



Fazl hopes Islamabad march 'won't be needed as govt to notify madrasa bill very soon'

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Saturday hoped that the federal government would approve the Societies Registration (Amendment) Bill 2024, also known as madrasa registration law, after fulfilling the legal formalities.



Israel on Rampage

With the plunge of Syria, Libya, Yemen, Lebanon in chaos, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Shia rule in Iraq facing imminent threat of de-stabilization while Gaza is being reduced to rubble by the relentless Israel, the Arab states are individually engaged in a desperate exercise for survival. I feel a strong repulsion to see the ever-shrinking role of the OIC in the Muslim world and the Arab League and the GCC in the Arab affairs.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Revenue related matters on Saturday.



Photo: PID

PM orders strict action against tax defaulters pushes for FBR digitization

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed authorities to bring tax defaulters into the tax net and take strict action against non-compliance. He made these remarks while presiding over a crucial review meeting on strategies to enhance revenue collection on Saturday.

During the meeting, officials briefed the Prime Minister on the installation and monitoring of video analytics in the sugar industry. Highlighting the importance of technology, the Prime Minister said, "Improving the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) performance through technology is the government's top priority."

He emphasized that the use of video analytics in the sugar industry would significantly improve revenue collection, eliminate hoarding, and help stabilize prices. "Our utmost effort is to ensure the avail-

ability of sugar at affordable prices for the public," he stated, directing regular monitoring of sugar stocks to maintain an uninterrupted supply chain.

The prime minister also ordered stringent and indiscriminate action against tax evasion and under-reporting by sugar mills. He underscored that ongoing measures for FBR's digitization would bring billions of rupees in benefits to the national treasury.

Additionally, the prime minister instructed the swift completion of FBR's value chain digitization and called for the rapid implementation of video analytics in the cement and tobacco industries.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, and senior government officials.

Military court sentences 25 civilian to jail term over May 9 incidents

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Sentences have been handed down to those involved in the events of May 9, 2023, the military's media wing said on Saturday, a week after the Supreme Court's constitutional bench conditionally allowed military courts to pronounce reserved verdicts of 85 civilians who were still in custody for their alleged involvement in last year's May 9 riots.

"On 9 May 2023, the nation witnessed tragic incidents of politically provoked violence and arson at multiple places, marking a dark chapter in the history of Pakistan. Building on a sustained narrative of hate and lies, politically orchestrated attacks were carried out on the installations of the Armed Forces including desecration of the monuments of Shuhada," the



Inter-Services Public Relations said in a statement on Saturday.

It added that such acts of violence "not only shocked the nation but also underscored the necessity of checking this unacceptable attempt of political terrorism" to impose perverted will through violence and coercion.

Sequel to the events of this 'Black Day,' through meticulous

investigations, "irrefutable pieces of evidence were collected to legally prosecute the accused involved in the May 9 tragedy," the ISPR said and added that certain cases were referred for field general court martial as per law, where they underwent trials following due process.

On December 13, a seven-member constitutional bench

of the SC directed that the cases pending due to an earlier order of the apex court be finalised and judgements in the cases of those accused found involved in these violent incidents be announced.

In light of the SC decision, the field general court martial has in the first phase promulgated the punishments to the following 25 accused; after examining all evidence, affording all legal rights to the accused and the completion of "due process".

According to the ISPR, the promulgation of the sentences of the remaining accused is also being done and would be announced "shortly" as and when the due process is complete.

"This is an important milestone in the dispensation of justice to the nation. It is also a stark reminder to all those who are exploited by the vested interests and fall prey

to their political propoganda and intoxicating lies, to never take law in own hands ever in the future," it said.

Many accused were under trial in various anti-terrorism courts and their cases were being pursued as per the law, however, "justice would truly be fully served once the mastermind and planners of 9th May Tragedy are punished as per the Constitution and laws of the land."

It added that the state would pursue dispensation of justice to ensure the establishment of writ of the state, "so as to uproot this evil of violence driven disruptive and destructive politics based on hate, divisiveness and baseless propoganda." The ISPR mentioned that all convicts retain the right to appeal and other legal resources, as guaranteed by the law and the Constitution.

Neither people nor history will accept military court sentences for civilians: Abbasi

Monitoring Desk

Neither people nor history would accept the military court sentences against civilians more than one year after the May 9 riots, former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Saturday.

"When you punish convicts after one and a half year years, it will raise questions," he said while appearing on Aaj News programme Rubaroo. "It was an unusual incident and should never have happened in Pakistan."

Earlier in the day, the Inter-Services Public Relations announced that the military courts have sentenced at least 25 suspects of May 9 events to jail.

The military courts took the decision after the SC's constitutional bench last week conditionally allowed them to

pronounce reserved verdicts of 85 civilians who were still in custody for their alleged involvement in last year's May 9 riots.

The military's media wing added that the promulgation of the sentences of the remaining accused is also being done and would be announced "shortly as and when the due process is complete."

"The reality will come to light when they will move to the Supreme Court, but I don't think these decisions will be made public," Abbasi said.

He agreed with Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's comment that delay in justice benefitted the planners of May 9. "It is important to know whether law of evidence was implemented or not. If not, these decisions will further weaken."

Continued on Page 7

Decision on obtaining candidate intelligence reports left to JCP's discretion

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) decided on Saturday that the decision on obtaining intelligence reports of candidates for judges' appointment to the high and top courts is left to the JCP's discretion.

It was decided in the second meeting on rules in Islamabad, sources said. Earlier in the day, SC judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah penned another letter to the JCP secretary. There should be a mechanism for the appointment of judges to the constitutional bench within the rules.

Justice Shah expressed his opposition to the practice of soliciting reports from intelligence agencies, warning that granting such agencies a role could lead to misuse.

The JCP has removed the requirement from the rules for a medical test for new additional judges. According to the new

rules, it will be at the commission's discretion whether to obtain a candidate's intelligence report.

The final draft states that three names would be considered for the high court chief justice and reasons must be provided if a senior judge is not appointed as the chief justice.

Moreover, five names would be submitted from the high court for SC judge appointments.

Sources added that the commission also extended the Supreme Court's constitutional bench tenure for six months.

The constitutional bench was formed after the government narrowly passed constitutional amendments on October 21 giving lawmakers more power to appoint top judges. It also changed the appointment process of the chief justice of Pakistan which was earlier based on

Continued on Page 7

All involved in May 9 violence to meet their logical end: Attaullah Tarar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that people involved in terrorism in the garb of politics had met their logical end.

Addressing party workers and people of his constituency here, he termed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder a mastermind of May 9 and his companions as planners. He said, "All those involved in May 9 riots will meet their logical end."

Attaullah Tarar said that people had strongly rejected anti-state elements who give priority to their personal interests over national interests. He



said, "Promises related to development works made during the general elections 2024 by me and PML-N MPA Malik Asad Ali Khokhar are heading towards implementation."

He said that different development projects had been inaugurated today in the constituency to solve problems of the people. He said that with the passage of time people of the constituency would witness change as development works were ongoing.

Continued on Page 7

CM Maryam Directs to Immediately Send Medicines to Kurram

Bureau Report

LAHORE: "It is time for service not politics, the people of Kurram are in trouble, I pray that situation and matters of life in the area return to normal at the earliest," said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif while fulfilling within a few hours her promise of sending medicines to the people facing difficulties in Parachinar. On her directions, the second batch of 41 essential items including medicines and essential goods has been dispatched, while further necessary steps are being taken to send 05 more trucks to the area. She had directed the relevant authorities to send medicines and other essential goods to the area in the cabinet meeting dated December 19, after the people of Parachinar contacted her.

Madam Chief Minister said, "A mobile health unit will also be sent to Kurram as per needs of the people." She added, "Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif especially directed me to help the people of Parachinar." She highlighted, "All possible help will be provided to



the brothers and sisters of Parachinar." Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Helping the distressed people is our motto."

She added, "Air Ambulance Service has also been started with an aim to provide timely and quick assistance to the injured."

Earlier, on the directions of Madam Chief Minister, a critical elderly patient Jamila Murad was shifted from Kurram to Islamabad by Punjab Air Ambulance Service for urgent operation. Zeeshan Haider, a son of the

60-year-old patient from Kurram district thanked Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and appreciated the air ambulance service.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "If necessary, more patients will be transferred from Parachinar to Rawalpindi through Air Ambulance." Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique, Khawaja Imran Nazir and Secretary Emergency Services Department Punjab Dr Rizwan Naseer supervised the process of sending medicines to Parachinar, and made the

operation possible within a few hours. They said, "On the special direction of Madam Chief Minister, more medicines are being sent to Parachinar."

The essential medicines include insulin, dog bite vaccine, other life-saving medicines and 24 items including essential equipment. 12 large consignments of essential medicines have reached Parachinar while arrangements for sending more medicines have been completed."

Upon reaching Kurram, District Emergency Officer Kurram Ghulam Murtaza received the medicines and appreciated the initiative of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He said, "Due to the deteriorating conditions in Kurram for the past two months, there was a severe shortage of medicines, and the lives of the patients were at risk." He added, "Patients in serious condition will need to be shifted from Kurram for treatment." He also requested for the supply of more medicines, upon which Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned to send more medicines accordingly.

Govt provides all facilities students to prepare better future: DC Naeem Sindhu



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, practical steps are being taken to develop the personality of students. According to the details, a special seat regarding career counseling was held in the high school of Tehsil Gujra under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu.

In the session, students were informed about various departments. Guidance was given to the students to choose a career according to their interests and abilities. Students showed great interest in the session and cleared their doubts by asking questions from the experts. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu said that along with education, such programs are very important for personality building and career planning of students. Punjab government is providing all possible facilities to the students to prepare for a better future. Such programs will be milestones for the bright future of the students.

Open Court held at DC Office



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, Organized an open court at the DC office, in which was attended by a large number of citizens. The Deputy Commissioner listened to the problems of Silin in detail and issued orders on the spot for their immediate solution. He urged the officers concerned to address the public grievances on priority basis and keep the spirit of public service at the fore. Various issues, such as land disputes, provision of government facilities, and other public grievances were considered in the open court and resolved to take immediate steps to resolve them. This initiative is an important step towards increasing public confidence and prompt resolution of issues.

Dinner hosted in the honor of anchorperson Iqrar-ul-Hassan

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: In Toronto, Canada, a prestigious dinner was hosted by Tabish Tufail, a prominent political and social figure of the Pakistani community and leader of PTI Canada, in honor of anchorperson Iqrar-ul-Hassan, who is currently on a fundraising tour in Canada for his welfare organization. The event took place at a local restaurant and was attended by notable figures from various sectors of the Pakistani community, including media persons Owais Iqbal, Irshad Bhatti, Malik Ayaz, Tariq Ghori, senior journalist Yaqoob Malik, and Muhammad Ishaq.

On this occasion, all the participants assured Iqrar-ul-Hassan of their full support in raising funds for his organization in collaboration with Humanity to help the underprivileged and needy in Pakistan. It is worth mentioning that Iqrar-ul-Hassan plays a vital role through his famous program Sar-e-Aam on Pakistan's national private TV channel by exposing societal evils and fraudulent practices, which is no less than a form of jihad. Iqrar-ul-Hassan expressed his gratitude to all the attendees for their support.

Renowned poet Hafeez Jalandhari remembered on death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Forty-second death anniversary of veteran poet and author of national anthem Hafeez Jalandhari was observed on Saturday. He was born in Jalandhar on January 14 in 1900 and migrated to Lahore after independence.

He wrote the lyrics for the national anthem of Pakistan in 1952. Hafeez Jalandhari actively participated in Pakistan Movement and used his writings to propagate for the cause of Pakistan.

He also wrote the Kashmiri Anthem, "Watan Hamara Azad Kashmir". He wrote many patriotic songs during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.

For his literary and patriotic services to Pakistan, Hafeez Jalandhari was awarded the Hilal-e-Intiaz and Pride of Performance by the Government of Pakistan.

He passed away on December 21, 1982 in Lahore at the age of 82 years.

Truk Arts

ISLAMABAD: An artist is making beautiful truck art on the body of truck at his working area along the Kernal Sher Khan Shaheed road as this is art famous around the world.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addresses gathering of members and press conference

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman has said that if the price of electricity had not come down, there would have been no talk of ending the agreement with IPPAs. The salaries of the provincial assembly were increased on the same day that gas prices increased. These people are already billionaires. In a situation where everyone benefits, everyone becomes one.

The 26th Amendment has been used to make malicious legislation and strangle the independence of the judiciary. Everyone is together in distorting the image of the constitution and suppressing the judiciary. Nawaz

Sharif himself is a product of Form 47. Bilawal can never become the Prime Minister. If an independent judicial commission is formed, everyone will be caught.

Anyone who propagates anti-national propaganda is not worthy of forgiveness. They will not allow anyone to destroy the country that was achieved after millions of sacrifices. They expressed these views while talking to the media after the district gathering of Jamaat-e-Islami members at a local wedding hall. On this occasion Provincial Ameer Javed Kasuri and District Ameer Professor Mehboob-ul-Zaman Butt were also present. Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman said that Interior Minister Mohsin



Naqvi had come to Mansoura. He has informed about the progress regarding IPPs. Our position is that if IPPs have been closed, immediate relief should

be given to the people.

Mere words will not work. If electricity prices are not reduced, Jamaat-e-Islami has no choice but to hold a big protest.

He said that inflation has increased this year compared to last year. Fifty percent of mills have closed in Faisalabad alone. Karachi is an industrial hub and its situation is in front of everyone.

The situation cannot be corrected until the price of electricity is controlled. He said that Nawaz Sharif was the Prime Minister three times and why did he expel me? He got 70,000 votes through ROs. His brother is the Prime Minister and his daughter is the Chief Minister

Provincial Minister Sharjeel Memon's Demand from the Federal Government

Sindh, a major source of natural resources, is currently facing a severe gas load-shedding crisis. From Karachi to Kashmir, the shortage of gas is negatively impacting the daily lives of the public. Along with this, industrial activities are also facing significant disruptions. Against the backdrop of this crisis, raising the voice on public issues by Sindh's senior minister Sharjeel Inam Memon is crucial, but will this voice bring about any changes in the federal government's policies?

Sindh, which produces 70% of the country's gas, is today deprived of its own resources. This situation

is not only affecting the basic needs of the public but is also dangerously harming economic activities. Issues such as a decline in industrial production and rising unemployment have turned into major challenges for Sindh's economy.

In his statement, Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon made it clear that the ongoing gas shortage is causing anxiety and frustration among the public. He has demanded the federal government ensure uninterrupted gas supply during the winter months. He also stated that the fair distribution of natural resources is a constitutional responsibility of the federal govern-

ment, and any negligence in fulfilling this responsibility is equivalent to public exploitation.

Elected representatives of the people are bound to continue their efforts to resolve these issues. Merely issuing statements will not solve the problem; a collective strategy and effective efforts are needed. It is the primary responsibility of government representatives to adopt a strong stance in negotiations with the federal government and to take the public

into confidence about this process. **To resolve the issue, it is necessary to implement some key measures:**

1. Comprehensive Planning for Gas Demand and Supply: Considering the growing demand for gas in winter, it is crucial to develop a fair policy for gas distribution.
2. Promotion of Alternative Energy Sources: To reduce reliance on gas, special attention should be given to alternative energy sources such as solar and wind energy.

3. Federal and Provincial Cooperation: Effective communication between the federal and Sindh governments is essential for joint efforts to solve the issue.

From Representing Public Issues to Taking Action

The gas load-shedding issue in Sindh has become a significant challenge for public life and the economy. Sharjeel Inam Memon's statement is a positive example of raising the public's issues, but to address them practically, stronger measures are needed. The federal government must understand its responsibilities and take immediate and effective steps to ensure fair gas distribu-

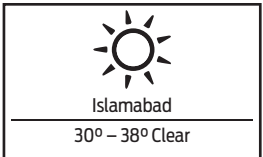
tion and provide relief to the public. To turn the hopes of the public into reality, both the provincial and federal governments must work together, as problems will not be solved by statements alone.

The gas load-shedding crisis is an important national issue that is not limited to Sindh. However, Sindh, as a gas-producing province, is more severely affected by this problem. If the issue is not addressed in a timely manner, it will not only increase public frustration but also exacerbate the economic crisis. The time has come for the federal and provincial governments to jointly reach a fair and sustainable solution.



Analysis

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr5:39 am
 Zohr12:05 pm
 Asr3:26 pm
 Maghrib5:03 pm
 Isha6:33 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
 Bomb Disposal 15
 Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad1122 & 16
 Emergency Ambulance 1122 & Rescue Services 4451122
 Motorway Police 92766044
 Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
 Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
 PIA Flight Info 114
 PIA Cargo 9280979
 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-8 9266316
 Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
 Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
 Wasa Water Tank Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

PATO calls to withdraw royalty fee on tourism imposed by G-B govt

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Association of Tour Operators (PATO) on Saturday rejected the increase in royalty fees imposed on tourism by the Gilgit-Baltistan government and demanded to withdraw it to save the tourism business from losses.

PATO also called to establish a central tourism authority in order to frame the policies regarding tourism that help to boost it further.

"The representatives of all tourism-related bodies like PATO, BAATO, and GBATO should be included in the proposed authority to protect the interests of all stakeholders," press release said.

Pakistan is the home of the highest mountains in the world, including K2 and Naga Parbat, PATO representative said, adding that due to that reason, the country has become the paradise for adventure and mountaineering from all over the world to visit here that benefits country's economy.

Christmas Celebration held in the National Assembly

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A ceremony to commemorate Christmas was organized by the National Assembly Secretariat at the Parliament House. Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Deputy Speaker Syed Mir Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar, along with senior officers of the National Assembly Secretariat, participated in the celebrations. The event included the ceremonial cutting of a Christmas cake alongside members of the Christian staff.

While Addressing the cake cutting ceremony, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his pleasure in joining the celebrations of the Christian community. He emphasized the integrity and

respect of Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him), describing him as a revered messenger of God whose teachings promote peace, love, brotherhood, and the service of humanity. The Speaker noted that the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ is a moment of great blessing and joy for all.

The Speaker further acknowledged the outstanding contributions of the Christian community to the nation's progress, particularly in the fields of healthcare and education, underscoring their commendable services.

He reiterated that minorities in Pakistan are granted equal rights under the Constitution and enjoy complete freedom to observe their religious practices and celebrate their festivals.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the protection of the rights of all



minority communities residing in the country.

He extended heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community and lauded their invaluable role in the nation's development.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Lord Qurban Hussain, a British Pakistani political leader of Kashmiri origin called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Minister of foreign Affairs on Saturday.



Photo: Online

IRI holds seminar on Current State of Teaching and Research in Islamic Studies

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Research Institute (IRI) of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) hosted an International Seminar on the Current State of Teaching and Research in Islamic Studies and Its Allied Disciplines onat the Allama Iqbal Auditorium, Islamic Research Institute (IRI) International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Faisal Masjid Campus, Islamabad. The seminar was organized in connection with the Visit and Short-Term Exchange Student Mobility Program of the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya (UM), Malaysia.

The event brought together distinguished dignitaries, academics, and policymakers from Pakistan and Malaysia. Key attendees included Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Director-General of IRI; H. E. Amb. Dato' Mohammad



Azhar Mazlan, Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan; Allama Raghieb Naemi, Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology; and Prof. Dr. Mohd Fauzi bin Hamat, Dean, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khadher bin Ahmad, Deputy Dean (Student

Affairs); Dr. Mohamad Azrien bin Mohamed Adnan, Deputy Dean (Undergraduate Studies); Mrs. Maimunah binti Kamaruddin, Senior Assistant Registrar; and Mrs. Nur Jannah binti Md Akhir, Project Officer. Joining them were senior faculty members from Faculty of Usuluddin

(Islamic Studies) of IIUI including the Dean, Prof. Dr. Taj Afsar, Deputy Dean/HoD (Department of Study of Religions) Prof. Dr. Muhammad Akram, and representatives from UM. The seminar also welcomed Post-Doctorial fellows, and faculty members of IIUI.

Chairman CDA visits Serena, Finnah Avenue Interchange projects

Abdul Waheed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa visited the Serena Interchange and Jinnah Avenue Interchange project sites on Saturday, accompanied by Member Engineering and other officials.

During the visit, the Chairman received a detailed briefing on the progress of construction work at both sites.

Officials reported that the underpass at Jinnah Avenue Interchange is nearing completion ahead of schedule and is set to be inaugurated on December 24, 2024.

The underpass will be opened for traffic immediately after the inauguration. The briefing also highlighted that the carpeting of the underpass road is in its final stages.

Chairman Randhawa instructed the relevant authorities to begin beautification work on the underpass before its inauguration and commended the staff and workers for their exceptional performance in completing the project in record time.

At the Serena Interchange project, the Chairman was updated on the ongoing construction activities. Officials noted that work is progressing simultaneously on all sections of the project, despite challenges. Efforts are being made to address obstacles impeding the pace of construction.

Randhawa emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards and urged the workforce to continue construction activities around the clock to ensure timely completion. He directed consultants and resident engineers to closely monitor progress and promptly address any issues.

Devcom-Pakistan bells alarm on Emerging Threats to Margalla Hills National Park

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) organized a compelling webinar on Saturday titled "Emerging Threats to Margalla Hills National Park," bringing together experts and stakeholders to discuss the urgent need to protect one of Pakistan's most significant natural assets. The speakers underscored the critical importance of implementing the Supreme Court's directives to eliminate encroachments and rehabilitate the park, while also emphasizing the broader implications for biodiversity and climate change resilience.

Rina Saeed Khan, Chairperson of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), provided an overview of the current state of Margalla Hills National Park. She highlighted the IWMB's continuous efforts to safeguard the park's ecosystem despite significant challenges. According to Khan, encroachments, illegal construction, and lack of enforcement mechanisms remain persistent issues.

Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan termed it as 'unfortunate' development while they were trying to implement the Supreme Court orders. "Our only crime is implementing the Supreme Court's orders regarding Monal's demolition.

Vaqar Zakaria, a board member of the IWMB, expressed deep concern over the government's apparent lack of prioritization for biodiversity and natural habitats.

Speakers at the webinar discussed the growing threats posed by urban encroachments, unregulated tourism, and property development. These activities have not only disrupted the ecological balance of the Margalla Hills but have also endangered the flora and fauna that are integral to the park's biodiversity.

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Mumir Ahmed said the federal and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments shall immediately take notice of the undue interventions and mushroom growth of the development of environment unfriendly infrastructures on both-sides of the Margalla Hills National Park. He called on the government to cease interference in the ongoing process of implementing the Supreme Court's directives; to strengthen the mandate and resources of the IWMB to enable effective enforcement of conservation measures. The ministry of climate change shall provide sufficient funds to IWMB to launch public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of Margalla Hills National Park for Islamabad's environmental and climatic health. He urged fostering collaboration between federal and local authorities to ensure the sustainable management of the park.

Pehchan Pakistan Prize Distribution Ceremony held in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pehchan Pakistan Prize Distribution Ceremony, a flagship event celebrating creativity, heritage, and inclusivity, was held today in Islamabad. The ceremony was hosted by Meera'n Malik, President of Community Development Council (CDC), and Murad Ali, Secretary of the National Book Foundation. Renowned poet and author Dr. Inam ul Haq Javeid graced the occasion as the chief guest, alongside representatives from the Ministry of Federal Education.

Since its inception in 2017 on Pakistan's 70th Independence Day, Pehchan

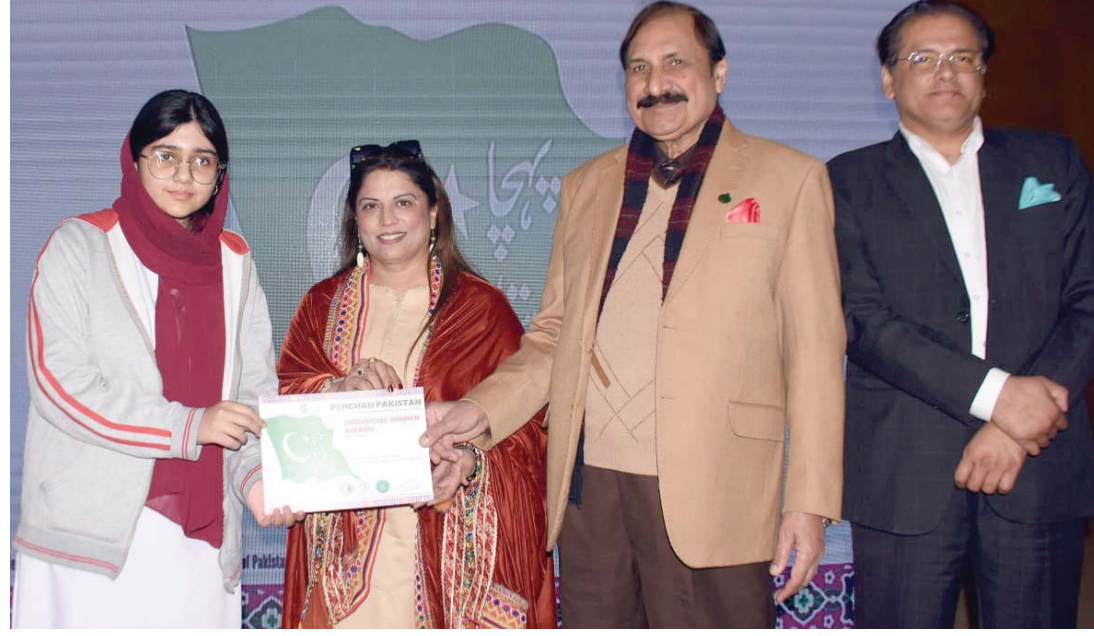
Pakistan has been a pioneering and inclusive platform for students aged 3 to 23. This project, led by CDC, aims to inspire young minds to connect with the country's history, heritage, and culture through creative writing, art, and storytelling. The contest has successfully bridged generational gaps and fostered a sense of national pride and responsibility in students across the nation.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Inam ul Haq Javeid emphasized the importance of fostering a love for books and heritage among the youth, calling it the cornerstone of building a progressive and harmonious society. "Programs

like Pehchan Pakistan instill a sense of belonging and identity in our students, which is vital for their personal growth and the nation's future," he said.

The event recognized the exceptional talents of students from diverse backgrounds, including those with special needs, celebrating their artistic expressions and creative endeavors in both English and Urdu.

The ceremony was a testament to the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Federal Education, the National Book Foundation, and CDC, who have worked tirelessly to nurture creativity, inclusivity, and national integrity through the Pehchan Pakistan project.



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Patel Kash New US FBI Chief

Donald Trump has nominated Kash Patel as FBI Director, a move with significant domestic and international implications. Domestically, Patel would oversee key areas such as counterterrorism, cybercrime, and public corruption, potentially introducing reforms in surveillance practices and politically sensitive investigations. Internationally, his defense and intelligence background could bolster counterterrorism and cybersecurity efforts but may impact collaboration with foreign partners. Patel's leadership is poised to shape FBI priorities, influencing U.S. security and global relations. Like Patel, many Indian-Americans have risen to prominence in U.S. corporate, administrative, and political spheres, driven by their focus on education, adaptability, and integration into American society.

Nikki Haley, Bobby Jindal, and Pramila Jayapal have held influential roles as governors, ambassadors, and members of Congress. In business, leaders such as Sundar Pichai (CEO of Alphabet), Satya Nadella (CEO of Microsoft), Indra Nooyi (former CEO of PepsiCo), and Arvind Krishna (CEO of IBM) have transformed global industries. Innovators like Shantanu Narayen (Adobe) and Parag Agrawal (Twitter) have spearheaded advancements in technology, while academic pioneers such as Renu Khator (President of the University of Houston) and Arun Majumdar (Dean at Stanford) have driven excellence in education and research.

government spending, and reallocating resources to marginalized communities and infrastructure.

One of Trump's most consequential nominations, however, is "Kash Patel" as the Director of the FBI. Patel's leadership in the nation's most powerful investigative agency could redefine its role, balancing domestic law enforcement and counterterrorism while maintaining public trust. The FBI, with a \$10.8 billion budget (2023), has vast capabilities to influence governance by exposing corruption, ensuring electoral security, and addressing national security threats. Patel's appointment underscores Trump's intent to reshape key institutions, leveraging Patel's expertise in defense and intelligence to align the FBI's priorities with his administration's vision.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

While Indians make up only about 1% of the U.S. population, they represent a remarkable 29% of all foreign-born individuals enrolled in higher education. Historically, the first wave of Indian migration began in the late 1800s, primarily with Punjabi laborers settling in California, followed by a significant influx of professionals after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which lifted quotas and prioritized skilled workers. Today, the Indian-American median household income is approximately \$119,000—nearly double the U.S. national median of \$70,784 in 2022—highlighting their economic success.

The list of Indian-Americans who have achieved remarkable success across government, business, and academia, contributing significantly to the U.S. landscape is very impressive. The figures like In the Biden Administration, Kamala Harris attained one of the most influential positions as vice president. She was instrumental in making some of the major domestic and foreign policy decisions leaving her marks on American society. She bravely and stoutly fought for the most coveted and powerful position as president of the most powerful and imposing country of the world but lost. She may in future strike back again and may as well win.

During Donald Trump's 2024 campaign, Indian-Americans played a key role in boosting his popularity, reflecting their growing influence in U.S. politics. Notable figures include Usha Vance (née Chilukuri), wife of Trump's vice-presidential nominee JD Vance, and Vivek Ramaswamy, a vocal supporter within Trump's circle. Together with leaders like Elon Musk, they advocate for reducing federal bureaucracy by 70%, cutting

leveraging Patel's expertise in defense and intelligence to align the FBI's priorities with his administration's vision. With the appointment of Patel Kash, Indian-Americans have risen to prominence in the United States due to their strong emphasis on a relentless work ethic with resilience, navigating challenges and succeeding in competitive environments. Strong family support systems and robust community networks further bolster their success, while their proficiency in English and global competency make them effective communicators and professionals. Their ability to balance cultural heritage with American values has made them respected contributors to society.

Indian-Americans have excelled in technology, business, and politics, with leaders like Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, and Kamala Harris showcasing their strategic mindset, teamwork, and humility.

Their focus on health, financial discipline, and adherence to societal norms has elevated their careers and social standing. Through entrepreneurship, respect for rules, and continuous learning, Indian-Americans have become one of the most successful and influential immigrant communities, contributing significantly to U.S. growth and prosperity.

While the Pakistani diaspora shares a strong emphasis on education, with 60% holding bachelor's degrees or higher (well above the national average of 33%), their economic achievements, though commendable with a median income of \$82,000, trail behind Indian-Americans. Unlike Indian-Americans, who thrive in technology, healthcare, academia, administration, and politics, the Pakistani community's prominence is more localized, particularly in the health sector, with less impact in areas shaping national and global progress.

To enhance their collective impact, the Pakistani-American community should aim to diversify beyond their established success in medicine and healthcare. By fostering greater confidence and actively pursuing opportunities in technology, politics, public administration, and innovation, and adapting to local norms and manners and preferences, they can build a broader platform for influence. Such diversification would enable them to contribute to critical decision-making processes, address complex societal challenges, and help shape policies that resonate far beyond U.S. borders.

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

US lifts \$10 million bounty on new Syrian leader after talks in Damascus

The United States has removed a \$10 million bounty on Ahmed al-Sharaa, the leader of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), after the first face-to-face meeting between American diplomats and the new Syrian leader in Damascus since the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime, according to media reports.

Barbara Leaf, the state department's senior diplomat for the Middle East, said al-Sharaa had given assurances in the meeting in Damascus that Islamic State (IS) and other terrorist groups would not be allowed to operate in Syrian territory.

Al-Sharaa, who was previously known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, was designated as a terrorist by the US in 2017 over his involvement with Al-Qaeda.

The American diplomat said they received, in her words, positive messages, during the discussions in Damascus.

During a press conference, Ms. Leaf told al-Sharaa of the "critical need to ensure terrorist groups cannot pose a threat inside of Syria or externally, including to the US and our partners in the region."

"Based on our discussion, I told him we would not be pursuing the Rewards for Justice reward offer," she said.

Ms. Leaf called al-Sharaa a "pragmatic" leader, saying that their meeting was "quite good, very productive, detailed."

"We welcomed positive messages" from al-Sharaa since his Islamist HTS rebels toppled Bashar al-Assad, she said. "We will be looking for progress on these principles and actions, not just words."

The US closed its embassy in Damascus in February 2012, with the Czech Republic representing US interests in the country.

In a statement issued last week, the US said it would be prepared to recognize Syria's new government if certain conditions were met.

On Monday, al-Sharaa met with the UN envoy for Syria, Geir Pederson, and a day later with a German delegation. French diplomats returned to their embassy in Damascus, raising the tricolor flag for the first time since 2012.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has disclosed it secretly doubled the number of US troops in northeast Syria from 900 to 2,000 soldiers before militants began their swift takeover of the country.

The figures were revealed on Thursday due to "sensitivity from a diplomatic and operational security standpoint", Pentagon Press Secretary Patrick Ryder explained during a briefing.



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

Afghan Quagmire: Impact on Pakistan's Security and Stability

Laiba Mahmood

The Afghan Quagmire: Impact on Pakistan's Security and Stability America's hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 triggered a cascade of chaos. The Taliban's rapid takeover of Kabul not only underscored the fragility of the Afghan state but also reignited old fears in Pakistan. As Afghanistan grapples with its internal crises, Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture, where its stability and security are intrinsically linked to the fate of its war-torn neighbor. This enduring relationship demands an honest reckoning of past policies and a bold rethinking of Pakistan's role in the region.

While Afghanistan and Pakistan officially recognized each other in 1948, their relationship has been fraught with mistrust from the very beginning. The Durand Line, a colonial-era boundary drawn in 1893, remains a source of contention. Over the years, Afghanistan's refusal to accept the border as permanent fueled tensions, compounded by ethnic and cultural complexities. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the subsequent Afghan Jihad, supported by Pakistan and funded by the United States, brought about seismic shifts. Pakistan's role as a frontline state was hailed as a geopolitical success at the time, but it unleashed a torrent of long-term consequences. Over 3 million Afghan refugees entered Pakistan, straining its resources and altering its social fabric. The proliferation of arms and extremist ideologies during this era sowed seeds of instability that continue to haunt Pakistan today.

The 9/11 attacks in 2001 thrust Pakistan into a new phase of entanglement with Afghanistan. As America's "frontline ally" in the War on Terror, Pakistan bore the brunt of militant blowback. While the

world focused on dismantling al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Pakistan became a battleground for terrorism. The statistics are grim: over 80,000 casualties, including civilians and security personnel, and economic losses exceeding \$150 billion. Entire regions in Pakistan's northwest turned into war zones, displacing communities and devastating livelihoods. The relentless wave of terror attacks exposed the fragility of Pakistan's internal security apparatus and the far-reaching implications of its alliance with the U.S.

The porous 2,640-kilometer-long Durand Line binds Pakistan's security to Afghanistan's fate. Militancy and refugee flows underscore the impossibility of remaining neutral. Since the Cold War, this situation has strained Pakistan's resources, contributing to housing shortages, pressure on public services, and unemployment. The informal economy absorbed many refugees, but their presence also facilitated the growth of smuggling networks, including narcotics, weapons, and other contraband. This illegal trade not only undermined Pakistan's economy but also fueled corruption and crime, further destabilizing the region. Whether it likes it or not, Pakistan is deeply enmeshed in Afghanistan's affairs, and this interdependence demands proactive engagement, not reactive crisis management. Yet, Pakistan's policy approach often appears mired in contradictions. Historically accused of harboring a dual policy towards Afghanistan—supporting the Taliban while aligning with the West, Pakistan faces an uphill battle in reshaping its narrative.

Although it seeks to support regional stability, it struggles to balance relations with the Taliban-led government and address international concerns about human rights. Pakistan's policy dilemma highlights the challenges of navigating a volatile neighborhood. The asymmetric nature of threats emanating from Afghanistan—from cross-

border terrorism to the influx of refugees—requires a mix of soft and hard power strategies. Pakistan's leadership must adopt a nuanced approach, leveraging diplomatic channels to foster regional stability while strengthening its internal security apparatus. The Durand Line not only facilitates illicit activities but also undermines Pakistan's ability to project strength in the region. Enhanced border controls, coupled with investments in infrastructure and surveillance, can mitigate these risks.

Moreover, fostering economic ties with Afghanistan could serve as a stabilizing force, providing both countries with incentives to maintain peace. We must reassess our Afghanistan policy through the lens of our own national interest. Pakistan's ambitious plans for economic integration, such as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), hinge on a stable Afghanistan that can act as a conduit for trade with Central Asia. The current instability hampers these prospects, limiting Pakistan's economic growth and its role as a regional trade hub. The international community, too, has a role to play. Sustainable solutions to the Afghan refugee crisis, including greater financial and logistical support from global powers, are essential. The Afghan quagmire is not merely a geopolitical issue; it is a test of Pakistan's resilience and vision. By taking bold, forward-looking steps, Pakistan can transform its role from a victim of Afghanistan's instability to a key player in fostering regional peace and prosperity. The question is whether Pakistan's leadership can muster the political will to rise to the occasion. If Pakistan fails to act decisively, it risks perpetuating a cycle of instability that undermines its own security and economic aspirations. Conversely, a proactive, strategically sound approach could position Pakistan as a stabilizing force in South Asia, turning challenges into opportunities for growth and regional leadership.

Melting Ice, Rising Seas: A Looming Threat to Coastal Cities

Eisha Tariq

Over the past three decades, the Arctic sea ice has shrunk to almost 75%, and the effects are felt in northern regions and around the world. Communities along the coast are particularly vulnerable, suffering from flooding, the inconvenience of moving, and most importantly, the effects of sea level rise. In addition to being a hazard to Mother Nature, the causes of ice cap melting and rising sea levels also pose a major threat to humankind and require international attention. We must examine these crises' characteristics, effects, and potential solutions before we can comprehend how serious it is.

The expenses associated with ignoring this problem are very high. As per a 2019 World Bank report, coastal cities are expected to suffer losses related to their infrastructure, housing stock, and economic activities. The total estimated loss might reach \$1 trillion per year by 2050. In other words, the World Bank highlighted how cities like Venice that are experiencing sea level rise as a result of submergence are also losing out on historically significant locations and cultural landmarks. Socially speaking, rising sea levels could result in the displacement of millions of people. Over the next few decades, the number of these climate refugees in the nation is predicted to rise to over 200 million, resulting in resource warfare and widening economic inequality. Increased shadow, poverty, and economic degradation in already devastated areas are just a few of the severe effects of such migrations include more shade, poverty, and deteriorating economic conditions in already devastated areas. Because they lack the resources to deal with or recover from such occurrences, poorer communities typically suffer the most.

The Thames Barrier in London, for example, is in place to prevent storm surges, but it needs to be updated frequently since the sea is rising more quickly than the money can be used. Poorer countries may not always be able to fund such costly programs. Such projects are expensive and not always affordable for poorer nations. In that case, it is the most vulnerable population that gets which economies with these types of projects are able to do. Nevertheless, they only give time, do not fully address the unsustainable problem of rising floods. Prevention

and preparation are the two main approaches we may take to address the issue of sea level rise. Mitigation means changing the entire carbon economy to reduce the greenhouse effect. The Paris Agreement is the most sensible approach that nations should adopt since it aims to keep global warming to precisely 1.5°C.

The actions include turning on renewable energy sources, using energy more efficiently, and halting deforestation. While enforcing environmental rules that try to reduce environmental concerns, governments must focus their economic efforts on more ecologically friendly technologies. Campaigns for public education can also significantly influence people's decision-making to live more sustainably. Adaptation means getting ready for the effects of sea level rise. Innovative flood control strategies, like floating neighbourhoods and water plazas that can hold extra rainfall, have been developed by cities like Rotterdam. It is recommended that other communities develop comparable concepts and prepare for the potential relocation of residents from high-risk areas.

In order to lessen the social impact of displacement, it is critical that vulnerable populations receive the resources and knowledge they need to adjust to new circumstances. International organisations and local governments should collaborate to create long-term plans that safeguard both the environment and people. This issue is resolved by international cooperation. The wealthiest nations, who also contribute the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, ought to assist the poorest countries who are most affected by sea level rise. Fair and efficient adaptation efforts can be aided by programs such as the Green Climate Fund. This is a global justice issue, not just an environmental one. Without having to worry about losing their homes to rising waters, everyone should have the opportunity to live in safety. A glaring warning is the melting of polar ice. Sea level rise is inevitable, and unless we act now, it will only grow worse. Coastal cities are in the forefront of this catastrophe and can only survive if international action is taken to combat climate change. Everybody has a role to play. Every bit counts, from making personal carbon reductions to supporting ambitious climate policy. If we don't act now, our cities will sink with the waves in the future. Will we be able to save our cities before it's too late?

Writer is student of Semester 7 in NUML

Iran-Pakistan trade volume should be enhanced from \$2.7b to \$10b: Raza Amiri Moghaddam

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Embassy of Iran have decided to collaborate for the growth of business and economic development by breaking down trade barriers for the mutual benefit of both nations. This landmark agreement was reached during Iranian Ambassador H. E. Raza Amiri Moghaddam's goodwill visit to ICCI to congratulate the newly inducted ICCI leadership.

The two sides agreed to further enhance economic, trade, and cultural relations between Pakistan and Iran. To achieve this goal, they established a four-member committee (two members from each side) for further deliberations and to maintain close coordination on necessary actions.

ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi and Iranian Ambassador Raza Amiri Moghaddam discussed at length various matters of mutual interest to strengthen bilateral cooperation and collaboration. Ambassador Moghaddam acknowledged the progress in Pakistan-Iran relations in recent years but highlighted that there remains significant untapped potential for deeper collaboration. He



emphasized the need to increase the trade volume between the two countries from the current \$2.7 billion to a target of \$10 billion.

The Ambassador proposed transforming the Pakistan-Iran border into a 'commercial gateway' to strengthen trade ties. He also suggested expanding border markets, opening

new crossing points, and establishing Customs Facilitation Desks to facilitate smoother trade. Additionally, he noted that Gwadar and Chabahar ports hold enormous potential for joint use, as both are strategically positioned on key international trade routes that provide connectivity to Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa,

and Europe.

The Iranian envoy further stressed the need to remove bureaucratic bottlenecks on both sides and develop an efficient mechanism, including banking channels, to foster economic growth. He also suggested that the business communities of both countries should meet to establish a frame-

work for joint ventures, as Iran has successfully done with Turkey.

On this occasion, Ambassador Moghaddam handed over an invitation from the President of Tehran Chamber of Commerce and Industry to ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi to visit Tehran.

In response, ICCI President Qureshi warmly welcomed the distinguished guest and highlighted that Pakistan is implementing a coordinated roadmap to increase foreign investment and is offering attractive opportunities for international investors. He emphasized that cooperation between Pakistan and Iran should be expanded across all sectors to enable both countries to benefit from each other's experiences and capabilities.

Qureshi pointed out that international pressures, regional instability, and security challenges have hindered business interactions between the two countries. However, he expressed confidence that both nations' resilient and determined business communities are capable of overcoming these obstacles. He emphasized the shared historical, cultural, and industrial strengths of Pakistan and Iran, which can be leveraged to deepen their mutual ties.

He proposed that Iran could export its oil through Pakistan and both countries could also collaborate on pharmaceuticals and agricultural goods through joint ventures, benefiting both economies. Furthermore, Qureshi suggested that the frequent exchange of trade and cultural delegations, along with B2B meetings, would bring the business communities of the two countries closer together.

He also invited Iranian businesses to attend a trade exhibition that ICCI plans to organize in the middle of next year, offering an opportunity to showcase products and explore new business opportunities.

Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui emphasized the need to formalize informal trade through collaborative efforts, reiterating the strong willingness of both business communities to work together for mutual benefits.

The Iranian delegation included Ms. Zahra and Mr. Shahbazi, Commercial Counsellors. Those present from ICCI included Vice Presidents Nasir Mehmod Chaudhry, Qazi Mohammad Ilyas, Waseem Chaudhry, Naem Siddiqui, and ICCI Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza.

Chairman KCEU congratulates Shafaq Mohammad on becoming Member of UK House of Lords

By Sohail Anjum Malik

BRUSSELS: Chairman KCEU Congratulates Shafaq Mohammad on Becoming Member of UK House

Chairman of the Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU) Ali Raza Syed has extended heartfelt congratulations to Shafaq Mohammed on his remarkable achievement of becoming a member of the UK House of Lords as

a representative of the Liberal Democrats.

In a statement extending heartfelt felicitations to Shafaq Mohammed, Chair KCEU Ali Raza Syed said, this milestone reflects not only his personal dedication and hard work but also his commitment to upholding the values of democracy and social justice.

Ali Raza Syed commended Shafaq Mohammed for his relentless efforts

in advocating for the rights of the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOK). His bold stance and consistent efforts to highlight the plight of oppressed Kashmiris in international forums have been invaluable. The oppressed people of Kashmir have found a powerful voice in his advocacy, and his elevation to the House of Lords is a source of inspiration for all those who believe

in justice and human rights.

The Chairman KCEU also praised Shafaq Mohammed for his tireless contributions to the British-Pakistani and Kashmiri communities. His leadership and dedication serve as a shining example for future generations.

Ali Raza Syed expressed hope that Shafaq Mohammed will continue to use his position in the House of Lords



to amplify the voices of the marginalized and work towards fostering harmony, understanding, and justice

at a global level. Chair of KCEU wished him all the best in his future endeavors.

Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said Memorial Scholarship programme

A bright and curious mind is a true blessing: Rumana Husain

By Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: A bright and curious mind is a true blessing. For such a mind to flourish, progressive thinking and open-mindedness are essential. It is important to examine every piece of information from multiple perspectives and explore it through diverse methods of study. This approach fosters scholarly growth, enabling a deep understanding of any subject. A renowned writer and artist Rumana Husain expressed these views as chief guest yesterday at Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said Memorial Scholarship programme, presided over by MS. Sadia Rashid President Hamdard Foundation Pakistan at The Arena, Bahria Town Tower. Under the Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said Memorial Scholarship programme, more than 150

bright students at the matriculation and intermediate levels from across the country received financial scholarships of fifty thousand and seventy-five thousand rupees, respectively. Syed Muhammad Arsalan, Director HFP was also among the attendees.

Rumana Husain further said "There has always been a lack of inspiring children's literature in Urdu. Recognizing this need, Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said initiated the publication of the monthly Hamdard Naunhal. This magazine has played a pivotal role in the mental and intellectual growth of many generations and holds historical significance. Make it a part of your regular studies. Karachi is a city renowned for its linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity—a unique identity where people of every color, race, language, and faith coexist harmoniously."



She advised the scholarship recipients to cultivate open-mindedness in all matters and to respect differing opinions. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of protecting the natural environment, noting that commonly used plastic bags pose serious threats to aquatic life.

Ms Sadia Rashid said "Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said envisioned a Pakistan where no child would be seen begging. He dreamt of a nation where every child would head to school each morning with smiles and laughter, nurtured by the light of knowledge and skills, and grow up with a passion for serving the country and its people."

She told the gathering that Hakim Said placed great value on time. He often said, "Time is a trust from Allah; using it wisely is an act of worship." He encouraged the habit of sleeping on time and waking up early, as it not

only improves health but also fosters positive thoughts. Good health, in turn, nurtures a constructive mindset.

She emphasized the importance of increasing knowledge, cultivating a love for reading, and avoiding the misuse of smartphones, which can waste time and hinder the opportunity to learn valuable lessons from elders. While congratulating the successful students she said "All the students present here have demonstrated exceptional academic performance through tireless effort and have earned the Hakim Mohammed Said Scholarship on merit. This success is also a testament to the hard work and unwavering dedication of your parents. Please be thankful to them."

The ceremony concluded with Dua-i-Said and was attended by a large gathering of students, parents, and teachers.

Dinner hosted in honor of Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Faruqi Panel by Friends of Ahmed Shah and Society Residents

By Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: A dinner was organized in honor of Ahmed Shah and Ejaz Faruqi Panel, Candidates of Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi elections for the year 2025-2026. The event was held at the Union Club in PECHS Karachi, hosted by friends of Ahmed Shah and residents of various societies, with thousands of members attending. The program began with the national anthem. During the dinner, speeches were delivered by Mohammad Ahmed Shah, presidential candidate of the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Faruqi Panel, political leader Nisar Khoro, renowned businessman Zubair Motiwala, famous poet Professor Sahar Ansari, Ahmed Channa, Sultan Chawla, and Khalid Tawab. The members of the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Faruqi Panel were also present.

Mohammad Ahmed Shah addressed the attendees, stating that Arts Council was established in 1954, and many prominent



figures, including Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Sadequain, played an important role in its creation. He also mentioned that Shakespeare's play had been performed here. He expressed confidence that 99% of the people are with them and emphasized that he carefully forms his panel. He assured the attendees that their panel is strong and that they will win by a large majority. He encouraged everyone to work towards

a more stable and strong Pakistan. He also noted that we do not intend to fight anyone or let anyone run away. He said that even insults would be answered with a stamp of authority. Voting would take place from 12 PM to 8 PM, and any member entering the Arts Council before 8 PM would be eligible to cast their vote. If a member does not have a membership card, they can vote using their national identity card. A comput-

erized system will be implemented for vote verification, and desks will be set up for this purpose.

Political leader Nisar Khoro mentioned his long friendship with Ahmed Shah and expressed his happiness in supporting him. He praised Ahmed Shah for his contributions to art and culture and said that winning the election is not a problem for him. However, Khoro emphasized that Ahmed Shah wants to see how many more votes he will receive this time. He praised Ahmed Shah for bringing a positive image of Pakistan to the world and for getting artists from 44 countries to perform in Karachi. He urged everyone to come to Arts Council and vote for good candidates.

Renowned businessman Zubair Motiwala, in his speech, stated that the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi elections are just a formality. He emphasized that the work of Ahmed Shah is not the work of an ordinary person, but that of someone who has mastered the fine arts. He further stated that

there is no one like Ahmed Shah in Pakistan. While others may resort to violence, Ahmed Shah and people like him are changing the face of Pakistan. Over the past years, the Arts Council has completely transformed. Organizing a successful 38-day festival with participants from 44 countries is a significant achievement. He added that he is considering bringing the business community to Ahmed Shah to learn how improvements can be made in business. Ahmed Shah has proven himself through his work in every aspect of art and culture, and he has not only promoted Pakistan's culture within the country but across the world as well. Zubair Motiwala extended his congratulations to Ahmed Shah for his exceptional contributions.

Sultan Chawla praised Ahmed Shah for promoting cultural unity in Pakistan. He said that there could be no greater honor for national unity. He applauded Ahmed Shah and his team for their hard work and dedication.

Khalid Tawab, chairman of Tawab Group of Companies, congratulated Ahmed Shah even before the election and praised Arts Council's role in bringing people together. He acknowledged that Ahmed Shah had never thought along linguistic lines and commended his ability to overcome challenges. Tawab believed that with Ahmed Shah's efforts, not only the city but the entire country could progress.

Professor Sahar Ansari, a renowned poet, praised Ahmed Shah for his work in the fine arts and for uniting young people in a way that has never been seen before. Ahmed Channa expressed confidence that Ahmed Shah and his team have already won, stating that no one in Karachi has the courage to compete with them. He declared full support for Ahmed Shah from the Maman community.

The candidates for the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Faruqi Panel include Mohammad Ahmed Shah for President (Serial No. 1), Munawar Saeed for Vice Pres-

ident (Serial No. 2), Professor Ejaz Faruqi for Secretary (Serial No. 1), Noor Ul Huda Shah for Joint Secretary (Serial No. 2), and Qudsiya Akbar for Treasurer (Serial No. 1). The candidates for the Governing Body include Dr. Huma Mir (Serial No. 3), Dr. S. M. Qaiser Sajad (Serial No. 4), Farukh Tanveer Shahab (Serial No. 6), Mohammad Iqbal Latif (Serial No. 7), Syed Sajid Hasan (Serial No. 9), Dr. Ambareen Haseeb Amber (Serial No. 10), Akhlaq Ahmed Khan (Serial No. 12), Ghazi Salahuddin (Serial No. 13), Mohammad Ayoub Sheikh (Serial No. 17), Amjad Hussain Shah (Serial No. 19), Amjad Saraj Memon (Serial No. 20), and Abdullah Sultan (Serial No. 22).

To ensure that your vote is correctly cast, please consider the serial numbers of the selected candidates and mark the correct symbol. Mohammad Ahmed Shah urged everyone to vote for the Ahmed Shah-Ejaz Faruqi Panel on Sunday, December 22, and help them succeed.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
109,513.14	106,274.97	
Day's High	Day's Low	
109,846.64	105,601.03	
Index Value	Change	
29,601,942,204	+3238.17	
Percentage	Time	
+3.05%	20 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,084.61	-20.71	
Percentage	Time	
-0.26%	20 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
43,022.99	+680.75	
Percentage	Time	
+1.61%	20 Dec, 11:38 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,701.90	-111.68	
Percentage	Time	
-0.29%	20 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	174.75	177.00
Bahrain Dinar	735.15	743.15
Canadian Dollar	195.60	198.00
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	287.25	290.00
Hong Kong Dollar	35.42	35.77
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.85	1.91
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.01	905.51
Malaysian Ringgit	61.59	62.19
New Zealand \$	156.93	158.93
Norwegians Krone	24.41	24.71
Omani Riyal	719.50	728.00
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.75	74.30
Singapore Dollar	204.99	206.99
Swedish Korona	25.03	25.33
Swiss Franc	310.12	312.92
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.40	76.05
UK Pound Sterling	349.05	352.55
US Dollar	277.95	279.45

Commercial importers urge FBR to resolve port backlog crisis

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Salim Valimohammad, Chairman of the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA), has expressed deep concern over the significant backlog of consignments at the ports, caused by the lack of sufficient administrative capacity under the Faceless Customs Clearance Assessment system, introduced as part of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Transformation Plan.

He has urged Chairman FBR Rashid Mahmood Langrial to address the delay in customs clearance and take immediate steps to resolve the backlog, which is causing potential financial losses for importers in the form of demurrage and detention charges.

In his appeal to the FBR Chairman, Salim Valimohammad acknowledged the benefits of the faceless customs clearance system but emphasized that proper administrative prepara-



tions should have been made prior to its implementation to ensure the efficient and timely clearance of consignments. He pointed out that due to the lack of such preparations,

large volumes of imported goods are now piled up at the ports, threatening severe financial losses for importers.

"If the timely clearance of consignments, especially those containing imported raw materials, is not ensured, it could severely disrupt the supply chain for industries. This would not only delay the delivery of export orders but also have a detrimental impact on the country's overall export performance," Valimohammad warned.

The PCDMA Chairman further appealed to Chairman FBR Rashid Mahmood Langrial to monitor the status of imported consignments on a daily basis. He stressed the importance of ensuring timely clearance and taking effective measures to clear the backlog at the ports as soon as possible. Timely clearance would facilitate the uninterrupted supply of raw materials to industries, enabling them to continue production activities and contribute positively to the country's exports and economic growth.

Gift of winter

ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying fruits and vegetables from vendors at Fruit and Vegetables Market Sector I-11 in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

FRIA wants special incentives for cash-strapped small industry

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has asked the government to announce soft financing with very low interest rate and without any collateral for SMEs.

The FRIA Chairman Shahbaz Aslam, in a meeting of industry representatives, stated that the constant increase in power tariffs on the pretext of fuel adjustment had increased electricity prices and added to the already high cost of trade and industry. Seeking comparable energy tariffs for domestic industries in order to capture the global market, he stated that due to high electricity rates, power theft became rampant as the tariff was unaffordable to consumers.

The meeting forwarded several recommendations so that the small industry could deal with the challenges posed by the present



economic crisis, saying mere statements would not work unless solid measures are taken by the government, including a sizable reduction in fuel prices, bringing down key policy rate to single digit, regionally competitive energy rates and substantial cut in duties and taxes.

Shahbaz Aslam said that it is unfortunate that the State Bank has several times introduced a financing scheme for Small and Medium Enterprises, enabling them to get loans without collateral but it was never implemented in its true spirit.

Value-added textile export industry be top priority of govt: PHMA



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The value-added export-oriented textile industry should be given the top priority of the government, providing them maximum facilitation to meet their exports requirements. The government needs to establish long-term and sustainable policies in consultation with the real stakeholders to enhance exports, increasing foreign exchange earnings for the country. Presently, the high cost of doing busi-

ness has proved to be dangerous for the export-oriented apparel industry, as the ever-increasing energy, gas and power tariffs are the real threat to the economy amidst high markup rate and continuous fluctuations exchange rate.

These views were expressed in an interactive session jointly organized by Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PHMA) and the Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) here at

a local hotel to review the challenges faced by the exporters.

The meeting was attended by PHMA North Zone Chairman Abdul Hameed, Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Shahzad Saleem Asghar, Ashar Khurram, Shahid Butt, Dr. Khurram Tariq from PHMA and Ijaz Khokhar, Sohail Sheikh, Dr. Ayyazuddin, Sajid Saleem Minhas and Mubashar Naseer Butt from PRGMEA, besides the apparel industry's representatives from Lahore, Faisalabad and Sialkot.

Call to establish long-term, sustainable policies in consultation with industry

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government needs to establish long-term and sustainable policies in consultation with the real stakeholders to enhance exports, increasing foreign exchange earnings for the country. Presently, the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for the export-oriented apparel industry, as the ever-increasing energy, gas and power tariffs are the real threat to the economy amidst high markup rate and continuous fluctuations exchange rate. This was stated in a meeting jointly organized by Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association and the Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association here on Sunday. The participants of the meeting asked the government

to take prompt measures to bring down the production costs for the export industry to enable them to compete in the international market. PHMA North Zone Chairman Abdul Hameed said that the export industry is currently having difficulty to compete the global market because of rapid increase in production costs. He said that the high cost of production is not good for our exports.

The meeting was attended by PHMA North Zone Chairman Abdul Hameed, Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Shahzad Saleem Asghar, Ashar Khurram, Shahid Butt, Dr. Khurram Tariq from PHMA and Ijaz Khokhar, Sohail Sheikh, Dr. Ayyazuddin, Sajid Saleem Minhas and Mubashar Naseer Butt from PRGMEA, besides the apparel industry's representatives from Lahore, Faisalabad and Sialkot.

CCP penalizes three dairy associations for collusive practices in fresh milk pricing

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has imposed penalties on three dairy associations in Karachi for colluding to influence fresh milk prices, a contravention of Section 4(1) and 4(2)(a) of the Competition Act, 2010. The penalties include PKR 1 million on M/s Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association (DCFA) and PKR 500,000 each on M/s Dairy Farmer Association Karachi (DFAK) and M/s Karachi Dairy Farmers Association (KDFFA).

The CCP initiated an enquiry following multiple media reports and articles highlighting a significant hike in milk prices across Karachi. Investigations revealed that the three associations, operating at different levels of



the fresh milk supply chain, were directly responsible for the price surge in Karachi and its surrounding regions. During the proceedings, it was argued that the price caps set by the Commissioner Karachi under the Sindh Essential Commodities Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding Act, 2005, were not been revised for three

years despite rising inflation. However, the CCP's findings demonstrated that these associations exerted undue influence on the supply chain to manipulate milk prices.

The Order established that evidence, in the form of video recordings confirmed that the price increases announced by the associations were effectively implemented across the

supply chain. The associations employed coercive tactics to enforce compliance with their pricing mechanisms, threatening wholesalers and retailers with milk supply suspensions if they refused to adhere to the prescribed rates. The Order concluded that the associations had substantial influence over key pricing elements, including bandhi rates, mandi rates, wholesale rates and retail prices, resulting in significant price distortions in the fresh milk market.

The Order further revealed that the associations created artificial shortages of milk by hoarding it in ice factories, subsequently selling it in interior Sindh at inflated rates. These practices significantly disrupted the supply chain and imposed an undue financial burden on consumers.

Ahsan Bakhtawari inaugurates Fatimatuz-Zahra dispensary in G-11 Markaz

ISLAMABAD: Member Central Core Committee UBG (FPCCI), Chairman Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, and former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, inaugurated the Fatima-tuz-Zahra free Dispensary in G-11 Markaz.

This dispensary has been established through the collaboration of the Anjuman-e-Tajir and the Khidmat Committee of G-11

Markaz, according to a press release issued here.

While addressing the ceremony, Ahsan Bakhtawari stated that providing basic healthcare facilities to the public is a top priority.

He commended the joint efforts of the Anjuman-e-Tajir and the Khidmat Committee, emphasizing that this dispensary will serve as a vital facility for local residents and provide quality treatment to those in need.

Trinasolar advanced technology gains momentum in Pakistan



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Trinasolar, a global leader in smart photovoltaic and energy storage solutions, is offering Pakistan's industrial sectors advanced, efficient, and cost-effective solar modules with its n-type i-TOPCon technology. As energy demand grows and industries look to control rising costs, TOPCon technology is increasingly recognized as a key driver in Pakistan's shift to advanced renewable solutions.

According to Yifeng Chen, Vice President of Trinasolar, "TOPCon solar module technology will continue to be the trendsetter in the photovoltaic industry over the next five years." Supported by insights from InfoLink and other PV industry leaders, Chen's view reflects the industry-wide consensus that TOPCon has become the mainstream technology and the preferred choice of leading manufacturers. With TOPCon's market share expected to reach 80% of module shipments next year, this technology is cemented as the PV industry's top choice due to its high efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and scalability.

Compared to other photovoltaic technologies, TOPCon stands out for its high industrialization rate, superior manufacturing efficiency, and low production costs. Trinasolar's n-type i-TOPCon Vertex N modules can achieve up to 1% higher cell efficiency and deliver 30W+ additional power output, providing a higher energy yield and greater return on investment for end users. This is particularly valuable in high-temperature areas like Pakistan's Punjab region, where high-performance modules are beneficial.

Aisam/Ushna, Muazammil win titles at Khawaja Iftikhar Memorial National Ranking Tennis Championship 2024

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Ushna Suhail grabbed mixed doubles title, Muazammil Murtaza bagged men's singles titles and Ushna claimed ladies singles title in the Khawaja Iftikhar Memorial National Ranking Tennis Championship 2024 at Sports Board Punjab Center Tennis Court, Nishtar Park Sports Complex on Saturday.

The highlight of the concluding day was mixed doubles final between Aisam/Ushna and Abdullah Adnan and Amna Ali Qayyum, which was witnessed by huge and enthusiastic crowd, which enjoyed each and every moment of the final and cheered for both the pairs on earning each point. After a very healthy competition, the enthralling encounter was won by Aisam and Ushna, who defeated the spirited duo of Adnan and Amna 6-2, 6-3.

The men's singles final proved a

highly-charged encounter, where Muazammil Murtaza played well and edged out experienced Aqeel Khan by 6-2, 7-6(6-3) to clinch the title. The ladies singles final was won by Ushna Suhail, the granddaughter of Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad, who overwhelmed young Zunaisha Noor 6-2, 6-0.

In the boys U-18 singles final, Abubakar Talha (Wapda) defeated Shehryar Anees 6-2, 6-2. Abubakar Talha completed the brace of titles, when he, along with Hamza Roman, beat Ahtesham Humayun and M Salar 6-1, 6-4 in the U-18 doubles final. Shayan Afridi claimed boys U-14 singles title by beating Junaid Khan 6-0, 6-3 while Bismel Zia defeated Hajra Sohail 6-3, 6-3 to lift the girls U-14 singles title.

ITF Seniors Champion Rashid Malik, partnering with Arif Feroze, defeated Muhammad Khalid and M Ilyas 5-2 (ret'd) to clinch the seniors 55+ doubles title. Talha Waheed (Gas

& Oil Pakistan Ltd) and Shehryar Salamat clinched the seniors 40+ doubles title after edging out Ashar Khan and Hadi Hussain 1-6, 6-4, 10-12 in the final.

Pakistan's Olympic Gold Medalist Arshad Nadeem graced the concluding ceremony as chief guest while his coach Salman Iqbal Butt was the guest of honour. Both distributed prizes among the winners and runners-up. They also awarded life time achievement awards to Nausheen Ehtesham and Rashid Malik for their services for tennis in Pakistan. Other notables present on the occasion were entire family of Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad including Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Ushna Suhail, Former Governor Punjab Gen (Retd) Khalid Maqbool, tennis players, their families, and tennis enthusiasts.

Speaking at the concluding ceremony, Aisam ul Haq Qureshi thanked the entire tennis community and



players as well as all the stakeholders including sponsors, whose contributions and presence made this memorial event a huge success. "The purpose of conducting this

event was to pay a huge tribute to my grandfather, who was a true legend of tennis of Subcontinent and Pakistan and their great services for Pakistan tennis will be remembered for

a long time. I assure you all that this huge prize money-carrying national ranking tennis tournament will be conducted every year with more zeal and zest."

Conquerors and Stars set to lock horns in final on Sunday

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Conquerors will take on Stars in the final of the National Women's One-Day Tournament, scheduled on Sunday at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

The toss of the 45-over final will take place at 9:00am, while the first ball of the match will be bowled at 09:30am, a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) press release said on Saturday.

The winner of the event will grab PKR 1.5 million, while the runners-up have to settle with PKR 1 million. The match will be live-streamed on PCB's official YouTube channel, while ball-by-ball coverage will be available on PCB's corporate website.

Fatima Sana-led Conquerors, who finished on the top of the table with 12 points will eye to conclude the event on the winning note. Conquerors and Sidra Amin's Stars have met twice against each other in the tournament, with both sides winning one match each. Most recently, at the Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi on 14 December, Conquerors on the back of three wickets apiece by Nashra Sundhu and Syeda



Aroob Shah managed a 48-run win.

Right-hand batter Sidra is leading the Stars from front as she has scored 254 runs in eight matches, which included two half-centuries and her 43-ball 53 came in a three-wicket win over Conquerors on 18 November at the HPC Oval Ground in Karachi.

In bowling charts, Stars' off-spinner Rameen Shamim (eight matches, 18 wickets) and leg-spinner Tuba Hassan (eight matches, 16 wickets) are among

the top four bowlers in the tournament.

For Conquerors, captain Fatima has produced all-round performance in the tournament. The 23-year-old has scored 225 from eight matches, which included two half-centuries, while with her right-arm fast she has bagged eight wickets. Right-hand batter Hafsa Khalid is another batter Conquerors will be relying upon. The right-hand batter has scored 217 from eight matches, which included one half-century.

In bowling, Conquerors spin bowlers Nashra Sundhu and Mahnoor Aftab have bagged 17 and 13 wickets, respectively.

Fatima Sana and Sidra Amin talked exclusively to PCB Digital on the eve of the final.

"The young players have shown great potential and skills throughout the tournament and now we are really looking forward to do well in the final.

"We have carried good momentum in the tournament, and now with one game away from winning the trophy, we will not think more about the final and will take it as a normal match," said Fatima Sana:

"We had a good start in the tournament, but in the middle of the tournament we had some close contest games, so it's important we finish well in the tournament.

"Our opponent for the final has played good cricket throughout the tournament and the final match will be a good contest and with the match being live-streamed, it will encourage young girls across the country to witness the performances of the players and also take up the sport," Sidra Amin said.

Ghazanfar five-for leads Afghanistan to ODI series win over below-par Zimbabwe

Sean Williams slog-swept Rashid Khan in the 24th over of Zimbabwe's innings, but the ball ballooned off the top edge for Hashmatullah Shahidi at midwicket. Shahidi looked to catch it with a reverse cup, but dropped the ball—possibly because of the sun in his eyes—and invited the loudest cheers until then from the sparse crowd at Harare Sports Club.

They didn't have much going for them, really, since Zimbabwe were 89 for 8 at that stage. Williams, on 33 at the time, went on to score 60 at just under a run a ball, and dragged his side to 127 in 30.1 overs. Afghanistan wiped out the target of 128 with eight wickets and 23 overs in the bank. Sediqullah Atal followed up a knock of 104 from the second ODI with 52 off 50 balls in the third, hitting four fours and two sixes on the way, and Afghanistan completed a 2-0 series win over Zimbabwe after the first ODI was washed out.

That gave Afghanistan their sixth successive ODI series win over Zimbabwe, who are yet to beat them in a bilateral series in seven attempts—the first one, back in July 2014, was shared 2-2.

The chase began with just 15 runs from the first six overs, as Zimbabwe kept it tight. But Atal drove and got a top edge for four off Richard Ngarava in the seventh over, and that got Afghanistan going. Although Abdul Malik, the other opener, took his time, Atal attacked from the other end to raise the fifty stand in the 11th over. The partnership ended at 83 when Ngarava had Malik chopping on for 29, before Brian Bennett took a blinder running and diving to his left to send Atal back. Shahidi and Rahmat Shah, however, didn't have any bothers finishing the job.

But Afghanistan's win on Saturday was set up by 18-year-old off-spinner AM Ghazanfar. He bowled his quota of ten overs

unchanged starting from the seventh, and finished with 5 for 33, his second ODI five-for in just 11 games. Shahidi chose to bowl first after winning the toss, and his bowlers proved the decision right. Afghanistan's seamers were getting appreciable swing even after the powerplay, while their spinners almost magically turned the ball both ways.

Eight of the ten wickets went to Ghazanfar and Rashid, who got 3 for 38. That, though was a result of both batters not reading them well, and the on-field umpires making debatable calls—perhaps not reading the bowlers well either. In a series where the teams don't have DRS to turn to, Craig Ervine and Ben Curran walked back unhappy. Even Sikandar Raza shook his head on being given out lbw off Rashid, but whether he did that because he was disappointed with the umpire or with himself... who can tell.

Zimbabwe's innings featured a mini-collapse as well as a big crumble. But before either of those, Afghanistan's new-ball bowlers Fareed Ahmed and Azmatullah Omarzai kept a tight leash on opening batters Curran and Joylord Gumbie. Twenty-two of the first 28 balls were dots; there were four more to start the seventh over, after which Zimbabwe lost three wickets for five runs in next to no time.

It started with Gumbie top-edging an attempted sweep off Ghazanfar to short fine-leg. Next over, Omarzai got one to seam away from Ervine, who was squared up as the ball went past. Ervine was given out caught behind, but there was no visible nick. Ghazanfar then got his second when he trapped Curran in front for 12 in the ninth over, although the first impression was that the ball was heading down the leg side.

Neither people nor history will accept military court sentences for civilians

Continued from Page 1

Abbasi, the Awaam Pakistan Party leader, stated that a "summary trial" is conducted in the military court and reiterated that speedy justice should have been served.

When asked about jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's fast trial, he said that it depends on the court as civilian courts would take time.

He was of the view that the jail terms for convicts after more than one year would imply that it was a "political persecution matter".

In response to a question, he said that the National Assembly was a forum for

holding talks on public matters and claimed that the government and opposition "lacked intention."

According to Abbasi, dialogue is not held with conditions and neither side was "serious" about people's issues. He slammed the federal and provincial governments for not focusing on Kurram where clashes killed at least 130 people and led to a shortage of food and medicines.

He was of the view that the PTI should not have made the civil disobedience movement announcement as overseas Pakistanis would not follow the decision to stop sending remittances to the country.

Pakistan terms US official's alleged perception over its missile ...

Continued from Page 8

Moreover, the spokesperson said Pakistan had also made it abundantly clear that its strategic programme and allied capabilities were solely meant to deter and thwart a clear and visible existential threat from its neighbourhood and should not be perceived as a threat to any other country.

Hence, any irrational assumption of a hostile intent from Pakistan by any other country including the US 'is perplexing as well as illogical'.

In view of the profound sanctity of strategic programme for the people of Pakistan and for the country's defense, she said their clear iterations and manifestation

of intent and purpose thereof, any attempt to seek intrusion into it, in any form or manner, on any pretext whatsoever, was neither thinkable nor possible.

"There is unshakable resolve and complete consensus on this aspect across the entire political and social spectrum of the country," it was further emphasised.

Pakistan had always sought to engage constructively with the US on all issues, including the need to pursue a balanced approach to security and stability in the region. They had a long history of cooperation and wish to build on this strong legacy, the spokesperson said.

Decision on obtaining candidate intelligence reports left to JCP's discretion

Continued from Page 1

the seniority principle.

Under the reforms, new benches would comprise senior judges from across the country to weigh exclusively on constitutional issues, at the core of disputes between the government and PTI in the Supreme Court.

The decision to maintain the composition of the constitutional bench was made with a ratio of seven to six.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel proposed including all Supreme Court judges in the constitutional bench and seven members voted in favour of maintaining the bench.

PTI's Khosa says SC's final order on civilians' trial ...

Continued from Page 1

PTI leaders have called for the establishment of a judicial commission, asserting that former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested from the biometric room on May 9. They emphasised that the apex court had ruled the arrest as illegal, citing court orders that arrests cannot occur within the court premises.

"We had no involvement in any acts of sabotage; the PTI founder chairman has always called for peaceful protests. Not a single leaf or flowerpot was broken during our demonstrations," Khosa said.

He noted that 20 individuals were released because their sentences had expired while 25

others received sentences of 10 years each. Those sentenced have now been sent to jail.

Khosa reiterated that the SC's final decision on the appeal would be crucial. "We are confident that civilian cases will not be subjected to military courts. Referring to military courts as courts is an insult to the judiciary; it undermines the spirit of justice."

The PTI leader claimed that trials of civilians by military courts are "extrajudicial and the entire world acknowledges that justice cannot be obtained from military courts." He added that the government would not allow "any encroachment on the public's rights."

Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament,



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Karachi: A fine Unbeaten 65 by Aliyan Asif and 57 by Haris Naveed helped Zone-II Whites beat Zone-VI Whites by 54 runs in their 2nd Match of Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at KCCA Stadium.

Later Aliyan Asif of Zone-II Whites received the Medicam Man of the Match Award from Jameel Ahmed President Zone-II. The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

Scores in Brief: Zone-II Whites defeated Zone-VI Whites by 54 runs at KCCA Stadium. Zone-II Whites 216/6 in 40 overs. Aliyan Asif 65 4x4 not out, Haris Naveed 57 8x4, Abdul Karim 32. Hamza Mehmood 2/34, Abdul Wahab 2/39.

Zone-VI Whites 162 all out in 37.1 overs. Hamza Tahir 96 10x4, Muhammad Nadim (mf) 3/32, Huzaifa Nazim (ob) 3/38, Jawad Ahmed (sla) 2/28.

ICC Champions Trophy to start from February 19

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The possible schedule of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 has been revealed, according to PCB sources, the mega event will be played from February 19 to March 9.

The opening match of the ICC Champions Trophy will be held on February 19 between Pakistan and New Zealand, the sources said that the high-voltage Pak-India clash will be played on February 23 at the Dubai Stadium.

After this event, the national team will play its third match against Bangladesh on February 27, while the first semi-final will be played on March 3 and the second on March 4.

According to the schedule, the final of the Champions Trophy will be held on March 9, along with another reserve day.

On the other hand, all stakeholders, including the host Pakistan and the Indian Cricket Board, have reached an agreement on the issue of a neutral venue for the Champions Trophy 2025.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the Steering Committee on outsourcing of the Islamabad International Airport at Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan terms US official's alleged perception over its missile capabilities as unfounded

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson on Saturday asserted that the alleged threat perception from Pakistan's missile capabilities and delivery means, raised by the US official were unfortunate, terming the allegations as 'unfounded, devoid of rationality and sense of history.'

In response to media queries regarding the statement by a senior US Official at a think-tank, the Spokesperson Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, in a statement, said the recent spate of US allegations towards a major non-NATO ally would be unhelpful for the overall relationship, especially in the absence of any evidence in this regard.

"Pakistan has never had any ill-in-



intention towards the US in any form or

manner, and this fundamental reality has not changed. On the contrary, Pakistan has made monumental sacrifices for this relationship and continues to suffer hugely in sustaining the onslaught of the aftermath of US policies in the region," she added.

The spokesperson maintained that since 1954, Pakistan and the US had enjoyed a positive and broad-ranging relationship.

"It is regrettable that the US official alluded to bracketing Pakistan with those who are perceived to be in an adversarial relationship with the US. While ignoring and shielding the manifestations of a much more potent missile capability in our eastern neighbourhood, concerns on Pakistani capabilities are being raised seemingly at the behest of others to further accen-

tuate the already fragile strategic stability in the region," it was further added.

The spokesperson reiterated that Pakistan's strategic capabilities were meant to defend its sovereignty and preserve peace and stability in South Asia.

"Pakistan cannot abdicate its right to develop capabilities that commensurate with the need to maintain credible minimum deterrence as well as evolving and dynamic threats. Since 2012 when the US officials started broaching the subject, different Pakistani governments, leadership and officials, have endeavored from time to time, to positively address and remove the misplaced US concerns," the press statement quoted her as saying.

Continued on Page 7

Peace to be restored in KP at any cost: Mohsin Naqvi

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that the government would go to any extent to restore peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The interior minister visited the veteran politician Aftab Khan Sherpao to discuss the political and security situation of the province.

Mohsin Naqvi also talked about the initiatives taken so far to restore peace in Kurram.

Naqvi also lauded the services of Aftab Sherpao in politics.

"No one should be allowed



to do politics on the sensitive issue of Kurram," the interior minister said.

Earlier, the provincial apex committee had decided to eliminate all the bunkers in Kurram district to ensure peace in the volatile region.

It was also decided during the meeting that the restive region would also be de-weaponized.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi assured CM Gandapur of his support to achieve peace in Kurram.

"It is our topmost priority to ensure peace in Kurram. The federal government is ready to enhance the capacity of provincial law-enforcement agencies," interior minister said.

"PIA to be privatized without liabilities": Abdul Aleem Khan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that start of PIA flights to Europe is a very welcome step as now people are confident that they will soon be able to travel by Pakistan International Airlines for Europe. He further said that this flight operation of PIA will also prove to be a milestone for the privatization of this organization and In Sha Allah after Europe PIA may get the good news of being operational for flights to the United Kingdom and United States of America as well which will further improve the credibility of this organization and it will be able to be "marketed" in a good way.

PTI founder calls for overseas Pakistanis to halt remittances: Aleema Khan

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, has called on overseas Pakistanis to stop sending remittances to the country.

Speaking to reporters outside Adiala jail after meeting Imran Khan, Aleema Khan said that the PTI founder said the government has no intentions to engage in talks with PTI, urging the overseas Pakistanis to halt remittances from tomorrow.

Aleema Khan reiterated her brother's demands for the release of prisoners, the establishment of a judicial commission on May 9 and November 26, and assured that Imran Khan would retract his call if dialogue with the government commenced.

The development came after PTI leader Omar Ayub claimed that the government was not serious to hold negotiations with PTI.

The Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub said that the PTT's negotiations' team was



not given access to meet the PTT's founder in Adiala Jail. He said the party's founder formed the negotiation team so as no one could say that the team was not formed for talks.

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Steering Committee directs Aviation Ministry to expedite completion of IIA outsourcing process

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday chaired the Steering Committee on outsourcing of the Islamabad International Airport.

The Steering Committee directed Ministry of Aviation to expedite the completion of the outsourcing process for the Islamabad Inter-

national Airport, a Deputy Prime Minister Office news release said.

The committee decided to approve the recommendation of the Pakistan Airports Authority that the bidder was technically qualified for outsourcing of the Islamabad International Airport.

Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb and senior government officials attended the meeting

Lord Qurban calls on DPM/FM Dar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Lord Qurban Hussain, a British Pakistani political leader of Kashmiri origin on Saturday called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

They discussed Pakistan-UK relations and issues pertaining to Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom, Office of the Deputy Prime

Minister said in a press release.

The DPM/FM appreciated Lord Hussain's support in the UK parliament for the rights and freedom of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and for their right to self-determination.

The DPM/FM highlighted the Government's initiatives for the economic growth and development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan Navy Ships Visited Kuwait and Iraq during Overseas Deployment



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: During an overseas deployment to the Arabian Gulf, Pakistan Navy Ships RASADGAR and AZMAT visited Port Al Shuwaiikh, Kuwait, while PMSS DASHT visited Port Umm Qasr, Iraq. The PN flotilla was led by Commander 14th Destroyer Squadron, Commodore Muhammad Umair.

Upon arrival at the host ports, the Pakistan Navy ships were warmly received by representatives of Pakistan embassies and officials from the host navies. The Mission Commander, along with the Commanding Officers, held meetings with the naval leadership of both countries. During these interactions,

matters of mutual interest, Navy-to-Navy engagements, and cooperation in maritime security were discussed. The Mission Commander conveyed well wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, to the people and navies of host countries.

Following the port calls, both PN and PMSA ships conducted Passage Exercises with Kuwaiti and Iraqi naval vessels. These exercises and maneuvers at sea aimed to enhance interoperability between the navies and promote shared learning through coordinated activities.

The visits of the PN flotilla to Kuwait and Iraq are expected to further strengthen the diplomatic ties and cordial relations with these friendly nations.

Sepoy martyred, four terrorists killed in Khyber gun battle: ISPR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A soldier was martyred in an exchange of fire with terrorists who were trying to infiltrate through the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Khyber district, the military's media wing said on Saturday. Security forces thwarted terrorists' attempt to infiltrate.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations said that four terrorists were killed during the gun battle that "occurred on the night of December 19/20" in the general area of Rajgal.

The martyred soldier was identified as Sepoy Amir Sohail Afridi, 22, a Khyber resident.

"Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border," it said and urged the interim Afghan government to fulfil its obligations and "deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarji for perpetuating acts of

terrorism against Pakistan." The statement said: "Security Forces of Pakistan remain committed to secure its borders & eliminate the menace of terrorism, and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve."

