

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے بڑی باتوں کے بیان کیا، انہوں نے  
کہا ہم سے محمد بن جعفر نے بیان کیا ان سے  
شعبہ نے بیان کیا ان سے سلیمان نے ان  
سے ابو اکمل نے اور ان سے عبد اللہ بن مسعود  
رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ  
وسلم نے فرمایا ان اس کے ساتھ ہے جس  
سے وہ جنت رکھتا ہے۔  
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6168)

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## Romina lauds World Bank for fostering more resilient future for Pakistan

Country Director for Pakistan, South Asia Region, Najj Benhassine called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam and discussed various matters of bilateral interest and cooperation for building Pakistan's climate resilience through various measures on Tuesday.



## PSX turns bearish, KSE-100 sheds over 1,300 points

The benchmark KSE-100 index of the PSX closed in a red zone after shedding over 1,300 points on Tuesday, KSE-100 shed 1,308.72 points, or 1.13 percent to settle at 114,860.69 points, from 116,169.41 points on the last trading day at the stock market. Market experts said that the KSE-100 displayed a mixed trend, reaching an intra-day high of 117,039.17 points before profit-taking pulled it down to an intra-day low of 113,688.54 points.

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## Welcome

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia led by Chairman of the Council H. E. Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al Sheikh called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

## 53rd martyrdom anniversary of Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Service Chiefs, and the Armed Forces of Pakistan solemnly commemorate the 53rd martyrdom anniversary of Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, a paragon of extraordinary courage and unwavering patriotism. The valor and self-sacrifice displayed by Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed during the 1971 war at the Wagah border epitomize the indomitable spirit of the Pakistan Armed Forces. In the face of overwhelming adversity, his fearless assault on enemy positions, despite insurmountable odds, stands as a profound testament to his exceptional bravery and steadfast devotion to the nation. His unparalleled heroism not only



exemplifies military excellence but also serves as a timeless embodiment of the resilience and selflessness that define the ethos of our armed forces.

On this solemn occasion, we pay tribute to his enduring legacy, which transcends individual achievement and illuminates the collective valor of those who stand resolute in safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan. His sacrifice remains an eternal inspiration, reinforcing the values of courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the motherland.

# PM Shehbaz underscores significance of Pak-KSA durable bilateral relations

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday emphasized that Pakistan's strong relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were a vital pillar of its foreign policy.

He said the government and people of Pakistan deeply appreciated the support provided by Saudi Arabia during difficult times.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with

a delegation of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia led by Chairman of the Council Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al Sheikh that called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister expressed his best wishes to King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman.

He said that he had the opportunity to visit Saudi Arabia several times this year, reflecting

the deep ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister also congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on hosting the 'FIFA World Cup 2034' and expressed his confidence that KSA would host this event in the best possible manner.

He further observed that the parliamentary exchanges between the two countries were crucial for strengthening the relationship between the two countries, adding they were keen to

enhance their economic ties with Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister mentioned that agreements worth \$2.8 billion had been signed between the KSA and Pakistan, with work already underway on these agreements.

He hoped that the benefits of these agreements would soon benefit the two countries.

The Pakistani community in KSA which numbered around 2.5 million served as a strong bridge between the two nations,

he added.

The prime minister also praised Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for hosting the Arab-Islamic Summit, which strengthened the Muslim Ummah's call for peace in Gaza, Lebanon, and the region.

"Pakistan will continue to fully support all efforts against the sufferings and human rights violations faced by the people of Gaza and Lebanon," the press release quoted the prime minister as saying.

## Govt closely monitoring situation in Parachinar: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar said on Tuesday that the federal government is closely monitoring the situation in Parachinar, with daily reports being provided to the prime minister and the interior minister.

The issue was raised by Abdul Qadir Patel, who informed the National Assembly about a report indicating that 19 children had died in Parachinar due to shortage of medicines.

Tarar said that the federal government is fully aware of its responsibilities regarding the situation in Parachinar.

He confirmed that continuous communication has been maintained with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government. He further said that the federal government is prepared to fulfill both its constitutional and moral obligations.

Tarar called on the Parliamentary Secretary for Health to gather further details and provide an update to the Assembly on the ongoing situation.

The minister said that, according to the Constitution, maintaining law and order falls under the responsibility of the provincial government. However, he assured that the federal government cannot remain detached in such circumstances and is ready to intervene if necessary.

## DPM/FM's meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Expatriate Affairs of Egypt

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting today with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Expatriates of Egypt Mr. Badr Abdelatty on the sidelines of the D-8 Ministerial Meeting being held in Cairo.

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister congratulated the Egyptian government for hosting the D-8 Summit and the Ministerial Meeting and thanked Foreign Minister Abdelatty for the warm hospitality.

Appreciating the deep-rooted multifaceted ties between the two countries, the two Ministers agreed to further consolidate political, defence, cultural, economic and trade ties and people-to-people contacts.

The two Foreign Ministers discussed regional developments including the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza and atrocities in the West Bank, highly

criticized ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza. They called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to prevent further loss of innocent Palestinian lives.

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar appreciated the role played by Egypt for facilitating humanitarian assistance for the people of Gaza and its diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire in occupied Palestine.

The two Foreign Ministers also expressed unequivocal support for establishment of a viable, contiguous and independent Palestinian state based on pre-June 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.



## Law ministry announces major reforms in Criminal Procedure Code

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law and Justice has announced significant reforms in the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 1898.

According to reports, Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar presented the wide-ranging amendments in the Criminal Procedure Code, which were unanimously approved by the federal cabinet.

According to the Ministry, the amendments were recommended by a committee formed under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The proposed reforms in the Criminal Procedure Code reflect consultations with bar councils, lawyers, prosecutors, and judges. Key reforms in the Criminal Procedure Code include the introduction of an electronic system for filing FIRs, along with initial inquiry powers for registering FIRs. Furthermore, only female officers will be authorised to arrest women under the new amendments.

The reforms also emphasise the use of modern investigative tools, including audio and video recordings, to enhance evidence accuracy.

As per the new amendments, prosecutors will now have the authority to highlight deficiencies in police reports, ensuring better transparency in the investigation process.

In cases where evidence is insufficient, the Criminal Procedure Code amendments allow for the suspension of investigations, providing a clearer legal process. The Ministry stated that these reforms will improve transparency and accountability in law enforcement agencies.

Following cabinet approval, the proposed amendments in the Criminal Procedure Code will be presented to Parliament for final legislation.

## Cut in interest rate to help boost investment in Pakistan: PM



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the central bank's announcement of cut in the interest rate by 2% to 13% would help boost investment in the country and stimulate the economic growth.

"Taking advantage of the good news on economic front, we should first promote domestic investment, as a

result the foreign investment will automatically come to the country," the prime minister said while chairing a cabinet meeting.

The meeting began with the recitation of Fateha for the eternal peace of Siddiqui-ul-Farooq and a policeman who was martyred in Karak during a terrorist attack on polio workers' team.

Addressing the persistent challenge of polio eradication, the prime minister regretted that while the polio virus had been nearly eradicated worldwide, Pakistan still faced obstacles in becoming a polio-free country.

He stressed the need to overcome these challenges and reaffirmed the government's commitment to eliminating the disease.

## Fazlur Rehman warns govt of street protests over Seminary bill issue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has warned the government of protests over the Seminary bill issue.

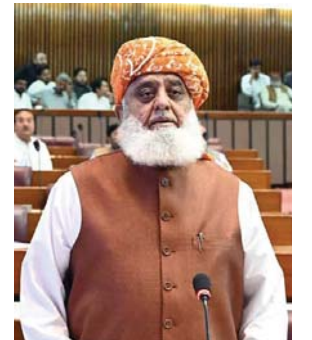
Addressing the National Assembly, Maulana Fazlur Rehman stated that presenting the bill again without accepting it as an act would violate the Constitution.

He questioned why a precedent was being set that could jeopardize the entire legislative framework.

"If the matter is not resolved, the decision will be made on the roads rather than the parliament," warned Fazlur Rehman.

Referring to the President's role, he said, "If the president does not sign a bill within 10 days, it automatically becomes law, as has already happened in past instances."

The JUI-F Chief criticized



the government's stance on religious seminaries, saying that madaris have always supported the Constitution and the law. "Why are our madaris being tested repeatedly despite their proven record?" he asked, adding that students of religious schools excel in both traditional and modern education systems.

He further warned the authorities not to attempt dividing religious seminaries or undermining them.

# Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah launched the polio eradication campaign in Sukkur

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

SUKKUR: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah arrived in Sukkur from Karachi on Tuesday morning, where he launched the door-to-door polio eradication campaign. The Chief Minister visited Union Council New Sukkur, knocking on doors to encourage residents to administer polio drops to their children.

While addressing parents, the Chief Minister emphasized that polio drops are essential for ensuring a healthy future for children. He stated, "Today, I have personally come to your doorsteps to ensure that every child receives polio drops because this is a matter of their future and our collective respon-



sibility as a nation."

Syed Murad Ali Shah himself administered polio drops to children, highlighting the government's resolve to eliminate polio and align with global health efforts. He paid tribute to the dedication of polio teams working tirelessly for this campaign, saying, "We are a great nation, and we are committed to eradicating polio and walking hand in hand with the world."

Accompanying the Chief Minister were Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Mukesh Kumar Chawla, MPA Farrukh Shah, Syed Javed Shah, and others. The Chief Minister also visited Bhatti Children's Hospital, where he personally administered polio drops to children.

## Souvenir

JAMSHORO: Vice Chancellor of LUMHS Dr Ikram Din Ujjan giving a shield to Dr Amber Kazi during Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) Winter Meeting 2024 at LUMHS.



Photo: Online

# PPP, party of the poor and the underprivileged: Governor Punjab

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan listened to the issues of people from various areas of District Attock during an open court and issued on-the-spot directives to the concerned authorities for their resolution. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan stated that imposing taxes on agricultural land by the Punjab government is a great injustice. He said that farmers are already suffering, as they were neither given the desired price for wheat nor was it purchased from them officially. Due to the lack of rainfall, Punjab's farmers are facing significant hardships.

He further stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is a party of the poor and the underprivileged, and it has always provided relief to farmers without imposing additional taxes on the agricultural sector. Governor Punjab emphasized that working in



just a few major cities cannot address the grievances of the entire population of Punjab. He urged the Punjab government to take practical steps to

solve the people's problems, noting that the public is distressed by inflation, taxes, and unemployment. He added that the PPP will continue to raise its

voice for the resolution of public issues and will keep striving to eliminate the deprivations of people in underprivileged areas.

# 20% discount agri medicines sale continues at Kissan Sahulat Centre Sandhilianwali: M. Abid

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: The Agricultural Medicines, Machines and all wheat products kept by the Agrarian Crop Sciences Company at the Kissan Sahulat Center Sandhilianwali are being given to the farmer at 20% discount. On this Occasion, Zonal Manager of Agrarian Crop Sciences Company, Mohammad Abid Talking to Media, said that Kissan Sahulat Centers are a good initiative of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

But Our Company Agrarian Crop Sciences is selling



machines and all Wheat Product to farmers at 20% lower than the Local Market

rate and these facilities are towards our company.

The farmer is the backbone of our country who works hard day and night to cultivate his crop but the farmer has a lot of expenses on his crop and he does not get a good rate of his crop due to which the farmer losses are incurred. Our company's agricultural medicines, sprays machines and all wheat product are available at Kissan Sahulat Center Sandhilianwali.

We sell to the farmer at 20% less than the Local market rate to benefit the farmers. Waqas Anwar and Younis Gujjar were also present on the Occasion.

## Annual General Meeting of District Armed Services Board

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Annual General Meeting of the District Armed Services Board 2024 was held at Shahbaz Hall, Hyderabad. The meeting was jointly chaired by Additional Commissioner 1 Gada Hussain Soomro and Deputy Director District Armed Services Board Hyderabad, Retired Major Khalil Ahmed.

The meeting began with prayers for the departed souls of martyrs. Following this, the Deputy Director of the Armed Forces presented a briefing, introducing the institution, its responsibilities, and sharing annual performance statistics.

Proposals to facilitate retired armed forces personnel in obtaining arms licenses were also presented. Additional Commissioner 1 assured immediate resolution of the matter.

Participants shared their issues during the meeting, and the Additional Commissioner guaranteed prompt action to address their concerns.

While addressing the meeting, Additional Commissioner 1 Gada Hussain Soomro stated "The armed forces are our pride and honor. They are serving and protecting the nation, and it is our duty to support them in every aspect. The district administration of Hyderabad has always supported the armed forces and will continue to do so."

The Deputy Director of the District Armed Services Board expressed gratitude to the district administration for their cooperation and reaffirmed the commitment to work together in the future.

## Police encounter in the area of Millat Town Police Station, accused killed

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Masroor Farooqi SI of Millat Town Police Station along with employees was taking the accused Rehan, who was on remand in case 24/3118 under offense 302/392/397 of the IPC, for recovery when near Bagh Wali Pali, six of the accused's associates who were riding three motorcycles attacked the police and escaped towards the fields after releasing the accused.

As soon as the information was received, a heavy contingent of SHO Millat Town, Dolphin, Elite and police along with senior officers reached the spot and surrounded the area.

A heavy contingent of police reached the spot and chased the accused, when the accused started firing directly at the police.

The police also opened fire in self-defense. After some time, when the exchange of fire stopped, they went closer and saw that the accused Rehan was lying injured. He was injured by the firing of his own associates.

## Special Function held to pay tribute to the martyrs of the APS at DPS T. T. Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A Special function was held at Divisional Public School Toba Tek Singh to pay tribute to the martyrs of the Army Public School (APS) tragedy. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindh and District Police Officer Ibadat Nisar were the chief guests of the function. Principal Rao Muhammad Siddique, teachers, students, civil society and media representatives participated on this occasion. The students highlighted the sacrifices of the martyrs by presenting speeches and national songs. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindh said that the APS tragedy united the entire nation against terrorism. Sacrifice of innocent lives is a torch for the nation. District Police Officer Ibadat Nisar reiterated his commitment to ending terrorism and establishing peace. Martyrs of APS united the entire nation. By ending terrorism, the country will be made the cradle of peace. At the end of the ceremony, prayers and Fatiha were also performed to raise the ranks of the martyrs.

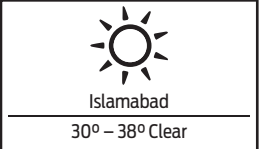


## Anukash Kumar: The Emerging Voice of Sindh's Rich Cultural Heritage



Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

HYDERABAD: Anukash Kumar, an emerging Singer from Nabisar locality of Umerkot district is gaining popularity on social media following his melodious singing. A 22 year old singer hailing from the desert region of Sindh has a profound affiliation to music since his childhood and his interest eventually brought him to Baghat Sarang who taught him the basics of music and melody. "Baghat Sarang recites Bhajan in local temples and is well conversant with ups and downs of music"; says Anukash adding that later he joined the academy of Rajab Faqeer a prominent name of Sindh music where he further improved his skills. He believes that changing trends of music have not overridden the aura of Ghazal singing and folk music. "Even today a large number of music lovers prefer Ustad Ghulam Ali, Ustad Sadiq Faqeer and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan over any modern day singer"; he claims and mentions that people still love to listen to melodious voices. Thar and Umerkot district have a glorious history of producing soothing voices and Kumar is another addition to this galaxy of singers. His call meeting with Usatd Ghulam Ali Khan a memorable event of his life, "It was like a dream coming true"; says Kumar adding that Ustad Rajab Faqeer and Ustad Sarang have played a vital role in polishing his skills. Anukash Kumar has so far performed in various musical concerts held in different parts of the country besides appearing on television shows and cultural gatherings. His father Kewal Kumar while talking to this correspondent said that parents should encourage their children to pursue their dreams without considering the social stigma associated with the field of performing arts in this country. He further said that the element of interfaith harmony across Sindh had been instrumental in the emergence of singers like Anukash Kumar, Narodah Malini and poet Shankar Sagar from Hindu religion and they are unleashing their talent without any hindrance. Sharing his vision Anukash Kumar said that he wanted to revive the lost glory of Ghazal singing and folk music.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:37 am  
Zohr ..... 12:04 pm  
Asr ..... 3:24 pm  
Maghrib ..... 5:02 pm  
Isha ..... 6:31 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA ..... 9221334-43  
CDA ..... 9208301-04  
Met Office ..... 9250360-6  
RDA ..... 5555864  
TMA ..... 5770886  
Cantonment Board ..... 9270151-3

# ICCI hosts Quran Translation Launching Ceremony

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted an impressive ceremony to launch the 'Quran Translation' of renowned scholar, business leader, and philanthropist Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan.

The ICCI. Distinguished guests included Patron-in-Chief United Business Group S. M. Tanveer, Secretary General of the United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, ICCI former Presidents including Abdul Rauf Alam, Executive members, members and a large number of men and women. In his address, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan emphasized the importance of implementing the teachings of



the Quran in daily life. He stated that the Quran provides comprehensive guidance on all aspects of life, including personal conduct, social interactions, and spiritual development. By adhering to its teachings, individuals can achieve inner peace, moral integrity, and fulfillment in this world.

Senator Khan urged the audience to venture into Quranic studies with special devotion to its meanings and translation. He emphasized that by implementing the Quran's principles in daily life, individuals can foster a more harmonious and prosperous society.

In his closing remarks, Nasir Mansoor Qureshi paid tribute to Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan's remarkable achievements as a prominent industrialist, philanthropist, and scholar. He highlighted Senator Khan's outstanding contributions to various fields, including education, healthcare, and the promotion of Quranic teachings.

## Celebration of UAE National Day

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, Hammad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, and others UAE traditional dancing during celebrations of UAE National Day ceremony at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online Sultan Bashir

## Number of international students on rise at AIOU

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The number of international students at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is increasing each semester compared to the previous ones. In the Fall 2024 admissions, the number of international students rose from 740 to 1,007, including 474 male and 533 female students. This semester, 267 new international students enrolled. The countries from which these students have enrolled include the United Kingdom, Japan, China, the United States, Australia, Russia, South Korea, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, Taiwan, Botswana, South Africa, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Qatar, Iraq, Kurdistan, Jordan, Oman, and Kuwait.

The Directorate of International Collaboration and Exchange recently organized an online orientation session for the newly enrolled international students. During the session, Director of International Affairs Dr. Zahid Majeed briefed students about the university's admission and examination procedures, guidance regarding textbooks, methods for writing and submitting assignments, and participation in online mid-term and final exams for BS students.

## Dolphin Communication and Milestone celebrated the Christmas

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: A grand event was organized at Rawalpindi Press Club in collaboration with Dolphin Communication and Milestone to express solidarity with the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas. The cooperation of Islamabad National Press Club and other organizations was involved in organizing the best event for the Christian community. On this occasion, Dolphin Communication Chairperson Ms. Asma Butt and Director of Milestone Organization Muhammad Hussain distributed gifts to more than six hundred Christian families. While a colorful event was also organized for the Christian community and especially for their children. Stalls of mehndi, bangles, and clothing were also set up. The children were very excited by the magic show and they generously appreciated the efforts made by Asma Butt for the Christian



community.

On this occasion, Dolphin Communication Chairperson Ms. Asma Butt said that Pakistan is a Muslim state that teaches brotherhood. Through this event, I will give the message that there is no religious discrimination in our Pakistan. We are a nation that walks together with minorities. We have always proven through our actions that Pakistan is a cradle of love, affection and peace. Asma Butt said that

People with disabilities should be encouraged instead of being pitied. Asma Butt special thanked to President PFUJ Afzal Butt, President NPC Azhar Jataoi, SSP City Police Officer Raja Haseeb, Ladies Officer and other guests for their visit.

JICA continues to enhance its cooperation for improved health services and disaster risk reduction to build back better assistance to the Government of Pakistan.

## Pakistan faced dengue surge in 2024

Parnia Abbas

Pakistan is facing a significant rise in dengue fever cases in 2024 with over 20,000 infection cases recorded. Over 10 fatalities have been reported so far. The disease, transmitted by Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes (commonly found in areas with dense populations and poor water management), continues to pose serious health challenges across the country.

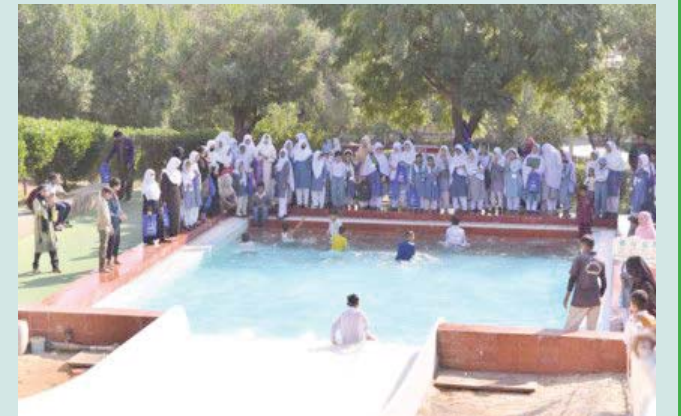
Punjab has emerged as one of the hardest-hit regions, recording 6,838 cases this year. Followed by Sindh with over 5,000 reported cases (mainly from Karachi). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) with 4,000 cases, Balochistan with 1,200 cases, Islamabad with 1,200 cases, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) with 800 cases of dengue fever reported this year.

The authorities are striving to control the outbreak through targeted operations to destroy mosquito breeding sites and raising public awareness about preventive measures.

World Health Organisations Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) region has reported 12 million Dengue cases in 2024. This highlights the need for comprehensive preventive strategies and worldwide effort to tackle the disease.

In Pakistan, ongoing efforts are focusing on vector education, public education, awareness campaigns, and timely medical assistance to mitigate the impact of dengue fever. Public vigilance and adherence to preventive measures are the key to controlling this outbreak.

## Over 1,200 orphan students to spend fun-filled day at Karachi's elite holiday resort



City Desk

KARACHI: Over 1200 orphan children from underprivileged families will spend a fun-filled day at an elite holiday resort on Karachi's outskirts.

These orphan children are enrolled in the charitable schools of the non-profit Green Crescent Trust (GCT) in the deprived parts of Karachi. A total of 2114 orphan children are enrolled at 170 charitable schools in underprivileged parts of Sindh. For the rest of the orphan children, the GCT will soon organize similar leisure days at famous recreational spots in Hyderabad and Sukkur.

A total of over 32,800 students from destitute families are enrolled in the GCT's schools.

"We organize these fun-filled days every year at the elite recreational spots to entertain orphan students in our schools in the best possible way," said GCT CEO Zahid Saeed.

He said the GCT conducted support activities throughout the year to help these orphan students and their families to provide them with quality education and the basic necessities of life honorably.

Sindh Local Government Minister, Saeed Ghani, will likely be the chief guest on the leisure day in Karachi.

## Japan provides 1.503 billion JPY for the different Project in KPK

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan decided to provide a grant of 1.503 billion JPY (approx. USD 9.91 million) for the Project for the Recovery of Maternal and Child Health Equipment in Flood-Affected and Surrounding Areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2.831 billion JPY (approx. USD 18.67 million) for the Project for Flood Management Enhancement in the Indus Basin under Grant in Aid assistance.

The Exchange of Notes was signed and exchanged between Mr. TAKANO Shuichi, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Japan and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs on

December 17, 2024. On the same occasion, Grant Agreement of both the projects were signed and exchanged today between Mr. Naoaki Miyata, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan Office and Mr. Muhammad Yahya Akhuzada, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Under Health grant aid, the project will procure and install essential medical equipment in 21 health facilities of Hazara Division to enhance maternal and child health (MCH) services by reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rates in KP province, particularly in the Hazara division.

By 2029, the project's expected outcomes include increased institutional deliveries, caesarean sections, and ultrasound examinations that will significantly contribute to the reduction in maternal deaths and improving health outcomes. These improvements will enhance care quality, increase patient trust in the healthcare system, and ensure equitable access to high-quality health services for all in Hazara.

Through targeted interventions and alignment with local and national health priorities, the project is set to make a substantial impact on health outcomes in KP province particularly in Hazara Division.

Charge d'Affaires ad interim Mr. TAKANO said "with the two projects, Japan has almost fulfilled the pledge of \$77

million, which was made at the Geneva conference in January 2023. I hope for the safety of the people involved in the projects, their successful completion, and their contribution to improving social welfare for the vulnerable population in the region."

Chief Representative Mr. Miyata said "I am confident that the health project will improve the health facilities and will achieve its goal of reducing the maternal and child mortality and better accessibility to quality health care." And through the Flood Management Enhancement Project, it is expected to reduce the risk of human sufferings and economic losses in future floods.

The Government of Japan and



JICA continues to enhance its cooperation for improved health services and disaster risk reduction to build back better assistance to the Government of Pakistan.

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# Sunshine Gold dethrones Black Gold

Oil has been a dominant force shaping global economies over the past two centuries, acting as both a maker and breaker of fortunes. Fluctuations in oil prices and supply chain disruptions have historically been a nightmare for governments worldwide. Low oil prices in the mid-20th century encouraged the production of large, fuel-inefficient vehicles, the conversion of coal-based power plants to oil-based ones, and the industrial shift to oil as a primary energy source. This transition boosted the economies of oil-producing nations, significantly raising the quality of life for their populations. Once regarded as an efficient and clean source of energy, oil—often called “black gold”—evolved into a potent political and security tool for oil-rich nations.

By the mid-1970s, oil-producing countries, especially OPEC members, realized the political leverage and economic influence they wielded. The 1973 oil embargo, led by Arab nations, demonstrated how increased oil prices could disrupt global economies and even trigger regime changes. Oil became a weapon that could bring even powerful nations to their knees. In response, oil-importing nations began transforming their industries by developing nuclear power plants and producing fuel-efficient vehicles. However, their reliance on oil persisted. Devastating nuclear plant disasters, such as Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011), shifted the focus towards renewable energy sources.

Scientists explored several options to reduce dependence on oil, including nuclear fusion, where hydrogen atoms fuse to form helium, releasing immense energy. However, the extreme heat generated by fusion reactions proved too intense for any material currently known to mankind to withstand, making the technology unviable for practical energy generation. Alcohol-based fuels, like

ethanol blends, were also introduced as alternatives, but motorists often criticized their performance. This compelled scientists to turn to renewable energy sources such as wind, ocean waves, and solar power as the most promising avenues for reducing reliance on oil. Among these, solar energy emerged as a frontrunner, steadily challenging the dominance of “black gold” with increasing effectiveness.

Recognizing the vast potential of solar energy, countries around the world began making substantial investments in developing innovative technologies to harness it. Global investment in solar energy has surged, with China leading at over \$100 billion in 2023, pioneering perovskite-silicon tandem cells with efficiencies exceeding 30%, and dominating low-cost panel production. The United States follows, investing \$56 billion, achieving breakthroughs like quantum dot solar cells with 39.5% efficiency and advanced grid-scale storage. India, at \$25 billion, excels in agrivoltaics and bi-facial cells (22% efficiency), while Germany, with \$19 billion, advances thin-film solar cells (26% efficiency) and decentralized storage. Japan, investing \$17 billion, developed multi-junction cells achieving 47% efficiency and floating solar farms.

The global shift to solar energy has enabled significant economic savings by reducing reliance on oil imports. China leads with annual savings of \$13 billion through extensive solar adoption in industries, followed by the United States at \$11 billion due to reduced oil usage in power generation. India saves \$9 billion annually, leveraging solar for rural electrification and industrial needs, while Germany's \$8 billion savings result from replacing oil-fired power plants. Japan (\$6 billion) benefits from resi-

dential and industrial solar systems, and Australia (\$4.5 billion) achieves savings through rooftop solar and large-scale farms. Collectively, the top ten sunshine gold nations save over \$60 billion annually, demonstrating solar energy's role in enhancing energy security and cutting costs.

If solar cell efficiency continues to improve, reaching consistent 40-50% efficiency in the coming decades, solar energy could progressively replace oil across various sectors. By 2035, solar could significantly reduce oil demand for electricity generation, which accounts for 10-15% of current usage, especially with advancements in energy storage and grid integration. By 2050, with widespread adoption and enhanced technology, solar could replace 70-80% of global oil demand, particularly in electricity, transportation (via electric vehicles), and industrial heating. A complete replacement of oil by solar energy is plausible by the 2060s, contingent on overcoming technological, political, and infrastructural barriers.

This transition would bring profound economic changes. Oil-importing nations would save trillions, enhance energy security, and reduce geopolitical risks, while oil-exporting countries could face severe economic disruptions, necessitating diversification. Global energy markets would shift towards renewables, fostering job creation in solar industries but challenging oil-dependent economies. Additionally, transitioning to solar energy would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, offering environmental and health benefits.

Good news is that sunshine gold (solar energy) does not hold the same economic and security value for producing and consuming countries as black gold (oil).



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Federal police begin investigations into PTI protest cases

The federal police have initiated investigations into multiple cases following the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest at D-Chowk. According to sources, Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) have been formed to probe all cases related to the PTI protest.

Eighteen JITs have been established for 18 separate cases. Each JIT will be headed by a Superintendent of Police (SP) from the respective zone. The teams will also include officials from the Special Branch (SB), Station House Officers (SHOs), ISI, and IB.

The JITs will record evidence and statements of the suspects involved in the cases. Their complete reports will then be submitted as part of the prosecution process.

This development comes as the authorities move to investigate the incidents surrounding the PTI protest at D-Chowk, ensuring a thorough and systematic inquiry into all related matters.

Earlier on December 13, PTI founder Imran Khan had been named in an FIR filed over the deaths of three Rangers personnel during the party's protest in Islamabad on November 26.

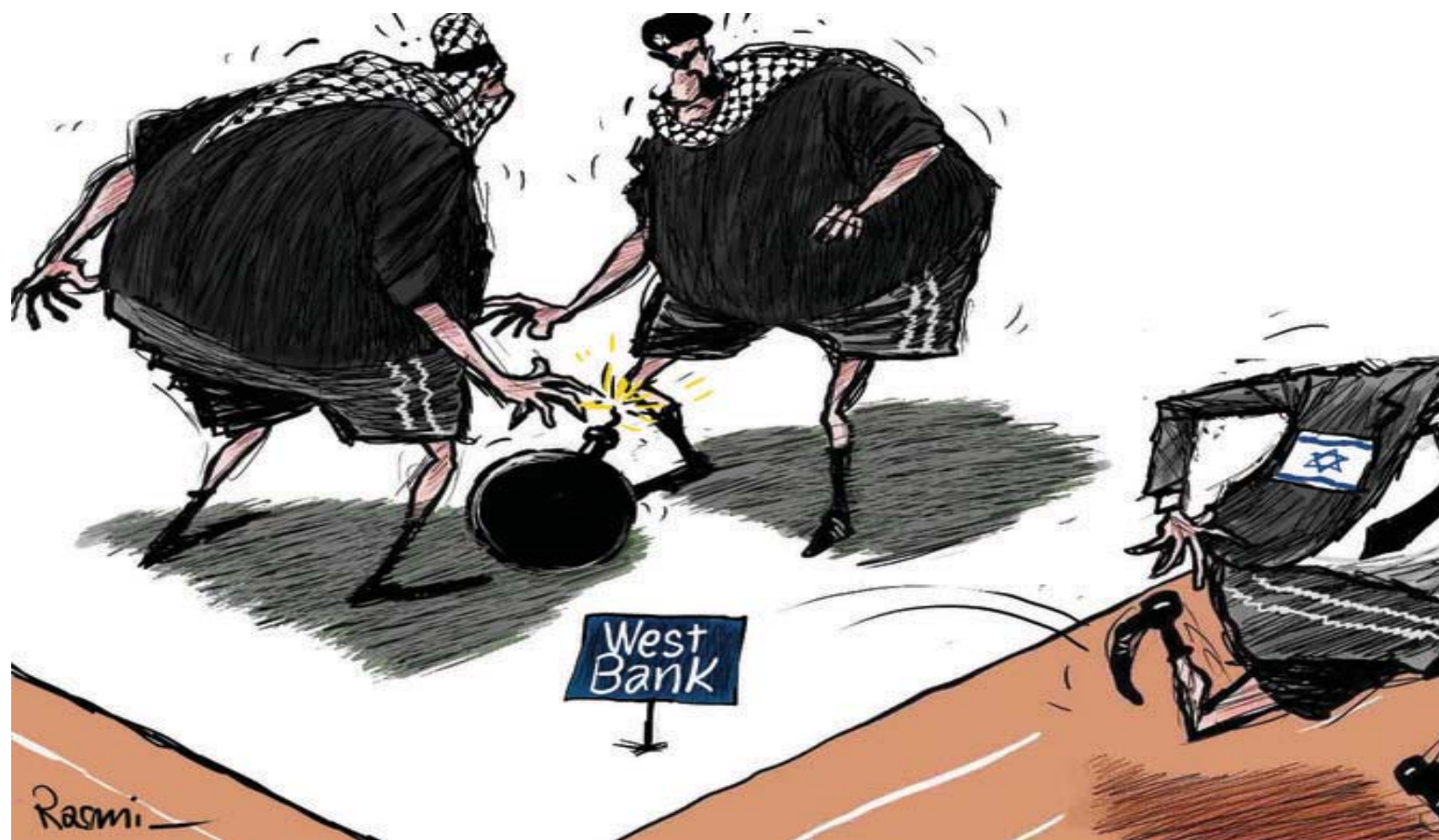
According to the FIR, registered at Ramna Police Station, Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, along with other party leaders, are accused of murder, terrorism, and other charges.

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

The FIR also named other PTI leaders, including Omar Ayub, Sheikh Waqas Akram, Salman Akram Raja, Ali Amin Gandapur, Murad Saeed, Zulfi Bukhari, Raof Hassan and Hammad Azhar, who allegedly conspired to attack the Rangers personnel.

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

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



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

## What kind of development is this, which only Murad Ali Shah can see!?

Development claims have become a regular feature of every government meeting and press conference in Sindh. Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah frequently highlights the Pakistan People's Party's “people-friendly policies and projects,” but for the common man in Sindh, these claims seem suspended in thin air. The ground realities not only challenge the government's performance but also add to the struggles of the people.

**Education: A Divide Between Claims and Reality**  
 The education sector is always presented as a government priority, but schools, colleges, and educational boards paint a different picture. In rural areas, schools are either closed or have turned into ruins. Where schools are operational, teacher absenteeism, outdated curricula, and poor learning environments are major challenges. Corruption and a contractor-based system in education boards have eroded quality education. Thousands of children are deprived of schooling each year, and those who do study remain far behind global standards.

**Health: Failed Policies and Public Misery**  
 Contrary to the Chief Minister's claims, the state of government hospitals remains abysmal. Shortages of medicines, lack of doctors, and inadequate medical facilities reflect the health sector's decline.

Even in major cities like Karachi and Hyderabad, basic healthcare is missing, while in rural areas, hospitals exist only in name without proper staff. While efforts to eradicate polio are visible, diseases like hepatitis and dengue continue to spread unchecked, leaving people vulnerable.

**Water and Drainage: A Persistent Crisis**  
 Despite repeated promises, the water and drainage

systems in Sindh remain a critical issue. Contaminated and toxic water is being supplied to the population, leading to numerous diseases.

Urban areas see overflowing sewage on roads, while in rural areas, people travel miles to fetch clean water. Poor drainage systems leave cities submerged during rains, and the government's focus appears limited to media photo sessions.

### Law and Order: The Real Test of Government Claims

The law and order situation in Sindh continues to deteriorate. From organized crime to political interference in the police, irregularities are evident everywhere. Despite government claims, crime rates have surged, and the justice system has weakened significantly.

**Development Projects: Empty Promises on Paper**  
 The government frequently announces development projects for urban and rural areas, but on-ground assessments tell a different story. Many projects have either failed to start or collapsed before completion.

**The Reality of Development in Sindh**  
 The people of Sindh still grapple with basic problems. Education has not improved, healthcare is inaccessible, employment opportunities are scarce, and law and order remains a concern. Development is visible only in projects that serve those in power.

When compared to ground realities, Sindh's claims of development appear to be nothing more than illusions. Syed Murad Ali Shah's statements may sound grand and appealing, but they have failed to bring any meaningful change for the common man. Unless government policies become transparent, people-centric, and implementation-focused, these mirages of development will inevitably crumble against the harsh reality.



Analysis

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

## Out of School and Out of Hope: Education Challenges in Balochistan

According to Jawaharlal Nehru, “Only through the right education can a better order of society be built up.” The

constitution of Pakistan guarantees primary education to all the children of the country, but millions of adolescents in Balochistan are out of school and struggling to find purpose. The youth of Balochistan are facing the problem of a poor education system. The education system in Balochistan is substandard, and it has many flaws. Balochistan youth constitute over 65 percent of the province's population, but over 1.2 million children are out of school in the province. The literacy rate in the province is 54.5 percent, which is less than the country average literacy rate of 60-65 percent. It is one of the alarming issues, and it has a significant impact on the youth of the province.

There are numerous causes and reasons behind the poor structure of the education system in the province. Corruption and nepotism are significant barriers to improving the education system in Balochistan. Teacher recruitment is often influenced by political figures, such as MPs and MNAs, who prioritize personal connections over merit.

Currently, the number of government schools in the province is more than 15,000, but more than 3,500 schools have been closed across the province, and 542 schools have been closed since the new government took charge. The majority of the schools are nonfunctional due to absenteeism of teachers, and many primary schools have only one teacher. The teacher-student ratio is 1:44, which further exacerbates the quality of education. Teacher absenteeism remains a

persistent issue; many of them are engaging with extra jobs or working in private teaching academies, which further increases the problems.

The conditions of higher education institute is also very pathetic. There is only 11 public sector universities in all over the province but there is few departments in these universities, and majority of the youth especially the females doesn't able to get higher education after their completion of intermediate education due to no higher education institute in their cities and due to some cultural norms and this leads to gender inequality and it increases the gender gap between males and females across the province. The 2024-25 budget for higher education in Balochistan is 5 billion Pakistani rupees which is primarily for salaries and this budget does not leave so much money for academic research. Some other challenges that higher education in Balochistan faces is unpaid salaries, lack of facilities and lack of qualified administration.

The poor education system of the province has many impacts. Due to socioeconomic disparities, many of the youth are not able to pay their fees to pursue their higher education after their completion of secondary education, and due to poverty, many of the children are working as laborers in different hotels, car washing shops, automobile repairing shops, and petrol pumps, and many of them are working in hazardous conditions in the agricultural sector. These children, who are out of school, are exploited by their owners both physically and mentally, and in some cases they are sexually abused, and the adults who are unable to pursue their higher education

engage in criminal activities like stealing cars and motorcycles, and many engage themselves in drug addictions, which is very alarming for society.

The government must take immediate reforms to solve the issue of the closure of schools across the province. The hiring of the teachers should be only merit-based. The government authorities should increase the educational budget in order to give some relief to the students. They should improve and expand the higher education facilities. The government must take steps towards women's education; they should launch awareness campaigns in the rural areas to promote girls education in Balochistan.

In a nutshell, the education system in Balochistan is plagued by numerous challenges, including corruption, lack of infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and limited higher education opportunities. These issues have not only hindered educational progress but have also contributed to alarming societal problems such as child labor, gender inequality, and youth involvement in crime and drug addiction. With over 1.2 million children out of school and a literacy rate below the national average, immediate action is crucial. The government must prioritize merit-based hiring of teachers, address the closure of schools, and allocate sufficient budgetary resources to improve facilities and support academic research. Furthermore, expanding higher education opportunities and promoting girls' education through awareness campaigns are essential steps toward reducing gender disparities and empowering the youth of Balochistan. By addressing these systemic issues, the province can pave the way for a more educated and prosperous future for its people.

Writer is Student of History at the University of Punjab Lahore.

# President for further strengthening bilateral ties with the UAE

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), describing the relationship as a bond rooted in "faith, trust, and mutual respect."

The President was addressing a reception in Islamabad held to mark the UAE's 53rd National Day, "Eid Al Etihad". Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, UAE's Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi, members of the diplomatic community and government officials attended the event.

Addressing the occasion, the President said that Pakistan wanted to enhance cooperation with the UAE in key sectors, such as information technology, renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism. He invited UAE businesses to explore opportunities in Pakistan's economy, including the Pakistan Stock Exchange, renewable energy, and other promising sectors as it offered an investment-friendly environment.

The President highlighted that Pak-UAE relations had flourished into a trustworthy strategic partnership, encompassing political, economic, and social dimensions. He added that the UAE was one of Pakistan's most



significant economic partners and one of the largest investors in the country. "The recent signing of multiple agreements in diverse sectors, including maritime, logistics, and aviation, reflects the UAE's unwavering support and confidence in Pakistan's economic potential," the President said, expressing optimism for deepened bilateral cooperation.

Highlighting the historic ties between the two nations, the President noted that Pakistan was the first country to establish diplomatic

representation in the UAE even before its formal formation. He expressed gratitude for the UAE's consistent support during Pakistan's difficult times.

The President appreciated the contributions of the 1.8 million-strong Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, who continue to play a vital role in the development of both countries. "This people-to-people connection exemplifies the mutual trust and goodwill between our countries," he added.

The President extended heartfelt congratulations to UAE President



His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and the people of the UAE on the country's national day. The President said that the UAE,

since its unification, had made remarkable progress, emerging as a global hub for trade, investment, and tourism. He credited the visionary leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan for laying the foundation of the UAE's

prosperity and its enduring relationship with Pakistan.

The President lauded the UAE's achievements in diverse fields and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering stronger ties with the UAE.

## PM sees Pak-UAE fraternal ties to grow further

By Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the brotherly ties, bonds of friendship and the mutual cooperation between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates would grow further and touch the new historic heights.

Addressing a reception to mark the UAE's 53rd National Day, "Eid Al Etihad", the prime minister felicitated the government and people of UAE on the celebration of the day.

He said the day commemorated the remarkable journey made by the UAE towards progress and prosperity as well as their unwavering support to the people of Pakistan.

The prime minister said that they were immensely proud of the remarkable achievements of UAE which were achieved in the last few decades first under the visionary leadership of late



Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan who was a great friend of Pakistan and his generous contributions in the field of health, infrastructure and airports were known to all and sundry in Pakistan. Now his great work was carried

out by his dynamic son, President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan whose practical approach towards transforming UAE had carved a great place for UAE in the comity of nations.

Ministers, members of the diplomatic community and senior officials

attended the event.

The prime minister said they celebrated this historic occasion to reaffirm Pakistan's unwavering support to the territorial integrity and solidarity of UAE.

He said that the UAE leadership had always supported Pakistan in the critical times and mentioned that the recent IMF programme would not have been achieved without their support, adding that the respective leadership of the two countries was deeply engaged to promote trade and economy and in this regard interventions were being made at the G2G level.

The prime minister also expressed his gratitude to the UAE for hosting a large number of Pakistanis, adding that the visa facility was again opened and facilitated by the UAE.

He said that the two brotherly nations would march on the path of progress together and this friendship and bonds of brotherhood would touch the historic heights.

UAE's Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi, in his remarks, said that today, they were celebrating their founding fathers' remarkable journey of progress.

He said the two nations of UAE and Pakistan enjoyed strong bonds of brotherhood deeply rooted in historic ties and common interests.

He reiterated the UAE's resolve to further strengthen economic partnership with Pakistan and create new opportunities for the youth in diverse fields.

### UAE ambassador highlights deep-rooted ties with Pakistan on National Day



By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi on Tuesday emphasized the strong and enduring relationship between the UAE and Pakistan, rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and a collective vision for regional peace and development.

Speaking at a reception to mark the UAE's 53rd National Day - Eid Al-Etihad, Ambassador Al-Zaabi reaffirmed his country's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation with Pakistan.

"The UAE sees tremendous potential for collaboration with Pakistan across various sectors, including renewable energy, artificial intelligence, sustainability, economic diversification, and agriculture innovations," he said.

The envoy stressed the importance of creating new opportunities for the youth of both nations, which would contribute to their mutual growth and benefit the wider region.

"As we celebrate this historic occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to the values that have guided our nations through challenges and triumphs," he added.

Expressing heartfelt gratitude to the government of Pakistan for its warm hospitality and support, Ambassador Al-Zaabi voiced optimism about the future of UAE-Pakistan relations. "I am confident that our friendship will continue to grow stronger and endure for generations to come," he concluded.

## Ambassador Dr Jemal presents his credentials to President of Kyrgyz Republic

By Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Designated to Kyrgyzstan with residence in Islamabad formally presented his credentials to H. E. Sadyr Zhaparov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, on 17th December, 2024.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker, who is currently in Bishkek on a working visit, presented his credentials to the President during a ceremony held at the President House.

Last week, the Ambassador also presented his credentials to the Speaker of the Parliament of Turkmenistan. With residence in Islamabad, Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker is a Non-Resident Ambassador of Ethiopia to the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

During the credentials' submission today, Ambassador Dr. Jemal conveyed heartfelt greetings of H. E. Taye Atske Selassie, President of the FDR Ethiopia, to the President and people of the Kyrgyz Republic as well as his good wishes for prosperity and development of Kyrgyzstan.

In his remarks, Ambassador Dr. Jemal highlighted the significant reforms undertaken by the FDR Ethiopia in political, economic, social, and foreign policy spheres which have not only enhanced global outreach of Addis Ababa, but also helped achieve economic progress through green development.

He underscored Ethiopia's commitment to addressing contemporary regional and international challenges and articulately explained Ethiopia's role as a leading nation in African development, peace-building, and fostering economic, political, and social cooperation across the continent.

He specifically highlighted the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam which was constructed on the basis of the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of resources, and also with the spirit of pan-Africanism.

On top of that, the Ambassador said H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, launched the Green Legacy Initiative to address climate change issues through the initiatives of afforestation, environmental restoration and food security.



He affirmed the commitment of the Government of the FDR Ethiopia to strengthen its bilateral relations with the Kyrgyz Republic by enhancing cooperation in diverse areas such as trade, investment, aviation, education and health.

On the other hand, H. E. Sadyr Zhaparov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, appreciated the comprehensive reforms undertaken by Ethiopia, and commended Prime Minister H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed for addressing the climate issues through a multi-dimensional initiative like the Green Legacy.

He also appreciated the initiatives taken by H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed for promoting sustainable development of mountain ecosystem. Such efforts should be supported and implemented globally, particularly in the countries directly affected by the climate change, the President remarked.

The President reiterated his Government's desire to strengthen bilateral relations with Ethiopia.

He said the Kyrgyz Republic looks forward to a robust friendship and partnership with the FDR Ethiopia, and assured the Ambassador of his full support in this regard.

## ISSI & CSCCC Host "Post-COP29 Dialogue on Analysis of Outcome and Strategy on Way Forward"

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) along with the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) and Embassy of France organized a Dialogue titled "Post-COP29 Dialogue: Analysis of Outcome and Strategy on Way Forward." The keynote speakers for the event included Senator Sherry Rehman, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Other speakers in the opening sessions were Ms. Aisha, Moriani, Acting Secretary, MoCC & EC, and Mr. Zakaria Haffar, Cooperation and Culture Attaché, Embassy of France in Pakistan. The thematic session featured prominent experts such as Syed Haider Shah, Additional Secretary (UN & OIC); Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI); Mr. Arif Goheer, Executive Director of the Global Climate Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC); Mr. Olivier Mahu, Global Practice Manager for Climate Finance Mobilization at the World Bank; and Dr. Pema Gyamisho Director General ICIMOD. At the subnational level, the speakers included Mr. Nadeem Ur Rehman, Secretary Climate Change & Environment, Balochistan; Mr. Mahmood Ghaznavi, Chief Conservator of Forests, Gilgit-Baltistan; Mr. Riaz Ahmed Wagan, Chief Conservator of Forests, Sindh Forest Department; Mr. Muhammad Shafique Abbasi, Director (HQ) AJK-EPA; and Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim, Deputy Project Director for the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Project at the KP Climate Change Forestry, Environment & Wildlife Department. Additional contributions came from the Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Punjab, and Ms. Pakiza Bukhari, Deputy Director (MEAs), Punjab.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome

remarks, described COP29 in Baku as a testament to the global community's resolve to tackle the escalating climate crisis, emphasizing its importance for frontline nations like Pakistan, ranked among the top ten most climate-vulnerable countries.

Mr. Zakaria Haffar emphasized that climate action remains a top priority in France's international cooperation agenda. He noted that since the Paris Agreement, France has maintained its commitment to the cause and contributed 7.2 billion Euros as of 2023.

Ms. Aisha Moriani highlighted that COP serves as a crucial platform for Pakistan to engage with development and international partners on climate change issues while highlighting its policies and ongoing projects.

In her keynote remarks, Senator Sherry Rehman emphasized that while collaboration with international bodies is essential, it is equally critical for Pakistan to build its capacity to address climate challenges at the national level. In his keynote address, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah discussed the judiciary's perspective on climate justice, particularly about climate finance following COP29 in Baku. He highlighted that Pakistan's constitution has been a pioneer in promoting environmental and climate justice within the country. Syed Haider, Dr. Abid Suleri, Mr. Arif Goheer, Dr. Pema Gyamisho, Mr. Rehman, Mr. Wagan, Mr. Noman also spoke.

In her concluding keynote address, Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the challenges faced by developing countries like Pakistan in advocating for their causes in international forums dominated by developed nations. She noted that Pakistan has remained resolute in its approach and trajectory at COP29, garnering significant recognition and praise for its efforts. The Dialogue concluded with the presentation of ISSI's memento to the esteemed keynote speaker by Chairman BoG ISSI Ambassador Khalid Mahmood.

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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
114,860.68	116,169.41
Day's High	Day's Low
117,039.17	113,688.54
Index Value	Change
46,616,536,697	-1308.73
Percentage	Time
-1.13%	17 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,195.20	-66.85
Percentage	Time
-0.81%	17 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
43,493.17	-224.31
Percentage	Time
-0.51%	17 Dec, 12:11 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,364.68	-92.81
Percentage	Time
-0.24%	17 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	176.99	179.24
Bahrain Dinar	735.15	743.15
Canadian Dollar	195.40	197.80
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	290.00	292.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.18	3.27
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.75	906.25
Malaysian Ringgit	61.75	62.35
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.4
Norwegians Krone	24.93	25.23
Omani Riyal	719.50	728.00
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	310.02	312.92
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	349.90	353.4
US Dollar	277.80	279.30

# Kazakhstan, Pakistan to establish product display centers

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: In a high-level meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan it was decided to establish Display Centers for products and machinery to promote bilateral trade between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. It was also agreed to showcase products of Textiles, Surgical Equipment, Sports, Goods, Handicrafts, Leather and Agricultural equipment. The meeting was attended by Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan Yezhan Kistafin and Pakistan's Ambassador to Kazakhstan Nouman Bashir Bhatti who expressed deep interest in establishing display centers in Pakistan and Kazakhstan, assuring their full cooperation for which both countries will immediately start work and these centers will be made functional as soon as possible.

Federal Minister for Board of



Investment Abdul Aleem Khan, while talking at the meeting said that both Pakistan and Kazakhstan will provide all possible facilities to the business community of their sides under one

roof on a large scale. He added that the volume of bilateral trade with Kazakhstan will be increased by 100 percent in the next three years.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem

Khan further said that Pakistan wants to increase its exports for Kazakhstan by 20 percent in one year for which Pakistan will also establish Exhibition Centers for its

products in Almaty, Baku and other cities of Central Asia while policy will be formulated for Display Centers according to the demand of each product in that country. Federal Minister for Investment Abdul Aleem Khan said that Display Centers will be built at important locations where the business community can easily access and do not face any difficulties. Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Pakistan H. E. Yezhan Kistafin expressed his thanks to Federal Minister for Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan for taking a keen interest in bilateral cooperation and assured his all possible support. Federal Secretaries and senior officers attended this high-level meeting and briefed on important departmental matters. It is mentionable that in Pakistan the first Display Center established at Islamabad and for this purpose Board of Investment, Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Ministry of Trade will start coordinated efforts.

## Signing ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid witnesses agreement signing ceremony between BISP, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Karandaaz held at BISP HQs on Tuesday. Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmad and Waqas ul Hassan CEO Karandaaz signing the agreement.



Photo: Online

## Govt notifies PM's High-Level Committee on Sugar Stock Monitoring

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The government has notified the high-level committee constituted by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif tasked with developing a robust system for monitoring and reporting sugar stocks to ensure timely decisions on exports. The committee, chaired by the Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, comprises federal ministers, top officials, and leading economic experts including Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

The Committee is

mandated to analyze sugar production, consumption, and stock data, identify discrepancies, and propose an efficient framework for evidence-based decision-making.

A distinguished economist, Dr. Suleri is known for his work on sustainable development and economic policy, making his nomination a valuable addition to the committee's deliberations.

The committee is expected to submit its findings to the Prime Minister within two weeks, for effective policy decisions that safeguard consumer interests, stabilize the market, and promote economic efficiency.

## Restoration of PIA is essential for Overseas Pakistanis: OPWC

**Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah**

LONDON: There are about two million overseas Pakistanis living in the UK. Due to the closure of PIA for the past four years, Overseas Pakistanis are deprived of free repatriation of dead bodies and direct flights, and are forced to travel on indirect flights via other countries, including the Middle East. Overseas Pakistanis pay thousands of pounds to the cargo companies to send the dead bodies of their loved ones to Pakistan from the UK.

Last month, the European Union restored the license for PIA flights, but the British Ministry of Transport has yet to inspect PIA next month in January 2025. In the same vein, the leaders of the Overseas Pakistanis Welfare Council (OPWC) and Pakistan Community Centre (PCC) Reading, Chairman OPWC Naeem Naqshbandi, Chairman PCC Mian Muhammad Saleem and President OPWC Haji Abid Hussain, lobbied and met with members of the British Parliament MP Yvon Young, MP Lizz, MP Matt Rodha, MP Tan Manjit Singh Desi and MP Raja Muhammad



Yasin and briefed them on this long-standing issue of the Overseas Pakistani community. They convinced them that the restoration of PIA is essential for Overseas Pakistanis. The aforementioned members of Parliament met with British Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander to highlight this problem and find a solution. They informed the British Transport Secretary that the European Union has restored flights so the British government should also resume PIA flights. In the meeting, the Transport Secretary assured a solution to this important issue regarding the travel

facilities of 2 million migrants by fulfilling the legal requirements.

While talking to the officials of OPWC and PCC Reading, the MPs said that the overseas Pakistani community will get good news regarding PIA in January 2025, God willing.

Overseas community leaders Naeem Naqshbandi, Mian Saleem and Haji Abid Hussain also appreciated the efforts of Chairman OPF Syed Qamar Raza and Chairman OPC Punjab Barrister Amjad Malik for the restoration of PIA in the UK and Europe.

## Iftikhar Malik welcomes 200 Basis Points Reduction in Monetary Policy Rate by State Bank



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Tuesday widely welcomed 200 Basis Points Reduction in Monetary Policy Rate by State Bank of Pakistan.

Hailing the wise decision, veteran popular trade leader of South Asia business termed it as a timely and positive step toward boosting economic growth, supporting trade, and revitalizing Pakistan's industrial sector.

Expressing his gratitude to the SBP, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), and the Government, he acknowledged their collective efforts in controlling inflation, stabilizing foreign exchange reserves, and improving the overall business climate. He emphasized that this monetary easing would provide much-needed relief to businesses and industries struggling with high borrowing costs.

"This decision will stimulate investment, reduce the cost of doing business, and create an enabling environment for growth," said Iftikhar Ali Malik. "It will boost the confidence of local and foreign investors, drive job creation, and ensure sustainable economic development in Pakistan." Highlighting the broader economic impact, he stated that the reduction in the policy rate would ease financial pressure on manufacturers, exporters, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), enabling them to access cheaper credit and expand operations. He said it would lead to enhanced production capacity, increased exports, and improved competitiveness of Pakistani products in global markets.

## Ufone 4G announces a partnership with Jubilee Insurance to launch General Insurance Service for its customers

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Ufone 4G, a leading Pakistani telecommunications service provider, and Jubilee Insurance, a renowned insurance company, are proud to announce their partnership to launch the JGI Insurance Products for Ufone 4G Customers. The signing ceremony took place at PTCL Group HQ in Islamabad.

Through this partnership, The JGI will offer Ufone 4G customers with two comprehensive insurance plans. 'Personal Accident Insurance', which provides coverage for accidental death and permanent disabilities, with lump sum, benefit plans ranging up to PKR 2,000,000. Similarly, the 'Bill Protector Insurance' covers bills in cases of accidental death or permanent total disability. Coverage includes utility bills, housing fees, mobile phone bills, and petrol/diesel expenses, with payouts reaching from PKR 20,000 per month for up to 3 months to PKR 70,000 per month, depending on

the duration of coverage, which extends up to 12 months.

Speaking at the signing, Syed Atif Raza, Group Chief Commercial Officer at PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "We are thrilled to partner with Jubilee Insurance to bring the JGI Insurance products to our customers. The collaboration underscores our commitment to providing innovative and valuable services that enhance our users' life standards. It also highlights our pledge to go beyond connectivity and digital enablement to facilitate our users with meaningful solutions."

Azfar Arshad, Chief Operating Officer at Jubilee Insurance also added "Jubilee General Insurance and Ufone 4G are joining forces to empower millions of customers with financial security. By leveraging digital technology, we are making insurance more accessible and affordable than ever before. Our innovative insurance products, designed with the unique needs of Ufone customers in mind, offer comprehensive protection and peace of mind.



With the added convenience of premium credit, Ufone customers can enjoy seamless deduction directly from mobile phone balance and hassle-free insurance coverage."

## Mastercard partner with Bank of Punjab to transform digital ecosystem

**Commerce Desk**

DUBAI: Mastercard has joined forces with the Bank of Punjab (BOP) as an exclusive partner to enhance the bank's proposition across consumer debit and credit, affluent portfolio and loyalty offerings. The collaboration seeks to transform the bank's digital ecosystem and its customers' digital experience.

Customers of BOP's priority banking program KHAAS will now benefit from Mastercard's market-leading World and World Elite cards. Under this partnership, the bank will expand into new affluent segments with revised customer value propositions (CVP) and best-in-class products, aiming to establish KHAAS as the country's preferred priority program for affluent and high-net-

worth individuals (HNIs). The collaboration will also see the launch of Islamic credit cards to address the high demand for Islamic banking payment solutions in Pakistan.

In addition, BOP will introduce an enterprise-wide loyalty program using



Mastercard's global expertise, Pay with Rewards and Mastercard Rewards Solutions, cutting across multiple products and segments. Pay with Rewards is a one-of-a-kind digital experience that gives cardholders the freedom to spend loyalty points like cash at the time of purchase for instant, seamless rewards redemption.

# Hafeez, Punjab Sports Minister inaugurate Khawaja Iftikhar Memorial Tennis Championship

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Former Pakistan cricket captain Muhammad Hafeez and Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar inaugurated the Khawaja Iftikhar Memorial National Ranking Tennis Championship 2024 at the Sports Board Punjab Tennis Courts, Nishtar Park Sports Complex.

Muhammad Hafeez, serving as the chief guest, praised Aisam ul Haq Qureshi for his contributions to tennis, calling him a "true champion" and a driving force for the sport in Pakistan. He lauded the championship as a fitting tribute to late Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad, a pioneer of tennis in the Subcontinent. Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub



Khokhar emphasized the need for infrastructure development to support tennis. He commended Aisam's efforts as PTF President, stating, "It is individ-

uals like Aisam who bring life to these courts through their passion and initiatives."

PTF President Aisam ul Haq Qureshi, grandson of the late Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad, thanked the dignitaries for their support, highlighting the tournament as a tribute to his grandfather. The event features top national players competing for significant honors. Punjab Sports Minister pledged infrastructure upgrades to promote tennis in the region.

In early matches, Ahmed Nael Qureshi stunned higher-ranked Abdullah Adnan 6-3, 6-4 in the men's singles, while S Ayesha Shahid and Zunaisha Noor dominated the women's singles category.

## Central Park Sports Department Organized Central Park Sports Gala, 2024

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Central Park Sports Department Organized Central Park Sports Gala, 2024 under the supervision of Nasir Majeed and Muhammad Kaleem Sports Manager, Central Park Sports Department. The event was organized here at vibrant Central Park Housing Scheme.

The Chairman Urban Developers, Mian Tahir Javed inaugurated this fabulous sports gala, 2024 event along with Usman Anwar, MD Urban Developers and M. Asif who came from UK as a Chief Guest for this event.

The event was also supported by Umar Majeed and Umar Rizwan. In Tape Ball Cricket event Final, 2024 DHA Dealers won the final against Central Park Blue by 10 runs. Batting first Dha Dealers made 50 for 6 in 5 overs Rizwan, 17, Adnan 14, and Ali Akbar, 10 were the main scorers. From Central Park Blue Zahid, Kamran and Ahsan got one wicket each. In reply Central Park Blue could manage 50 runs



in stipulated 5 overs. Baqir 19, Zahid 18 were the main feature of the inning of Central Park Blue.

From Dha Dealers Rana Raheel and Ali Shah captured two wickets each, while Salman and Ramzan got one wicket apiece. Rana Raheel was named

man of the match on his outstanding bowling performance. Mujahid Ali Central Park Blue declared best batsman in the tournament he made total score 134 runs, while Ali Shah, DHA Dealers was declared best bowler in the tournament he got 7 wickets in the tournament.

Shahbaz Kalia and Shahid Dewan were the Umpires in the final. Aftab Ahmed was the reserve Umpire and scorer was Azhar Hussain.

After the final Chairman Urban Developers, Mian Tahir Javed, Usman Anwar, MD, and Muhammad Asif (UK) distributed the prizes among the players and gave away the winner and runner up trophies to both the team Captain.

On this occasion Mian Tahir Javed, Chairman Urban Developers appreciate the sports department head Muhammad Kaleem effort who maintained the cricket pitches and ground very well and congratulated to whole the management team Nasir Majeed, Muhammad Kaleem and Umar Majeed who also supported this event.

He also emphasized Central Park Housing Scheme will always will be on forefront to promote the healthy entertainment and sports activities and this sports gala will be a platform to unite the community and will provide opportunities for the youth to showcase their talents.

## Salman Ali Agha, Saim Ayub steer Pakistan to victory over South Africa

A Sports

PAARL: Saim Ayub scored his second century, while Salman Ali Agha showcased his all-round brilliance to lead Pakistan to a thrilling victory in the first ODI of the three-match series against South Africa here at Boland Park on Tuesday.

Chasing a target of 240, the visiting team successfully achieved the total with three balls to spare and took a 1-0 lead in the series.

Salman Ali Agha, after taking four wickets in the first innings, played a calm and composed knock of 82\* in 90 balls with the help of six boundaries, which included two sixes.

The right-hander came out to bat with Pakistan struggling at 60-4 and formed a solid partnership of 141 runs with opening batter Saim Ayub.

They took Pakistan's total to 201 before Kagiso Rabada broke the partnership with the wicket of Saim, who scored 109 runs from 119 balls with the help of ten boundaries and three sixes.

Pakistan lost two more wickets in quick succession before Naseem Shah (9\*) joined Salman and they constructed an unbeaten 33-run stand to take their team across the line.



For South Africa, Rabada and Ottneil Baartman took two wickets each, while Marco Jansen and Tabraiz Shamsi bagged one each.

Earlier, South Africa's stand-in captain Aiden Markram chose to bat first after winning the coin toss against Pakistan's formidable bowling attack.

The decision seemed to bore fruits initially as Tony de Zorzi and Ryan Rickelton built a 70-run opening stand in 59

balls before Salman Ali Agha turned things around with his off-spin bowling.

De Zorzi scored 33 off 25 with the help of six boundaries, while Rickelton struck seven fours on his way to a 38-ball 36.

Salman removed both batters in successive overs, followed by Triston Stubbs of Rassie van der Dussen and Triston Stubbs (1) in his fourth over to leave South Africa reeling at 88-4.

Markram (35) and Heinrich Klaasen

then joined hands to take the hosts out of the trouble with a 73-run stand for the fifth wicket before Saim Ayub broke the budding partnership.

Klaasen then waged a lone war, playing a brilliant knock of 86 runs from 97 balls, which featured seven fours and two sixes, to take his team's total beyond the 200-run mark.

Shaheen Shah Afridi ended Klaasen's knock before Kagiso Rabada (11) and Ottneil Baartman (10\*) added crucial 21 runs for the ninth wicket.

Rabada got run out on the last ball of the innings as South Africa finished with 239-9.

Salman Ali Agha led Pakistan's bowling attack with his figures of 4-32, while Abrar Ahmed took two wickets.

Pakistan Playing XI: Mohammad Rizwan (c)(wk), Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Salman Ali Agha, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf

South Africa Playing XI: Tony de Zorzi, Ryan Rickelton, Rassie van der Dussen, Aiden Markram (c), Triston Stubbs, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Marco Jansen, Andile Phehlukwayo, Kagiso Rabada, Ottneil Baartman, Tabraiz Shamsi

## Zone VI Win in Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant Century by 101 by Rana Areeb Aftab Ahmed and fine bowling by slow left arm spinner Muhammad Masham captured 4 wickets for 23 Zone-IV Whites easily defeated Zone-V Greens by 181 runs on Monday at Pak Star Ground.

Later Sports Organiser Syed Waseem ul Haq given the Medicam Man of the Match Award to Rana Areeb Aftab Ahmed of Zone-IV Whites.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-IV Whites 268/6 in 40 overs. Rana Areeb Aftab Ahmed 101 16x4, Aun Abbas 71 9x4, Hamza Awan 24, Amanullah 21. M. Rehman Bashir (ob) 2/54, M. Usman Ahmed (mf) 2/58.

Zone-V Greens 87 all out in 20 overs. M. Umer Qureshi 22. Muhammad Masham (ob) 23, Arshman Riaz (lcm) 2/13, Mukarram Ali (mf) 2/33.

## Babar Azam eyes major milestones during South Africa ODIs



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan batting maestro Babar Azam is on the verge of achieving multiple milestones in ODI cricket during the upcoming three-match series against South Africa, scheduled to commence on Tuesday in Paarl.

The former Pakistan captain has the opportunity to break South African batting legend Hashim Amla's long-standing record of fastest to 6000 ODI runs.

Amla achieved the feat in 123 innings while Babar has so far scored 5809 runs in 117 innings. He needs 191 runs in his next five innings to break the record.

It's worth noting that Babar holds the record for being the fastest batter to score 5000 ODI runs, having achieved the landmark in 97 innings.

Babar Azam has scored 19 ODI centuries, placing him in an impressive second position in the list of most hundreds by Pakistani batters. He is just one century away from equalling the legendary Saeed Anwar's record of 20 centuries.

During the upcoming three-match ODI series against South Africa, Babar needs to score two centuries to surpass Saeed Anwar and further secure his legacy in cricket history.

If he scores centuries in all three matches, he will join David Warner, Sourav Ganguly, and Tillakaratne Dilshan in tenth place on the list of most hundreds in ODIs.

It's worth noting that after the series opener today, Pakistan and South Africa will play subsequent ODIs in Cape Town and Johannesburg on December 19 and 22 respectively.

Meanwhile, the two-match Test series will kick off in Centurion on December 26, followed by the second Test in Cape Town, starting from January 3.

Pakistan Playing XI: Mohammad Rizwan (c)(wk), Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Salman Ali Agha, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf

## Four local players promoted to platinum category for PSL 10

A Sports

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday that Test cricketers Saim Ayub and Hasan Ali are among four local players promoted to the platinum category for the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 10.

The cricket board, through a press release, confirmed the category renewal of 87 local players for the 10th edition.

Hasan Ali (Karachi Kings), Mohammad Amir (Quetta Gladiators), Saim Ayub (Peshawar Zalmi) and Usama Mir (Multan Sultans) have been promoted to the Platinum category from the Diamond category.

Meanwhile, Imad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Shadab Khan (Islamabad United), Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Shaheen Shah Afridi (Lahore Qalandars), Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan (Multan Sultans) and Babar Azam (Peshawar Zalmi) are retained in Platinum category.

A total of 16 players are part of the Diamond category, which includes four players each of Quetta Gladiators and Multan Sultans, three players each from Karachi Kings, and Islamabad United and two players from Peshawar Zalmi, while Lahore Qalandars have one player in this category.

Furthermore, 30 players are part of the Gold category which

includes Peshawar Zalmi's seven players. Karachi Kings, Lahore Qalandars and Quetta Gladiators have five players each, while Islamabad United and Multan Sultans have four players in the Gold category.

Among the 16 players assigned Silver category, four each are from Gladiators and Lahore Qalandars, while Peshawar Zalmi have three players in this category. Kings and Sultans have two players each in the Silver category, while United have one Silver category player.

In the Emerging category, among the 12 players selected, three players each are part of Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi. Karachi Kings and Multan Sultans have two players each,

while Quetta Gladiators and Lahore Qalandars have one player each.

Earlier, on Thursday, 12 December the PCB had opened the registration window for foreign players for the landmark 10th edition of HBL PSL along with the trade window for all six franchises. The relegation process and retention of players will be announced at the end of December. The PSL Players' Draft is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 11 January 2025. The venue and time for the draft will be announced in due course.

Local category player renewals (team-wise):

Islamabad United - Imad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Shadab

Khan (all Platinum), Azam Khan, Salman Ali Agha (both Diamond), Faheem Ashraf, Haider Ali, Qasim Akram, Rumman Raees (all Gold), Shahab Khan (Silver), Hunain Shah, Shamyul Hussain, Ubaid Shah (all Emerging)

Karachi Kings - Hasan Ali (Platinum), Mohammad Nawaz, Shan Masood, Shoaib Malik (all Diamond), Arafat Minhas, Anwar Ali Khan, Mir Hamza, Zahid Mahmood, Irfan Khan Niazi (all Gold), Mohammad Amir Khan, Muhammad Akhlaq (both Silver), Saad Baig, Sirajuddin (both Emerging)

Lahore Qalandars - Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Shaheen Shah Afridi (all Platinum), Abdullah Shafique (Diamond), Sahibzada

Farhan, Zaman Khan, Mirza Tahir Baig, Kamran Ghulam, Jahandad Khan (all Gold), Ahsan Hafeez Bhatti, Muhammad Imran Jnr, Salman Fayyaz, Syed Faridoun Mahmood (all Silver), Tayyab Abbas (Emerging)

Multan Sultans - Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan, Usama Mir (all Platinum), Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Ali, Usman Khan (all Diamond), Ihsanullah, Tayyab Tahir, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Faisal Khan (all Gold), Ali Majidi, Yasir Khan (both Silver), Aftab Ibrahim, Muhammad Shahzad (both Emerging)

Peshawar Zalmi - Babar Azam, Saim Ayub (both Platinum),

Aamir Jamal, Mohammad Haris (both Diamond), Arshad Iqbal, Asif Ali, Haseebullah, Hussain Talat, Khurram Shahzad, Salman Irshad, Sufyan Moqim (all Gold), Arif Yaqoob, Mehran Mumtaz, Umair Afridi (all Silver), Aimal Khan, Ali Raza, Mohammad Zeeshan (all Emerging)

Quetta Gladiators - Mohammad Amir (Platinum), Abrar Ahmed, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Hasnain (all Diamond), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Usman Qadir, Omair Bin Yousuf, Sohail Khan, Umar Amin (all Gold), Sajjad Ali Jnr, Usman Tariq, Bismillah Khan, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay (all Silver), Adil Naz (Emerging)

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the Federal Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

## PM directs ministries to address medicines shortage in Parachinar, establish contact with KPK govt

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior to take immediate steps to address the shortage of medicines in Parachinar and to establish contact with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in this regard.

The prime minister chaired a meeting of the federal cabinet at the PM House during which several important decisions were made. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The federal cabinet approved the Criminal Procedure (Code of Criminal Procedure) Amendment Bill 2024 on the recommendation of the Ministry of Law and Justice.

This amendment aims to simplify the process of registering FIRs, allow the use of modern technology in investigations, forensic technique and to enable the audio-video recording of witness statements.

Furthermore, the amendment bill included provisions to strengthen the role of the prosecutor during investi-

gations. The prosecutor will be able to point out any deficiencies or flaws in the police report.

Under these amendments, women, individuals under 12 years old, men over 70 years old, and persons with physical or mental disabilities will be able to record their statements at a place of their convenience.

The amendments also stipulated that the trial court would deliver its verdict within one year, and in case of delay, the relevant High Court would be held accountable. Additionally, the appellate court will be

required to make a decision on any appeal within six months to one year.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, the cabinet approved the inclusion of section related to oath of Finality of Prophethood in marriage certificates within the Islamabad Capital Territory.

The cabinet was presented with reports on the implementation of Principles of Policy for federal affairs for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23 by the Cabinet Secretariat.

The cabinet also received reports from the Cabinet Division regarding the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for the past three years. These reports will now be sent to the Council of Common Interests.

The federal cabinet confirmed the decisions made during the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises held on December 4, 2024, and the meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Government Transactions held on November 20 and 21, 2024.

## Dar participates in 7th Ministerial Meeting of CICA

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today participated virtually in the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), hosted by CICA Chair Azerbaijan in virtual format.

The meeting focused on enhancing regional cooperation, promoting peace, and advancing sustainable development in Asia.

The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the CICA's vision of achieving common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia. He highlighted CICA's immense potential in addressing the region's key challenges including political disputes, conflicts, and endemic poverty that



continue to hinder collective progress.

Underlining the importance of dialogue, mutual respect and adherence to international law, the Deputy

Prime Minister/Foreign Minister called for just and inclusive political solutions for long-standing disputes such as Palestine and Jammu and

Kashmir.

A key focus of Pakistan's statement was the imperative of strengthening regional connectivity to foster economic integration and sustainable development.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister emphasized the vital role of connectivity initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in promoting shared growth, facilitating infrastructure development, and enhancing trade and energy links across Asia. These projects, he noted, can serve as catalysts for regional economic cooperation and prosperity.

Pakistan is a founding member of CICA, a multi-national forum aimed at enhancing cooperation and confidence-building among its 28 member states to promote peace, security, stability, and prosperity in Asia.

## Jailed former PM Imran Khan postpones civil disobedience movement

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has announced his decision to postpone the civil disobedience movement for a few days on party leaders' request.

"Imran Khan agreed to the party leaders request of delaying the civil disobedience movement," Khan's sister Aleema told reporters outside the Adiala Jail on Tuesday.

"I am worried about the country and I should wait for a few days," she said while quoting her brother.

On December 5, jailed former PM Khan revealed his "trump card" by announcing a civil disobedience movement if the government failed to act on the party's demand. He also formed a negotiating committee to fulfil those



demands, including the release of political prisoners and a judicial inquiry into the events of May 9 and November 26.

His orders came after several PTI supporters had lost their lives due to "state terrorism" during his "final call" for nationwide protests on November 24. Such protests aimed to demand the restoration of the PTI's electoral mandate, the release of detained party members, and the reversal of the 26th Constitutional Amendment.

After violent clashes between security forces and PTI protesters in Islamabad, the party leadership quickly retreated from the Red Zone on November 27. The three days of protests resulted in six fatalities, including a police officer and three Rangers struck by a speeding vehicle, according to officials.

## Justice Mansoor Shah proposes climate court to tackle environmental challenges



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, says a climate court should be established to tackle the country's environmental challenges.

Addressing the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference via video link, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has said Pakistan's constitutional courts are addressing environmental matters.

He noted that the country was facing severe climate change challenges and highlighted the role of the Climate Change Authority in tackling

these issues.

He referred to cases like the cement plant in Kallar Kahar, where environmental concerns such as water scarcity were addressed, and the CDA case, where the court directed that planning must be eco-friendly. Recommendations were also made to relocate marble crushing plants or adopt modern technology.

Justice Shah stressed the critical need for climate finance, which is not reaching Pakistan. He suggested that both public and private sectors can contribute to climate finance, describing it as the new form of climate justice.

## Karachi breaks new record in tax collection

## Agencies

KARACHI: The Large Taxpayer Office (LTO) Karachi has set a new record in tax collection, reporting a 20 percent (pc) increase in tax receipts compared to the same period last year.

Reports suggest that, during the first five months of the fiscal year 2024-25, LTO Karachi collected Rs1,110 billion in taxes, a significant rise from Rs924 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

LTO Karachi's direct tax collection during the first five months amounted to Rs542 billion, up from Rs451 billion in the same period last year, marking a 20pc increase. The office also issued Rs47 billion in

refunds over the same period.

Indirect and sales tax collection by LTO Karachi saw an 18pc rise, accumulating Rs494 billion in the first five months. This compares to Rs420 billion collected in the corresponding period last year.

The increase is largely driven by higher local transactions, where sales tax collection saw a 30pc jump to Rs203 billion. However, challenges remain in the collection of import sales tax due to a decline in import bills, according to sources from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

LTO Karachi, also known as the 'Mini FBR', has collectively collected Rs1,160 billion in total taxes over the first five months of the fiscal year 2024-25.

## Father and stepmother of Sara Sharif jailed



## Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: The father and stepmother of Sara Sharif have been jailed for life for her murder.

Sara was hooded, burned and beaten during more than two years of abuse before her body was found with dozens of injuries at the fami-

ly's home in Woking, Surrey, last year.

Her father, Irfan Sharif and stepmother, Beinash Batool, were found guilty, while her uncle, Faisal Malik, was convicted of causing or allowing a child's death.

At the Old Bailey, Court Irfan Sharif was sentenced to a minimum

## OGRA approves major increase in gas prices across Pakistan

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has approved significant hikes in gas prices, affecting consumers nationwide.

According to reports, the decision, sent to the federal government for final approval, will see an average increase of 25.78 percent (pc) for consumers in Sindh and Balochistan, while consumers in Islamabad, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will experience an 8.71pc rise.

Under the new tariff structure, the average gas price for Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has been set at Rs1,762.51 per MMBTU, and for Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), it's Rs1,778.35 per MMBTU. These changes aim

to address financial needs totalling Rs527.55 billion for SNGPL and Rs319.78 billion for SSGC, along with adjustments for prior receivables.

The companies had originally sought increases in gas prices as high as 208.67pc but were met with public hearings by OGRA last month.

OGRA's decision to forward the recommendations to the federal government for final approval means that a notification will be issued once the government grants its consent.

This revision in gas prices comes amidst rising financial pressures on the gas companies, with SNGPL receiving approval to recover over Rs50 billion from previous adjustments, and SSGC allowed to recover Rs48.85 billion.