists attacked the future of our children and nation.



Nation stands united against terrorism on APS tragedy: PM

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reiterated the nation's unwavering resolve to combat terrorism as he marked the 10th anniversary of the devastating Army Public School (APS) tragedy on Sunday. In his heartfelt message, he said that December 16, 2014, was a day of unimaginable sorrow when cowardly terrorists attacked APS Peshawar, martyring 144 innocent individuals, the majority of whom were young children.

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Anti Polio campaign launched

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif launching the last Anti-Polio campaign of 2024 by administering anti-polio drops to children on Sunday.



Photo: PID

PM launches anti-polio campaign, commits to eradicate virus forever

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday launched the anti-polio drive by administering polio drops to children under five years of age, emphasizing the government's commitment to completely eradicate polio virus from Pakistan.

During the inauguration, the prime minister highlighted the growing concern of rising polio cases, with around 60 new reported cases, but assured that with the combined efforts of the

federal and provincial governments, the country would overcome this challenge.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his gratitude to the international partners who had supported Pakistan in the fight against polio, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the government of Saudi Arabia.

He specifically thanked Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for his contributions to the anti-polio campaign in both

Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"I especially thank the government of Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, for his very valuable contribution towards eradicating polio not only in Pakistan but also Afghanistan, and of course, I deeply appreciate the efforts of Bill Gates Foundation, WHO and I want to assure you that together we will march forward and will not rest until polio is thrown out for all times to come," he added.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ayesha Raza Farooq and Dr.

Bharat, he said the campaign aims to ensure that no child is left unvaccinated, with over 400,000 polio workers deployed across 143 districts in the country.

Earlier, Prime Minister's focal person for the anti-polio drive Dr. Ayesha Raza Farooq, thanked the Prime Minister for his steadfast support and participation. She noted that the Prime Minister's continuous involvement in the anti-polio efforts served as a testament to his commitment to safeguarding the health of Pakistan's children.

Crisis unit activated in Greece as one Pakistani dead, 47 others rescued in boat mishap

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office has confirmed that one Pakistani was drowned while 47 others were rescued in a boat capsizing incident in southern Greece and activated its Crisis Management Unit here to facilitate the families.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said search and rescue operation was going on after the boat capsized. She did not confirm the number of dead or missing Pakistanis.

She said the embassy of Pakistan in Athens was in contact with the Hellenic Coast Guard which are



directly dealing with the search and rescue operation.

The embassy officials have also reached Crete Island of Greece to meet with the rescued Pakistanis and assist them.

Pakistanis in Greece and their families are encouraged to contact the

Crisis Management Unit at the telephone number 051-9207887 in Islamabad.

They can also contact at Email: cmu1@mofa.gov.pk

Families of the missing Pakistanis can also contact the embassy of Pakistan to share details at the number: +30-6943850188

PTI indulges in politics of protests, sit-ins as it lacks positive, constructive agenda: Tarar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf always indulged in protests and sit-ins as the party did not have any positive or constructive agenda.

Talking to the media on Sunday, the minister said that the series of incitement, threats and accusations was the style of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership.

He reminded that in 2014, they attacked the Pakistan Television Corporation building and targeted law enforcement personnel. The PTI leaders incite people to violence and then run away, he maintained.

The minister said it was important to inform the nation about the facts regarding the baseless allegations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. Gandapur's allegations were based on lies



and concoction, he said adding now foreign media was invited to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to give them misleading briefings.

The facts should be known to the public and mischief and anti-nationalism should be exposed, he remarked.

He said Gandapur had claimed the next call will not be peaceful but the question arises which of their past calls were peaceful. He said on November 26, they invaded the capital with AK 47 rifles, teargas shells, grenades and slingshots.

Talks without confidence building measures meaningless: PTI's Hamid

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Any negotiations between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the government would be "meaningless" if the latter does not take any confidence-building measures, PTI Senator Hamid Khan said.

"This is only mazaak ka raat nothing else," he said while appearing on Rubaroo which was aired on Aaj News on Sunday.

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan formed a negotiating committee after the November 26 incident, which according to the PTI killed its 12 supporters.

Khan has warned the government of a civil disobedience movement if their demands for the release of party workers and a judicial commission on May 9 and November 26 were not met.

Earlier this week, PTI MNA Sher Afzal Marwat told Aaj News' that the government was engaging with the PTI in

talks at "some level" to normalise the political situation in the country.

Hamid said that the government should follow the Supreme Court's July 12 order, allot reserved seats to the PTI, and conduct Senate elections to show signs of any confidence building measures.

"It will show the government is serious and we will believe that there was some base for talks," he stated.

The PTI senator added that talks are not held without any demands. He slammed the government for not following the apex court's order on reserved seats.



Police disregard ATC order, re-arrest freed PTI workers from outside court

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Showing disregard to the anti-terrorism court (ATC) order, police on Saturday night re-arrested several workers of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who were freed by the court.

Police re-arrested the workers from outside the Judicial Complex when they were leaving the court. Some of the workers, who were inside the complex along with the PTI lawyers, avoided being re-arrested.

Advocate Ansar Kayani said that the court has been informed about re-arrest of several workers and the court order is being awaited.

It may be recalled that the court had warned police that if the freed workers were re-arrested, the officers would be handcuffed as well.

Court Discharges 32

Earlier, the Islamabad ATC discharged 32 worker arrested in connection with the PTI protests, clearing them of the charges.

The accused were brought before the ATC late at night after being sent for an identification parade.

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Rescue 1122 substation inauguration ceremony held in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Rescue 1122 substation was formally inaugurated on Narawal Road Bypass. Rana Sanaullah, Zafar Iqbal Nagra and Mian Ajmal Asif attended the inauguration ceremony as special guests. Local elders, hundreds of people from civil society as well as media representatives attended the inauguration ceremony.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Rana Sanaullah said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is paying special attention to public welfare projects and providing health facilities to the public is her top priority. District Emergency Officer Zafar Iqbal, while expressing his views, said that the construction of Aminpur Bangla Station was inevitable in view of the increasing incidents of emergency on Narawal Road.

In view of this need, Secretary Emergency Services Dr. Rizwan Naseer made special efforts to establish Aminpur Bangla Station and its construction work was completed in a short time. With the activation of Aminpur Bangla Station, it will not only be possible to provide rescue services in the villages near Narawal Road but also on the



bypass road, emergency services will be available immediately.

The trained staff of Rescue 1122 will be ready to serve humanity round the

clock and will also maintain its standard response time.



ISLAMABAD: Zanab Salman cutting the ribbon on the occasion of Launching ceremony of M & M on Sunday.

Minister Ramesh Singh Arora inaugurates Pakistan Lifestyle Furniture Expo 2024

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The provincial minister Ramesh Singh Arora inaugurated the 108th edition of (PLFE) Pakistan life style furniture expo at the Rosa Blanca Country Club, Raiwind Road, Lahore.

He inspected several exhibition stalls, praising the creativity and craftsmanship of local manufacturers, encouraged stakeholders to continue working towards enhancing the quality and diversity of Pakistani furniture to compete effectively in international markets.

Minister Arora appreciated the diversity and quality of products displayed and stated: "the furniture industry in Pakistan holds immense potential for growth."

CEO PLFE Mian Faisal briefed the minister that the Expo featured over 100 top furniture brands, showcasing an impressive range of products.

Major exhibitors included Diamond Supreme Foam Pvt Ltd (the official sponsor of the event), Dolce Vita, Yousuf Furniture, Home Furnishers, B&T Furniture, Quetta Carpet, Furniture Point, Habitt, Gaba Home, JC Buckman, Nevi Home, Soho Interior by Faiza, Wood Star, Ambiente, Riway Furniture, Furniture Emporium, Dareechay Home, Adil Furniture, Innovation Zone, Unique Home Décor, SHF Collection, Kahloon Furniture Gallery, Makeup Factory, Arbab Frames, Araish Khana, Murad Interior, Saad Interior, Wajid Handicrafts, Reflect Furniture, Ayesha Collection, Wood Curve, HK Bistra, Aamir Furniture, Glory Home, Abu Teck Zhomes, Unique Collection, Mian Furniture, Home Furniture, Furniture Republic, and many more.

Nor Alam Khan Advocate addresses seminar on narcotics in Takht Bhai

Correspondent



TAKHT BHAI: A seminar on narcotics laws and related topics was organized by the Takht Bhai Bar Council at the Takht Bhai Bar Room, where Noor Alam Khan Advocate, a member of the KP Bar Council and a Supreme Court lawyer, delivered a special address. On this occasion, the President of Takht Bhai Bar Council, Advocate Saifullah Khan, General Secretary Advocate Haq Nawaz Khan, Advocate Shah Hussain, Roman Shah, Advocate Younas, and other senior and junior lawyers of the bar room also participated.

While addressing the seminar, Noor Alam Khan Advocate emphasized that the fight against drugs is not the responsibility of any single institution; rather, collective efforts are required to combat it. He highlighted the growing use of narcotics and their harmful effects, calling for urgent and joint action to control the issue. Drugs not only destroy individual lives but also severely damage the social and economic structures of society. He pointed out that the youth are a prime target for drug dealers, making this a grave issue.

He urged parents, teachers, and religious leaders to educate young people about the dangers of drugs and to engage them in positive activities. He mentioned that the government has launched a crackdown on drug dealers, strengthening and empowering law enforcement agencies to make them more effective. The public was also appealed to immediately report any suspicious activities to the relevant authorities.

Hazara University is Leading Pakistan in the Field of Pteridophytes Exploration



Nasir Ali Tanoli

MANSEHRA: The PhD defense of Botany scholar Dr. Ahsan Shah was successfully held in Hazara University in Mansehra. Dr. Shah defended his dissertation with distinction, having published four research papers with a combined impact factor of 12 in prestigious international journals, including those by Elsevier and PLOS.

His dissertation, titled "Bioactivities and Pharmacogenetic Studies of the Selected Medicinal Pteridophytes of Hazara Division," represents a significant milestone. Dr. Shah is the first to earn a PhD in green synthesis and phytochemical investigation of Pakistani ecotypes of ferns against multi-drug-resistant (MDR) pathogens. His research explored the bioactivities of four novel Pakistani fern ecotypes, demonstrating their effectiveness against gastric cancer cell lines.

Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba Shah Gillani said research was supervised by Dr. Alia Gul, Associate Professor of Botany, and co-supervised by Prof. Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba Shah. He expressed profound gratitude to all faculty members of the Botany Department and the supportive faculty from the Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Chemistry Departments at Hazara University (HU) for their assistance and provision of facilities. Acknowledgements were also extended to COMSATS University Abbottabad, the Institute of Space Technology (IST) Islamabad, and the Fifth Affiliated Hospital of Zhengzhou University, School of Medicine, China, for their support in conducting various activities and data analysis.

Painting exhibition

KARACHI: Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, Sindh Minister of Culture and Tourism, inaugurating group painting exhibition (Natural Hues Floral Blossom) by Shahina Naz, with collaboration of PNC, along with Sarvech Shaikh, deputy director PNCA, and MD, Legends Hotels and Resorts others are present



Pakistan Association of the Blind elects new President, General Secretary

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Sadia Kirmani elected President and Farrukh Hussain General Secretary in the Pakistan Association of the Blind Punjab elections. The election was supervised by Deputy Director Social Welfare Aziz Ahmed, State Director Muhammad Shafiq, Muhammad Shakir, Naeem Akbar. According to the announcement of Chairman Election Committee Qari Bashir Ahmed Qadri, Sadia Kirmani received 61 votes for the President through a show of hands, while Zulfiqar received one vote in her competition. Similarly, General Secretary Farrukh Hussain also received 61 votes. First Vice President Malik Zafar



Iqbal, Second Vice President Omar Rashid, Ghulam Bashir Joint Secretary, Finance Secretary Muhammad

Ibrahim Secretary Publication and Publication Saeed Ahmed Secretary Education, Manzoor Ahmed Secretary

Rehabilitation, Muhammad Imtiaz, while Anas Raza, Syed Ali Raza Shah, Muhammad Hashim and Manzoor Abbas were all elected unopposed in the executive council. On this occasion, President Sadia Kirmani, General Secretary Farrukh Hussain and other officials said that Pakistan Association of the Blind Punjab is bringing together blind people throughout Punjab and bringing prosperity to their homes. He thanked the blind people who had come from all over Punjab and said that we will fulfill their trust and work day and night for the blind people. A large number of blind people from all over Punjab participated in the election. The election was held at Muhammad Bin Qasim Blind Center.

Minister of Education's Statement: A Harsh Response from Youth

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

The youth of Sindh, who are tirelessly working day and night to build a better future through exams, have been deeply affected by the recent statement of Sardar Shah. The Minister of Education's suggestion for youth to sell "cholas" instead of providing jobs is not only a display of indifference but also a mockery of the dreams and efforts of the future builders of the nation.

The question arises: if there are no jobs, then why the drama of tests and exams? Does the government have no other option but to disappoint and play with the emotions of youth? When someone comes to power through the votes of the public, do they have the right to play with the expectations of the people?

What is the Purpose of Exams?

Every year, thousands of young people in Sindh participate in exams

with hopes of a better future. These youth work hard not only for their families but to set an example for the entire society. In such a scenario, Sardar Shah's statement, which belittles their efforts and shatters their emotions, raises serious concerns.

If the government has no jobs for the youth, then why were exams conducted? Does their hard work have no value? Are such statements not meant to crush their hopes?

Youth's Emotions and Government's Apathy:

The statement by the Education Minister reflects the government's indifference and gives the impression that playing with the emotions of youth is acceptable. If they cannot provide jobs, at least they should not destroy their hopes and aspirations. Advising youth to sell "cholas" instead of offering them jobs sends an irresponsible message: work hard, but your reward will only

be disappointment.

Power and Arrogance: Important Questions for Sardar Shah:

After coming to power, do the government and its representatives begin to play with the hopes of the public instead of serving them? Do those who gain power through public votes have the right to display such indifference? Sardar Shah's statement raises the question of whether arrogance and pride among government representatives lead them to forget public service.

Questions that Need Answers:

1. If there are no jobs, what is the purpose of tests and exams?
2. Why were exams conducted if the result was only to lead the youth to disappointment?
3. Do representatives like Sardar Shah have the right to hurt the emotions of youth with their statements?
4. Is the government mocking the

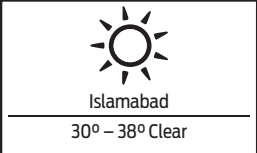
hard work of youth to hide its own incompetence?

The Need for a Secure Future for Youth:

Sardar Shah's statement raises an important question for the youth of Sindh: does the government guarantee a better future for them? Do these hard-working youth participate in exams just to hear such insensitive remarks? The government must provide proper job opportunities for the youth, and if it is not possible, at least stop playing with their emotions. Restoring their hopes and securing their future should be the government's top priority.

The Echoing Voice of Youth:

The youth of Sindh now want to ask: Do their dreams have any value? Will their hard work be acknowledged? Or will disappointment and anger remain the only gifts from the government? The time has come for the government to reconsider its approach and take serious steps for the future of the youth.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:36 am
Zohr12:03 pm
Asr3:23 pm
Maghrib5:01 pm
Isha6:30 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Ahmed Shah panel announces nominees for Arts Council Karachi's Election 2025-2026

City Desk

KARACHI: Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Farooqi panel for the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi for 2025-2026, led by Ahmed Shah and Ejaz Farooqi, was announced at the Faizi Rahamin Art Gallery. The candidates from the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Farooqi panel include Muhammad Ahmed Shah for President (President of the Arts Council), Munawar Saeed for Vice President, Ejaz Farooqi for Secretary, Noorul Huda Shah for Joint Secretary, and Qudsia Akbar for Treasurer.

The members of the governing body include Dr Huma Mir, SM Qaiser Sajjad, Farrukh Tanveer Shahab, Muhammad Iqbal Latif, Syed Sajid Hasan, Dr Ambar Haseeb Ambar, Akhlaq Ahmed Khan, Ghazi Salahuddin, Muhammad

Ayoub Shaikh, Amjad Hussain Shah, Amjad Siraj Memon, and Abdullah Sultan.

The announcement ceremony was attended by thousands of Arts Council members, including individuals from various sectors of society. These attendees included representatives from the Karachi Chamber of Commerce, the business community, the artistic community, Karachi Press Club, Karachi Club, Karachi Gymkhana, High Court Bar, Karachi Bar, journalist associations, and various political, social, and cultural organizations. They all publicly declared their support for the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Farooqi panel. On this occasion, President Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, Muhammad Ahmed Shah, stated that he would not be asking for votes. He said his



panel includes many prominent figures, and seeing a large gathering should not be mistaken as an indication of victory. "Alhamdulillah, we have already won." Khalid Tawab congratulated the Arts Council members on having such great leadership in Ahmed Shah, who has worked to improve the city's image and growth. He assured his support on behalf of the United Business Group. Saeed Sarbazi, President of Karachi Press Club, emphasized the mutual contributions of the Karachi Press Club and the Arts Council in promoting culture and human rights. He recognized Ahmed Shah's efforts in combating terrorism and announced the Karachi Press Club's lifetime membership for him. He also expressed complete support for the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Farooqi panel.

Warm Caps

ISLAMABAD: A young vendor is displaying traditional warm caps attraction for customers at his roadside workplace at Karachi Company area, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Oxford Pakistan Program hosts distinguished hi-tea to promote higher education



City Desk

KARACHI: The Oxford Pakistan Program (OPP) recently hosted a distinguished hi-tea at the University of Oxford, bringing together key figures committed to advancing education and empowering the next generation of leaders. The event featured Businessman and philanthropist Hamid Ismail CEO Ismail Global, Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai, scholars from the Hamid Ismail Foundation and Malala Fund, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, the Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, and key members of the Pakistani diaspora.

Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai shared her unwavering support for initiatives that empower young women and men through education. She praised the collaborative efforts of the OPP, the Hamid Ismail Foundation, and the Malala Fund in creating pathways for success for students from all walks of life.

The event also brought together the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, the Principal of Lady Margaret Hall and Talha J. Pirzada, co-founder of the Oxford Pakistan Program, and key members of the Pakistani diaspora. These leaders reaffirmed their commitment to fostering inclusive, global partnerships that promote education and empowerment for all.

By bringing together these organizations, scholars, and leaders, the event reinforced the collective goal of making education accessible to all, regardless of background or gender. Through continued support and collaboration, the OPP is paving the way for a brighter and more equitable future.

AIOU's academic workshops to begin today

ISLAMABAD: Online workshops for the BS, B. Ed., and Postgraduate programs offered in the Fall 2024 semester of the Allama Iqbal Open University will begin today (Monday, December 16). To facilitate students, those enrolled in these programs have been divided into different groups.

The workshops for the first batch will start on December 16, for the second batch on December 23, and for the third batch on December 31. The schedule for the remaining batches is being finalized. Students will attend their classes online via the LMS portal.

Usernames and passwords for accessing the online classes have been sent to students via SMS. Students who have not received their login credentials are advised to contact the nearest regional campus.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mehmood has instructed regional campuses to provide all possible assistance to students. Those without computer and internet access will be provided free access to computers and the internet at the regional campuses.

Government should reduce interest rates by 5 percent: Nasir Qureshi

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nasir Mansoor Qureshi has demanded that the government reduce interest rates by 5 percent. Reducing interest rates will bring economic stability and development.

He said that a reduction of 100 basis points in interest rates reduces the debt burden of Rs 470 billion and that a five percent reduction can reduce debts by up to Rs 2,300 billion.

ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi further said that the reduction in interest rates will increase the value of the rupee, as well as exports.

Nasir Qureshi said that the State Bank has reduced the policy rate by 700 basis points so far and that the reduction in the policy rate has also brought balance in payments.

CISS-AJK hosts collaborative session with VCs of Azad Jammu and Kashmir universities

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Center for International Strategic Studies, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (CISS-AJK), organized a significant session with the Vice Chancellors of leading universities from Azad Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen ties between academia and the think tank. The session, presided over by Associate Director CISS-AJK, Zohaib Altaf, aimed at exploring opportunities for collaboration and advancing research-driven initiatives in the region.

The meeting was attended by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Vice Chancellor of the University of AJK; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Younis Javed, Vice Chancellor of MUST University



AJK; Prof. Dr. Zakria Zakir, Vice Chancellor of the University of Poonch; and Prof. Dr. Rehmat Ali, Vice Chancellor of the University of Kotli, along with members of the

CISS-AJK research faculty. During the session, Tayyaba Khurshid, Research Officer at CISS-AJK, provided a detailed briefing on the think tank's research activities

over the past two years, highlighting its efforts in addressing key strategic issues and fostering intellectual discourse in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

ICCI Founder Group congratulates Ajmal Baloch on election of new President at Aabpara Market

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Members of the Founder Group Council of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) visited Aabpara Market yesterday to congratulate newly elected President Ajmal Baloch and General Secretary Akhtar Hussain Abbasi. The delegation was led by Chairman of the Founder Group, Tariq Sadiq, accompanied by ICCI President Nasir Qureshi, UBG (FPCCI) General Secretary Zafar Bakhtawari, former FPCCI President Abdul Rauf Alam, former Chairman of the Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, Khalid Javed, Ejaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Masood, and Shaukat Masood.

The members of the Founder Group commended Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi for their dedicated services to the business community and expressed their full confidence in

their leadership.

Speaking on the occasion, Founder Group Chairman Tariq Sadiq said that Ajmal Baloch has always been at the forefront of resolving business community issues. His leadership has provided a strong platform for traders, standing by them in every challenging time.

ICCI President Nasir Qureshi emphasized the importance of strong and active market associations for the business community in Islamabad. He assured his full support in addressing market issues and finding their solutions.

UBG (FPCCI) General Secretary Zafar Bakhtawari remarked that the election of Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi is a recognition of their services by the business community. He expressed hope that they would continue to work diligently for resolving traders' issues.

Former FPCCI President Abdul Rauf Alam stated that Ajmal Baloch's success symbolizes the unity and trust of the business community. He highlighted that Ajmal Baloch's leadership has always played a significant role in the development of Aabpara Market and addressing traders' concerns.

Former Chairman of the Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik praised Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi for their exceptional work for the welfare of traders. He added that their success reflects the complete trust traders have in them.

Ejaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Masood, and Shaukat Masood also shared their views, acknowledging the commendable efforts of Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi in addressing traders' issues. They expressed that their success guarantees a bright future for the business community.



Later, the delegation presented bouquets to Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi and expressed their

best wishes for them. In response, Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi thanked the delegation, stating

that serving the traders is their top priority, and they will strive to live up to their trust and expectations.

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)
Syed Afraz Ali Nazish
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 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

China and USA: Pillars of Global Prosperity

In December 2024, the United States and China renewed their government-to-government Science and Technology Agreement (STA) with a five-year protocol, continuing a collaboration first established in 1979. Over the decades, the STA has yielded significant mutual benefits, with the U. S. leveraging China's biodiversity to advance agriculture, medicine, and environmental science, besides joining hands in climate science, renewable energy, AI, and quantum computing. For China, the STA facilitated modernization in biotechnology, aerospace, and telecommunications while enabling its researchers to gain expertise at U.S. institutions, fueling domestic advancements in agriculture, environmental policy, and clean energy.

The deep-rooted cooperation between the United States and China defies the prevalent perception of adversarial bilateral relations. In reality, their economies are so deeply intertwined and interdependent that further strengthening their economic, financial, trade, and investment ties seems inevitable.

In an ideal scenario, where the United States and China have resolved their longstanding differences, established a partnership that have prioritize global development, technological innovation, and peace, diplomatic resolutions have address security issues in Taiwan and human rights concerns, while fair trade policies and the removal of investment barriers have created open markets and foster mutual trust, in such a scenario, the two nations could lead efforts to upgrade road, air, and port infrastructure worldwide, adding an estimated \$2 trillion in global trade capacity annually

and boosting GDP growth by \$500 billion across developing regions.

This mutually beneficial collaboration could extend to defense and space research, yielding advancements in security, space exploration, and renewable energy technologies, with an estimated combined annual investment of \$300 billion generating global benefits.

This partnership will ensure peaceful and secure sea, air, and land routes, paving the way for sustained economic growth and global stability, estimated to contribute \$1 trillion annually to global economic activity.

For the citizens of both nations, this cooperation will bring significant dividends. Open markets and seamless trade, estimated to exceed \$2 trillion annually, will boost GDP growth by \$1 trillion combined and create millions of new jobs in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and technology.

Joint investments in clean energy, valued at \$500 billion over a decade, will make renewable technologies affordable and accessible, reducing energy costs for households and businesses by as much as 20%-30%.

Defense collaboration will reduce tensions, reallocating an estimated \$100 billion annually to critical sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Increased cultural exchanges and educational opportunities, valued at \$30 billion annually through student and tourism contributions, will further strengthen mutual understanding and nurture global

talent. Globally, this partnership will drive transformative changes. Modernized infrastructure projects across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, worth an estimated \$1.5 trillion in investment, will unlock economic potential, reduce poverty, and foster regional development, adding \$500 billion annually to regional GDP.

Affordable renewable energy initiatives and global climate efforts will mitigate environmental risks, contributing \$200 billion annually in savings from reduced emissions and energy efficiency gains.

Collaborative trade and economic policies will stabilize markets, reduce volatility, and enhance global supply chains, contributing an estimated \$1 trillion annually to global economic efficiency.

Joint advancements in AI, quantum computing will add \$300 billion annually in global technological value, addressing challenges like climate change and resource optimization.

A U. S.-China partnership in space exploration would revolutionize scientific discovery, technological innovation, and global economic growth, benefiting both nations and the world. By pooling resources, expertise, and infrastructure, they could achieve ambitious goals like establishing lunar and Martian bases, advancing satellite technology, and pioneering space-based industries such as asteroid mining and solar power.

This collaboration would lower costs, accelerate breakthroughs in medicine,

and create millions of high-tech jobs. Beyond the economic and scientific dividends, a united front in space exploration would inspire humanity, reduce geopolitical tensions, and foster global cooperation, marking a transformative era for civilization.

By reallocating resources currently spent on military competition, trade restrictions, and geopolitical conflicts, both nations could instead foster global peace and channel investments into projects that uplift not just their citizens but also billions of people around the world.

The logic for such cooperation is compelling. Continued rivalry drains resources, creates uncertainty, and destabilizes global markets, harming not only the two nations but also the international community.

In contrast, collaboration would unleash the peace dividend, reducing global tensions and ensuring stability. Investments in infrastructure, clean energy, and technology could catalyze growth across developing regions, lifting millions out of poverty and fostering resilience against global challenges like climate change.

Ultimately, the realization of this vision depends on the leadership of both nations understanding that mutual upliftment is not just desirable—it is essential for the well-being of their own citizens and for global progress. The path to cooperation may require hard compromises, but the rewards—a peaceful, prosperous, and unified world—are undeniably worth the effort.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan, EU agree to continue cooperation on food, climate change challenges

Pakistan and the European Union have agreed to continue cooperation on emerging challenges of food, energy security, and climate change, underlining sustained engagement, particularly in areas such as trade, migration, human rights, political, economic and development cooperation with a focus on the Global Gateway strategy.

The bilateral relations and cooperation were discussed in the 14th Pakistan-European Union (EU) Joint Commission meeting which took stock of recent political developments besides the ongoing formation of the new College of Commissioners, according to a joint press issued Friday on the Joint Commission meeting held recently.

The Joint Commission was preceded by the Sub-Group on Democracy, Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights in which two sides agreed on the need for continued efforts to strengthen the electoral process. The EU reiterated the importance of political pluralism, democratic values, independent media, vibrant civil society, judicial independence, and international human rights standards, which are key for democratic elections.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the protection of all human rights, including women and children's rights, labour and migrant rights, as well as fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression and opinion including growing problem of disinformation.

Pakistan presented its reform agenda, including in the framework of the National Action Plan on Human Rights, National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, as well as actions towards the full implementation of 27 international conventions related to GSP+.

Pakistan and the EU also exchanged views on freedom of religion or belief and the rights of persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups and concerns about anti-Muslim hatred.

The meeting of the Pakistan-EU Sub-group on Trade also preceded the Joint Commission in which both sides acknowledged the importance of a robust multilateral trading system and exchanged views on recent developments at the multilateral (WTO), plurilateral, and bilateral levels.

Both sides acknowledged that since the grant of GSP status in 2014, the bilateral trade relations have made significant strides.

In the meeting of the Sub-Group on Development, both Pakistan and the EU agreed on the continued relevance of key priority areas under the ongoing Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) including Green Inclusive Growth, Human Capital/TVET, and

Governance including Rule of Law and Human Rights.

The EU presented the details of the projects for the period 2025-2027 following the Mid-Term Review of the MIP and updated on the EU's policy framework and the Global Gateway. Pakistan appreciated the recent visit of the European Investment Bank in Pakistan held in September this year and agreed on the opportunity to enhance engagement within the framework of the Global Gateway by identifying new investments.

The EU expressed its continued support to Pakistan in developing green and clean energy.

Reiterating their commitment to the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) signed in 2019, Pakistan and the EU reviewed the state of its implementation, five years on. Pakistan presented proposals to expand bilateral cooperation in additional areas, among others in agriculture, taxation, and disaster risk reduction.



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

Strong Military and Unity: The Pillars of Pakistan's Survival, Defense, Sovereignty, and Prosperity

Numerous historical and contemporary examples demonstrate the profound and lasting effects of a weak military. From territorial losses to internal instability, these countries highlight the critical role of a strong and capable military in ensuring national survival and progress. Afghanistan stands as a stark example of the consequences of a weak military on a nation's stability. Despite its strategic location in South Asia and Central Asia, Afghanistan's failure to maintain a strong, unified army has led to decades of turmoil. The country has faced foreign invasions, civil wars, and internal strife, largely due to its inability to establish and sustain a cohesive military force. In the 1980s, Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviet

Union. Despite foreign support from the United States, Afghanistan's army was overwhelmed, eventually leading to the Soviet withdrawal. However, the country's failure to create a stable military and government system allowed the Taliban to rise to power in the 1990s, capitalizing on the weak central authority. While U. S. and NATO intervention following the 9/11 attacks helped build a new Afghan National Army, this military remained fragile, poorly equipped, and divided along ethnic lines. In 2021, as U. S. troops withdrew, the Afghan military swiftly collapsed under the Taliban's advances, leading to the fall of Kabul and the Taliban's return to power. Afghanistan's lack of military strength allowed external forces to influence its internal politics, and without a strong army to defend

against these pressures, the country fell back into instability.

Without such a powerful military, Pakistan would be vulnerable to external threats, becoming an easy target for its enemies. This discussion clearly emphasizes the importance of a strong army for Pakistan, offering a response to those who question the need for military spending. The people of Pakistan fully understand the vital role of the Pakistan Army. The nation stands united in recognizing the armed forces as the true defenders of the country, offering unwavering support to them.

Another crucial issue is the deepening division and hatred within societies. The ongoing situation in Syria serves as a stark example. Syria, once a peaceful nation like Libya, has paid an immense price from 2010 to 2024—over 400,000 civilian deaths, more than 200,000 soldiers killed, over 6.7 million internally displaced persons, and over 7 million refugees fleeing abroad. With the departure of President Bashar al-Assad, the real conflict is set to begin, as over 100 armed groups will vie for control, with religion and sectarianism further fueling violence. The hopes and dreams of the Syrian people have turned into bloody nightmares.

This tragedy is a direct consequence of foreign powers manipulating public perceptions and weakening the state. While some actors may be unaware of the long-term consequences, others deliberately stoke division, knowing full well the destructive path ahead. The people of Pakistan

have much to learn from the Arab Spring and the Syrian conflict. Once a state is weakened, the suffering of its people becomes far worse and endless.

In Pakistan, a similar narrative is being promoted through social media, where people are led to believe that the state is usurping their freedom, and that true liberation lies outside the authority of the state. A specific political party is being supported and encouraged to stoke division, with rhetoric that fuels hatred against anyone who disagrees. Its Politics is being transformed into militancy and presented as a righteous, holy war. This is a dangerously toxic formula for any society that seeks peace and stability in the 21st century. The ultimate goal is to weaken the state.

Pakistanis must reject this hateful and violent ideology. While poverty and corruption are indeed grave social issues, the real threat lies in the propagation of hate and the use of violence as a political tool. The true target of these forces is Pakistan itself and its people. The public must resist hate-driven ideologies and demand that the state assert itself in protecting the nation's peace and stability.

Pakistan has a clear path toward peace and prosperity, which lies in progressive development, not in hollow slogans, hate-filled speeches, or the misuse of violence masked under the guise of religious righteousness. The people of Pakistan must reject those who seek to weaken the nation, and demand that the government take strong action against any forces that seek to destroy the country's peace and stability. The people stand united with the country and its military in ensuring the betterment and future of the nation.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Fall of Dhaka 16 Dec, 1971: Causes, Concocted Myths & Lessons Learnt

The creation of Bangladesh is one of the most sensitive and tragic chapters in the history of Pakistan. On Dec 16, 1971, Pakistani troops laid down their arms and surrendered for secession of East Pakistan. It is considered the darkest day in our history. The grievances of Dhaka were political one: it should have been handled with a political approach. Thousands of innocent civilians lost their lives in this tragedy.

On Mar 25, 1969, Gen Ayub resigned and handed over govt to General Yahya Khan. After that, first democratic election in history of Pakistan took place in Dec 1970, in which Awami League won a majority. Awami League did not get a single seat from West Pakistan and PPP met the same fate in the East wing.

Awami League had full rights to form a govt and rule over Pakistan. However, the leadership of West Pakistan denied the transfer of power to Awami League. Despite political issues, the external factor still played a major factor in fall of Dhaka.

It is not a culture of Pak Army to carry out mass killings, which are evident from the operations in War on terror. The allegation of the Genocide of three Million Bengalis is fake propaganda by India to defame Pakistan.

Operation searchlight is also a drama posed by Awami League and India as Shaikh Mujib ordered his hooligans to destroy powerhouses, bridges, and communication systems and to loot and plunder ration depots that compelled Pak army to launch the military operation and restore peace. Urdu, being lingua franca, was a unifying factor for Muslims of sub-continent that's why it was made national language. Indian interven-

tion was not on humanitarian grounds but it was a vicious, planned attack on Pakistan's territory. These plans were made with consent of Awami League in an infamous meeting known as Agartala Conspiracy.

Another propaganda, that Bengalis negated the concept of Two Nation Theory was also wrong as after seceding from Pakistan, Bangladesh had to merge with India as was in pre-partition era, which it did not. Even after succeeding from

Pakistan, Muslims in Bangladesh don't consider themselves similar to Hindus. Nevertheless, Pak Army fought valiantly in tough conditions, Logistical problems faced by West Pakistan in 1971 war need due consideration. Pakistani troops gave heroic fight despite enemy's superiority in both numbers and firepower.

No doubt, we learned a lesson from tragedy of East Pakistan when we resolved issue of provincial autonomy in 1973 Constitution and later after 2008 elections, consolidated federation further by 18th Amendment. Mistakes were committed by both sides that led to bloodshed and creation of Bangladesh. Great nations learn from their past mistakes and make their way forward. On 16 of Dec, as a nation, we have to choose that if we want to live with unity and dignity we have to strengthen our bonds by sharing justice, love, and respect. This day should be remembered to pay homage to the patriots who gave their lives for Pakistan. (Originally published in Modern Diplomacy)

Writer is Islamabad-based veteran Journalist & Ph. D. Media Studies fellow, an Academic Researcher & Media Analyst, tweets @ShFakharA and can be contacted at fakharhrp@gmail.com



Analysis

Sheikh Fakhar-e-Alam

KSrelief launches food security initiative in Pakistan for 2024-2025

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain has lauded Saudi Arabia's unwavering humanitarian contributions to Pakistan at the launch of a major food security initiative for 2024-2025.

Addressing the event organized by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) at the Saudi Embassy the other day, the minister expressed deep gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for their commitment to humanitarian causes. He commended KSrelief's efforts, calling them a "shining example of Islamic values" that provide much-needed relief to vulnerable families across Pakistan.

The initiative, implemented in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and other key partners, will distribute 147,500 food packages from December 2024 to November 2025. Each 95-kg food



package, containing flour, cooking oil, sugar, and pulses, is designed to sustain a family for one month. The effort will benefit over 1 million individuals across all provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Paki-

stan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki reiterated the Kingdom's enduring support for Pakistan. "It is my pleasure to hand over these food packages as a gift to the brotherly people of Pakistan. This initiative reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to alleviating global food inse-

curity," he stated.

Rana Tanveer emphasized that KSrelief's project complements Pakistan's efforts to ensure no citizen is left behind in combating poverty and malnutrition. He underscored the historic ties between Pakistan and



Saudi Arabia, built on shared faith, culture, and mutual respect, noting that such initiatives strengthen bilateral relations.

The minister assured Saudi officials of Pakistan's full cooperation in ensuring the transparent and efficient distribution of aid. "Together, we will strive to reach every corner of the country and every family in need," he said.

KSrelief's initiative reaffirms Saudi Arabia's leadership in global humanitarian efforts. By addressing immediate food security challenges, the project will help improve the well-being of Pakistan's underprivileged communities and foster long-term social and economic stability.

The event concluded with a reaffirmation of the enduring friendship between the two nations.

Major Agreements Signed with Chinese Companies in IT, Environment and Green Energy at Punjab Investment Conference

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's hectic efforts bore fruit as important agreements were signed, at Punjab Investment Conference, with the Chinese Companies working in the fields of IT, Environment and Green Energy. She said, "It is an Important step towards global partnership for economic development in Punjab."

Madam Chief Minister noted, "Under an agreement with the Bank of Punjab, Gobi Partners has announced to establish a \$50 million investment fund to support technology start ups in Punjab." She said, "The aim of the agreement is to promote financial system for startups and SMEs in Punjab." She added, "Gobi Fund will support businesses through loan provision, equity investment, financial solutions, and mentorship programs." She highlighted, "Gobi Fund will strengthen businesses in Punjab, and will ensure sustainable development in the region through digital economy, as the Fund will help Punjab develop technology and create regional leaders in entrepreneurship."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Chinese company Solar N Plus and the Punjab Government has signed an MoU for the promotion of solar technology in the province." She



added, "The Chinese company will work to establish a center in Punjab, and will introduce innovative solar technology projects to promote green energy in Punjab."

Madam Chief Minister said, "The conference has provided the prospec-

ive investors with all the needed information on Punjab's unique economic incentives." Participants of the Punjab Investment Conference acknowledged, "Punjab has surpassed regional and global standards in promoting investment." They added, "Punjab

is ideal for investment due to tax exemptions, special industrial zones, and other facilities." The conference discussed promoting sustainable and long-term partnership between the Government of Punjab and Chinese businesses.

Future on Wheels: PIDE's Proposals for Pakistan's New EV Policy

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: 'Technology Transfer, Global Value Chain Integration, Export Oriented Production and Reducing Upfront Cost' - these are the priority areas identified by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in its recommendations for the upcoming Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy. The Prime Minister of Pakistan in September 2024 directed the government to present a new policy for accelerating EV manufacturing and increase user adoption across the country. In response to the Prime Minister's call for a robust EV policy, PIDE has presented its set of recommendations 'Future on Wheels' to support the development of an effective policy framework. These insights are based on PIDE's recently published two books on the automobile industry of Pakistan 'Driving Backwards: What is Wrong with Pakistan's Automobile Industry?' and 'Wheels of Change: Tracing Pakistan's Automotive Evolution through Political Economy and Technology Acquisition.'

PIDE recommends devising a long term policy for development of EV Industry in Pakistan with short term goals for 2030, medium term targets till 2035 and long term targets set to be achieved by 2040. These include 10% of all new 4-wheelers and 25% of all new 2/3 wheeler sales to be EVs by 2030, while increasing the shares of the former to 50% and latter to 75% by 2040. PIDE also recommends increasing production of EVs in Pakistan to produce 50% of all new 4 and 2/3 wheelers in Pakistan as EVs by 2035.

The policy recommendations by PIDE emphasize integrating the country's automobile industry into the global value chain of automobiles, and EVs in particular. This is possible only when the custom duties on import of EV inputs are lowered, while production of EVs and EV parts and components is increased manifolds to enhance exports. PIDE recommends targeting 10% of all EVs and 5% of auto parts produced to be exported by 2030 while 50% of all EVs and auto parts both produced in Pakistan must be exported by 2040. For this purpose, the government must take steps to facilitate joint ventures between existing automotive firms in Pakistan and foreign firms to enhance production of EVs, parts and components through Transfer of Technology and Capital Investment. G2G and G2B basis engagement must be carried out for attracting investment and manufacturing in Pakistan. The State Bank of Pakistan is also encouraged to devise a Green Financing Plan for provision of financing through commercial banks to support the growth of EVs and EV parts and components manufacturing in Pakistan.

China-aided airport to enhance connectivity, spur economic growth in Pakistan's Gwadar

Xinhua / Misbah Saba Malik

GWADAR: Khalid Kakar, airport manager of Gwadar Airport in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, stood attentively, observing the final touches on the newly constructed, China-aided New Gwadar International Airport, which in just a few days would be officially handed over to Pakistani authorities, including Kakar himself, to commence operations.

A short distance away, Chinese and Pakistani engineers huddled around a large map spread out on a table, discussing final details. The atmosphere at the airport was abuzz with activity as staff from various departments, both Pakistani and Chinese, moved purposefully through the terminal.

"This is a huge airport in Pakistan, equipped with state-of-the-art technology and an architectural marvel," Kakar, a native of Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan, told Xinhua, adding that "I have watched its construction closely over the past two years since I arrived here. The hard work, dedication, and passion of the Chinese engineers and architects are truly admirable."

Previously, residents of Gwadar and business travelers from other provinces faced significant challenges in reaching the city due to the limited capacity of the old airport, and Kakar believes that the new facility is set to transform connectivity and foster economic growth in the region.

The old airport has very limited operational capacity, capable of accommodating only small aircraft with a maximum passenger capacity of several dozens of people, whereas



the new Gwadar airport is designed to handle wide-body aircraft, significantly enhancing its operational potential, Kakar said.

He said this advancement will encourage airlines with modern fleets to begin services to and from Gwadar, overcoming the limitations previously posed by the old airport, adding that the enhanced connectivity will open new vistas of development in the district due to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Besides serving passenger flights, the airport will also play a crucial role in cargo operations, Kakar noted, adding that a cargo shed is currently under construction, with plans for an additional five sheds to be built in the future.

"Once operational, this facility will provide significant support to the business community in Gwadar and beyond, making Gwadar a trans-

shipment hub through the Gwadar port being developed under CPEC," he added.

Talking to Xinhua about the intricate details of the construction, Qin Zhengrong, a senior engineer from the China Railway Beijing Engineering Bureau, said that the apron is divided into five slots, which are Class C and Class F, capable of accommodating the largest civil aircraft, including the Boeing 747-800.

The airport's runway spans 3,658 meters in length and 45 meters in width, with additional 15-meter shoulders on each side, bringing the total usable width to 75 meters. This makes it one of the few 4F-grade airports in Pakistan equipped to handle the largest jets.

He said that the Chinese companies also faced a major challenge of water scarcity during the airport's construction, and after a failed search



for groundwater, the team used water trucks and later built a 2.5-km ditch to bring seawater for foundation work and freshwater for cement was sourced through municipal pipelines after negotiations with local authorities.

"The site's unstable, saline soil required special treatment, and for that, various compaction techniques were tested, leading to an optimized, patented foundation design, and a cement-soil sealing layer was added to prevent settlement, with multiple layers of material placed beneath the concrete surface for added durability," he added.

Ziauddin Salman, an engineer representing the National Engineering Services of Pakistan, observed the high-quality standards and finishing techniques employed by the Chinese

team in the airport's construction, during his visit as a third-party observer at the airport.

"My team and I conducted thorough inspections and evaluations, finding that every aspect of the project, from structural design to construction details, was executed with remarkable precision and care," he told Xinhua.

Salman highlighted that they did not find any objection regarding any parameters, including vertical alignments and finishing work, which met the highest satisfaction standards, adding that the Chinese team working on the project has set a commendable example for engineering construction.

"The two critical components in engineering are design and construction based on that design, and both aspects have been exceptionally managed in this project, making

it a benchmark for contractors and consultants, not just in Pakistan, but also on an international scale," he added.

Salman said that the Pakistan Engineering Council and the well-reputed contracting and consulting firms should be invited to visit the project to witness the best quality work and replicate it in their projects.

"By witnessing the quality of design and construction firsthand, these firms could incorporate these high standards into their own work to yield significant benefits, enabling the formulation of designs based on successful patterns observed at this site," he added.

The project generated a considerable number of employment opportunities, and the local workers, who have had the chance to observe the dedication and work ethic of the Chinese team, will elevate the standard of construction practices in Pakistan and inspire local professionals to emulate the same commitment to quality when they worked on the local projects in the future.

To ensure the successful operation of the new airport, officials have been sent to China for training, and two batches have already completed their training, focusing on the operational aspects of running the airport and the trained officials will play a vital role in launching the new airport, Kakar said.

"The airport symbolizes the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China, particularly for Gwadar, and the establishment of such a state-of-the-art facility is a significant milestone for the development of Pakistan," he added.

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

High-level meeting of FTO Regional Advisory Committee to be held on Dec 18

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah has convened a high-level meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee on December 18.

Speaking here today to an awareness session with business community, FTO Advisor Dr Waqar Ch Arain said the purpose of the meeting here is to gather suggestions from stakeholders for further improving the working of the FTO Secretariat, particularly in addressing tax-related grievances of taxpayers in a timely and effective manner. He said the Regional Advisory Committee includes representatives from elected trade bodies of chambers, tax experts led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh, legal professionals led by Mian Azhar Shoukat and other key stakeholders. Their feedback will play a vital role in identifying areas for reform and recommending actionable measures to enhance service delivery. Coordinator to FTO Saif Ur Rehman on



this occasion said the FTO Secretariat remains committed to ensuring transparency, fairness, and efficiency in resolving taxpayers' genuine complaints against tax collectors. By prior-

itizing stakeholder input, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah aims to strengthen the institution's capacity to address issues swiftly and reinforce public trust in the tax grievance redressal mechanism.

Another FTO coordinator Muhammad Farhan Munir sharing views with participants said Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah always emphasised that addressing taxpayer grievances is a top priority, and the recommendations emerging from the meeting will help streamline processes and reduce delays. He reaffirmed his commitment to providing relief to aggrieved taxpayers while promoting a taxpayer-friendly environment. The meeting will further enhance foster constructive dialogue and contribute to ongoing efforts for institutional improvement.

Legal Advisor Almas Ali Jovinda will give briefing on overall performance of the FTO secretariat for the current year while all advisors of regional offices and senior officials of incoming tax and customs will also participate and respond to the questions of stakeholders.

Hard work

FAISALABAD: Workers busy in preparing shoes in a local factory at Samanabad area in the city.



Photo: Online

Shahid Imran calls for support of SMEs to spur economic growth

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convenor Pakistan Federation of Commerce and Industry regional committee on Food Shahid Imran Sunday said the government can stimulate entrepreneurship and industrialization, leading to robust economic growth by providing comprehensive support and patronage to SMEs across the country.

Talking here today to a delegation of SMEs entrepreneurs led by Mian Zahid Iqbal former vice president FPCCI he said SMEs need to be viewed not just as businesses but as drivers of Pakistan's economic future. He said to fully unlock the economic potential of SMEs, the government must prioritize not just financial support but also long-term patronage.

He said Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan form the backbone of the economy, contributing over 40% to GDP and employing a significant portion of the labor force. However, a persistent challenge undermining their potential is a lack of financial literacy and access to advisory support.

He said many SME owners struggle with financial planning, budgeting, and navigating formal banking systems. This results in limited access to credit, inefficient use of resources, and missed opportunities for growth. The absence of professional advisory services further compounds the problem, leaving SMEs unable to compete effectively in domestic and international markets, he concluded.

CEO DRAP Asim Rauf Visits Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: The CEO of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), Mr. Asim Rauf, visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and participated in a meeting of the Standing Committee on Pharmaceuticals. During the meeting, Mr. Rauf emphasized that ensuring the availability of quality medicines remains a top priority for the government. He highlighted efforts to streamline the processes for licensing and registration, making them more efficient and business-friendly to unlock the true potential of Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector and drive export growth.

The meeting, presided over by RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaukat, also included Mr. Umar Farooq, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Pharmaceuticals. The committee members expressed their appreciation for DRAP's



proactive role in supporting the pharmaceutical industry and modernizing the regulatory framework.

The meeting was attended by notable figures, including Group Leader Mr. Sohail

Altaf, Senior Vice President Mr. Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Mr. Fahad Barlas, Executive Committee members, and other distinguished members of the chamber.

The participants discussed

strategies to enhance collaboration between DRAP and the pharmaceutical industry, address existing challenges, and capitalize on export opportunities to contribute to the national economy.

Iftikhar Ali Malik calls for adopting China's model to transform Pakistan's industrial sector

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former President Iftikhar Ali Malik, has called for adopting China's economic model to transform Pakistan's industrial sector into a digitalized economy.

In a press statement here Sunday veteran popular octogenarian trade leader of South Asia, he emphasised the need for bold reforms and strategic partnerships to modernize Pakistan's outdated industrial framework, enhance productivity, and foster economic resilience. He said China's rapid ascent as a global economic powerhouse, attributing its success to policies focusing on technological innovation, robust infrastructure development, and incentives for

industrial automation. He pointed out that Pakistan could replicate key elements of China's model, particularly its digital transformation initiatives, to harness its industrial potential and compete in the global market.

Malik stressed the importance of creating Special Economic Zones (SEZs) with cutting-edge technology and facilities, similar to those established under China's economic reforms.

He added that fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and offering incentives for technology adoption were essential to attract foreign direct investment (FDI).

He also urged policymakers to prioritize skill development and digital literacy among Pakistan's workforce to ensure a smooth transi-



tion to a knowledge-driven economy. By embracing artificial intelligence, automation, and e-commerce platforms, he argued, Pakistan could significantly increase its export capacity and reduce reliance on traditional industries.

Acknowledging the challenges, he called for a unified approach among government, industry leaders, and international partners, particularly China, under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He concluded that adopting a tailored version of China's model could be a game-changer for Pakistan, paving the way for sustainable economic growth and global competitiveness, export capacity and reduce reliance on traditional industries.

Scope 3 emissions need more than policy intervention for exports growth: PRGMEA

Commerce Desk



LAHORE: The Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) has recognized the urgency of Scope 3 emissions

the indirect greenhouse gas discharges occurring throughout the textile value chain-by initiating the formation of a compliance committee at the National Compliance Centre (NCC) in Islamabad. This initiative aims to realign governance, planning, and spending at every level-starting from government policy and cascading down to the daily decisions of individuals and businesses.

PRGMEA North Zone Chairman Dr. Ayyazuddin, addressing a meeting held here on Wednesday, observed that the issue of Scope 3 gas emissions needs more than a policy intervention, as it is a call for a cultural shift.

"The Scope 3 emission is the often-overlooked segment of the carbon footprint, especially in Pakistan's informal sectors, which often operate without NTNs, social benefits, or environmental mapping, now fall squarely within the global monitoring, as the lack of preparedness in these sectors threatens the viability of our exports and the livelihoods of millions.

Dr. Ayyazuddin stated that the PRGMEA, in collaboration with key stakeholders like the Ministry of Commerce, the National Compliance Centre, the Pakistan Textile Council, and leading industry players such as Artistic Milliners, is paving the way for this transformation. These efforts are not just about meeting international requirements but about creating a sustainable, inclusive, and competitive future for Pakistan, he added.

Dissent within PCB over Naqvi's acceptance of hybrid model for CT 2025, Indian media claims

Sports Desk

LAHORE: An Indian media report has claimed the existence of significant internal dissent within the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) following its acceptance of a hybrid model for the 2025 Champions Trophy. The controversy centers around the perceived inadequacy of the compensation offered by the International Cricket Council (ICC) in exchange for India's refusal to play in Pakistan.

The ICC's proposal sees India playing its matches in Dubai, while Pakistan hosts the remainder of the tournament. In return, Pakistan secured the hosting rights for its matches in the 2026 T20 World Cup in Colombo, and the hosting rights for a future ICC women's event after 2027.

According to the NDTV report, several PCB members are openly expressing their displeasure with the deal, arguing



that the compensation is insufficient and that PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi was too quick to accept the ICC's terms. Sources cited by NDTV suggest a heated

debate is underway within the PCB over the hybrid model.

Prominent voices within Pakistan's cricket community are echoing these

concerns. Former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif voiced his disapproval, stating that the offered women's tournament is not a suitable trade-off for hosting the Champions Trophy under a compromised format. Similarly, commentator and former cricketer, Basit Ali, described the deal as a mere "lollipop" from the ICC, suggesting the long-term benefits for Pakistan are negligible. He argued that the PCB should have instead prioritized securing the hosting rights for the upcoming Asia Cup.

The internal conflict within the PCB highlights the sensitive geopolitical context surrounding cricket matches between India and Pakistan. India's reluctance to tour Pakistan due to security concerns has forced the ICC to seek alternative arrangements, leading to this controversial compromise and the subsequent internal friction within the PCB.

ABL Stallions, UMT Markhors delight Sunday crowd with wins

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: Mohammad Haris hit a fiery 35-ball 61 and pacer Mohammad Ali grabbed 4-28 to give ABL Stallions a convincing six wicket win over Lake City Panthers, while a last-ball six by Abdul Samad helped UMT Markhors outlast Nurpur Lions by three wickets on a Super Sunday in Rawalpindi.

With the win ABL Lions strengthened their top position in the five-team Bahria Town Champions Cup table as second round matches started in a thrilling way.

UMT Markhors, still second on the table, enthralled with a hard-fought win. They pulled off a sensational win with five needed off the last ball as a holiday crowd witnessed every action they seek in a rapid-fire T20 brand of cricket.

Lake City Panthers were lifted to 168-7 by Pakistan international star Haider Ali who smashed a belligerent 49-ball 73 with five towering sixes and as many boundaries but the total proved reachable for the Stallions.

ABL Stallions were given a robust 28-run start in just 3.1 overs as Yasir Khan hit a 13-ball 20 and Maaz Sadaqat 14-ball 18. Once the openers returned back to the pavilion, Haris and in-form Hussain Talat took the baton, adding 64 off 42 for the third wicket. Haris smashed eight boundaries while Talat's 25-ball 32 included two boundaries and a six.

Team mentor Shoaib Malik with 21 and Mohammad Mohsin 15 were



unbeaten as the chase was completed with two balls to spare.

Sent into bat, Haider was the star for under-performing Lake City Panthers as he held the innings after the early loss of Sharjeel Khan for four. Haider and Umar Siddiq, who scored a 29-ball 30, lifted the innings through a second wicket stand of 61 off 54 balls.

Haider found another able partner in Mubasir Khan, adding an invaluable 63 off just 38 deliveries for the fourth wicket.

The pick of the bowlers were pacers Mohammad Ali with 4-28 and Mohammad Amir Khan with 2-34.

The second match proved to be the most thrilling of the event so far. Nurpur Lions entrusted 21-year-old pacer Shahid Aziz with the task of defending 11 runs in the final over. Shahid removed the well-set Mohammad Faizan with the

second ball for a 42-ball 66. Mohammad Nawaz smashed the next ball for a boundary but after a dot ball was caught in the deep. Abdul Samad, however, kept his cool to hit the winning six, chasing the stiff 188-run target.

Faizan, who cracked five sixes and three boundaries off 42 balls, came together with skipper Iftikhar Ahmed with their team in a spot of bother at 37-2. The duo added 88 in quick time. Iftikhar struck eight sixes and two boundaries in his 31-ball 66-run knock.

But Nurpur Lions hit back when Shahid dismissed Iftikhar in the 14th over and followed that with Saad Masood's scalp. Faizan kept the tempo until the final over as Markhors pulled off a sensational win.

Unlucky Shahid took 4-42 in the losing cause.

Nurpur Lions, who opted to bat first

were given an aggressive start of 56 in 4.2 overs as Hasan Nawaz (24) and Imam-ul-Haq (28) cut loose from the get-go. Rohail Nazir (17-ball 22) and Shahzaib Khan (13-ball 16 with a six and a boundary) got starts but fell in the space of just one run.

All-rounder Aamer Yamin rescued the innings with a solid 27-ball 39 inclusive of two sixes and as many fours to help his team add 57 in the last five overs, taking them to 187-7 in 20 overs. Pacers Nisar Ahmed with 2-40 and Akif Javed 2-47 shared the bowling honours.

Scores in brief:

ABL Stallions beat Lake City Panthers by six wickets

Lake City Panthers 168-7 in 20 overs (Haider Ali 73, Umar Siddiq 29, Mubasir Khan 30; Mohammad Ali 4-28, Mohammad Amir Khan 2-34)

ABL Stallions 170-4 in 19.4 overs (Mohammad Haris 61, Hussain Talat 32, Shoaib Malik 21 not out, Yasir Khan 20; Usama Mir 2-30)

Player of the match: Mohammad Haris (ABL Stallions)

UMT Markhors beat Nurpur Lions by three wickets

Nurpur Lions 187-7 in 20 overs (Aamer Yamin 39 not out, Imam-ul-Haq 28, Hasan Nawaz 24, Rohail Nazir 22; Nisar Ahmed 2-40, Akif Javed 2-47)

UMT Markhors 189-7 in 20 overs (Iftikhar Ahmed 66, Mohammad Faizan 66; Shahid Aziz 4-42)

Player of the match - Iftikhar Ahmed (UMT Markhors)

Babar Azam breaks Chris Gayle's all-time T20 record

Pakistan batter Babar Azam surpassed West Indies legend Chris Gayle on Friday to become the fastest batter to amass 11,000 runs in T20 cricket.

Babar reached the elusive milestone during the second T20I against South Africa in Centurion, where he played a quick 31-run knock to set up Pakistan's total of 206-5.

Chris Gayle achieved the feat in 314 innings, however, Babar Azam took only 298 innings to score 11,000 runs in T20 cricket.

The right-handed maestro is not only the 11th player globally to accomplish this extraordinary feat but also the second from Pakistan after Shoaib Malik.

However, Shoaib and Babar also hold the record for slowest to reach the milestone in terms of strike rate.



Shoaib completed his 11,000 runs at a strike rate of 127.47, while Babar's strike rate was 129.37.

The record for the fastest to 11,000 runs in T20 cricket in terms of strike rate is held by Kieron Pollard, who achieved the feat with a strike rate of a whopping 150.51.

Moreover, Babar Azam has also surpassed 14,000 runs in international cricket, marking himself as just the fifth Pakistani batter to reach this prestigious milestone.

Notably, he stands out as the second-fastest Pakistani to achieve this landmark, trailing only the legendary Mohammad Yousuf.

During his brief 31-run innings, Babar smashed one six, which propelled him to equal Shahid Afridi's tally of 73 sixes in T20I cricket.

Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024



ISLAMABAD: An athlete's competes in the women long Jump during Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 at Jinnah Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex, in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: An athlete's competes in the women long Jump during Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 at Jinnah Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex, in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Players are in action in judo karate match during Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 at Jinnah Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex, in the Federal Capital.

Photos: Online by Sultan Bashir

Quaid-e-Azam Games: Punjab wins women's swimming title

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab emerged victorious in the women's swimming category on Sunday at the ongoing Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games, organized by the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

Islamabad secured second place, while Sindh finished third, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa standing at fourth position.

Punjab secured the top spot with 335 points, followed by Islamabad with 169 points and Sindh with 43 points. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa managed to earn 4 points, finishing fourth.

Besides others, the closing ceremony was attended by Punjab Sports Board Director General Khizar Afzal Chaudhry, who distributed prizes alongside PSB Deputy Director General Shahid Islam. The event was attended by PSB Director Admin Ihtesham-ul-Haq, Event Director Chaudhry Saeed Akhtar, and a large number of spectators.

Athletes securing first position in the championship received Rs. 20,000 each, while runners-up and third-place winners were awarded Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 10,000 respectively, along with medals.

The event saw participation from seven women's teams representing Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Islamabad. Men's swimming events are also part of the ongoing competitions.

Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games: KPK, Punjab advance to finals in squash events

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Punjab secured their spots in the finals of both the men's and women's team squash events at the Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 here on Sunday. The semi-finals witnessed intense competition as the top teams battled for supremacy.

In women's event semifinals, Punjab outclassed Sindh, while KPK defeated Balochistan to book their spots in the final.

In the men's semifinals, Punjab outperformed Sindh and KPK defeated Balochistan to confirm their place in the final.

The much-anticipated finals between KPK and Punjab in both men's and women's team events will be held on Tuesday.

India defeat Pakistan by nine wickets in ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup

Sports Desk

KUALA LUMPUR: India beat Pakistan by nine wickets in the Group A match of the ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup at the Bayemas Cricket Oval, Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

Opting to bat first, Pakistan managed to score 67 for seven in 20 overs with wicketkeeper-batter Komal Khan top-scoring with a 32-ball 24, hitting four boundaries.

For India, Sonam Yadav bagged four wickets for six runs in four overs.

In turn, India achieved the

target in 7.5 overs losing one wicket in the process. Left-hand batter G Kamilini top-scored for the side returning undefeated on 44 off 29 balls, which included four fours and three sixes.

Pakistan will now take on Nepal on Monday in their second fixture of the tournament. The match will begin at 2pm local time.

Earlier, Pakistan Women's U19 team saw six players make their international debut in the opening match of the inaugural ACC Women's U19 T20 Asia Cup against India. The debutants include Fiza Fiaz, Fatima Khan,

Aleesa Mukhtiar, Rozina Akram, Quratulain, and Mahnoor Zaib.

The team management marked this special milestone by presenting debut caps to the players in a ceremony prior to the match. Head coach Mohsin Kamal awarded caps to Fiza Fiaz and Fatima Khan, while Assistant coach Muhammad Hanif Malik presented the cap to Rozina Akram. Fielding coach Nahida Khan handed the cap to Alisha Mukhtiar, team's performance analyst Usman Shahid awarded Quratulain, and Media Manager Muhammad Rafi Ullah presented Mahnoor Zaib with

her debut cap.

Team Manager Ayesha Jaleel, along with the entire team management, extended their heartfelt congratulations to the players and wished them the best for their international careers.

Scores in brief:

India beat Pakistan by nine wickets

Pakistan 67-7, 20 overs (Komal Khan 24; Sonam Yadav 4-6)

India 68-1, 7.5 overs (G Kamilini 44 not out; Fatima Khan 1-22)

Player of the match - G Kamilini (India)



Called on

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on His royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.



Photo: PID

Chief of the Naval Staff Visits Bahrain and Meets Highest Civil and Military Leadership

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, called on the highest civil and military leadership during an official visit to Bahrain. The Naval Chief held meetings with the King of Bahrain, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. During these meetings, discussions focused on strengthening defence cooperation and reinforcing the historic ties between Bahrain and Pakistan. The King appreciated Pakistan Navy's role and commitment to regional maritime security and stability.

Later, Chief of the Naval Staff met Commander-in-Chief of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Commander of the Bahrain National Guard, General Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the Commander

of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force (RBNF), Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Binali. During these engagements, professional matters of mutual interest, including regional maritime security and bilateral defence collaboration, were discussed.

The Naval Chief emphasized the importance of enhancing interactions between the armed forces of both countries through joint exercises, mutual visits, and training exchange programs.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf also visited RBNF Ship MANAMA and the Royal Command and Staff College. In his address at Royal Command and Staff College, the Naval Chief elaborated on current and emerging environment in the Indian Ocean Region and highlighted the need for a region-centric maritime security construct.

The Naval Chief's visit is expected to further strengthen and expand defence ties between the two brotherly nations.

Chairman Senate urges provinces to take ownership of healthcare in accordance with 18th Constitutional Amendment

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that 18th Constitutional Amendment was instrumental in empowering provinces to take ownership of their health-related affairs, allowing for local solutions tailored to the unique needs of their populations. He observed that the devolution of powers helped

in creating a more inclusive, participatory framework for healthcare governance. The Chairman Senate made these remarks at a Health Awareness and Recognition Seminar in Islamabad on Sunday as Chief Guest.

"It is time to reaffirm our collective dedication to improving healthcare in Pakistan. Together, we can ensure that our people not only receive

the care they deserve but also live in a society that values health as a cornerstone of its development", the Chairman Senate said.

He commended Tianshi International Pakistan for organizing the important event to raise awareness about critical health issues.

He also assured that the Senate continues to prioritize discussions and oversee

policies aimed at strengthening our healthcare system and removing barriers from accessing quality care. Today's seminar is a testament to our collective resolve to raise health awareness and promote well-being, he added.

In closing, Chairman Senate emphasized that Pakistan must unite for better healthcare, focusing on rural development and innovation. Both

primary and secondary healthcare are crucial. Education, a legacy valued by my ancestors, is equally important. My father stressed the value of quality education, particularly at Bahauddin Zakariya College. With health and education now under provincial control, it is up to them to prioritize. Education drives progress, and we must equip our youth to compete globally.

Mohsin Naqvi met Saudi Minister of State for Interior Dr. Khalid Mohammed Abdullah Al Battal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Saudi Minister of State for Interior Dr. Khalid Mohammed Abdullah Al Battal here on Sunday.

On his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by the Saudi Minister of State for Interior Dr. Khalid Mohammed Abdullah Al Battal and Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations were discussed in detail.

Mohsin Naqvi felicitated the Saudi leadership and the people on being awarded



the hosting rights for the 2034 FIFA World Cup and expressed good wishes for the

event. He said that Saudi Arabia is a brotherly Islamic country

and Pakistan's most trusted friend, adding that Pakistan takes pride in this friendship.

The Interior minister further stated that Saudi Arabia has always shown immense love and sincerity towards Pakistan.

He also appreciated Mohsin Naqvi appreciated Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's vision of 2030 which paves the way for achieving progress and prosperity.

The Saudi Minister of State for Interior said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are enjoying very close and cordial relations.

He expressed the hope that important meetings with Saudi officials during the visit of Interior Minister will further enhance ties between the two countries.

Parliamentary Secretary calls for collective effort to build sustainable, climate-resilient communities



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, Rana Ahmad Atiq Anwar emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts with stakeholders to develop sustainable and climate-resilient communities, advocating for joint action to establish long-term strategies to address climate risks.

Speaking at the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Pakistan Mission Society here, he outlined the urgent need for collaboration between governmental bodies and stakeholders to combat the climate crisis.

The parliamentary secretary also

underlined the critical role of stakeholders including non-governmental organizations in mitigating the effects of climate change and fostering a sustainable, resilient environment.

During his address, Rana Atique underscored the importance raising public awareness, advocating for policy change and implementing community-level interventions aimed at addressing the adverse impacts of climate change.

He noted that the non-governmental organizations could play a key role in delivering crucial resources and support to vulnerable communities, helping them adapt to shifting climate conditions.

All schools, colleges will remain closed in Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi today

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: All schools and colleges would remain closed in Lahore, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi on December 16 (today), the district administrations said on Sunday.

The government did not specify any reason for the announcement, but reports said that the decision was taken in memory of the victims of the Army Public School attack which killed over 130 children in 2014.

A public holiday has been declared in all state and private schools and colleges in the territorial jurisdiction of Rawalpindi and Lahore on Monday (tomorrow), according to the notification.

Moreover, examination papers scheduled for Dec 16 have also been postponed. The new date would be announced later.

At least 132 schoolchildren were martyred when the banned terrorist organisation, the TTP, attacked the school in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The attackers had breached the school compound by scaling a wall and targeted the schoolchildren and their teachers.

Special prayers and Quran Khawani would be offered for the

martyred students and teachers of the APS on Monday, Radio Pakistan reported. The KP Education Department has arranged special functions on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the incident.

In September, APS attack survivor Ahmed Nawaz was honoured with the British Empire Medal by King Charles III in recognition of his exceptional services to youth worldwide.

Earlier this week, the Sindh government announced that

there would be a public holiday on December 25 and December 26 (only for Christians) on the occasion of Quaid-i-Azam Day/Christmas.

All offices, autonomous bodies, semi-autonomous bodies, corporations and local councils under the administrative control of the provincial government would be closed except those engaged in essential services.

Foreign Ministry: Renews its call for urgent international pressure to stop the war of extermination

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates views with great concern the Israeli escalation in the unilateral and illegal occupation measures in the occupied West Bank with the aim of deepening and expanding the crimes of ethnic cleansing and gradual annexation and accelerating its pace, whether confiscating tens of thousands of dunams and exterminating the Palestinian presence in all its manifestations from all areas classified as (C), or starting to install Israeli watchtowers and communications, or the provocative calls launched by the extreme Israeli right regarding the deployment of



more barriers and their installation at main road junctions, which leads to

paralyzing the movement of Palestinian citizens and dismembering the occupied West Bank, as well as giving settler militias a free hand and arming them to commit more attacks against Palestinian citizens.

The Ministry believes that these measures come in light of the ongoing war of extermination and displacement and official Israeli boasting about annexing the West Bank to undermine any opportunity to embody the Palestinian state on the ground and liquidate the Palestinian cause, and exploit the regional developments taking place to monopolize the Palestinian cause and abuse our people and deny their just and legitimate national rights.