



New date announced for verdict against Imran and Bushra in £190 million case

The verdict will now be announced on January 6. The date was announced by the court staff. While the hearing took place today, the judge, Justice Nasir Javed Rana, informed PTI lawyers that the verdict would not be delivered.



468 people airlifted in last 3 days from Kurram

Due to the closure of land routes in Kurram district, special helicopter service has been started on Monday for district Kurram on the instructions of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur with the aim to facilitate the transportation of people stranded there. On Monday, air transport services were provided to a total of 248 individuals.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday.



Photo by Presidency

President Zardari meets PM Shehbaz, agree to further legal reforms through consultations

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday held a crucial meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday wherein they agreed to move forward with legal reforms and decisions through consultations with all political stakeholders.

Naveed Qamar, a President House press release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his best wishes for President Zardari's health during the course of the meeting.

The discussion centered around the country's overall political, economic, and security situation. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working together for the nation's development and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, and National Assembly member Syed

They also discussed in details the legislative matters in Parliament.

President Zardari assured Prime Minister Shehbaz of his continued support and cooperation for the progress and stability of the country.

Govt asks PTI to submit charter of demands in next round of talks

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The first round of talks between the government and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) took place today under the chairmanship of National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. The government has requested PTI to submit its charter of demands in the next session.

Negotiating teams from both sides met in the committee room. The PTI delegation comprised Asad Qaiser, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and Raja Nasir Abbas.

The government's delegation included Ishaq Dar, Rana Sanaullah, Irfan Siddiqui, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Alim Khan, Raja Pervez Ashraf, and Naveed Qamar.

The meeting began with prayers for the success of the talks.

Speaker Sadiq stated that the dialogue between the government and the opposition is auspicious, highlighting that negotiation is a hallmark of democracy.



He emphasized that collaborative efforts between the government and opposition strengthen democracy, and that dialogue is the only solution to political issues.

He further stated that the parliament is a representative body of 240 million people, and that the public has high hopes for its ability to resolve issues. He stressed the importance of

finding solutions to the people's problems, highlighting that Pakistan's economic progress is intrinsically linked to political stability. He underscored that the current situation demands the promotion of political harmony.

During the negotiating committee meeting, government member Ishaq Dar commented that whenever the government initiates talks, a tweet appears

from the other side, seemingly referring to counter-productive statements or actions undermining the dialogue.

Asad Qaiser responded by agreeing, stating that the PTI's core committee had discussed this issue extensively and condemned such actions.

Following this exchange, both sides agreed to continue the negotiations. Sources indicate that

the next meeting of the negotiating committee will be held on January 2nd, at which point the opposition will be asked to present their charter of demands.

Following the first meeting of the negotiating committees between the government and the opposition, Senator Irfan Siddiqui read a statement to the media.

The statement noted that the first session of negotiations took place at the Parliament House and that the negotiating committees expressed their gratitude to the Speaker of the National Assembly. It further stated that both sides agreed that negotiations should continue, and both committees described the talks as a positive development.

The statement also indicated that the opposition committee will submit its demands and conditions in writing. According to Senator Siddiqui, Asad Qaiser informed the meeting that some members were unable to attend.

Initiating dialogue with Opposition to help strengthen political system: Rana



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Monday said that initiating dialogue with Opposition would help strengthen political and democratic system in the country. It is a good step of PTI for holding talks with the committee formed by the government for resolving political

issues, he said while talking to a private television channel. Political stability is vital for economic progress of Pakistan, he stated.

In reply to a question about release of PTI founder, he said unconstitutional demands of the PTI could not be fulfilled. He made it clear that PTI founder and leaders who have found involved in the planning of May 9 riots, could not be released.

He further stated that the courts would decide the cases of PTI founder on the basis of evidence. To another question, he said, we have strong wish to make result oriented dialogue with PTI.

Emergency declared in Kurram



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the KP Chief Minister on Information Muhammad Ali Saif Saif said that the cabinet has approved declaring Kurram a "disaster area," which allows for the legal authorisation of emergency relief activities.

According to Saif, the provincial government has directed relevant authorities to expedite relief operations. "The emergency response includes ensuring the supply of medicines and food items, as some private media channels have been misrepresenting the situation."

He emphasised that the relief emergency encompasses the provision of medications, food, and transportation via air service and that relief activities would continue until the situation in the district stabilises.

Saif added that financial assistance for individuals

affected by the tensions in the area would continue.

Earlier, during the cabinet meeting, Gandapur said that the people of the area desire peace, but "certain elements are attempting to exacerbate the situation through sectarian hatred."

He claimed that such elements created a "misleading narrative" to alter the perception of the problem, pointing out the excessive presence of illegal heavy weapons in the region.

"There is no justification for possessing such heavy arms and constructing fortifications," he said, "the government has no policy permitting any armed group to hold illegal heavy weapons."

The KP chief minister reiterated that the provincial government was making every effort to find a peaceful resolution to the issue through negotiations and jirgas.

PPP chief Bilawal criticises internet slowdowns as 'government censorship'

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari slammed the internet slowdowns and restrictions in the country, describing them as an "attempt to control and censor" the populace amid growing tensions between his party and the government.

"Our infrastructure used to be roads, highways motorways," he said while addressing the convocation ceremony at Sindh University in Jamshoro on Monday. "In today's age, I believe it's our bandwidth, our fibre optic cable, our wireless internet services."

Independent internet observers have confirmed that users in Pakistan have experienced slow internet speeds over the last couple of months. Users have reported problems in downloading media on WhatsApp and

inconsistent connectivity.

IT professionals have expressed concerns over internet shutdowns and slowdowns, warning they affect work and revenue.

According to reports, the government has been installing the second phase of a "firewall" that monitors certain platforms



and enables the blocking of specific content.

Last month, the PPP chairman opposed the bans on VPNs and the slow internet speeds in the country. He had criticised "decision-makers" for their lack of

understanding about VPNs and the internet, suggesting that had the government engaged in discussions with his party it could have provided clarity on the matter.

To many people's dismay on Sunday, a government official asked citizens should "reduce their internet usage" as a response to the frequent internet slowdowns experienced in Pakistan.

"There are large loads on our internet, [just] like on a congested road," Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Division Syed Sajid Mehdi told DawnNews TV programme Doosra Rukh. "Cars move slower if there is congestion. If 10 people use a road meant for five, it will slow everything down."

Bilawal stressed the need for "urgent attention" to internet restrictions.

Nine killed in Iran as bus, fuel truck collide: state media



Agencies

TEHRAN: At least nine people were killed on Monday when a bus collided with a fuel truck in Iran's southeast, state media reported, the second mass casualty road accident within days.

Mohammad Mehdi Sajjadi, head of the Red Crescent Society in Sistan-Baluchestan province, told the official IRNA news agency that "nine people lost their lives and 13 others were injured in the accident in which a bus collided with a fuel truck near Zahedan."

On Saturday, 10 people were killed when a bus plunged into a ravine in Iran's western Lorestan province.

Iran has a poor road safety record, with more than 20,000 deaths in accidents recorded between March 2023 and March 2024, according to figures from the judiciary's Forensic Medicine Organisation cited by local media. In August, 28 pilgrims en route to Iraq were killed when their bus crashed in central Iran.

Impoverished Sistan-Baluchestan, which borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, saw one of Iran's deadliest accidents in 2004, when a gasoline tanker collided with a bus, sparking a massive fire that killed more than 70 people.

Unveiling of Zawwar Abdul Sattar Dars book 'Fiqh-e-Muhammadi (PBUH)'

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: To spread the message of Islam across the universe, the Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) endured immense hardships, offered unparalleled sacrifices, and carried out an extraordinary and tireless struggle. Following in his footsteps, the descendants of the Prophet (PBUH) had to make even greater efforts, including sacrificing their own lives and those of their children, to propagate the same faith to the Muslim Ummah. It is due to these supreme sacrifices that Islam gained eternal life and stands indebted to these pure and righteous personalities.

These views were expressed by District Shia Preacher and Imam of Friday Prayer at Abu al-Fa'iz al-Abbas Mosque, Qadamgah Mola Ali, Maulana Syed Haider Abbas Zaidi, along with Zaker-e-Ahl-e-Bayt Syed



Waseem Haider Zaidi, Syed Ariz Mehdi Jafri, Zawar Abdul Sattar Dars, and Maulana Jabran Ghazanfar Zaidi. They were speaking at the launch ceremony of Zawar Abdul Sattar Dars's new book "Fiqh-e-Muhammadi (PBUH)" at Jamia Alaviya Mashari Ul Uloom today.

They emphasized that it is our fundamental responsibility to inform the Muslim Ummah, especially the younger generation, about the challenges Islam faced throughout centuries to reach us. By authoring "Fiqh-e-Muhammadi (PBUH)", Zawar Abdul Sattar Dars has fulfilled this vital

religious duty, which is a commendable service to the faith. The way he has succinctly documented centuries of history in this book is akin to capturing an ocean in a jar. May Allah Almighty and the revered Imams (AS) grant him great rewards for this noble service.

The event also featured speeches by Syed Ali Ghazanfar Shah Jehanian, Syed Muhammad Ahmed Jafri, Zaheer Mirza, Niaz Hussain Laghari, Syed Aftab Jafri, and others.

The ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Quran, after which the guests were presented with traditional Sindhi Ajraks as tokens of appreciation by Sohail Ahmed Palari, Tahir Ali Soomro, and Shahnawaz Solangi. Following the formal inauguration, the book was unveiled, and Syed Muhammad Zaki Shah Jehanian and Syed Hasnain Haider Jafri had the honor of reciting eulogies and praises.

Attock Police's successful operations against drug dealers continue

Reza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Police's successful operations against drug dealers continue; over 5 kilograms of hashish and 50 liters of liquor recovered; multiple suspects arrested. According to details, under the directives of District Police Officer Attock, Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan, Attock Police's operations against drug dealers are ongoing. As part of this effort: Police Station Saddar Attock recovered 1600 grams of hashish from Mehran Bakhsh, son of Basharat Mahmood, a resident of Dhoke Sharafa Attock, and 20 liters of liquor from Imran Abbas, son of Sajid Ali, a resident of Dhoke Gama. In another operation, 10 liters of liquor were recovered from Ubaid Nazabat, son of Nazabat, a resident of Jameel Town, Mari Kanjur. Police Station City Attock Recovered 1400 grams of hashish from Shakeel Abbas, son of Jameel Hussain, a resident of Kamalpur Syedan, Attock Cantt. Police Station Fateh Jang arrested five drug dealers. 700 grams of hashish were recovered from Tanveer Ahmed, son of Mumrez Ahmed, a resident of Ratwal. 650 grams of hashish from Sajjad Ahmed, son of Fazal Elahi, a resident of Jaffar. 600 grams of hashish from Muhammad Ilyas, son of Zahoor Ahmed. 10 liters of liquor each from Muhammad Rafi, son of Fazal Elahi, and Tausif Ahmed, son of Akseer Ahmed, both residents of Ratwal. Police Station Injra arrested Imran Abbas, son of Muhammad Altaf, a resident of Turab Jand, recovering 590 grams of hashish from his possession. Separate cases have been registered in various police stations, and the suspects have been taken into custody.

District administration utilize all resources providing safe travel to the public: DC

Reza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, has stated that providing safe travel to the public is the top priority of the district administration. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the Regional Transport Authority Attock at the DC Office Attock. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner General Anil Saeed, Secretary Regional Transport Authority Attock Zaheer Ahmed Khan, Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officers, and other relevant officials. The following matters were discussed during the meeting: Road Safety Traffic accidents across the district-Vehicle fitness and inspection-Cleanliness and arrangements at bus terminals-Installation of road signs Additionally, discussions were held on the inspection of government vehicles, operations against commercial vehicles with expired permits, elimination of illegal rickshaw stands, inspection of vehicles to combat smog, renewal of licenses for C-class and D-class stands, overcharging, and other related topics. Deputy Commissioner Attock instructed all relevant officers to strictly ensure the implementation of the directives issued regarding the meeting agenda.

'Ayaz Shah's detention sparks outrage in Thatta'

Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

THATTA: Relatives of famous Wrestler-Player of Sindhi wrestling-Mall Syed Ali Shah have accused noted political figures of Thatta district for subjecting Ayaz Shah and his family members to political victimization. Syed Ayaz Shah enjoys popularity across Sindh for his performance in Sindhi wrestling Malakhra and is also an eminent political figure of district Thatta. Ghulam Nabi Sheedi a colleague of Syed Ayaz Shah told local reporters that the player had been implicated in the cases registered under Sindh Arms Act allegedly on the behest of Hameed Panhwar Chairman District Council Thatta after he had contested elections against PPP MPA Haji Ali Hassan Zardari. Shah went on to secure more than 8000 votes, establishing himself as an emerging political force.

The rise of Shah he said had annoyed the political forces of Thatta district leading to his unabated victimization. Malja Players belonging to different areas of Thatta district staged a vigorous protest in Thatta demanding justice for their fellow player. Syed Nawaz Shah Badai of Jiye Sindhi Qaumi Mahaz said that the PPP had a history of inflicting brutality on its rivals during and after elections. He further said that players and artists are assets of a nation but in Sindh they were being victimized. Another player Khan Muhammad noted that neither the sports ministry nor the culture Minister has taken notice of the detention of Sindhi wrestlers. He further mentioned that they would continue their struggle until Ayaz Shah Bukhari was released. Mir Muhammad Halo said that contesting elections is a democratic and constitutional right of every citizen that could not be snatched by any means. Lawyers, traders and members of the civil society had also deplored the arrest of the Malah player.

MPs must declare assets by year-end: ECP

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set a deadline of December 31 for all members of parliament (MPs) and provincial assemblies to submit their statements of assets and liabilities, including those of their spouses and dependents.

The ECP requires all parliamentarians to submit their yearly statements of assets and liabilities, including similar details for their spouses and dependent children, as of the preceding June 30 on Form B for the 2023-2024 financial year, a mandatory requirement under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017, said a press release issued by the ECP here Monday.

The Commission, on the first day of January each year will publish names of members, who fail to submit the requisite statement of assets and liabilities including assets and liabilities within the specified period.

Assistances

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori inspection of medicine after a press conference along with Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Farooq Sattar, regarding supplies of medicines for affected people of Parachinar, at Sindh house, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Immunization prevents 3-5 million deaths from diseases annually, say health experts

Rafiullah Mandokhel

QUETTA: Vaccines have saved 154 million lives since the EPI began in 1974, of whom 150 million children and 101 million infants. Immunization has been the single greatest contribution of any health intervention in ensuring babies not only see their first birthdays but continue leading healthy lives into adulthood, said health experts during a health workshop held here in Quetta.

The one-day workshop for journalists across Balochistan entitled 'Engagement, Sensitization, and Orientation Workshop: Strengthening Media Advocacy for Routine Immunization' was organized by the Expanded Programme on Immu-



nization (EPI) in partnership with UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The workshop brought together senior journalists associated with both print and electronic media outlets hailing

from the provincial capital Quetta and bordering towns Killa Abdullah, Chaman, Zhob, Killa Saifullah, Noshki, Gwadar, Mastung, Sibi, and Pishin districts.

The Provincial Technical Person

N-STOP CDC Dr Ihsan Larek, Deputy Provincial Coordinator EPI Balochistan Dr Sahreen Nowsherwani, Senior Consultant WHO Dr Lubna Khalil, Directive Preventive Director General Health Office Balochistan Dr Asif Shahwani, SBC Lead Balochistan UNICEF Zia ur Rehman Sumalani, Provincial SBC Manager JHPEIGO Nadem Shahid, Provincial SBC Consultant EPI Balochistan Abdul Salam, Provincial MNTE Consultant EPI Balochistan Arif Ullah Marwat and EPI Balochistan official Dr Izzat Mandokhel briefed the participants about the importance of routine immunization, the role of the media, eliminating misconceptions, and a dozen different types of vaccines.

'Rashk-e-Qamar International Poetry Festival' hosted by Rehana Qamar

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: "Rashk-e-Qamar International Poetry Festival" was hosted by Madam Rehana Qamar, daughter of Toba Tek Singh. Ms. Rehana Qamar welcomed the poets and writers who participated in this poetry festival with bouquets of flowers. The Rashk-e-Qamar Poetry Festival was presided over by renowned literary figure Lieutenant General (R) Mr. Abdul Qayyum. While the event was patronized by renowned social and business figure Mr. Dr. Abdul Rauf. The Rashk-e-Qamar International Poetry Festival began with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Khush-al-Han Qari Ahmed

Faiz Golrawi in a mesmerizing and charming voice. Muhammad Saeed Saleem Sultani had the privilege of enlightening hearts with Naat Rasool Maqbool. The duties of management were performed by Atir Al-Fihani, President of Bazm Wafa-e-Qalam, in a grand manner. The honor of special guests was received by Mr. Sikandar Hayat Bhatti, Advocate of Supreme Court and Chairman Executive Committee Press Club Safdar Hussain Saifi. District Emergency Officer 1122 Faraz Munir, Mian Kamran Zafar Advocate, Lubna Afzal Rana Advocate and Abid Jamil Mahota Advocate specially participated in the Rashk-e-Qamar International Poetry Festival-

in addition to them, a large number of doctors, lawyers and journalists from all over the region, including men and women, and prominent personalities from every school of thought. Almas Shabi from America, Abid Rasheed from Glasgow, singer and poet Adeel Barki from Lahore, Ijaz Saqib, Qamar Raza Shahzad from Multan, Jahanzeb Sahir from Dijkot, Faqih Haider from Islamabad, Qamar Bukhari and Ahmed Saeed from Faisalabad participated as special guests and entertained the audience. Tahir Mahmood Tahir, Asad Khan Asad, Yasir Naeem, Fakhir Chaudhry, Nadeem Akmal Shaz and Madam Shukri Najafi attended as guests of honour. Local poets Abdul



Majeed Kanwal, Jamil Ehsaas, Saleem Sakhi, Dr. Adnan Asi, Tahir Rafique, Munir Sakin, Akram Khokhar, Qamar

Saleem and Siddique Parkeef recited their poems and received a lot of applause from the audience. Lieu-

tenant General (R) Abdul Qayyum's insightful and well-reasoned speech was very colorful.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:40 am
Zohr	12:07 pm
Asr	3:27 pm
Maghrib	5:05 pm
Isha	6:34 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
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Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

Cultural Day Celebration at Central Jail Hyderabad

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A splendid cultural program was held at Central Jail Hyderabad recently to mark Cultural Day, during which important steps were taken for the welfare and rehabilitation of prisoners. The aim of the program was to promote messages of culture, peace, love, and tolerance among the inmates.

This year's Cultural Day, celebrated annually in December, was held in a unique manner at the jail. The event was attended by DIG Jail Syed Manawar Ali Shah, jail administration, and cultural artists, with the event being organized by Jail Superintendent Naib Ali Bahhban.

During the program, renowned singer Waqar Malah and famous comedian Asghar Khoso performed, bringing joy and a sense of peace to the prisoners. The program, filled with cultural colors, Ajrak, and hospitality, allowed prisoners, jail officers, and guests to spend time together in an atmosphere of love, peace, and brotherhood.

Sambrial launches as Pakistan's Second Smart Village

Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Communities

Faisal Khawar Butt

SIALKOT: Sambrial has officially become Pakistan's second Smart Village, marking a significant step towards digitally connecting rural communities and improving the quality of life for residents. The initiative is a collaboration between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Pakistan, and Huawei, with TeleTaleem serving as the E-Education partner. and Baidarie NGO as Smart Village Center partner. The inauguration ceremony took place in Roras, Sambrial, and was attended by key stakeholders, including Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Addressing the Audience on Video link Ms. Shaza Fatima State Minister for IT & Telecom said The "Smart Village" platform leverages technology to provide rural communities with easy access to online education and healthcare. Residents can consult doctors and access medical services from home, while children can benefit from Islamic education and academic learning through online teachers.

Regional Director International Tele-

communication Union Atsuko Okuda said, "The Smart Village Pakistan initiative in collaboration with Huawei promotes a complete government approach to bring the benefits of digital transformation in sectors such as health, education and agriculture to rural and remote communities".

Khurram Sultan, Director Programs at TeleTaleem, highlighted the importance of collaboration, stating, "TeleTaleem is deeply grateful for the opportunity to partner with International Telecommunications Union and Huawei, a leading global provider of ICT infrastructure, on the Smart Village initiative at Government Girls High School Roras. Through this collaborative effort with ITU, Huawei, and the Ministry of IT & Telecom, we are bridging the digital divide and empowering students and marginalized communities with quality education and connectivity."

Moreover Arshad Mehmood Mirza Executive Director Baidarie Sialkot added ; -Setting up of "Smart Village Roras, Sambrial" in District Sialkot is a great landmark in the developmental history of the area. The training to improve the digital knowledge and skill will have a game changing impact



in shaping the future of the male and female youth who hitherto have been almost dimensionless with no option and hope for redemption except to haplessly experience the wastage of their potential, energy and efforts.

Ahmed Bilal Masud Deputy CEO Huawei Pakistan said This initiative is part of the Smart Villages of Pakistan program and aims to transform remote and rural communities by giving them access to digital services and Internet

connectivity to enhance their quality of life. The Smart Villages of Pakistan initiative hopes to transform more isolated and rural communities in Pakistan and foster sustainable digital growth and development.

Illuminate

ISLAMABAD: A view of decorated with colorful lights Saint. Thomas' Church, in connection with celebrations of Christmas, in the Federal Capital.

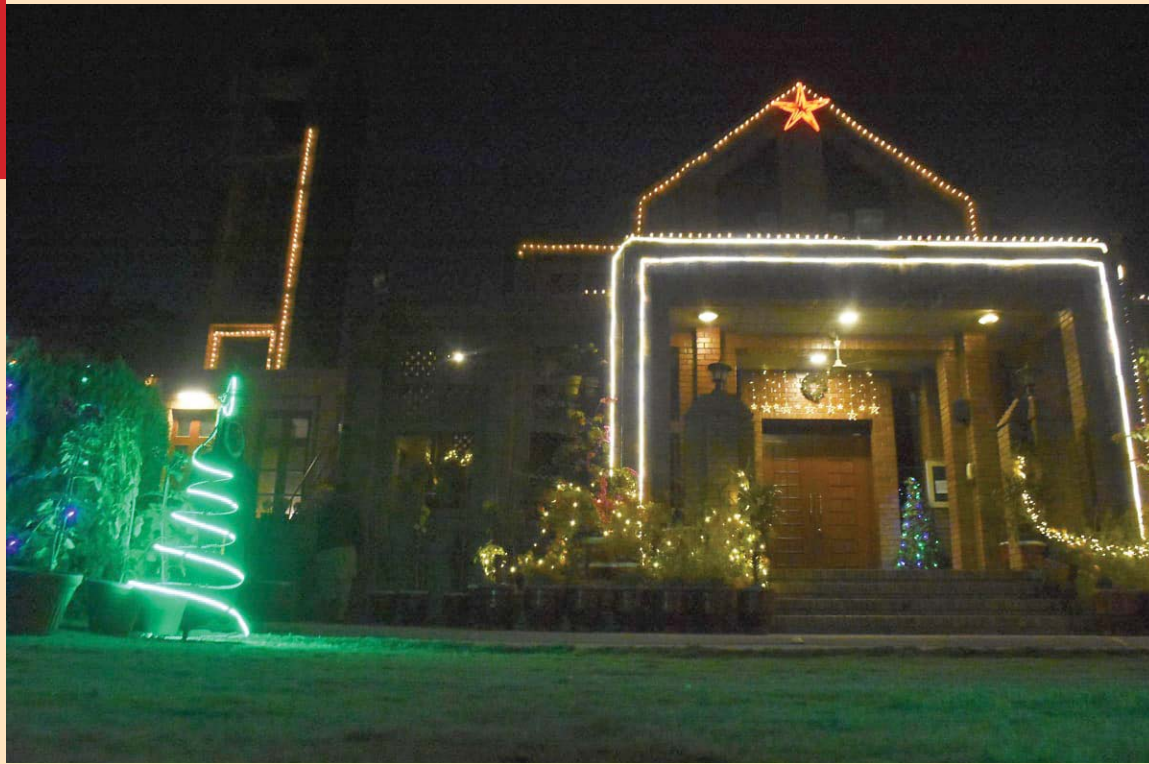


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Sarafa Association joined in Kamalia Tajer Ittehad

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the details, on joining the Kamalia Tajer Ittehad of Sarafa Association. A grand dinner was given in honor of the office bearers of Sarafa Association by the Patron In-chief of Kamalia Tajer ittehad Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat and President Chaudhry Tariq Hassan Rahmani. The elected president of Sarafa Association, Haji Imtiaz Ahmad and CEO Imtiaz Jewelers joined the Kamalia Tajer ittehad along with his cabinet and



the Kamalia Tajer ittehad elected Haji Imtiaz as the Chairman of the Council. Haji Imtiaz is currently the elected president of Sarafa Association after winning the regular elections in Kamalia. Mian Arqam Nasir among the respected members of

Mobile Association elected vice president of Kamalia Tajer Ittehad and Ahsan Shafiq was elected as deputy secretary. Patron in-Chief Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat administered to the members of Sarafa Association and Chairman Malik

Shafiq Shahid administered the oath to the newly elected office bearers. President Kamalia Tajer Ittehad Chaudhry Tariq Hassan Rahmani assured all the members that they are always standing together for the rights of tajers. General Secretary of Kamalia Tajer ittehad Rai Asad Ali Khan, Vice President Fida Hussain Bhatti, Vice Chairman Mian Tahir, Finance Secretary Malik Ajmal, Chaudhry Rehan Dogar and Amjad Chaudhry along with the participation of honorable members of Press Club.

Deadline extended for admissions at International Islamic University

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) has announced an extension to the application deadline for its spring semester admissions. The new deadline is Monday, 6th January, 2025.

The extension covers MS and PhD programs, while BS programs in various departments of the 11 Faculties of the university.

Prospective students can find details on the offered programs, eligibility criteria, and fee structure on the university's website, cms.iiu.edu.pk. For queries, male applicants can contact on WhatsApp number +92-0319-5213192, while female applicants can contact on +92-0319-5213193.

SECP Reasserts Compliance by Listed Companies to Publish Gender Pay Gap data

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has announced that despite extensive advocacy and engagement, the annual accounts of listed companies revealed very limited adherence to the gender pay gap disclosure requirements.



SECP through Circular 10 of 2024 in April this year directed the board of directors of listed companies to disclose gender pay gap data in their annual reports and on their websites with effect from June 30th, 2024. The directive was issued in compliance with Prime Minister's Women Empowerment Package (PM-WEP) 2024. Furthermore, the SECP advocated compliance through social media and by disseminating notices to listed companies for compliance through Pakistan Stock Exchange vide notice PSX/N-1140 dated November 26, 2024.

In order to facilitate compliance with the disclosure requirement, a suggested format and calculation method was provided along with the Circular. Additionally, an advocacy session was organized in collaboration with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to further emphasize the importance of gender pay gap disclosure and to promote gender inclusive practices among businesses.

The SECP is once again urging all listed companies to fully comply with the requirement to include gender pay gap data in their annual reports and on their websites. Failure to comply with the Circular may lead to enforcement actions against non-compliant companies.

The SECP is committed to promoting transparency, gender equality and facilitating PM WEP 2024 to foster a more gender inclusive business environment in Pakistan.

Chaudhry Javed Iqbal appointed Vice President as part of UBG's restructuring

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chaudhry Javed Iqbal has been appointed Vice President as part of UBG's restructuring, and the notification has been issued. A prestigious ceremony was held yesterday at FPCCI's Capital Office in Islamabad, where Chaudhry Javed Iqbal, nominated as Vice President for UBG representing Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir, was presented with his appointment notification.

The ceremony was attended by FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari ubg islamabad region Abdul Rauf Alam, former Chairman Founders Group Khalid iqbal malik, former

ICCI Vice President Faad Waheed, UBG Islamabad, ICCI President Nasir Qureshi, Vice President Nasir Chaudhry, UBG Islamabad Senior Vice President Johar Ali Raiki, Capital Office Incharge Karim Aziz Malik, former President Ijaz Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Waseem Chaudhry, and other prominent figures.

Speaking on the occasion, FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said, "The appointment of Chaudhry Javed Iqbal is an important step in UBG's restructuring. His inclusion will further strengthen and activate UBG in the Azad Kashmir and Islamabad regions."

UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said, "The Patron-in-Chief of UBG, S. M. Tanveer, has

taken remarkable steps to make the organization more dynamic and active. Chaudhry Javed Iqbal's appointment is another significant milestone in this process. We are confident that under his leadership, UBG will achieve even greater success."

UBG Islamabad Region President Abdul Rauf Alam added, "Chaudhry Javed Iqbal has already proven his capabilities. He has rendered outstanding services in FPCCI and Mirpur Chamber. We are certain that he will bring the same dedication to UBG, further strengthening the organization."

The appointment of Johar Ali Raiki as UBG Islamabad's Senior Vice President was also highlighted during the



event, recognizing him as a recent addition to the leadership team. Both appointments were seen as key steps

toward enhancing UBG's activity and influence in the region. The event concluded with attendees

congratulating the newly appointed officials and expressing their best wishes for their future endeavors.

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Education and Skills Unlock Economic Stability and Growth of Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

Education is the cornerstone of a prosperous society that helps to cultivate skills development of the youth is crucial for economic stability and growth. As the world continues to undergo rapid technological advancements and globalizations the need for a highly skilled workforce to stabilize the growth of a country. Pakistan's priority is first the quality of education and equipping individuals with the necessary skills that can empower youth to contribute meaningfully to the economy and secure a prosperous future.

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping the future of youth and driving economic development. World Bank reports also indicate that investigating education yields high returns not only for individuals but also for society as a whole. Education is directly linked to increased productivity, higher incomes and better well-being.

Moreover, imparting knowledge and skills education enables individuals to enter the workforce with the capabilities needed to thrive in today's competitive environment. Skills development is another critical factor in unlocking economic stability and growth. Rapid technological advancements have reshaped the job market, creating a demand for workers with specialized skills.

Education serves as a catalyst for social mobility allowing individuals to

break free from the cycle of poverty and achieve their full potential. Empowering the next generation through education and skills development investing in quality education, providing continuous skills training and fostering a culture of innovation. Moreover, continuous skills training plays a pivotal role in adapting to the rapid changes in the global economy. As industries evolve due to technological advancements and globalization, equipping the workforce with relevant skills ensures that individuals remain competitive. This not only enhances personal economic prospects but also contributes to overall societal progress by fostering innovation and productivity.

Empowering future generations through robust educational frameworks and ongoing skill development is essential for promoting social mobility. By prioritizing these investments, societies can cultivate an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to succeed irrespective of their socio-economic background. Education not only benefits individuals by increasing their employability and income but also serves as a driving force for economic development and social progress. As we look towards the future it is essential to recognize the transformative power of education and skills in shaping a prosperous society for generations to come.

Education serves as a dual catalyst for both individual advancement and broader societal progress. On one hand, the benefits of education to individuals are evident through enhanced employability and increased income potential. Individuals with higher educational qualifications typically have access

to better job opportunities, which contribute to financial stability and improved quality of life. This personal gain not only empowers individuals but also fosters a sense of self-worth and community involvement.

The implications of education extend beyond personal achievement; it acts as a driving force for economic development and social progress. A well-educated workforce is essential for innovation, productivity, and competitiveness in the global economy. Moreover, education promotes civic engagement and social cohesion by fostering critical thinking and informed citizenship. This collective benefit underscores that while individual gains from education are significant, its role in shaping economic landscapes and advancing society is equally crucial.

It effectively highlights the dual nature of educational benefit, personal enrichment and societal advancement. However, critiqued for its lack of specificity regarding it constitutes collective benefit. A more nuanced exploration of how education influences various sectors, such as healthcare, technology, and civic engagement, would strengthen the argument.

For progress acknowledging individual gains is important, one must consider the disparities in educational access that can hinder these collective benefits. The statement overlooks systemic barriers that affect marginalized communities disproportionately. Failing to address these inequalities, it risks promoting an overly optimistic view of education as a universal solution. Thus, while the assertion holds merit in recognizing education's broader implica-

tions, it necessitates a critical examination of accessibility and equity to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its transformative potential.

Empowering future generations through robust educational frameworks and ongoing skill development is essential for promoting social mobility. A well-structured education system not only imparts knowledge but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability skills vital in an increasingly complex job market. Furthermore, investing in comprehensive curricula that include vocational training, STEM education, and soft skills development, we equip students with the tools necessary to navigate their career paths successfully.

Moreover, ongoing skill development initiatives are crucial for ensuring that individuals remain competitive in a rapidly evolving economy. As industries transform due to technological advancements, continuous learning becomes imperative. Programs aimed at reskilling and upskilling will bridge the gap between existing qualifications and emerging job demands, thus facilitating upward mobility for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Prioritizing educational frameworks and lifelong learning opportunities is fundamental to dismantling systemic barriers to social mobility. In the future, empowering next generations with diverse skills and knowledge, we create a more equitable society where everyone has the potential to thrive.

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq, Post-Doctorate (Peace Education) in International Islamic University, Islamabad

'Future of our planet'

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) held historic hearings from December 2 to 13 addressing States' obligations under international law to combat climate change, a process spearheaded by small island nations facing existential threats, the U. N. reported Monday.

Initiated by a UN General Assembly resolution, the proceedings involved 96 countries and 11 regional organizations presenting their views on the "obligations of States with regard to climate change" under international law.

While ICJ advisory opinion will be non-binding, it is expected to shape the future of international climate law.

The hearings opened with an appeal from Vanuatu and 'Melanesian Spearhead Group', representing nations most vulnerable to climate change.

"The outcome of these historic proceedings will have repercussions for generations to come, determining the fate of nations like mine and the future of our planet," said Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's special envoy for climate change.

The Pacific Island nation highlighted the catastrophic impacts of rising seas and extreme weather, calling the failures of high-emitting States "illicit".

The country's Attorney General Arnold Kiel Loughman argued that "the failure of a handful of high-emitting states to meet their obligations constitutes an internationally wrongful act," as they have brought humanity "to the brink of the abyss."

Small island developing States (SIDS), represented by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), echoed these calls.

They asked the World Court to affirm principles of international law that address sea-level rise, including the recognition of maritime zones and statehood even if territories are inundated.

Brazil highlighted its commitment to ambitious emissions reductions, stressing that despite being a developing country, it faces significant challenges like poverty eradication and extreme climate impacts.

The country's special envoy on climate change, Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado, underscored the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", asserting that high-emitting developed countries bear the greatest burden in addressing the crisis.

China, meanwhile, urged the ICJ to avoid creating new legal obligations and focus on existing frameworks such as the Paris Agreement on climate change.

As one of the world's largest emitters, China argued that developed nations must bear historical responsibility, while developing countries require longer timelines to meet climate goals.

The United States acknowledged the severity of the climate crisis but argued that international treaties like the Paris Agreement are not legally binding.

Margaret Taylor, the US representative, also rejected the notion that "common but differentiated responsibilities" is a fundamental principle of international law.



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

Unraveling the Sectarian Crisis in Parachinar & Kurram

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) region of Pakistan, particularly the districts of Parachinar and Kurram, is currently facing a severe humanitarian crisis. To fully understand the root causes of this turmoil, one must delve into its intricate and multifaceted dynamics, which are often obscured by deliberate complexity. As a keen observer, I have come to the conclusion that these conflicts are not merely localized disputes but are fueled by foreign conspiracies, exploiting existing sectarian divisions. This externally motivated extremism has been exacerbated by the state's historical policies, which prioritized short-term goals over long-term societal cohesion, leaving a deeply fractured society in its wake.

Pakistan, a country where Sunni Muslims are in the majority, has a long history of sectarian tension, particularly against the Shia minority. Under the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, strong anti-Shia sentiment was encouraged as part of a state policy to counteract the influence of Iran's Shia-dominated regime. During this era, Iran was actively funding movements to assert its leadership in the Muslim world, which created tensions with Sunni-dominated Pakistan. To curb Iran's influence, the Pakistani state supported extremist ideologies that marginalized Shias. This short-sighted policy not only ignited sectarian violence but also institutionalized prejudice within

society, which has persisted and evolved into widespread extremism today.

The belief that Shias are heretics and that killing them is a religious virtue took root in the Sunni majority, deeply embedding itself in certain segments of society. Extremist groups, particularly those aligned with the Deobandi school of thought, like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), have perpetuated this narrative. The situation in Parachinar, where Shias form the majority, has become particularly dire as the district is surrounded by Sunni-majority areas, leading to a constant state of hostility. Local accounts suggest that militants, allegedly affiliated with the TTP and crossing over from Afghanistan, have been attacking Shia communities, further exacerbating the conflict.

On the other hand, Sunni residents of Kurram and nearby areas allege that certain Shia militant groups, purportedly backed by Iran, are responsible for targeting Sunni Muslims. This mutual distrust and blame have created a vicious cycle of violence and retaliation. While these claims might stem from legitimate grievances, they are also a product of years of propaganda and state neglect. The lack of a robust response from the state has allowed foreign actors to exploit these divisions, turning local conflicts into proxies for larger geopolitical agendas.

What we are witnessing is not merely a sectarian issue but a complex interplay of historical grievances, state policies, and

foreign interference. This has created an environment where extremism thrives, and ordinary citizens bear the brunt of the violence. The people of Parachinar are particularly vulnerable, as they find themselves trapped between local hostilities and international conspiracies. Despite the relatively better situation in other parts of Pakistan, Parachinar remains a flashpoint, highlighting the failure of the state to protect its citizens and uphold its writ.

To address this crisis, the state must take decisive action to restore peace and stability. It must recognize the equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of their sectarian affiliation, and actively work to dismantle extremist ideologies that fuel hatred and violence. This includes curbing foreign interference, whether from Iran, Afghanistan, or other players, and holding accountable those who perpetuate violence under the guise of religious doctrine. Education reform is also essential to promote tolerance and unity, replacing divisive rhetoric with messages of coexistence and mutual respect.

The ongoing killings, whether of Shias or Sunnis, must be stopped immediately. The state has a responsibility to uphold the rule of law and ensure justice for all. This requires not only immediate action to quell violence but also long-term measures to address the underlying issues that have led to this crisis. Only through sustained efforts can Pakistan overcome the divisions that have been tearing it apart and ensure a peaceful and inclusive future for all its citizens.

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M Azam Tariq

Bilawal Bhutto's Statement: Political Failure or Strategy?

The recent statement by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in which he criticized the Shehbaz government and highlighted the failure to fulfill promises, carries an important political message.

This statement is not just an attack on the federal government, but also reflects the internal strategy and future planning of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Bilawal Bhutto's statement also expresses a demand for greater support and cooperation from the federal government, calling for stronger communication and a more assertive stance in the upcoming 26th December meeting.

The Pakistan Peoples Party, a major political force in Sindh, formed an alliance with the federal government when opposition parties aimed to oust Imran Khan's government. Under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif, PPP joined the federal government alongside the PML-N and other coalition parties. However, over time, PPP has felt that the promises made by the federal government, especially regarding financial resource distribution, legislation, and provincial autonomy, have not been fulfilled.

Bilawal Bhutto's statement clearly shows that PPP expected more effective action and cooperation from the federal government, but those expectations have likely not been met. The slow implementation of various issues at the federal level, particularly regarding financial resources for Sindh and legislative matters, has become a significant challenge for PPP leadership.

The recent meeting chaired by PPP's Chairman, with the participation of governors and chief ministers from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan, and Sindh, sends a clear message that PPP is attempting to adopt a unified strategy to strengthen its demands. The meeting revealed concerns about the lack of progress in talks with

the federal government, indicating that PPP is serious about maintaining strong connections with the federal government and ensuring its demands are recognized. The delay in financial assistance for provinces and legislative matters was a key concern raised during the meeting.

Bilawal Bhutto's direction for governors and chief ministers to enhance communication with the federal government quickly highlights that PPP seeks a more effective response, particularly in the upcoming Central Executive Committee meeting on 26th December. In that meeting, PPP is expected to fortify its stance and refine its strategy for positive results.

Bilawal Bhutto's statement is not just a criticism; it could also be part of a broader strategy. His message is clear: if the federal government fails to fulfill its promises, PPP will adopt a new strategy. Bilawal Bhutto believes this new approach could help PPP gain more public support in the upcoming general elections.

This statement is a significant indication of PPP's strength and its unwavering stance. Bilawal Bhutto's position reinforces the idea that PPP is ready to fight for its constitutional rights, and increasing pressure on the federal government may become a key part of its strategy.

At this stage, Bilawal Bhutto's statement is creating a new tension in the political landscape. PPP is prepared to adopt any strategy to increase pressure on the federal government. After the 26th December meeting, it is likely that PPP will further strengthen its position and mobilize public support.

In the coming days, it will become clearer whether PPP will truly take a new direction in its strategy and relationship with the federal government, or if this recent statement will remain limited to political pressure.



Abdul Ghafoor Saroqi

Pakistan and Kenya strengthen trade ties: A Gateway to East Africa and Central Asia

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and the Kenyan High Commissioner met today to explore new horizons in trade and regional cooperation.

The discussions centered on leveraging Pakistan's strategic location to serve as a gateway between Central Asia and the East African Community (EAC), with both sides expressing a strong commitment to deepening economic ties.

The minister conveyed greetings for the Kenyan President and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with Kenya and the broader East African Community (EAC).

Highlighting Pakistan's strategic location, he underscored its potential role as a bridge for trade between CARs and East Africa, paving the way for mutually beneficial trilateral relations.

Discussions during the meeting covered key trade sectors, including agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and commodities. The minister emphasized that Pakistan, as one of the largest importers of Kenyan tea, sees tremen-

dous scope to diversify trade into other unique African products such as coffee, pineapples, and more.

Similarly, Kenya was invited to explore opportunities in Himalayan pink salt, marble, and cement exports from Pakistan.

Pharmaceuticals also emerged as a growing sector for bilateral trade. With banking channels already well-established between the two countries, the minister highlighted the importance of expediting the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the East African bloc.

The High Commissioner requested swift progress on the MoU, which is currently under review by Pakistan's law division.

Minister Jam Kamal proposed hosting an East African-specific trade conference in Pakistan, highlighting the country's keen interest in the East African bloc.

He suggested including CARs in such initiatives to facilitate a comprehensive dialogue and create stronger trade corridors.

The minister also pointed to Paki-

stan's thriving industries, such as surgical instruments and sports goods, and recommended the High Commissioner visit Sialkot and Gujranwala—key industrial hubs known for exports and innovation.

The minister also highlighted the potential for Pakistani private companies in the power transmission sector and recommended the High Commissioner meet Pakistan's Minister for Power.

The Kenyan High Commissioner expressed appreciation for Pakistan's proactive approach, stating, "You opened the door before we knocked." He emphasized the architectural similarities between Kenya and Pakistan, which are gaining popularity, and appreciated recent developments such as tractor exports from Pakistan to Kenya.

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to strengthen trade relations, enhance cooperation, and work expeditiously on formalizing trade agreements.

Both sides expressed optimism about the future, with plans to coordinate visits and explore further opportunities across key industries.



PMLN UK celebrate the Quaid-e-Azam, Nawaz Sharif, birthday

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: The Muslim League (N) UK organized a ceremony in London to commemorate the birthdays of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, and Mian Nawaz Sharif, the Quaid of the Muslim League (N) and former Prime Minister of Pakistan. The event saw a large gathering of supporters and party members, with Defense Minister Khawaja Asif as the special guest.

In his address, Khawaja Muhammad Asif highlighted the significant contributions of both leaders to Pakistan. He stated that Nawaz Sharif's achievements and stature in Pakistan's political history, following those of Quaid-e-Azam, are unparalleled. The ceremony served as a platform to emphasize Nawaz Sharif's role in shaping the country's political landscape while paying tribute to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam.

PML-N UK's This event was attended by prominent figures. Among the attendees were Pakistani High Commissioner Dr. Muhammad Faisal, Press Minister Ali Nawaz Malik, and several key leaders of PML-N UK, including President Ahsan Dar, General Secretary Rashid Hashmi, and Coordinator Zubair Gul.

Other notable attendees included



Senior Vice President UK Iqbal Sindhu, renowned lawyer Shafaqat Sindhu (Head of International Coordination London), PML-N London President Majid Wardag, Senior Leaders Anjum Chaudhry, Chaudhry Naveed Akbar, Raja Ansar, Chaudhry Abdul Manaf, Bradford Branch President Raja Kamran Sayab, Chaudhry Jahangir Hussain, Rafiq Awan, Ikram Nawaz, Syed Farhad Hussain Bukhari, Hina Malik, Silk Lodhi, and Nawadar Khan were present, alongside a large number of other party officials and workers.

The event underscored the unity and dedication of PML-N's overseas chapters, with participants reaffirming

their support for the party's vision and leadership.

The ceremony concluded with the cutting of birthday cakes to honor the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the leader of PML-N, Mian Nawaz Sharif. Party workers demonstrated their unwavering solidarity with Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz by enthusiastically raising slogans in their support.

The event wrapped up on a celebratory note as attendees enjoyed a soulful Qawwali performance, adding a cultural and festive touch to the gathering. The atmosphere reflected unity and enthusiasm among PML-N supporters and officials.

Relentless target killing of youth, illegal confiscations part of a grand conspiracy to turn Kashmiri Muslims into a minority

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has strongly condemned the target killing of Kashmiri youth by Indian occupation forces.

In a statement issued here today, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal, while referring to the recent killing of five youth in Kulgam area by the occupation forces, said that the Indian trigger happy forces deployed in every nook and cranny of the valley were relentlessly targeting Kashmiri youth in fake encounters.

He said that on the one hand bloodbath of innocent civilians goes on unabated while on the other hand illegal attachment of civilians' properties at the hands of occupation forces has become a new normal in Kashmir.



He said that it was quite unfortunate that the innocent civilians were being abducted by the Indian forces during night raids and then killed in stage managed encounters.

Terming it as a deep

rooted conspiracy, the spokesman said that relentless target killing of youth and illegal confiscations were part of the Modi government's nefarious designs to turn the Muslim majority state into

a minority and strangulate it economically.

The spokesman urged the world human rights bodies to take effective notice of the matter and help stop bloodshed and violence in the region.

State-run Bank of AJK partners with Faysal Bank to revolutionize financial transactions

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Spokesperson for the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (BAJK) said in a statement regarding the agreement between BAJK and Faysal Bank that recently the State Bank of Pakistan and AGPR have made it mandatory for customers to provide their International Banking Account Number (IBAN) for receiving all types of government payments, be it salary, pension or any type of government money, after which these payments will either be transferred directly to the bank account or the IBAN number will be mandatory on the cheque issued by the AG Office. Following these instructions, the AG Office Azad Kashmir has also

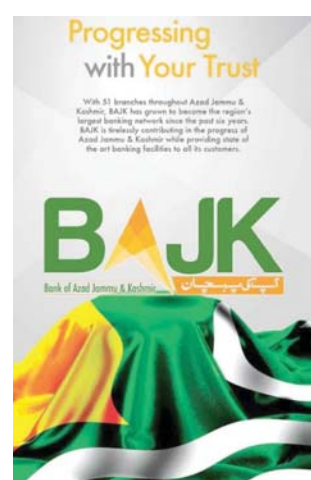
made it mandatory for all recipients of government payments to provide IBAN and the last date for this was set as 30th September 2024.

Since the scheduling process of the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (BAJK) is still underway, the bank currently needs more time to provide the facility of direct IBAN to its customers. To facilitate the customers and resolve the issue, BAJK officers held a meeting with representatives of AG Office, AGPR and State Bank. In this meeting, it was informed by the concerned institutions that the same issue had also been faced by Karakoram Commercial Bank Limited (KCBL) some time ago. KCBL resolved this issue through an agreement with Faysal Bank,

under which Karakoram Bank provided IBAN to its customers and through them payments are being transferred to KCBL accounts.

Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir currently has accounts of more than 12,000 government employees, many of whom have also obtained advance salary loans against their salaries.

Internally, while any kind of government payments are not possible without IBAN, the bank management decided to immediately contact commercial banks to provide IBAN facility to its customers for timely payment of salaries. To immediately sort out the issues, instead of a new experiment, an initial agreement was made with Faysal Bank so that the



esteemed customers do not face any problem. Apart from Faysal Bank, the bank management

is also in touch with two major national banks.

The Supreme Court of Azad Kashmir has allowed the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to purchase banking software on December 13, 2024, but without obtaining the status of a scheduled bank, the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir cannot issue IBAN on its own. The AG Office had set a deadline of November 30, 2024 to resolve this issue. If the bank is unable to provide IBAN to its customers in time, then after November, salaries, pensions and other government payments will not be able to be transferred to the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, so entering into an agreement with Faysal Bank is the only temporary solution to

this issue.

It should also be remembered that agreements between banks are a normal thing. Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has already entered into agreements with UBL and HBL for the convenience of its customers. The agreement with Faysal Bank has nothing to do with the efforts of Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to get the status of a Scheduled Bank, nor will it affect those efforts. The two main conditions for becoming a Scheduled Bank are a minimum capital of Rs. 10 billion and banking software. Progress is progressing rapidly on both these issues. The process of purchasing banking software, which was delayed for more than a year, has been

resumed, and a letter of intent has been issued to the successful bidder. After the installation of the software, the application for the license of Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will be submitted. Similarly, as far as the minimum capital is concerned, the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is playing a full role in achieving this goal.

The public is requested not to pay attention to baseless rumors circulating on social media. Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is performing brilliantly as always. In the first eleven months of this year, the bank has earned a record profit of over Rs. 1.70 billion, which is a historic milestone, and even better results are expected next year.

IICR hold a seminar on Decoding Media Influence

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) convened an insightful seminar titled "Decoding Media Influence: Global Perspectives on Information Perception and Society". The event Seminar together prominent experts from academia, media, and public policy to discuss the profound impact of media on shaping societal and political landscapes in an increasingly interconnected world.

Moderated by Dr. Shabana Fayyaz, Associate Professor at Quaid-e-Azam University, the seminar featured a distinguished panel, including Ex. Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Dr. Nazir

Hussain, Air Marshal (Ret.) Farhat Hussain, Ex. Information minister Murtaza Solangi, media expert Dr. Furqan Rao, and investigative journalist Fakhar Kakakhel.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Sabah Aslam, Executive Director and Founder of IICR, emphasized the critical relationship between media, public perception, and societal outcomes. She underscored the importance of fostering media literacy, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging responsible media consumption, particularly among youth. The seminar sought to examine the media's role in shaping narratives, countering misinformation, and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Syed highlighted the EU Disinfo lab role in exposing India's global propaganda campaigns, citing examples like the activities of ANI and the Srivastava Group. He noted the transformative power of Western media in shaping historical and contemporary events, from the 1953 Iranian coup to the Iraq War. Reflecting on the shifting dynamics of media during the 2024 U.S. elections, Senator Hussain called for a coordinated media strategy in Pakistan to address emerging challenges.

Murtaza Solangi, a seasoned journalist and ex federal minister, delved into the essence of journalism, advocating for the public's right to know. He identified corporate influence, market forces, and

non-state actors as significant challenges to media independence. He emphasized the global epidemic of misinformation, stressing the importance of digital literacy to combat fake news and prevent the suppression of voices through censorship.

Fakhar Kakakhel, an investigative journalist, pointed to the proliferation of "keyboard warriors" and the Western-backed spread of misinformation, linking these issues to efforts to undermine Pakistan's progress, particularly regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He called for better mechanisms to address the digital chaos resulting from censorship and misinformation.

Dr. Furqan Rao, a media expert, warned against the dangers of political hate speech, which he said exacerbates social and cultural divisions. He advocated for a multidisciplinary approach to address media-related challenges and highlighted the need for widespread media information literacy to create an informed populace.

In his keynote address, Air Marshal (Ret.) Farhat Hussain underscored the necessity of exploiting Indian vulnerabilities that are often masked as strengths through media manipulation. He called for equipping individuals with critical thinking skills to discern truth from propaganda and recommended rationalized media regulations to manage the



cross-border influence of media narratives. Dr. Nazir Hussain, in his closing remarks, addressed the growing dominance of social media as a counterbalance to the restrictive practices of mainstream media. He attributed this trend to the corporate ownership of traditional media houses, which often limits the diversity of perspectives available to the public.

The seminar shed light on

pressing global and national challenges posed by media influence, including the rise of misinformation, the weaponization of narratives, and the role of social media as an alternative to mainstream platforms. Panelists collectively stressed the urgent need for digital literacy, media regulation reforms, and the cultivation of critical thinking to navigate the evolving media landscape.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
113,924.41	109,513.14	
Day's High	Day's Low	
114,189.71	110,891.35	
Index Value	Change	
38,681,410,746	+4411.27	
Percentage	Time	
+4.03%	23 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,102.72	+18.11	
Percentage	Time	
-0.22%	23 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
42,740.16	-100.10	
Percentage	Time	
-0.23%	23 Dec, 12:31 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
39,161.34	+459.44	
Percentage	Time	
+1.19%	23 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	174.75	177.00
Bahrain Dinar	735.65	743.65
Canadian Dollar	194.60	197.00
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	39.15	39.55
Euro	288.35	291.10
Hong Kong Dollar	35.44	35.79
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.01	905.51
Malaysian Ringgit	61.59	62.19
New Zealand \$	155.37	157.37
Norwegians Krone	24.41	24.71
Omani Riyal	719.50	728.00
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.80	74.35
Singapore Dollar	204.99	206.99
Swedish Korona	24.92	25.22
Swiss Franc	311.45	314.25
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.45	76.10
UK Pound Sterling	347.40	350.9
US Dollar	278.10	279.60

PTCL partners with IBM & GBM Pakistan to modernize its IT infrastructure using IBM technology

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the country's leading ICT services provider, has partnered with GBM Pakistan and IBM to modernize IT infrastructure. This strategic partnership strives to boost PTCL's operational efficiency while establishing a foundation for cutting-edge innovations and a comprehensive upgrade of Enterprise Systems.

"We are proud to partner with IBM & GBM Pakistan" shared Jafar Khalid, Group Chief Technology and Information Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G. "This upgrade is vital in a rapidly transforming telecommunications landscape. By adopting advanced technologies like IBM Power Systems and IBM Spectrum Scale, we are committed to enhancing our capabilities by future-proofing our operations. Our commitment to this transformation reinforces our dedication to delivering exceptional service and value to our customers while leading the industry into the future."

Asif Ahmad, Country Manager & Technology Leader, Pakistan at IBM said: "We're committed to helping organizations like PTCL harness the power of advanced technology to drive growth. IBM will help PTCL by improving performance, efficiency, and scalability, while reducing operating costs through



newer machines. The new systems will also enhance security and reliability, supporting business-critical applications."

Saqib Ahmad Khan, Country General Manager, GBM Pakistan, said: "We are excited to support PTCL on its digital transformation

journey. By harnessing IBM's Power solutions, we are committed to providing robust solutions that not only enhance PTCL's operational capabilities but also drive innovation and customer satisfaction in a competitive market.

GBM Pakistan offers a comprehensive suite of services, including system implementation, storage migration and training. This infrastructure upgrade is a crucial component of PTCL's broader strategy to enhance performance, security and scalability.

Inspection

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visiting F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchange Project on Monday.



Photo: Online

Meezan Bank and Arif Habib Limited launch instant top-up service for investors

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank, and Arif Habib Limited, a leader in investment banking, have recently partnered to enhance the investor experience in Pakistan. The collaboration is marked by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the launch of an innovative Instant Top-up Service for investors. Mr. Shahid Ali Habib, CEO of Arif Habib Limited, and Syed Amir Ali, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Meezan Bank signed the agreement, with senior management from both organizations in attendance.

The new service allows Meezan Bank customers to instantly top up their Arif Habib Limited investment accounts via the Bank's Alternate Distribution Channels, including Meezan Mobile App, Internet Banking, and ATMs. Previously, investors had to manually transfer funds and provide proof of deposit. The Instant Top-up Service automates this process,



saving time and reducing complexity. Syed Amir Ali, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Meezan Bank, commented "The Instant Top-up Service is part of Meezan Bank's strategy to digitalize and streamline financial transactions, strengthening its position as a leader in Shariah-compliant banking. Through our partnership with Arif Habib, we are helping drive the evolution of digital banking in Pakistan, providing a faster, more efficient way to top

up investment accounts, and improving the overall experience for investors." Mr. Shahid Ali Habib, Chief Executive Officer of Arif Habib Limited, said "We are pleased to announce our strategic partnership with Meezan Bank to enable swift and secure digital payments for our clients. This collaboration reflects our commitment to delivering seamless and efficient financial solutions, ensuring our customers can conduct transactions with greater ease."

EFP joins hands with ILO

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP), with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the Labour INDITEX Project, organized the first awareness-raising session in its series aimed at promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) in the Cotton Supply Chain. The session was held in District Bahawalnagar, Punjab.

Briefing the background of the session, Mr. Abaan, Project Coordinator at EFP, highlighted the importance of FPRW in ensuring

decent work for all. He also shared the contributions and achievements of EFP in promoting and creating decent working conditions and ensuring the safety of workers, which are essential for better productivity and the sustainability of businesses.

Mukhtar Awan, Master Trainer, made a detailed presentation on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, covering all five FPRW agendas. During the session, the core principles of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) were highlighted. These principles focus on ensuring freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right

to collective bargaining. Additionally, the session addressed the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor, the effective abolition of child labor, and the eradication of discrimination in employment and occupation. It also emphasized the importance of providing a safe and healthy working environment for all workers.

During the open discussion session, participants inquired about and shared their views on the benefits of forming an employer's association. They agreed to form a small landlords' association and suggested the name "Haqooqe Kissan Welfare Association - District Bahawalnagar"



for it. A committee was formed to finalize the representatives' names and positions. Additionally, the participants requested EFP for

technical assistance in developing a memorandum of association and helping with registration with the respective forums.

realme launches industry's best waterproof smartphone, the realme C75



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The world's fastest growing smartphone brand realme has officially launched the realme C75, a revolutionary device with unparalleled water and dust resistance protection. It features the coveted

IP69 rating, a rare inclusion across its price segment in Pakistan. With the realme C75, the brand takes innovation to an entirely new level. Packed with features rarely seen in its price range, this device is designed to meet the demands of modern users:

Advanced solar technology powers Pakistan's industrial growth



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan's energy needs continue to grow, consumers have lots of choices in cutting-edge technology in advancing industrial and commercial solar solutions.

Known for higher energy yields, performance in low-light conditions, and durability, this advanced photovoltaic technology is becoming the preferred choice for large-scale applications across diverse industries.

A 202kW solar installation at an agribusiness facility in Kasur, completed earlier this year, produces 283,068 kWh annually with a performance ratio of 75%. This project demonstrates how the technology can reliably support energy-intensive operations in agriculture.

The growing adoption of this technology aligns with Pakistan's push for renewable energy solutions to combat high electricity costs. The company's modules, known for reduced degradation rates and increased longevity, provide businesses with a cost-effective means to offset operational expenses.

It recently announced a breakthrough in its technology with the introduction of i-TOPCon Ultra, achieving a record-breaking efficiency of 26.58% in laboratory conditions. The new modules promise up to 40W additional power output, offering enhanced energy efficiency and cost savings. These advancements are set to further boost the performance of Trinasolar's Vertex N series, which already delivers superior results in high-temperature regions like Punjab.

President, PM congratulates Green Shirts over ODI series sweep against South Africa

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday congratulated the Pakistan Cricket team for securing a series win over South Africa, with a victory by 36 runs, in the third and final one-day international match.

The president, in a statement, said that the Green Shirts displayed a fabulous game and conveyed his good wishes for the future of the team members.

He expressed the hope that the Pakistan cricket team would continue to perform well in the future as well.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has felicitated the Men in Green on historic clean sweep in the ODI



series against South Africa.

Paying glowing tribute to the Men's cricket team here on Monday, the premier said that Pakistan Men's cricket team was the first in the world to clean sweep

South Africa in a three-match or more ODI series at their home soil.

Shehbaz Sharif hailed the cricket team for excellent performance with the bat and ball throughout the ODI series and expressed the hope that the team would continue to win laurels for the country in future as well.

The Prime Minister also praised Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi and the team management for yielding exceptional results.

Naqvi hails Men in Green on historic ODI series win against Proteas

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has congratulated Pakistan Men's cricket team on historic white-wash of South Africa in the ODI series.



Pakistan has become the first team to achieve a 3-0 clean sweep against South Africa on their home soil in an ODI series comprising three or more ODIs. Chairman Mohsin Naqvi expressed his heartfelt congratulations to the national team on their remarkable victory in the third ODI. "This outstanding achievement is a testament to exceptional teamwork and determination," he said.

The Chairman also praised individual performances that contributed to the team's success. "Saim Ayub once again showcased his class with a magnificent century that played a pivotal role in securing the win. Similarly, Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam demonstrated great batting skills, while Sufiyan Moqim's excellent bowling performance won the hearts of the nation," he remarked.

Chairman Mohsin Naqvi further commended the confidence and composure displayed by the players throughout the series. "The team played with passion and hard work, and this historic triumph will undoubtedly boost their morale as they prepare for the ICC Champions Trophy. We are confident that the team will continue to deliver such stellar performances in the upcoming tournaments."

The PCB acknowledges the collective efforts of the players, coaching staff, and management for this remarkable series victory, which has brought pride and joy to cricket fans across the country.

CM Internship Programme: Over 4,000 Applications received in 2nd phase of: Secretary Sports

Tahir Amin Malik.

LAHORE: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial has said that the applications of more than four thousand youth have been received in the first two days of second phase of Chief Minister Internship Programme.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial shared this information while presiding over a review meeting of Chief Minister Internship Program at the Punjab Stadium on Monday.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry, Additional Secretary Mian Usman Ali, Chief Digital Officer Bank of Punjab Nofal Dawood, Director Admin Dr M Kaleem and Bank of Punjab team participated in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial said that the aim of



Sports and Youth Affairs Department Punjab is to highlight the potential of the talented youngsters and provide them sufficient opportunities to grow in their respective careers.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial further said that the Internship Program is being organised in accordance with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister

Maryam Nawaz Sharif. "Under this revolutionary programme, Rs 25,000 per month is being given to the talented youth for a period of six months," he elaborated.

Mohammad Amir shares 'the most special moment' of his career

A Sports

LAHORE: Former Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir recently revealed that dismissing legendary Sachin Tendulkar was the most special moment of his international career.

The 32-year-old pacer announced his retirement from international cricket earlier this month, bringing an end to a 15-year international career that started in 2009.

Amir announced his decision in a heartfelt note posted on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, following the footsteps of his compatriot Imad Wasim, who announced his retirement a day before.

"After careful consideration, I have taken the difficult decision to retire from international cricket," he posted. "These decisions are never easy but are inevitable."



"Representing my country has been and always will be the greatest honour of my life.

I would sincerely like to thank the PCB, my family and friends and, above all, my fans for their

continuous love & support." During a recent appearance on a sports talk show, Amir

reminded about taking the wicket of Sachin Tendulkar at the age of 17 during the ICC Champions Trophy in 2009.

He described it as the most special moment of his career and shared that it took him a full three days to fully come to terms with the reality of having dismissed one of the greatest batters of all time.

"Dismissing Sachin Tendulkar was the most special moment for me," said Mohammad Amir. "I bowled to him only once in my life during the 2009 Champions Trophy in South Africa."

"I had seen him play cricket on TV and always used to think about how brilliant a batsman Sachin was... Bowling to Sachin Tendulkar was a big thing for me."

"For three days after his dismissal, I was not in my senses; I could not believe I had taken Sachin Paaji's wicket."

Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches were decided in the Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at various Grounds. The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.



Scores in Brief:

Zone-III Whites won their 2nd consecutive Victory against Zone-II Green by 9 wickets at KCCA Stadium in Group "D". Zone-II Green 78 all out in 27.3 overs. M. Mudassar 21, Zubair Anwar 14. M. Maaz Maqbool (ob) 3/12, Aman Ahmed Ahmed (ob) 2/9. Asadullah Khan (ob) 2/16, Anas Balouch (mf) 2/25.

Zone-III Whites 79/1 in 9.4 overs. Muhammad Hamza 36 6x4 not out, Haider Ali 24. Later Muhammad Maaz Maqbool received the Medicam Man of the Match Award.

In the 2nd Match Zone-VII Blues beat Zone-III Blues by 5 Wickets at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-III Blues 109 all out in 33.3 overs. Affan Khan 41 6x4, Anas Khan 14. Sahil (ob) 4/20, M. Saqib (sla) 3/18. Muhammad Sarim 2/19.

Zone-VII Blues 111/5 in 28.5 overs. Zohaib Khan 40 5x4, Muhammad Jalal 15. Hanzala Nadeem 3/17, M. Afoze Afridi 2/24. After the finish of the Match Ajmal Naseem President Zone-I given the Medicam Man of the Match Award to Sahil of Zone-VII Blues.

Swinging for Hearts: AKUH Golf Tournament Saves Lives

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two years ago, little Kawish's parents were living their worst nightmare. At two months old, their baby boy was diagnosed with holes in his heart—a condition that could cut his life tragically short. The doctors at the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) assured them the defect was operable, but for Kawish's family, the cost of surgery seemed an insurmountable obstacle.

That's when AKUH's "Mending Kids' Hearts" programme stepped in. With generous donor support, the programme covered the treatment cost enabling Kawish to undergo a successful surgery that healed his heart. Today, Kawish is a vibrant two-year-old, running, laughing, and living the care-free life every child deserves—

all thanks to the experts at AKUH and the generous support of donors.

This Sunday, December 22, over 100 corporate players gathered for AKUH's Annual Golf Tournament, an important fundraising event for the "Mending Kids' Hearts" programme. This initiative provides life-saving surgical care to children with Congenital Heart Disease (CHD), a condition affecting thousands of children in Pakistan. Since its inception in 2015, the programme has saved over 3,000 young lives.

CHD is the most common congenital defect in Pakistan, affecting more than 60,000 newborns annually and contributing to high under-five mortality rates. However, with timely intervention, 90% of these cases are treatable, allowing children to lead healthy, productive lives.

The Aga Khan University Hospital is one of the few institutions in Pakistan offering neonatal cardiac surgeries, performing advanced procedures. From arterial switches to neonatal arch surgeries, the hospital's expertise ensures even the most complex cases are treated with precision.

"There is no greater joy than witnessing a child take their first steps toward a healthy and happy future—a future that might not have been possible without the generosity of our donors and the unwavering dedication of our team. Each child we help is a story of hope, courage, and resilience. Events like the Annual Golf Tournament remind us of the incredible things we can achieve when we come together for a cause bigger than ourselves," said Dr Farhat Abbas, Chief Executive Officer, AKUH.

AKUH's Annual Golf

Tournament has become a premier event, exemplifying the strength of collaboration between the public and private sectors, and the impact it can create. Each swing this Sunday has brought us closer to mending hearts—both literally and figuratively.

In this year's golf tournament, Siddique Sons' team emerged victorious, lifting the coveted winning trophy. The team showcased exceptional skill and teamwork throughout the event. ARY's team put up a strong fight, finishing as the runner-up after a series of competitive rounds.

Highlighting individual brilliance, Abdul Raffay was awarded the "Longest Drive" honour for a remarkable 322-yard drive. The tournament was a testament to the high level of talent and sportsmanship displayed by all the participants, with memorable



moments across the course. "Thank you to all the wonderful donors and players who came together today. Your

participation in this tournament is more than just a round of golf—it's a lifeline for children who need our support in

their battle against congenital heart disease," said Zahra Somani, Aga Khan University's Chief Advancement Officer.

Celebration

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, hosted a special cake cutting ceremony in connection with celebration of the occasion of Christmas by the Christian staff of the Finance Division. The event was attended by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, along with senior officers of the Ministry on Monday. The ceremony began with prayers for the peace, security, and solidarity of the country. Minister Aurangzeb extended heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian staff, recognizing their contributions and reaffirming the government's commitment to promoting inclusivity and equality for all citizens.



Photo: PID

Attractive returns to promote trade, employment opportunities: Aleem Khan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday said for sustainable development and economic improvement in the country, investors should get attractive returns which will increase employment and have a positive impact on every sector.

He expressed these views while talking to CEO of Multinational Company CCI Kareem Yahi who called on him. They discussed important issues related to investment including business promotion in Pakistan, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that there are immense opportunities for starting business in



Pakistan with a population of 240 million which can be beneficial for domestic and foreign investors.

He said foreign investors are being provided with

maximum business facilities in Pakistan and it is necessary that those doing business and investing in Pakistan feel a practical and favorable atmosphere with attractive facilities.

The minister said government's positive steps have significantly reduced the inflation rate which is a very welcome development and this will not only increase business

in the future but also improve the annual growth rate.

He said that business companies from Turkey are close to our hearts and we always ensure special cooperation over unresolved issues.

He appreciated Mr. Kareem Yahi's affiliation to Turkey and assured him of his all possible cooperation.

Kareem Yahi expressed his deep interest in investing more in Pakistan on which Aleem Khan assured him of constant communication and said that he would get full support for investing and enhancing business in Pakistan.

CEO CCI appreciated the business-friendly initiatives and facilities in glowing terms and assured that his company will definitely avail such opportunities.

Senate body discusses UAE visa restrictions

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, chaired by Senator Zeeshan Khanzada, on Monday convened a session at Parliament House to deliberate on critical issues, including the UAE's unofficial visa restrictions, housing projects, and the welfare of overseas Pakistanis.

Senator Zeeshan Khanzada emphasized the urgency of addressing lingering visa concerns, noting public frustration over unresolved issues.

'People are questioning when these matters will be resolved,' he remarked, urging clarity on the underlying challenges, said a press release.

Khanzada pointed out discrepancies in visa processing despite applicants fulfilling all requirements and stressed the importance of



keeping the public informed and timelines.

The Secretary of the

Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OPHRD) clarified that the restrictions were not absolute, particularly in Dubai, where skilled labor remains unaffected.

He acknowledged a recent decline in the demand for unskilled labor and highlighted the need to prioritize skilled workforce migration. He added that approximately 700,000 workers have been sent abroad this year.

Dr Salman Atif calls on PM's Coordinator for Climate Change

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam said that while Pakistan grapples with the escalating adverse impacts of climate change, from devastating floods and droughts to extreme heat waves, there is a pressing need to prioritise gender-inclusive climate resilience to overcome these climate risks.

'Women, especially in rural and marginalised communities, are among the most vulnerable to climate-related disasters. Yet, they also hold the key to sustainable, community-driven solutions,' she said during her meeting with two-member delegation, led by Technical Lead for Green Tech Hub at NUST Dr Salman Atif.



The delegation which also comprised a senior official from UN-Women Dr Waqar Ul Shams on Monday called on the PM's Coordinator for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam here in the M/o Climate Change & Environmental Coordination in Islamabad. Various matters related to the

future plan of action for Green Tech Hub as a national focal point for research and green technology driven startups from the country and possible search for international partners for enhancing cooperation and collaboration in climate research and startups ecosystem came under discussion

between two sides during the meeting. PM's climate aide assured the delegation of her all-out support to explore and reach out to available funding avenues and opportunities for strengthening the Green Tech Hub, set at the NUST University in Islamabad in collaboration with the climate change and environmental coordination ministry.

During the meeting PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam highlighted that 'By empowering women with the tools, knowledge, and resources to adapt to a changing climate, Pakistan can build stronger, more resilient communities for the future. However, there is urgent need for inclusive, holistic risk management strategies focusing on building climate resilience of the women and children.'

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Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed Takes Over As Commander Central Punjab (COMCEP)



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed assumed command as Commander Central Punjab (COMCEP). COMCEP exercises authority over all Pakistan Navy units from Bahawalpur to Wazirabad and is also the Commandant of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore.

Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1992. He has a distinguished career, holding a wide range of command and staff appointments. These include Personal Staff Officer to Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Directing Staff at PN War College, Commanding Officer of PNS SAIF, Defence Attaché of Pakistan in Malaysia, Commander Surface Task Group-3, Commandant of Pakistan Naval Academy, Commander West at Gwadar, Hydrographer of Paki-

stan, Chairman PNSC, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (T&P), and Director General C4I at Naval Headquarters.

The Admiral is an alumnus of PN War College Lahore, Defence Services Command and Staff College Bangladesh, and the National Defence University Islamabad. In recognition of his meritorious services, he has been awarded the Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military).

The Change of Command ceremony was held at Naval Complex Walton, Lahore, where Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood handed over command to the newly appointed Commander Central Punjab. Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed was presented with a Guard of Honour and introduced to the staff officers of Headquarters COMCEP.

The ceremony was attended by Pakistan Navy officers, CPOs, sailors, and civilian personnel.

UK govt response to sentencing of 25 civilians in military courts in Pakistan

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: The British Foreign Office issued a statement expressing concern following the sentencing of civilians by military courts in Pakistan. A spokesman stated:

'While the UK respects Pakistan's sovereignty over its own legal proceedings, trying civilians in military courts lacks transparency, independent scrutiny, and undermines the right to a fair trial. We call on the Government of Pakistan to uphold its obligations under the Interna-



tional Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.'

The statement underscores the UK's commitment to promoting justice, human rights, and adherence to international legal standards

Barrister Danyal Chaudhry Attends Christmas Festivities



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, graced Christmas celebrations hosted by Faith Force Ministries in Rawalpindi. The gathering included Senior Pastor Samson Bhatti, Pastor Sharoon Bhatti, Pastor Danish Bhatti, Pastor Ramoon, Umair Gill, and individuals from diverse walks of life.

Barrister Chaudhry commended the Christian community's invaluable contributions to Pakistan, underscoring the spirit of Christmas as a time for peace, love, and unity. 'Christmas reminds us of the beauty of harmony and mutual respect that binds us as a nation,' he remarked. The celebration concluded with the cutting of a Christmas cake and prayers for peace and prosperity, reaffirming Pakistan's dedication to inclusivity and shared values.

First 'Made in Pakistan' exhibition Jeddah to open avenues for trade: Commerce Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has stated that the first 'Made in Pakistan' Trade and Investment Conference in Jeddah would play a pivotal role in showcasing the country's industrial strengths and fostering international partnerships. He emphasized the importance of focused matchmaking during the B2B sessions to create

meaningful business opportunities for both product and service sectors, said a press release issued here Monday.

He said the three-day event will feature an exhibition, B2B meetings and a gala dinner, with 125 exhibitors representing Pakistan's diverse industries, and added that the key sectors included textiles, leather, agriculture, surgical goods, engineering, construction, sports goods, pharmaceuticals, IT and more.