



US ambassador reinforces trade, investment partnership

United States (US) Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome has reaffirmed the US commitment to strengthening bilateral ties in business, trade, jobs and education during his visit to Karachi from December 17-18.



11 Khwarij killed in 3 separate IBOs in KP

According to a news release issued by ISPR, "An intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in Tank District on the reported presence of Khwarij. During the conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location, as the result of which seven Khwarij were sent to hell". Another intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Datta Khel, North Waziristan District. In ensuing fire exchange, two Khwarij were sent to hell by the security forces, it further said.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding measures against human trafficking on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

DPM/ Foreign Minister's Meeting with the Foreign Minister of Iran

Spokesman Report

CAIRO: The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met today with the Foreign Minister of Iran Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the 21st D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers being held in Cairo, Egypt.



Deputy Prime Minister Dar and Minister Araghchi also exchange views on the situation in the Middle East. DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's principled position on Palestine and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people.

PM arrives in Cairo to attend D-8 Summit



News Desk

CAIRO: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday arrived here on an official visit to Egypt to lead the Pakistan delegation at the 11th Summit of the Developing Eight (D-8) countries being held from 18-19 December.

D-8 Summit is "Investing in Youth and Supporting SMEs: Shaping Tomorrow's Economy."

At the summit, the prime minister will underline the importance of investing in youth and SMEs for building a strong and inclusive economy; creating jobs; advancing innovation; and promoting local entrepreneurship.

"The Prime Minister will also attend the Special Session of D-8 on the Humanitarian Crisis and Reconstruction Challenges in Gaza and Lebanon to deliberate on the situation resulting from Israeli aggression in the Middle East. On the sidelines of the Summit, the Prime Minister is expected to hold bilateral meetings with the participating leaders," it was further added.

Minister for Public Business Sector of the Arab Republic of Egypt Mohamed Shimi along with senior Egyptian and officials of the Pakistan embassy in Cairo received the prime minister upon arrival at the airport, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Pakistan delegation includes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Ataulah Tarar.

The theme of the 11th

IHC postpones hearing on Asad Qaiser's petition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was set to hear a petition of former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on Wednesday but postponed due to shortage of time.



The case was set to hear by Justice Saman Rafat Intiaz of the Islamabad High Court, but the hearing was postponed due to time constraints.

However, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Legal Sajid Cheema presented a detailed report on the cases registered against Qaiser.

Qaiser across various police stations in Islamabad. Earlier, on November 13, the police reported nine cases against him. However, following protests on November 24, eight more cases were registered, bringing the total to 17. The court has yet to schedule a new hearing for the case.

The report revealed that 17 cases have been filed against

PM directs solid actions to curb human trafficking defaming Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to take solid actions against human trafficking bringing defame to Pakistan and sought a report on the incidents of human trafficking during the last year involving Pakistani citizens.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the death of Pakistani nationals in a boat capsizing incident in Greece and the measures to curb human trafficking, called for strict action against the people involved in the trafficking of innocent people to other countries.

He recalled that 262 Pakistani nationals had lost their lives in another incident in the same area last year and expressed his

displeasure over inaction against those responsible. The recurrence of such incidents is due to the sluggish actions against the people involved, he added.

The prime minister instructed the immediate implementation of the Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) to monitor international travelers.

During the briefing, the prime minister was told that 174 people

involved in human trafficking had been produced before courts with four of them convicted.

Prime Minister Shehbaz sought details on the public awareness campaign on human trafficking and asked the FIA and foreign ministry to furnish a report on the incidents involving Pakistani nationals over the last year.

He also stressed the need to

enhance collaboration with international institutions to prevent the recurrence of such tragic incidents.

Federal ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Ahad Cheema, and Ataulah Tarar, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi, Coordinator to PM Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Court reserves verdict in 190m pound reference against Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court on Wednesday reserved the verdict after completing the trial in 190 million pound reference against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi.

According to Dunya News, Judge Nasir Javed Rana conducted the trial of the 190 million pound reference at Adiala Jail, and the decision was reserved after the defense lawyer's arguments were concluded.

The final hearing of the trial lasted for approximately 8 hours and 15 minutes, during which PTI founder and Bushra Bibi were present in court.



The accountability court will announce its decision on Monday, December 23.

It is worth noting that the NAB

lawyer had completed their arguments in the 190 million pound reference the previous day.

The court reserved the decision

after final arguments in case, the trial concluded in one year.

The £190 million case involves a reference filed by NAB against former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and others in December 2023.

The case centers around an alleged settlement between the PTI government and a property tycoon, which reportedly caused a loss of £190 million to Pakistan's national exchequer.

Khan and the accused are alleged to have misused £190 million sent by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) as part of the settlement. Bushra Bibi was named as an accused for her role as a trustee of the Al-Qadir Trust.

Additionally, the couple is accused of receiving undue benefits, including over 458 kanals of land in Mouza Bakrala, Sohawa, for the establishment of Al-Qadir University.

During Khan's tenure, the NCA seized £190 million worth of assets from the tycoon. The assets were meant to be handed to Pakistan, with the settlement deemed a civil matter by the NCA.

However, the details of the confidential agreement were not disclosed when Khan's cabinet approved it in December 2019. Subsequently, the Al-Qadir Trust was established in Islamabad.

Election theft only cause of Pakistan's debacle, says Shahid Khaqan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Wednesday said that election theft is the only cause of Pakistan's debacle.

"I have held the prime minister's office, I knew about the election theft before the polls held," Abbasi said.

"I have informed my party one year ago that I could not walk along on their path", he said. "We

back, 'respect to the vote' but not 'respect to the power,'" former PML-N leader said.

"I knew it that the election will be stolen thus didn't contest the election", Shahid Khaqan said.

"Saying that the people have

no right, and we will decide, then how the country will be governed," he questioned. "How the country will run when those not given vote by the people, run the country," he asked. "I am saying without any exaggeration that 50 percent sena-



tors win seats by paying money," he claimed.

"The country is needed supremacy of the constitution, rule of law and reforms," he stressed.

Agriculture Department AJK achieved yet another milestone in modern agricultural technology

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Agriculture Department has achieved yet another milestone in modern agricultural technology by setting up an Olive Oil Extraction Unit and a laboratory to promote Mushroom Production in Azad Kashmir.

Pertinently, both the projects costing 40 million rupees have been launched with the support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA).

The inauguration ceremony of the projects was held here today at the Agriculture Complex Gojra.

Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Irrigation and Water Resources Sardar Mir Akbar Khan along with the head of the Turkish delegation, Dosan Ali Yeskan inaugurated both the projects.

The ceremony was attended by Secretary Planning and Development Aamir Latif Awan, Secretary Agriculture Imtiaz Ahmed, TIKTA Pakistan Desk In-charge Ovia Tutunso Govin, Country Head Mohsin Bilki, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division Masood-ur-Rehman, former Director General Agriculture Khawaja Khurshid Ahmed, and others.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the Minister for Agriculture

Sardar Mir Akbar Khan thanked Turkey for its technical cooperation helping the government of Azad Kashmir in its efforts to improve the agriculture sector.

"The people and government of Turkey had always stood shoulder to shoulder with us in difficult times", the minister said, adding that during October 8, 2005 earthquake Turkey helped us in the rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

Landowners will be trained for value addition. Speaking on the occasion, Dosan Ali Yeskan, Head of South Asia of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, said that it is very happy to see the inauguration of these two projects today and their results because the farmers of Azad Kashmir are benefiting from these projects.

On this occasion, Administrator Parks and Horticulture Malik Aamir gave a departmental briefing.

Administrator Agriculture Extension Ms. Amna Rafi gave separate briefings about the olive oil extraction unit, whereas administrator Agriculture Research Zafar Jahangir and Deputy Nazim Abdul Hafeez Mughal also gave separate briefings about the laboratory established for mushroom production.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain presenting souvenir to Ambassador of Iran Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam on his visit to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony in on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan's 2050 Outlook: Media's Role in Shaping a Balanced Future

Bureau Report

QUETTA: To reduce the rapid population growth and bring it to a sustainable level, implementation of the National Action Plan, formulated under the decisions of the Council of Common Interest (CCI), must be ensured. If the current population growth rate continues, Pakistan will face significant challenges in its economy, education, health, and human resource sectors by 2050.

This was stated during the Media Coalition Meeting organized by the Population Council with the support of UNFPA. Journalists from across Pakistan, representing leading media outlets of the country, participated in this National Media Coalition meeting.

In his welcome remarks, Dr. Ali Mir, Senior Director at the Population Council, emphasized the critical need to achieve a balance between population growth and available resources to ensure Pakistan's sustainable progress.

Dr. Bashir underscored the significant implications of these scenarios, noting that under the current trajectory, Pakistan would require 115 million new jobs by 2050. However, effective implementation of CCI decisions could reduce this demand to 97 million. She explained.

Speaking at the National Media Coalition meeting, Ikram Ul Ahad, Deputy Manager Communication, Population Council, underscored the urgent need to address rapid population growth, which is adversely affecting the economy, health, environment, and education indicators.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Ghulam Farid Khan, Programme Analyst at UNFPA, stated, "The Media Coalition, established under the decisions of the Council of Common Interest (CCI), serves as a platform to ensure accountability and facilitate the implementation of the National Action Plan agenda."

Government College Women University Faisalabad remarkable achievement

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Government College Women University has achieved remarkable success in the UI Green Matrix World Universities Rankings 2024 by implementing environmental initiatives and green projects. According to the 2024 ranking, Pakistan is ranked second among all women's universities around the world and women's universities in Pakistan, while it has managed to achieve a position of 18th among all universities in Pakistan, 282nd among all universities in Asia and 518th among all universities in the world. This graph of progress last year was something like this: third among all women's universities around the world and Pakistan, 24th overall, 341st in Asia and 580th overall GCWUF position worldwide. Vice Chancellor Government College Women University Professor Dr. Kanwal Amin Tamgha Imtiaz said that this is a great achievement. The university is continuously moving towards development. He said that the vision of a green and clean environment has been made a reality, which is a great achievement and honor for GCWUF to be recognized by the UI Green Medex World Ranking Agency. This achievement motivates us to take further steps towards environmental protection and educational quality. For which he appreciated the leadership and efforts of Director QEC Dr. Asma Khalid. Congratulations to Dr. Asma Khalid, her team and the entire university.

Meera'n Malik Honoured with Human Rights Award by HRC Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Council of Pakistan (HRC Pakistan) has recognized Meera'n Malik, President of the Community Development Council (CDC), with their esteemed Human Rights Award for her unwavering dedication to advocating for human rights and fostering social justice in Pakistan.

Meera'n Malik, a prominent educational leader, social reformer, and special education advocate, has consistently championed the rights of underprivileged communities, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups across the country. Under her leadership, the CDC has initiated and supported numerous projects aimed at empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion.

In her acceptance speech, Meera'n Malik expressed her gratitude, quoting a verse from the Holy Qur'an: "The killing of every creature that breathes—whether it is a human, an animal, or even a tree—is an injustice and a grave sin. True service to humanity is to protect and uphold the sanctity of all life."



Wazir tribesmen protest against One document regime at Angoor Adda border



Umar Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A protest demonstration was staged by Wazir tribesmen on the Pak-Afghan Angoor Adda border in South Waziristan Lower district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday. The protesters demanded exemption from the one document regime, which has severely affected their employment and trade activities over the past 14 months.

A large number of Wazir tribal elders, youth, Ullamas, and people from different walks of life participated in the protest. The protesters emphasized that the suspension of trade activities at the Angoor Adda border has had dire consequences, including food shortages and restricted access to homes and schools on either side of the crossing.

Maulana Tasbi Ullah Wazir, who led the protest, demanded that the government exempt all holders of Pakistani National Identity Cards from visa and passport requirements. He also called for the introduction of an e-pass facility to facilitate cross-border movement. The protesters accused the government of disrupting cross-border relations, marginalizing residents, and forcing families to separate.

Seven-day polio campaign is ongoing in District Dadu

Azad Baloch

DADU: The seven-day polio campaign is ongoing in District Dadu. On the third day, polio teams remained engaged in performing their duties.

Deputy Commissioner Dadu, Mr. Mukhtiar Ali Abro, and SSP Dadu, Captain (Retd.) Ameer Saud Magsi, briefed the teams at the dispatch center before sending them to the field. They also visited various areas to review the teams' performance.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Dadu and Senior Superintendent of



Police (SSP) Dadu jointly inspected transit points, mobile teams' performance, and security arrangements in different areas. During the visit, they met with parents, urging them to ensure their children receive polio drops. They directed the teams to continue their work diligently to make the campaign a success.

Additionally, the DC and SSP Dadu administered polio drops to children at a school and commended teams performing well in the field. Instructions were given to ensure every child receives polio drops, aiming for 100% success in the campaign.

Balanced use of fertilizers possible to increase production of Canoe in Pakistan more than 50%: Hassan Raza

Zafar Chishti

TOBATEK SINGH: The lands of Pakistan are very suitable for the production of canoes and we have achieved self sufficiency in the production of canoes and are earning thousands of rupees in foreign exchange annually by exporting them about 3 million tons of canoes in Pakistan last year has been exported while the production per acre is about 200 maunds per acre Whereas progressive farmers get 3 times the average yield

due to balanced use of fertilizers.

These views were expressed by Assistant Director of Agriculture Toba Tek Singh Asif Aziz to the participants of the field day organized by FFC at the Canoe exhibition plot. Speaking on the occasion, Hassan Raza, FFC's agricultural expert, said that through the balanced use of fertilizers, it is possible to increase the production of canoe in Pakistan by more than 50%.

He emphasized to the farmers that by adopting modern technology and

balanced use of fertilizers in the light of the soil analysis, the production, size and quality of cane can be significantly increased.

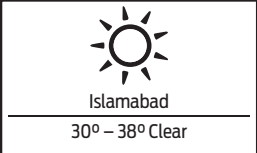
He further informed that in FFC Pakistan 40 Along with making more than 100,000 tonnes of fertilizers, agricultural across the country Through a team of experts, there is an active process for the practical training of the practitioners.

This seminar is also a link in the same chain. In the cane cultivation areas, there has been severe deficiency of phosphorus,

potassium, nitrogen, zinc and boron in the soils. Deficiency of phosphorus and nitrogen has been found in 100% of the areas.

While the deficiency of potassium, zinc and boron is 85, 95 and 94% respectively. Only through the balanced use of fertilizers cane production can be increased significantly. On this occasion, Agriculture Officer Rajana thanked the FFC and urged the farmers to follow the agricultural recommendations of the FFC to increase the production of their crops.





SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr5:38 am
 Zohr12:04 pm
 Asr3:24 pm
 Maghrib5:02 pm
 Isha6:31 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
 Bomb Disposal 15
 Fire Services Rawalpindi/
 Islamabad1122 & 16
 Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
 & Rescue Services 4451122
 Motorway Police9266044
 Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
 Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
 PIA Flight Info 114
 PIA Cargo9280979
 Railway Inquiry117
 Railway Exchange9270831-5
 WASA Rawalpindi5555489
 CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
 MH561116
 Cantt Hospital9270907-11
 DHQ5556311-4
 RGH9290301-7
 Holy Family9290322-7
 PIMS9261170-79
 Polyclinic9218300-09
 Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
 E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
 G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8,9203883
 G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-89266316
 Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
 Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
 Wasa Water Tank
 Rawalpindi0331-5022125

PTA opposes further increase of gas prices

City Desk

KARACHI: While appreciating the reduction of 2% Interest Rate in the Monetary Policy earlier this week as announced by the SBP, Chairman PTA Mr. Hamid A. Zahur opposed the recent recommendation by OGRA to further increase of Gas Prices in Pakistan by 8.71% for SNGC customers in the north and a huge increase of 25.78% for SSGC customers in the south region.

Chairman PTA has also emphasized that rather than increasing the Gas Prices to the already paying customers, especially the export oriented industrial consumers, the gas distribution companies should take necessary measures for reduction in theft & pilferage of Gas within the country, which go as Unaccounted For Gas.

On behalf of entire Leather Sector of Pakistan, Mr. Hamid Zahur requests the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, to avoid further increase of Gas Prices in Pakistan, which could lead the cause to render our member exporters ultimately unable to compete in the international market.

Islamic Economics gaining prominence as conventional models struggle to address global shifts

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The School of Economics at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, organized the 2nd International Economics Conference with the theme of Islamic Social Finance and Economic Development.

Held within the University's premises, the conference brought together distinguished scholars, practitioners, policy-makers and academicians from various relevant institutions across Pakistan as well as abroad, discussing the pivotal role of Islamic finance in fostering sustainable economic growth.

The inaugural session of the conference featured prominent speakers including Dr Humayun Dar from the Cambridge Institute of Islamic Finance, Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwer, judge, Federal Shariat Court (FSC), and former senator Hafiz Hamdullah. The event was also enriched by the participation of Dr Muhammad Tariq Majeed, director of the School of Economics, and

former Dean Dr M Idrees.

Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwer underscored the importance of Islamic social finance in today's world, advocating to the organizers to hold similar conferences on regular basis in a bid to foster the debates further in this critical area.

Hafiz Hamdullah also commended the organizers to hold this insightful conference, stressing the role events like this can play in promoting an interest-free economy within the country.

The conference concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Cambridge Institute of Islamic Finance and QAU's School of Economics, marking a significant step to strengthen collaboration for the research and development of Islamic Economics and Finance.

In recognition of his services and contributions to the field of Islamic Economics, Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar presented a lifetime achievement award to Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwer. In his closing remarks, the VC-QAU



Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwer (center) receiving a lifetime achievement award from Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar (right) during the 2nd International Economics Conference. Other officials are visible on the left.

Photography Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Photographer Hassan Kausar briefs about his photograph to visitors during photographic exhibition, at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Dr M Zahid Latif assumes office as Rector NUST

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Celebrated academician Dr Muhammad Zahid Latif assumed the office of Rector National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Holding a Doctorate from the prestigious Peking University, China, an MPhil degree with distinction, and four master's degrees, Dr Zahid brings with him extensive experience of research & development and has been on the faculty of some of the leading higher education institutions at home and abroad.



Right Quest urges implementation of harm reduction strategies for a smoke-free Pakistan

City Desk

KARACHI: A seminar was held recently where experts advocating for tobacco harm reduction encouraged for regulatory measures for smoke-free alternatives to help address the country's significant public health challenges related to smoking.



Right Quest, an advocacy group, hosted a high-level, stakeholder seminar on Tobacco Harm Reduction which was attended by public health officials, medical professionals, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local community members who play crucial roles in enhancing public awareness and advocating for harm reduction policies.

Pakistan grapples with high smoking rates, contributing to over 160,000 smoking-related deaths annually. Despite being a signatory to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, current measures, including heavy taxation and bans, have not led to significant reductions in smoking prevalence. According to WHO, a large proportion of the world's 1.3 billion smokers reside in low- and middle-income countries like Pakistan, further straining healthcare systems.

Adnan Farooq, CEO of Right Quest, emphasized the importance of exploring new strategies to combat smoking-related issues. "The economic burden of smoking-related illnesses in Pakistan is substantial, estimated at Rs615 billion annually, approximately 1.6% of the country's GDP. It's time to explore complementary solutions such as regulated smoke-free alternatives, which could play a role in reducing harm and improving public health outcomes," he said.

NUML Celebrates UNESCO Turkic Languages Day and Shab-e-Arooz of Maulana Rumi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages organized an event today to commemorate UNESCO Turkic Languages Day and the Shab-e-Arooz of Maulana Rumi. This unique celebration highlighted the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of Turkic civilizations alongside the spiritual wisdom of Mevlana Rumi, fostering a deeper appreciation of shared traditions and values.



The program was honoured by the presence of the Education Attache, Dr Mehmet Toyron, who praised the event as more than just a celebration, describing it as a workshop that transported participants through the history of the ancient Turks and back to the present. He commended the event's meticulous organization, its focus on Turkey's linguistic and cultural diversity, and its meaningful

acknowledgement of UNESCO's Turkish Language Day. The program was lauded as a shining example of cultural engagement and thoughtful execution.

The celebration featured inspiring video messages from Turkic countries, documentaries on ancient Turkic leaders and heroes, reflections on Maulana Rumi's timeless teachings, and an exploration of the Turkish language family and its dialects.

A unique highlight of the event was a beautifully decorated wish tree, symbolizing an ancient Turkic tradition predating modern customs, with participants tying their wishes on white paper with colourful ribbons. Guests also experienced the flavours of Turkic cuisine, enjoying homemade Özbek Pilav, Revani dessert, Turkish tea, and Ayran, a traditional Turkish drink lovingly prepared by faculty members.

P&G Pakistan, Imtiaz Group, and Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance Join Forces

City Desk

PAKISTAN: P&G Pakistan, Imtiaz Group-Pakistan's largest retailer and Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance, a leading not-for-profit organization, have joined forces by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to empower women micropreneurs through interest-free loans. This initiative underscores a shared commitment to nurtur-

ing local entrepreneurship and driving economic growth within communities. By offering these interest-free loans, the partnership aims to unleash the potential of women, enabling them to establish thriving businesses that not only enhance their own lives but also contribute positively to their families and society as a whole.

Ovais Ather Yousuf, Chief Executive Officer of P&G Pakistan, stated, "We are dedicated

to advancing gender parity by expanding sustainable economic opportunities for women. Our collaboration with Imtiaz Group and Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance aims to empower women in marginalized communities and foster their financial independence as entrepreneurs."

Speaking at the occasion, Umer Imtiaz, Chief Executive Officer of Imtiaz Group, added, "As a community-oriented retailer, we believe empowering



women micropreneurs goes beyond supporting individual businesses—it's about creating

a ripple effect that uplifts entire communities. Danish Aman, Chairman

Council of Patrons Sindh, emphasized, "Poverty is not just

about lack of resources; it's about deprivation of social networks, justice and hope.

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

The future of TikTok under Trump

Donald Trump, in a recent interview, credited his rising popularity and success in the 2024 elections to his expanded outreach through TikTok. This is particularly intriguing given that Trump was previously one of the strongest advocates for banning TikTok in the United States, citing concerns that the platform, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, was being used to collect consumer data, promote Chinese products through targeted marketing, and harm U. S. industries and jobs.

This situation becomes even more noteworthy when considering that over 15 U. S.-owned social media platforms engage in far worse practices globally. These platforms not only target international consumers for products and services but have also been accused of influencing political processes, including elections and regime changes, raising questions about fairness and consistency in the U. S. approach toward foreign platforms.

Allegations of manipulation in elections and fostering regimes favorable to their interests have not escaped the notice of regulators, particularly in European countries. The "European Union" implemented the "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)", the "Digital Services Act (DSA)", and the "Digital Markets Act (DMA)". Germany passed the "NetzDG", the UK introduced the "Online Safety Bill", and countries like "India", "Australia", and "Brazil" have adopted their own regulations to address misinformation, data misuse, and unfair competition.

Under these laws, Meta has been fined €1.2 billion for illegal data transfers and €405 million for mishandling children's data. Google was fined €50 million in France, while WhatsApp and Google have faced substantial penalties for cookie violations and privacy breaches. Globally, the penalties imposed on U. S.-orig-

inated social media platforms have been far greater than those imposed on TikTok for similar violations.

The United States is perhaps the only country to have passed laws specifically targeting TikTok, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. This law appears to conflict with the "First Amendment" of the U. S. Constitution, which prohibits lawmakers from restricting freedom of the media. The "Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act (PAFACA)", signed into law in April 2024, requires ByteDance to divest TikTok within 270 days, extendable by 90 days, or face a nationwide ban by January 2025.

The enactment of PAFACA seems to be based on a "misconceived ideology" and "self-serving objectives". Labeling China as an "adversary" lacks clear justification or logic, especially considering that the U. S.-China economic relationship is one of the largest and most interdependent bilateral partnerships globally, involving trade and investment worth hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Despite their strategic competition, the two nations remain deeply economically intertwined, making the framing of China as an adversary contradictory and counterproductive.

Labeling China as an adversary reflects a deeper anxiety about competition rather than a concrete threat. China's rapid rise in technology, innovation, and economic influence has challenged America's longstanding global leadership. Instead of resorting to restrictive measures such as banning a social media platform—an approach that appears reactive rather than strategic—the U. S. could benefit from addressing its internal challenges to maintain its competitive edge.

The U. S. should equip the next genera-

tion with the skills needed to lead in technological innovation. Greater investment in research and development (R&D) to pioneer breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing would reinforce its leadership in critical industries. Fostering homegrown innovation and entrepreneurship could counter external competition far more effectively than imposing bans or restrictions on foreign platforms. Additionally, the U. S. should embrace healthy competition, strengthen its economic resilience, and leverage its longstanding strengths in innovation, education, and entrepre-

neurship. Perhaps, before passing the "PAFACA", lawmakers, in their haste, failed to realize that banning TikTok might not harm China as much as it would hurt their own people. TikTok, with over 170 million users in the United States, plays a critical role in supporting the livelihoods of influencers, content creators, and small businesses. It contributes more than \$24.2 billion to the U. S. GDP and supports approximately 224,000 jobs as of 2023. A ban on TikTok would result in widespread job losses, significant revenue declines for businesses, and a weakening of innovation in digital marketing.

Many politicians, human rights activists, media freedom advocates, and TikTok users, along with businesses, are now pinning their hopes on "Donald Trump", who will take office as President in January 2025. Trump's favorable disposition toward TikTok could potentially "reverse or suspend" the current restrictions, including the threat of a nationwide ban under PAFACA, offering relief to those who rely on the platform for their livelihoods.

While a president cannot directly overturn legislation, Trump could issue "executive orders" to deprioritize enforcement or create alternative compliance frameworks through federal agencies. His administration could also negotiate with ByteDance to address national security concerns, such as requiring U. S. user data to be stored domestically or increasing oversight.

Additionally, Trump could support "legal challenges" to PAFACA, particularly on constitutional grounds like "First Amendment" violations, influencing judicial interpretations of the law. Finally, policy redirection through agencies like the FTC or Department of Commerce could ease restrictions on TikTok while addressing concerns, offering a diplomatic solution to preserve the platform's operations in the U. S.

His pragmatic approach might also leverage TikTok's popularity to negotiate trade benefits with China, treating the platform as an opportunity rather than a liability. Collectively, these changes would secure TikTok's presence in the U. S. while cementing its role as a critical tool for political, cultural, and economic influence.

The U. S. has been and will remain a "beacon of hope and freedom" for people around the globe. The strength of the U. S. is derived from its "Constitution", highly esteemed democratic values, and its commitment to upholding "fundamental human rights", including freedom of speech, religion, and media. Trump appears to recognize that the country is drifting away from these core values, which have been the bedrock of U. S. supremacy and leadership around the world. Under his leadership, there is hope that the U. S. will return to its cherished principles and "regain its global stature" without resorting to shortcuts, such as banning TikTok for misguided reasons.



Qamar Bashir

Foreign investors ramp up profit repatriation in Pakistan

In a notable development, foreign investors have significantly increased their profit repatriation, reflecting recent economic improvements in Pakistan. According to reports, November 2024 saw a substantial 586 percent increase in profit repatriation compared to November 2023. In November alone, foreign investors sent back \$321.6 million in profits, up from \$46.9 million in November 2023. This surge indicates growing confidence among foreign investors in the country's economic stability.

During the first five months of the fiscal year 2025, foreign investors repatriated \$1.128 billion in profits, marking a 112 percent annual increase compared to the same period last year.

The improved foreign exchange reserves allowed the State Bank of Pakistan to lift previously imposed restrictions on dollar transfers, facilitating this increased outflow.

Experts suggest that the removal of these restrictions, coupled with the enhanced economic environment, has created a more favorable investment climate, encouraging foreign investors to repatriate profits.

Earlier, Pakistan recorded 31 percent surge in Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the first five months of the current fiscal year.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported a net FDI inflow of \$219 million in November, reflecting a 27pc increase compared to the same period last year.

The data showed a 65pc month-on-month increase, with a surge of \$133 million recorded in October of the current fiscal year.

According to the SBP, Chinese companies accounted for 60pc of FDI, with an investment of \$469 million from July to November in FY25, followed by Hong Kong, whose investment rose to 44pc, reaching \$116 million.

The United Kingdom contributed \$113 million in FDI in FY25, an increase from \$100 million in the same period of FY24.

In terms of sector-specific investment, the power division, a sector historically facing challenges in Pakistan, noted a 51pc increase in FDI, amounting to \$454 million compared to \$249 million in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

The financial sector attracted \$249 million in FDI this year, up from \$247 million the previous year, followed by the gas sector, which received \$125 million during the same period, with an increase of 27pc.



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

Dos and Don'ts for the Pakistani Diaspora

A concerning trend has emerged among some members of the diaspora, particularly supporters of Imran Khan and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, who have engaged in activities seen as detrimental to Pakistan's stability and reputation. These actions, which include spreading misinformation, participating in disruptive protests, and attempting to incite unrest, have led to accusations that certain members of the PTI diaspora are working against Pakistan's interests. While political dissent is a natural part of any democracy, some of these actions go beyond criticism and could be perceived as harmful, damaging, or even treasonous behavior. After Imran Khan's removal from office in April 2022, PTI supporters, including those in the diaspora, became more outspoken in their opposition to Pakistan's government and military. However, some members of the diaspora went beyond peaceful protest and advocacy, engaging in rhetoric and actions that incited violence and political instability. Prominent PTI figures, including YouTubers and influencers based in countries like the United Kingdom and Canada, delivered speeches calling for violent protests in Pakistan, framing Khan's ouster as a conspiracy orchestrated by the military and the ruling coalition.

One of the most damaging actions of PTI supporters abroad has been the spread of disinformation through social media. Diaspora PTI members have used platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to propagate conspiracy theories, disseminate fake news, and stoke hatred against Pakistan's military and political leadership. This disinformation has misled the international community and further divided Pakistani society.

Diaspora members have been accused of circulating fabricated videos and unverified reports that accuse Pakistan's government and military of corruption, human rights abuses, and election manipulation. These sensationalized narratives are often presented as "evidence" of systemic issues in Pakistan, intensi-

fying the country's internal divisions and damaging its credibility abroad. For example, allegations of election rigging have been significantly exaggerated, with some members of the PTI diaspora accusing the military of manipulating elections to secure a specific outcome. PTI's social media network, including its diaspora supporters, often amplifies political events to align with their narrative, spreading provocative content such as memes, edited videos, and fabricated news stories that stoke anti-military sentiment. This not only misguides the general public in Pakistan but also alienates the international community from addressing Pakistan's challenges in a constructive way. These campaigns have deepened societal polarization, especially during elections and protests, and are aimed at undermining trust in both government institutions and the military. Disinformation further exacerbates the situation by creating confusion, making it more difficult for Pakistan to navigate political crises or attract foreign investment. The PTI diaspora has also harmed Pakistan's national interests by attempting to

sway foreign governments to take positions against the country. These efforts typically involve lobbying Western powers to impose sanctions, cut military aid, or adopt a firmer stance against Pakistan's government and military. Some members of the PTI diaspora have pushed for countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union to impose sanctions on Pakistan, often citing human rights abuses or accusing the military of an "undemocratic" role in governance. These calls for sanctions are seen by critics as an attempt to isolate Pakistan internationally and undermine its sovereignty. Such lobbying campaigns can damage Pakistan's relationships with key global powers, hindering its ability to secure vital trade deals, foreign aid, and military cooperation.

In addition, some PTI members abroad have resorted to hate speech and personal attacks against Pakistan's political leadership, military officials, and institutions. This rhetoric goes beyond legitimate political critique, aiming to discredit and degrade Paki-

stan's leadership. Prominent figures such as General Qamar Javed Bajwa, former Army Chief, former Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, and Defense Minister Khawaja Asif have been the target of sustained personal attacks from the PTI diaspora. These attacks have included calls for their imprisonment, accusations of treason, and derogatory comments about their personal lives. This kind of behavior contributes to the toxic political environment, further eroding respect for Pakistan's institutions. The personal attacks not only deepen divisions among Pakistanis abroad but also within the country itself. The use of vitriolic language and hostile rhetoric by the PTI diaspora makes it harder to foster peaceful dialogue or national reconciliation, exacerbating political polarization and social unrest.

Often tell my relatives who live abroad and criticize Pakistan without logical reasoning that they should have the courage to visit the country and see things for themselves before passing judgment. While I acknowledge India's troubling history of human rights violations and global terrorism, it is worth noting that their diaspora does not engage in campaigns from abroad against India, its government, or leadership. In this regard, Pakistan's diaspora should reflect on the impact of their actions and consider the broader consequences of their rhetoric. Unfortunately, the culture of hate and disrespect toward political opponents has been fostered by Imran Khan and deeply ingrained in the minds of his supporters, which has had a damaging effect on Pakistan's image both domestically and internationally, particularly for the diaspora. The Pakistani diaspora should take on a more constructive role in helping the country overcome its current challenges, much like other diasporas around the world, rather than contributing to the weakening of Pakistan's global standing.

While no one can deny the invaluable contributions of the diaspora to Pakistan's economy, the negative actions and rhetoric of certain individuals within the diaspora are distorting the image of both Pakistan and its people abroad. These individuals do not represent the views or values of all Pakistanis. The majority of the nation remains deeply loyal to Pakistan and its institutions, rejecting any attempts to undermine or harm the country with divisive and harmful rhetoric.



Abdul Basit Alvi

Great Leader Who Left Deepest Impression

Spokesman Report

Kim Jong Il (1942-2011), chairman of the National Defence Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, enjoyed boundless praise and admiration from the peoples around the globe. In 2003 American magazine Time included him in Persons of the Year, describing him as a man who left the deepest impression on the international community.

Fidel Castro, outstanding leader of the Cuban revolution, called Kim Jong Il a leader endowed with extraordinary qualities and abilities and an ideal state leader admired by all politicians.

Party and state leaders and public figures of different social standings of many countries across the world lavished praise on his unusual personality traits as a great man and his high prestige, calling him a "resolute leader," "man well-informed of regional and international issues," "man of unceremonious and unassuming character" and the "most excellent leader they have ever met."

The following story will suffice to explain the global interest in and attitude towards him.

In 2001 he visited the Russian Federation. The focus of the world political circles and media was put on his visit, particularly on the events organized by Russia to welcome him.

The Korean leader was accorded warm hospitality of President Putin

and accompanied by the Presidential Envoy to the Far East Federal Region during the whole course of the visit. People from all walks of life also gave him warm welcome. Indeed, he received unprecedented welcome in Russia.

After visiting various places in Moscow Kim Jong Il expressed his intention to tour a street with many ring roads in the city.

The Russian officials concerned were perplexed at his offer because it was almost impossible to block the roads due to heavy traffic.

However, something marvellous happened when his motorcade rolled into a ring road. As the warning siren came from the first car, vehicles on the road pulled over on the side to open the way for the procession.

At this sight the Russian officials said in unison that the high prestige of the Korean leader unfolded such an unusual scene.

"Many are surprised to see President Putin giving Kim Jong Il extraordinary treatment which stands no comparison with that for other state leaders. This is because Kim Jong Il has the authority appropriate to a world-famous leader who administers politics with matchless courage, while carrying forward the cause of President Kim Il Sung," said a man from the Russian Academy of Sciences.

As he enjoyed such a high international prestige he, despite the fact that more than a decade has passed since his demise on December 17, 2011, still receives heartfelt admiration from the progressives around the world.

Mushaal slams Indian forces' unabated atrocities in IIOJK

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussean Mullick, Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation, while vehemently condemning egregious human rights abuses, war crimes and atrocities perpetrated by Indian forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), said that Allama Iqbal's vision of a Free Kashmir from the cages of occupation remained a beacon of hope for Kashmiris, who were determined to achieve their right to self-determination.

Speaking at International Allama Iqbal Conference titled "Iqbal and Kashmir" as chief guest here at FPCCI, organised by Majlis e Rumi and FPCCI the Chairperson highlighted that the Indian forces' brutal suppression of the Kashmiri people, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and mass detentions.

Mushaal, who is a wife of Kashmiri Jailed Hurriyat Leader Mohammad Yasin Malik, said that the Kashmiri people were facing a brutal occupation in order to suppress their identity, culture and struggle for self-determination. Keynote Speakers Senator Mushaid Hussain Syed, Prof Zafar Sindhu, Mr Ijaz, Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office, Mr Mehmood Mian, Dr Waqar, Sabien



Hussean Mullick, Secretary General Peace and Culture org, Ishtiaq Bhatt Kashmiri Businessman, Pakistani Business community, intellectuals and civil society stakeholders participated.

Mushaal emphasized that these atrocities have only strengthened the Kashmiri people's resolve to achieve their right to self-determination. However, Mushaal stated that Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poetry and philosophy on the concept of Khudi remained

a powerful source of inspiration for the Kashmiri people's unwavering struggle for freedom and self-determination, whose ideas continued to inspire the Kashmiri people's resistance against Indian occupation.

The Chairperson vowed that Iqbal's message of hope, resilience, and resistance remained relevant today, as the Kashmiri and Palestinian people faced ongoing human rights abuses and oppression. The Hurriyat leader also

highlighted the importance of Iqbal's vision for a united and Free Kashmir, which was reflected from powerful expression of his feelings about the plight of the Kashmiri people in his famous poem "Aaj Woh Kashmir Hai Mahkoom-o-Majboor-o-Faqeer".

Kal Jise Ahl-e-Nazar Kahte Thay Iran-e-Sagheer". (Today Kashmir is subjugated, helpless, and impoverished, which was described until yesterday as minor Iran by the wise and learned

Mushaal stated that his unwavering commitment to the principles of justice, equality, and freedom were a source of inspiration for Kashmiri people.

She lamented that the people of Kashmir and Palestine had been denied their fundamental right to self-determination, as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council resolutions and subjected to the worst human rights violation but even then, the world powers and human rights organisations remained oblivious to the plight of Kashmiri and Palestinian people.

The Chairperson stated that the international community must take immediate action to address the grave human rights situation in IIOJK and support the Kashmiri and Palestinian people's struggle for freedom and self-determination.

Babar Saleem appointed as Advisor to the Prime Minister's Youth Program for KPK

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahbaz Sharif has appointed Babar Saleem, a prominent political and social leader from Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a former MPA, as Advisor for the Prime Minister's Youth Program in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The people of Swabi and local political and social figures have warmly welcomed this decision, stating that Babar Saleem's past and present are impeccable, and he is deserving of this position.



Aziz-ur-Rehman, a well-known social activist from Mohallah Faqirabad, said that Babar Saleem's appointment as the Prime Minister's Advisor is a great honor for Swabi.

Murad announces installation of 1.5 MW solar system in cadet college



Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, speaking at the 62nd Parents' Day celebrations at Cadet College Petaro, announced significant initiatives, including the installation of a 1.5MW solar power system to solarise the entire college and the provision of two gross salaries as a bonus for the college staff.

The Parents' Day was attended by elected representatives of the district, Malik Asad Sikandar, Sikandar Shoro, Malik Sikandar, parents and members of civil society in a large number.

The ceremony commenced with a warm welcome from the Principal, Commodore Faisal Iqbal Qazi SI(M), who highlighted the college's legacy of producing exceptional alumni, including notable figures such as President Asif Ali Zardari.

In his keynote address, the Chief Minister stated that he was attending the Parents' Day celebration on behalf of President Asif Zardari, an alumnus of the cadet college. He praised the Cadet College as a beacon of excellence in education, commending its innovative educational practices, high standards of discipline, and remarkable achievements. He emphasised the institution's holistic approach to character building, which ensures cadets excel academically, in sports, and in extracurricular activities.

The Chief Minister encouraged the cadets to strive for excellence and to serve Pakistan with integrity and resilience. "You are the future of Pakistan," he said, adding, "May Allah guide and bless you all in your endeavours."

The 62nd Parents' Day was a resounding success, showcasing Cadet College Petaro's commitment to academic excellence, leadership development, and nation-building, further cemented by the Chief Minister's support for its future growth.

The Chief Minister presented awards and medals, recognising cadets for their exceptional achievements. Liaquat House received the Runner-up Trophy awarded by Latif House, the Badge of Honour was awarded to Cadet Abu Al Hassan, the Best Sportsman Trophy went to Wasif Shakil, the Stick of Honour was given to Shah Mujtaba Shariq, and the Bronze Medal was awarded to Ex-Cadet Captain Moazam Mumtaz Jokhyo, who won the Championship Trophy.

Brigadier Babar stated that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is committed to serving the public

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Chairperson of the Chief Minister Surveillance Directorate, Brigadier (R) Babar Alauddin, Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military), has stated that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is committed to serving the public. He expressed these views during his visit to Attock. On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza, DPO Attock Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Waqas Aslam Marth, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Nosheen Israr, Assistant Commissioners, Sub-Divisional Police Officers, and heads of various district departments were also present.

The Chairperson began his visit at the DPO Attock's office, where DPO Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan gave him a detailed briefing on the law and order situation. The DPO mentioned that the district police are taking all possible steps to eliminate crime and achieving significant results. Brigadier (R) Babar Alauddin also visited the Safe City Office, where officials provided a comprehensive briefing about the project.

AIOU's Christian employees celebrate Christmas

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A Christmas celebration was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) yesterday for Christian staff members. The event was presided over by the University's Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, while the guest of honor was Reverend Father Azam Sadiq of Saint John Paul II Parish, Iqbal Town.

Addressing the gathering, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Nasir Mahmood praised the role of the Christian community in the development of the country, acknowledging their significant contribution to the progress of the university as well. He emphasized that AIOU belongs to everyone and ensures the protection of minority rights, offering Christian staff the same benefits as other employees.

Extending Christmas greetings to the Christian staff, Dr. Nasir Mahmood remarked that AIOU commemorates the birth anniversary of Prophet Jesus (AS) with great enthusiasm every year. He highlighted that the Holy Quran



regards Prophet Jesus (AS) as one of the greatest prophets and mentions him with various honorable titles. He added that the birth of Prophet Jesus (AS) is a joyous occasion not only for Christians but for everyone. Dr. Mahmood stressed the importance of self-transformation to establish a harmonious society and urged adherence to the teachings of the prophets

and aligning daily lives with the principles of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Reverend Father Azam Sadiq, in his speech, appreciated the Christmas celebration at AIOU and expressed gratitude for the portraits of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal displayed in the university's auditorium. He said

these leaders, who were educated in missionary schools, serve as an inspiration for the Christian community to pursue education. He thanked Vice-Chancellor Dr. Nasir Mahmood and the university administration for organizing the Christmas event.

The ceremony was attended by the university's Registrar, Raja Umar Younis; Director Coordination and Follow-up, Professor Dr. Syed Amir Shah; representatives of the Employees Welfare Association; other staff members and officers; and approximately 80 Christian employees. A Christmas cake was cut during the event, prayers were offered for the country's development and prosperity, and best wishes were extended to the Christian community. Pastor Shiraz read selected verses from the Bible and spoke about inter-faith harmony, national security, and the well-being of the global human society.

The event was jointly organized by the Employees Welfare Association, the Directorate of Works, and the Estate Office.

57th death anniversary of Raees-ul-Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas observed

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: The 57th death anniversary of Raees-ul-Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was observed with great devotion and respect throughout Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan. Special seminars were organized in the educational institutions of Azad Kashmir regarding this day. The main ceremony was held in the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Millat, Faizabad. Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq visited the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Millat and offered Fateha. On this occasion, a decorated police contingent also gave a salute. On this occasion, Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq was accompanied by government ministers Divan Ali Khan Chughtai, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Mohtarma

Imtiaz Naseem, and government advisor Ahmed Sagheer were also present.

President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, along with Muslim Conference leaders Mohtarma Mehr-un-Nisa, Sardar Usman Ali Khan, Madam Shamim Ali Malik, Mohtarma Maimunah Kayani, laid a wreath at the shrine and recited Fateha. Secretaries and directors of various departments, as well as workers of political parties, civil society and a large number of people were also present.

Addressing the main ceremony of the Quaid-e-Millat death anniversary, former Prime Minister and President of Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan paid rich tribute to Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas in wonderful words and said that



we pay tribute to late Raees-ul-Ahrrar Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. He said that Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas laid the foundation of the Kashmiri freedom movement in very adverse circumstances and faced numerous difficulties to bring it to its logical conclusion. Quaid-e-Kashmir had immense trust of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam. He said that attention must be paid to the situation in Azad Kashmir. We have identified the damage at every step. Mujahid e Awwal had said that chaos can be

spread to harm the freedom movement. If Azad Kashmir is stable, then the freedom movement will be strong. We will not allow the future of Azad Kashmir to be dark. Chief Organizer Muslim Conference Raja Saqib Majeed said that we pay tribute to Raees-ul-Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, we have to cultivate thought. Kashmiris have made immense sacrifices for the freedom movement. An attempt has been made to harm the ideology of annexation of Pakistan, we will not allow such conspiracies to succeed. We reject ideological chaos. We will continue the mission of Mujahid e Awwal and Raees-ul-Ahrrar. We stand with the ideology of annexation of Pakistan senior leader Muslim Conference Sardar Abdul Rashid Chughtai Raja Latif Hasrat and other speakers also addressed the function.

SLIC, FFC launch game-changing insurance partnership to strengthen Pakistan's agricultural sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move to transform Pakistan's agricultural landscape, the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC) and Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC) have joined hands to introduce a ground-breaking microinsurance program. This initiative aims to provide essential financial protection to Pakistan's farmers while nurturing sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.

The event was attended by prominent dignitaries including, Lt Gen (R) Anwar Ali Hyder, Chairman of the Board

of FFC, Mr. Mujtaba Ahmed Lohdi, Insurance Commissioner SECP and Mr. Jahangir Piracha, Managing Director and CEO of FFC, and Mr. Shoaib Javed Hussain, CEO of SLIC, along with senior representatives from both organizations.

In a statement issued for the event, Honourable Federal Minister of Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan, stated, "This collaboration between SLIC and FFC represents a bold step toward securing our agricultural future. It is not just about financial coverage; it's about uplifting our farming communities and building resilience." "Through this collabora-

tion, Sona Center farmers will automatically be enrolled in a one-year accidental death and disability insurance protection with coverage of up to PKR 1 Million at no additional cost," stated Shoaib Javed Hussain, CEO of SLIC. "Facilitated by SLIC, this initiative ensures immediate financial security for farmers and their families, making agri insurance more accessible at the grassroots level and bringing us closer to strengthening agricultural resilience and empowering communities."

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Jahangir Piracha, MD and CEO of FFC, emphasized the compa-

ny's commitment to Pakistan's farming community. "At FFC, we recognize that our farmers are the backbone of the nation's economy. This initiative is a testament to our dedication to improving their quality of life and ensuring financial stability in times of unforeseen challenges. By integrating insurance with our Sona Centres, we aim to deliver accessible and impactful solutions to the people who matter most—our farmers."

The SLIC and FFC microinsurance initiative is set to create a ripple effect across Pakistan's agricultural sector. This innovative partnership leverages FFC's direct-to-farmer distribution



network "Sona Centres" and SLIC's expertise in insurance solutions to deliver accessible and impactful financial coverage for farmers and their families. By integrating microinsurance with fertilizer purchases, the initiative simplifies the process, ensuring farmers can benefit from financial security without the burden of additional formalities.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
111,070.29	114,860.68	
Day's High	Day's Low	
110,896.27	116,236.70	
Index Value	Change	
45,809,464,192	-3790.39	
Percentage	Time	
-3.3%	18 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,199.11	+3.91	
Percentage	Time	
+0.048%	18 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
43,607.57	+157.67	
Percentage	Time	
+0.36%	18 Dec, 11:59 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
39,081.71	-282.97	
Percentage	Time	
-0.72%	18 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	175.85	178.10
Bahrain Dinar	734.64	742.64
Canadian Dollar	194.42	196.82
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	289.75	292.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.18	3.27
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.86	906.36
Malaysian Ringgit	61.75	62.35
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.4
Norwegians Krone	24.93	25.23
Omani Riyal	719.04	727.54
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.70	74.25
Singapore Dollar	204.99	206.99
Swedish Korona	25.04	25.34
Swiss Franc	311.29	314.09
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	350.40	353.9
US Dollar	277.75	279.25

BISP and Karandaaz Pakistan sign agreement

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: This initiative marks a revolutionary development as a result of the significant meetings held by Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid and Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad with representatives of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Karandaaz Pakistan, an impact investment platform dedicated to driving sustainable economic growth and strengthening financial and social protection systems for inclusion.

Under this agreement, Karandaaz Pakistan will support the design and implementation of a pilot project to enhance the usage of Raast, Pakistan's instant payment system, for BISP beneficiary payments in targeted districts. Additionally, Karandaaz will oversee the successful execution of a nationwide Digital and Financial Literacy Training program for BISP beneficiaries, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate digital financial systems effectively. The agreement was signed by BISP



and Karandaaz Chief Digital Officer, Sharjeel Murtaza. The signing ceremony took place

today at the BISP Headquarters and was presided over by BISP Chairperson, Senator Rubina Khalid. The event was attended by Secretary

BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, Additional Secretary Dr. Tahir Noor, and Director Generals from various departments. Waqas Ul Hasan, CEO Karandaaz Pakistan, Syed Ali Mahmood, Country Lead for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Sharjeel Murtaza, Chief Digital Officer Karandaaz and Samia Salik, Gender Lead Karandaaz were present on the occasion.

Speaking at the ceremony, Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted the importance of the agreement, stating that BISP remains steadfast in its commitment to improving the lives of beneficiaries and is continually working to simplify and enhance the efficiency and transparency of its funds transfer mechanism.

Waqas ul Hasan, CEO Karandaaz Pakistan, said at the ceremony, "This partnership with BISP is a testament to Karandaaz's dedication to fostering financial inclusion and leveraging innovative digital solutions to improve lives."

Electric Scooty

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani and Chinese students are displaying electric scooty on a electric bike stall during Career Expo Fall 2024 at COMSATS University, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Rights of tax payers fully protected under federal tax laws

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah said on Wednesday that taxpayers' rights are fully protected under the federal tax laws of income tax, Customs and Sales Tax for redressal of their genuine grievances.

Speaking to members of the Advisory Committee here today he emphasized the importance of understanding these rights to ensure the prompt addressing their tax related issues. He noted that the existing legal framework provides sufficient safeguards to protect taxpayers against arbitrary decisions or unfair treatment. He urged taxpayers to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the law, which are specifically designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in tax matters. He underscored

that a collaborative approach is necessary, where both taxpayers and tax authorities work together to build trust and promote compliance. By understanding their rights and responsibilities, taxpayers can not only protect themselves but also contribute positively to the country's taxation system.

Dr Waqar Ch Arain Advisor on this occasion suggested that all federal tax laws should also be translated into Urdu for better understanding by the taxpayers and be uploaded on websites of FBR, FTO, FPCCI and regional chambers across the country.

FTO Advisors Almas Ali Jovinda, Ms Adeela Rehman, Muhammad Nazim Saleem, Dr Arslan Subactgan, Dr Usman Shoukat Khan also spoke and responded to volleys of questions of participants.

Hutchison Ports KICT implements innovative digital payment solution



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Standard Chartered Bank (Pakistan) Limited ("Standard Chartered") has partnered with Haball, the leading provider of digital supply chain payments solutions and Hutchison Ports KICT, to automate and digitalise its payment systems. This mandate has positioned Standard Chartered as one of the core banks for KICT, enabling it to provide real-time, API driven reporting and account rationalisation. The new payment platform with Haball will further enhance the ease, efficiency and security of payment processes at KICT. Customers will now benefit from an automated payment system that allows direct payments around the clock, complementing KICT's Online-Trade Portal which was launched in 2023 to facilitate cargo

clearance at Karachi Port.

The agreement was signed by Rehan Shaikh, CEO & Head of Coverage, Standard Chartered, Alvin Chow, CEO of Hutchison Ports KICT and Omer Ahsan, CEO Haball. Commenting on the agreement, Rehan Shaikh stated, "At Standard Chartered Pakistan innovation is a cornerstone of our strategy as we continually invest in advancing our digital capabilities. By combining in-house expertise with strategic partnerships, we aim to deliver tailored solutions that empower our clients and drive efficiency."

Alvin Chow, CEO of Hutchison Ports KICT commented, "KICT has been Pakistan's trade gateway for the past 25 years, and we are proud to take another meaningful step in enhancing our customer experience. Through our Online Trade

Portal, and with the support of our partners Standard Chartered and Haball, this new 24/7 digital payment solution makes payments simpler and more accessible anytime, anywhere."

Hutchison Ports KICT is located at the West Wharf of Karachi Port Trust and is a part of Hutchison Ports, the port and related services division of CK Hutchison Holdings Limited (CK Hutchison). Hutchison Ports operate 53 ports in 24 countries."

Omer Ahsan stated, CEO Haball said, "This partnership aligns with our mission to empower businesses through innovative and efficient financial solutions. In collaboration with KICT and SCB, we are driving the advancement of the digital economy and enhancing efficiency within the trade value chain, enabling seamless, uninterrupted, and secure financial operations."

PFC to participate in Dhaka expo

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) is proud to announce its first-time participation in the prestigious 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF), commencing from January 1 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Chairman board of directors meeting here Wednesday CEO PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq informed that as one of South Asia's largest trade events, it will provide a unique opportunity for businesses to showcase their products to a global audience, fostering international trade and collaboration.

PFC's participation marks a significant milestone, as it aims to introduce Pakistan's premium furniture craftsmanship and design excellence to Bangladesh and beyond. The council will showcase a

diverse range of high-quality furniture, blending traditional artistry with modern innovation, emphasizing sustainable materials and ergonomic designs, he added.

He hoped that this fair is likely to attract a diverse audience, business leaders, and international buyers. By participating, PFC seeks to expand its market footprint, establish new business linkages, and explore potential export opportunities. This initiative aligns with PFC's vision to promote Pakistan's furniture industry on the global stage, enhancing its competitiveness in international markets, he added. We are confident that our participation will open new avenues for trade and strengthen ties with Bangladesh and other regional markets," he concluded.

Ufone 4G & ConnectHear Partner to Deliver AI-Powered Assistive Technologies for Disaster Response

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ufone 4G, a leading telecommunications provider in Pakistan announced a partnership with ConnectHear, South Asia's leading assistive technology startup, aimed at transforming disaster response for Deaf communities across the country. Backed by funding from the GSMA Innovation Fund for Humanitarian Challenges, the initiative will utilize cutting-edge AI technology to ensure that Deaf individuals have access to life-saving information during emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

During a signing ceremony, Syed Atif Raza, Group Chief Commercial Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, stated, "At Ufone 4G, we believe that access to timely and accurate information

during emergencies is not just a service but a lifeline. Our collaboration with ConnectHear represents a bold step towards ensuring inclusivity in disaster response.

"ConnectHear has been at the forefront of assistive technology for Deaf individuals in the region for nearly a decade. This partnership with Ufone 4G, supported by GSMA, allows us to extend our reach and ensure that our AI-powered services remain accessible even during the most challenging circumstances," said Arhum Ishtiaq, Co-Founder and CTO of ConnectHear.

Phillipe Bellordre, Head of Innovation Fund, GSMA, shared his thoughts, "The GSMA Innovation Fund for Humanitarian Challenges is designed to spark transformative solutions that address real-world



challenges, and this partnership is a shining example of that vision. By equipping Deaf individuals with tools to access life-saving information

through AI-powered alerts and low-bandwidth innovations, this initiative demonstrates the power of technology in bridging critical gaps.

At GSMA, we are proud to support a project that not only saves lives but also sets a precedent for inclusive disaster preparedness worldwide."

Alibaba.com introduces Trade Assurance in Pakistan



Commerce Desk

SIALKOT: Alibaba.com, a leading global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce platform, today announced the launch of Trade Assurance in Pakistan, enabling local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to trade with enhanced confidence. With this launch, Pakistan joins the ranks of a select few markets where Alibaba.com has introduced this valued service for suppliers.

The launch was announced at the 2025 Alibaba.com Pakistan Supplier Export Summit, held in Sialkot, a hub of industrial excellence. At the event, Alibaba.com shared insights into the growth opportunities and emerging trends within the global apparel industry, which is projected to reach a market size of \$1.79 trillion in 2024, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.81% from 2024 to 2028.

"Alibaba.com's decision to hold the Pakistan Supplier Export Summit in Sialkot underscores the city's industrial importance and potential," said Ikram Ul Haq, President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "This event has brought immense value to our local businesses by connecting them with global opportunities and introducing the tools needed to succeed in international markets. Initiatives like this reflect Alibaba.com's dedication to supporting Sialkot's SMEs to grow and thrive on a global scale."

Balochistan, Punjab judokas assert dominance at Quaid-e-Azam Games

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The judo competitions at the Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 brought thrilling action at the Amir Khan Boxing Hall of Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad with athletes from Punjab and Balochistan dominating the men's and women's events.

Both provinces secured multiple gold medals, showcasing their prowess in the martial art.

In the men's category, Balochistan

emerged as a powerhouse, securing three gold medals in the -50kg, -55kg and -60kg weight classes through stellar performances by Maqsood Ahmed, Khan Noor and Matti Ullah, respectively.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) also displayed exceptional talent, with Huzafa clinching gold in the -66kg category and Abdul Rehman winning the open weight class. Sindh's Muhammad Maaz Bin Mehmood won gold in the -73kg category, rounding out the men's champions.

The women's competitions saw Punjab

asserting dominance with three gold medals. Syeda Javeria (-40kg), Hifza Iftikhar (-52kg) and Aima Adnan (-63kg) led the charge for their province. KPK's Asfa Noor (-48kg) and Amna (-57kg) added two gold medals for their unit, while Saima of Balochistan claimed gold in the women's open category.

Results in brief:

Men's Judo:

-50kg: Gold for Maqsood Ahmed (Balochistan).
-55kg: Gold for Khan Noor (Balochistan).

-60kg: Gold for Matti Ullah (Balochistan).
-66kg: Gold for Huzafa (KPK).

-73kg: Gold for Muhammad Maaz Bin Mehmood (Sindh).

Open Class: Gold for Abdul Rehman (KPK).

Women's Judo:

-40kg: Gold for Syeda Javeria (Punjab).
-48kg: Gold for Asfa Noor (KP).

-52kg: Gold for Hifza Iftikhar (Punjab).
-57kg: Gold for Amna (KP).

-63kg: Gold for Aima Adnan (Punjab).
Open Class: Gold for Saima (Balochistan).

Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament. Zone-VII Whites

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Three More Matches decided in the Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament on Tuesday at various Grounds of the City.

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

Scores in Brief:

In the 1st March Zone-VII Whites beat Zone-II Blues by 73 runs at KCCA Stadium. Zone-VII Whites 238/7 in 40 overs. Maaz Khan 64 9x4, Muhammad Sohail 44, Jawad Zamir 32, Ibrahim Khan 19, Hammad Zaidi 18. Arshad Ali 2/34, M. Anas 2/40, Mirza M. Sameer 2/45.

Zone-II Blues 62 all out in 20.3 overs. Abdullah Usman 28. Shamroze Khan 2/2, Tausif Ul Hassan 2/12, Abdul Rehman 2/19.

Later Rehan Siddiqui Former Secretary Zone-II given the Medicam Man of the Match Award to Maaz Khan of Zone-VII Whites.

In the 2nd Match Zone-V Whites beat Zone-II Green by 7 Wickets at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. Zone-II Green 102 all out in 30 overs. M. Mudasar Siddiqui 23, Zubair Anwar 21. M. Ali Hussain (sla) 3/9, Sohail (mf) 3/25, M. Rehan 2/25, Muhammad Khan 2/28.

Zone-V Whites 102/3 in 13 overs. Muhammad Akbar 35 7x4 not out, Yousuf Ali 30 not out.



Former First Class Cricketer Fareeduddin given the Medicam Man of the Match Award to M. Ali Hussain of Zone-V Whites.

Zone-IV Blues by 73 runs at Pak Star Ground.

Zone-III Blues 238/7 in 40 overs. Saad Asif 56 4x4 3x6, Affan Khan 32, Anas Khan 28, Zohan 25, Ali Raza 21.

Shoab Khan 2/32, Sameer Imam 2/37. Zone-IV Blues 165 all out in 34.5 out. Ejaz uddin 47 7x4, S. Muhammad Shahnawaz 23. Saad Asif (sla) 4/21, Anas Khan 2/14.

Sports activities increase the mental and physical capabilities: Ziaullah Shah

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Member of the Provincial Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services Punjab Ziaullah Shah said that along with education, sports activities increase the mental and physical capabilities of children. The bright future of the country is associated with the young generation. The services of President APSAMA North Punjab and Director AIMS Education System Abrar Ahmed Khan for the education sector are commendable.

These views were expressed by Member of the Provincial Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services Punjab

Ziaullah Shah on the occasion of the annual sports event of AIMS Education System New Scheme Mohanpura. Former Vice Chairman Union Council 36 Gulfranz Khan Jadoon, Chairman Youth Council 36 Chaudhry Saqib, Health Incharge of



Dengue and Polio Mrs. Tanzila Shafiq and a large number of parents of children attended this colorful event. Atif Aziz, Secretary General, Apsama Taxila

Cantt, performed the commentary duties. On this occasion, the school boys and girls entertained the audience by presenting a beautiful PT show under the super-

vision of Drill Instructor Muhammad Fateh Khan. Various competitions were organized among the students of the institution. Tariq House won the most competitions and was awarded the first position. The second position went to Khalid House and Qasim House. Ziaullah Shah, in his address, praised the performance of the children and said that Allah Almighty has blessed the Pakistani nation with immense talents. Keeping them busy in positive activities through sports is the need of the hour. A nation whose sports fields are populated, its hospitals are deserted. Gulfranz Khan Jadoon, Chaudhry Saqib and Tanzila Shafiq, while addressing the ceremony, said that AIMS Education System is a great educational institution of Rawalpindi where special attention is paid to both the education and training of children. This institution has been providing educational services to the residents of the area for a long time.

Quaid-e-Azam Games: Punjab rack up 163 medals to stay on top of medals tally

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab emerged as the undisputed leader in the medals tally at Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024, with a stunning total of 163 medals, including 77 gold at Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad on Wednesday.

The province claimed 50 silver and 36 bronze medals.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) followed in second place by racking up 90 medals, including 24 gold, 29 silver and 37 bronze.

Sindh secured the third position with 14 golds, 25 silver and 31 bronze, achieving a



respectable total of 70 medals.

Balochistan also performed commendably, matching Sindh's gold count with 14 but finishing with a slightly lower total of 60 medals, including

15 silver and 31 bronze.

Islamabad stood fifth with 53 medals, including 5 gold, 11 silver and 37 bronze.

The competition for the lower positions was close,

with Gilgit-Baltistan athletes punching above their weight to earn 22 medals (2 gold, 2 silver and 18 bronze), while Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) claimed 26 medals, including a single gold, 5 silver and 20 bronze.

In total, 484 medals were awarded during the Games so far.

Director General of Pakistan Sports Board, Yasir Pirzada in a statement appreciated the outstanding performance of the athletes, emphasizing that the results reflected a positive development in the promotion of sports and the enhancement of young athletes' skills in the country.

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The athletics' competitions of Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 culminated on Wednesday with outstanding performances of athletes, across both men's and women's events at different venues of Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad.

In the men's category, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) emerged as the top unit, securing a total of 12 medals (5 gold, 3 silver, and 4 bronze). Punjab closely followed with 11 medals (5 gold, 3 silver, and 3 bronze). Balochistan, Sindh, Islamabad, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) also participated, contributing to a total medal tally of 33 across the events.

In 100 metres race, Muhammad Hasnain from Punjab clinched gold with a time of 11.10 seconds, followed by Atta Ullah from KPK, who earned silver medal.

Hasnain continued his winning streak, finishing first again at 22.52 seconds in 200 metres.

In 400 metres, Ataullah of KPK took gold, clocking in at 50.46 seconds.

Akram from Punjab won 1500 metres with a time of 4:05.63.

In the 4 x 100m relay, Punjab's team, featuring Ghulam Murtaza and Muhammad Hasnain, secured gold with a time of 42.90 seconds.

KPK's athletes also excelled in field events, with Bilal winning the javelin throw and Wassi Ullah taking gold in discus throw.

Meanwhile, in the women's events, Sindh showcased their dominance, finishing with 7 medals (4 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze). Punjab followed closely with 10 medals (3 gold, 4 silver, and 3 bronze). Overall, the women's events produced a total of 27 medals.

In 100 metres race, Iqra Riaz from Sindh sprinted to victory with a time of 13.07 seconds. She continued to shine, securing another gold in 200 metres with a time of 26.63 seconds.

In high jump, Anaya Ahsan of Sindh won gold, clearing a height of 1.43 metres.

The Sindh team, comprising Iqra Anaya, Alayna and Rania won gold in 4 x 100m relay, with a time of 54.87 seconds.

Pakistan-Malaysia fifth place match washed out

Sports Desk

KUALA LUMPUR: The fifth position contest between Pakistan and Malaysia of the ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday was washed out due to rain.

Opting to bat first, Pakistan scored 115 for six in 20 overs. Areesha Ansari coming to bat at number six top-scored with an unbeaten 42 off 35 balls, hitting six fours.

In turn, the hosts lost two wickets for five runs in 3.2 overs after the match was stopped due to rain and ultimately ended in a no result. Both the wickets to fall were clinched by Mahnoor Zaib, who returned with bowling figures of 1.2-0-2-2.

Pakistan will now return home after they could not qualify for the Super Four Stage, losing both their group matches against India and Nepal. Pakistan will travel again to Malaysia to take part in the ICC Women's U19 World Cup set to take place from 18 January to 2 February 2025.

Scores in brief:

No result

Pakistan U19 115-6, 20 overs (Areesha Ansari 42 not out, Maham Anees 22)

Malaysia 5-2, 3.2 overs (Mahnoor Zaib 2-2)

KPK, Punjab, Sindh karatekas shine at Quaid-e-Azam Games

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Punjab emerged as dominant forces in the women's event, while Sindh and Punjab showcased remarkable performances in the women's event of karate at the Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 at Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad on Wednesday.

In the men's event, KPK demonstrated exceptional skill and teamwork, clinching four gold medals to lead the medal tally with a total of nine medals (4 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze). Punjab followed closely, securing three gold medals. Balochistan bagged two gold medals, while Sindh claimed one. Notable victories included Punjab's Sujal Zafar in the 67kg category and Muhammad Usman in the 84kg category, while Shahram Hussain from Balochistan earned top honours in the individual kata event.

The women's category witnessed a fierce competition as Sindh and Punjab tied with three gold medals each. Sindh's Nabihah Jamal (50kg) and Alisha Channa (68kg) stood out with their stellar performances, while Punjab's Maham Batool (55kg) and Hanna Qamar (61kg) secured the top podium spots.

The event brought together six teams from across the country, reflecting the spirit of unity and sportsmanship. The closing ceremony celebrated the athletes' achievements, with medals and trophies awarded to the winners amidst applause from spectators and officials.

PCB Chairman meets Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation Chairman, discusses cricket promotion



RIYADH: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation (SACF) Chairman Prince Saud bin Mishal Al Saud in Riyadh to discuss the promotion of cricket and the development of players in Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, Chairman PCB extended an invitation to Prince Saud to visit Pakistan and witness the Champions Trophy tournament matches. He also offered comprehensive support to Saudi Arabia in promoting cricket and constructing cricket stadiums.

Mohsin Naqvi proposed a player exchange programme to enhance cricket development, suggesting that Saudi Arabia could send emerging players to Pakistan for training. "We are committed to fully supporting Saudi Arabia in cricket development and stadium construction. For every Pakistani, Saudi Arabia is like a second home, and we are delighted to collaborate," Naqvi stated.

In response, Prince Saud bin Mishal Al Saud expressed his eagerness to strengthen ties with Pakistan in cricket promotion. Saudi Arabia is actively working on player development and boasts approximately 18,000 cricketers, he added. He highlighted Saudi Arabia's victory in the Asian Cricket Council Challenge Cup as a testament to their growing cricketing prowess.

Prince Saud expressed his desire to work closely with Pakistan to foster cricket growth in Saudi Arabia, underscoring the potential for cooperation between the two nations in the sport.

Quaid-e-Azam Games: Athletes exhibit standout performances in athletics' competitions

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The athletics' competitions of Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Provincial Games 2024 culminated on Wednesday with outstanding performances of athletes, across both men's and women's events at different venues of Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad.

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Called on

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House. Former Speakers of National Assembly Mr. Asad Qaiser & Raja Pervez Ashraf are also present.



Photo: PID

ECC reviews economic progress and stability under government's oversight

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairing the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, provided a comprehensive overview of the economic landscape, underscoring the government's consistent efforts to implement policies aimed at bolstering economic stability and ensuring sustainable growth.

The Minister also highlighted the progress made towards economic stability, the continued improvement in various economic sectors, and the government's firm resolve to maintain and accelerate this momentum. He emphasized that the positive trends observed in economic indicators reflect the effectiveness of the government's targeted measures and commitment to steering the country towards greater prosperity.

A key highlight of the meeting was the presentation



of the most recent Consumer Price Index (CPI) data, which recorded a significant drop to 4.9% in November 2024. This represents the lowest level of inflation since April 2018, when CPI stood at 3.96%. The current CPI figure marks the lowest in the past 78 months, signaling a positive shift in the country's inflationary trends. The decline in CPI reflects the government's success in

managing inflationary pressures and restoring price stability, particularly for essential commodities.

The ECC was also briefed on the substantial reduction in the prices of several essential goods and services. Among the items that have seen price drops are wheat flour, chillies powder, diesel, petrol, pulses, onions, basmati rice, electricity charges, sugar, plain bread, tea,

soap, chicken, eggs, tomatoes, garlic, firewood, and salt. These reductions are seen as critical measures that have eased the financial burden on the common man and strengthened the purchasing power of the population.

Minister Aurangzeb appreciated the efforts of relevant stakeholders as prices of Chicken has dropped to Rs. 49 per kg (from Rs. 383 to Rs.

334), Gram pulse Rs.31per kg (from Rs. 411 to Rs. 380) and Mash pulse to Rs. 20 per kg (from Rs.528 to Rs.508) during last four weeks. The Chair also directed the NPMC and provincial govts to ensure smooth supply of essential items as well as take corrective measures regarding undue price hike.

The meeting reaffirmed the government's commitment to ongoing reforms and stabilization measures aimed at ensuring economic growth and improving the living standards of the people. The Economic Coordination Committee will continue to closely monitor developments and take proactive steps to safeguard economic stability and foster sustainable growth.

The Finance Minister expressed optimism that the progress made so far would serve as a foundation for future successes, as the government remains dedicated to building a prosperous and stable Pakistan.

Outgoing Head of ICRC Delegation in Pakistan meets PRCS Chairman

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Head of Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Pakistan, Mr. Nicolas Lambert, paid a farewell visit to the Chairman of Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, at the PRCS National Headquarters on Wednesday.

Nicolas Lambert commended the PRCS for its exemplary humanitarian efforts during the devastating 2022 floods and its ongoing recovery initiatives. He acknowledged Chairman Laghari's leader-

ship in advancing impactful humanitarian programs and reaffirmed the ICRC's dedication to supporting PRCS.

"Our partnership with PRCS forms the cornerstone of our mission in Pakistan. Together, we stand stronger in serving communities by delivering critical aid and support during times of need," Mr. Nicolas Lambert remarked.

Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari expressed appreciation for the ICRC's steadfast support and its pivotal role in reinforcing the PRCS as a National Society. He highlighted key ICRC-supported



programs such as National Society Development, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Restoring Family

Links, First Aid, Media and Communication, and Risk Awareness and Safer Behavior initiatives.

Reflecting on Pakistan's geographical challenges, frequent natural disasters, and evolving humanitarian needs, Chairman Laghari stressed the necessity of enhancing capacity, expanding program outreach, and advancing the strong partnership between PRCS and ICRC. He extended his best wishes to Nicolas Lambert for success in his future endeavors.

The farewell meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their shared commitment to strengthening humanitarian action and collaboration in the years ahead.

Yalda: The Panoramic Mirror of Friendship, Coexistence and Hospitality

Reza Amiri Moghadam
Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan

We are on the eve of the last evenings of the autumn of the year 2024. This year we are highly honoured to celebrate the ancient Iranian event of Yalda in our friendly, brotherly and neighbourly country of Pakistan along with the other countries with which we share civilizational commonalities and links.

The Yalda Night, or as called in the Iranian folklore, Chele, is the longest night of the year and the beginning



of the light and the rebirth of brilliance. Yalda is a turning point in the beautiful nature, at the moment of the winter solstice, which connects the leafy autumn to the ermine

winter. During the millennia and throughout the old history, at the very beginning of the cold winter, this night has been regarded as an opportunity to

seize the treasure and warmth of the family gatherings and friendly circles to bring hearts closer together looking forward to the coming of the green spring and the growth of nature.

In our common culture, Yalda symbolizes friendship, coexistence, kindness, love and hospitality. Yalda is the starting point of a cycle where the dormant nature, in transition from the cold winter, promises the resurrection of the spring, and we will celebrate the ancient Nowruz in this place, along with the nature, at the end of the winter.

As a shared and common heritage, Yalda is a celebration that has been held since

ancient times throughout the common civilization area of all of our countries. I am pleased to announce that in 2022, this cultural event was included in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.

UNESCO describes this ancient event as a panoramic mirror of cultural identity, hospitality, friendship, peaceful coexistence and cultural diversity, highlighting its unique features that have had a significant and positive impact on world culture.

In these joyous moments of happiness, I pray that May Allah Almighty bestows peace, security and prosperity to our countries, and to our people, health, happiness and welfare.

Pakistan Navy Commissions Offshore Patrol Vessel PNS Yamama in Romania

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has commissioned its Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), PNS YAMAMA, at Constanta Port, Romania. Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi, graced the ceremony as Chief Guest and handed over the traditional Command Scroll to Commanding Officer of PNS YAMAMA. Deputy Fleet Commander of Romanian Navy, Rear Admiral (UH) Marian Ciobotaru, and the Ambassador of Pakistan to Romania, Mr. Arshad Jaan Pathan, were also present on the occasion.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief Guest emphasized the significance of this project and highlighted the additional set of capabilities that PNS YAMAMA brings to Pakistan Navy's sphere of operations. He further stated that these platforms are designed to enhance full spectrum of Navy's maritime operations. Earlier this year, Pakistan Navy inducted first ship of OPV Batch II into its fleet on 6 September 2024. Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi commended the exceptional professionalism and dedication of DAMEN

Shipyards and expressed confidence in the prospects of future cooperation in delivering cutting-edge technologies to Pakistan Navy.

PNS YAMAMA is the final vessel of OPV Batch II constructed at DAMEN Shipyards, Galati, Romania. It is a versatile and highly agile platform of medium size and tonnage. The ship is equipped with state-of-the-art electronic warfare, anti-ship, and anti-air warfare capabilities. Additionally, it is capable of embarking a multirole helicopter and can operate independently or as part of a task force for extended durations to execute a variety of missions, thereby safeguarding Pakistan's maritime interests.

The commissioning ceremony was attended by high-level dignitaries from Pakistan, Romania, and the Netherlands, including members of Pakistani community.



Ahsan Iqbal visits iSoftStone Technology Park, discusses future cooperation possibilities

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Wednesday visited the iSoftStone Information Technology Park and discussed ways and means for future cooperation between the two countries in this sector.

The minister, along with the Pakistani delegation, was received by Vice President of International Business Department Yin Lu and Vice President Intelligent Electronics Li Chuan, a news release said.

Ahsan Iqbal took a round of the headquarters and exhibition area where he witnessed a demonstration of the latest products, services and solutions being provided by the company.

He was given a briefing on the company's business development in Middle East and Central Asia.

Pakistan's side also delivered a presentation on technology integration in the execution of the projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The two sides exchanged views on future cooperation in the field of IT and implementation possibilities.

Both sides expressed hope in collaborating to develop innovative digital technology products and solutions.

The Pakistani delegation included Political Counselor Haseeb Gohar, Science and Technology Counselor Khan Muhammad Wazir and Infrastructure Specialist at Ministry of Planning, Development Special Initiatives Dr Muzammil Zia.

Naqvi lauds King Fahd security college during Riyadh visit

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the King Fahd Security College, where he was warmly welcomed by the institution's Director General, Major General Dr. Ali Al-Dajj.

During the visit, Minister toured various departments of the college and expressed admiration for its cutting-edge educational standards. He highlighted the significance of the college's Master's programs, describing them as well-aligned with modern-day security challenges and advancements.

The Minister also praised the institution's comprehensive five-year strategic plan, commending the leadership of Major General Dr. Al-Dajj for steering the college toward excellence.

In a meeting with the Director General, both parties discussed potential exchange programs to strengthen bilateral cooperation. They explored opportunities for graduates from both countries to engage in study tours and training sessions. Minister Naqvi extended an invitation to the college's Master's degree graduates to visit Pakistan under the exchange program and proposed short-term training courses for Pakistani graduates at King Fahd Security College.

Describing the college as "a remarkable example of Saudi leadership's innovative and futuristic vision,"

Minister Naqvi concluded his visit by applauding the college's contributions to the field of security education, calling it a "state-of-the-art institution of global standards."

AJK PM laid a floral wreath at the grave and offered Fateha

Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI/MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Wednesday visited the mausoleum of Raees-ul-Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas at Faizabad, Rawalpindi. On this occasion, the PM laid a floral wreath at the grave and offered Fateha for the departed soul.

The PM was accompanied by government ministers including

Diwan Ali Khan Chughtai, Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim, Ms. Imtiaz Naseem, Advisor to the Government Ahmed Sagheer and others.

Former Prime Minister and President Muslim Conference Sardar Atique Ahmed Khan, leaders of Muslim Conference including Ms. Mehr un Nissa, Sardar Usman Ali Khan, Madam Shamim Ali Malik, members of civil society and a large number of people were also present on the occasion.