

## Justice Mansoor declines to discharge his duty as SC administrative judge

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah of the Supreme Court (SC) has refused to perform his duties as an administrative judge, Sources told that the judge has refused to sign the files, saying he had already relinquished the post of an administrative judge.



## Gas supply suspended after major pipeline explodes near Queta

A major gas pipeline explosion near Quetta's Western Bypass has caused a widespread disruption of gas supply across several areas of Balochistan. Police reported that the incident occurred near a bridge in the jurisdiction of the Barori police station. An 18-inch diameter gas pipeline was targeted, resulting in a large fire. Police and fire brigade personnel responded quickly, bringing the blaze under control after an hour-long effort.

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## Happy Christmas

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and others cutting the cake on the occasion of Christmas at St. Joseph's Catholic Cathedral Church, Rawalpindi.



Photo: ISPR

# Protection of minorities' rights focus of Pakistan's fundamental agenda: PM

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the country's fundamental agenda of development and prosperity hinges upon the protection of the rights of Christian community and other minorities.

Addressing an event held in connection with Christmas celebrations here at the PM House, he extended cordial felicitations to the Christian community in the country and the world.

PM Shehbaz Sharif underscored that the day demanded the nation to join its forces for the betterment of mankind. "The Holy Quran has a revered mention of Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH) and Hazrat Maryam (PBUH). Today, the birthplace of Prophet Jesus Christ is tainted in bloodbath and thousands of Palestinians including children, youth, elderly and women have been killed. All Christians and Muslims should unite and join forces to stop this bloodshed and uphold the mission of peace of



Jesus Christ in Palestine's holy land," the PM urged.

He acknowledged that the Christian community rendered indelible contributions in the independence, betterment of the nation's education, defence,

and protection of the motherland in different wars that would be remembered in golden words, adding, "Cecil Chaudhary and Justice Cornelius are known to everyone."

PM Shehbaz noted that he

and his elder brother Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had also graduated from missionary schools whose teachers played a critical role in grooming their personalities.

"We should promote unity,

interfaith harmony and tolerance in the society to ensure protection of the rights of the minorities and ensure that they consider themselves as a respected member of the society. Pakistan belongs to all and we should celebrate this day as a more revered occasion as it is the birthday of Jesus Christ, and Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as well," Shehbaz Sharif said.

The prime minister quoted Quaid-e-Azam's statement saying, "Protection and promotion of minorities rights has been our top priority. You all are the proud citizens of Pakistan. Your equal development and progress is the basic point of our fundamental agenda. I extend you the felicitations of Christmas and ensure that your protection, security and prosperity is not only dear to us but our responsibility."

Christian athletes, the Sohail sisters had won 22 medals in different games whereas Brigadier Helen Merry Roberts the first female christian army officer were the recognition of their services for the motherland, he said.

## Azerbaijani airliner crashes in Kazakhstan, killing 38 with 29 survivors, officials say

### Spokesman Report

AKTAU: An Azerbaijani airliner with 67 people onboard crashed Wednesday near the Kazakhstani city of Aktau, killing 38 people and leaving 29 survivors, a Kazakh official said.

Deputy Prime Minister Kanat Bozumbaev disclosed the figures while meeting with Azerbaijani officials, the Russian news agency Interfax reported.

The Embraer 190 was en route from the Azerbaijani capital of Baku to the Russian city of Grozny in the North Caucasus when it was diverted and attempted an emergency landing 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from Aktau, Azerbaijan Airlines said.

Speaking at a news conference, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev said that it was



too soon to speculate on the reasons behind the crash, but said that the weather had forced the plane to change from its planned course.

"The information provided to me is that the plane changed its course between Baku and Grozny due to worsening weather conditions and headed to Aktau airport, where it crashed upon landing," he said.

Russia's civil aviation authority, Rosaviatsia, said that preliminary information showed that the pilots diverted to Aktau after a bird strike led to an emergency on board.

## Federal govt to introduce Presidential Ordinance for madressah registration

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is set to introduce a presidential ordinance for the registration of madressahs, with the Ministry of Law tasked with its preparation.

This decision follows a successful agreement between the Government of Pakistan and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) on a madressahs registration bill, allowing the President to either issue an amendment ordinance or present a bill in Parliament. The ordinance aims to permit madressahs to register under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, providing legal protection to those wishing to affiliate with the Ministry of Education's current system.

Sources indicated that President Arif Alvi will issue this ordinance. At present, no law governs the registration of madressahs linked to the Ministry of Education, which is currently being conducted by a directorate established through a federal cabinet decision after negotiations



between religious scholars and the government.

This ordinance will create a legal framework for registering madressahs connected to the Ministry and address the President's concerns regarding the madressah registration bill.

The decision emerged from meetings involving the Prime Minister, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and President Alvi. Stakeholders, including Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, have report-

edly reached a consensus on the ordinance.

The new ordinance will provide legal safeguards for madressahs under the Directorate General of Religious Education and the Societies Registration (Amendment) Act, 2024. In October, Maulana Fazlur Rehman successfully utilized his party's voting power to ensure the approval of a bill amending the Society Act for madressahs registration as part of the 26th constitutional amendment.

## COAS joins Christian community to celebrate Christmas

### Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), joined the Christian community in celebrating Christmas at St. Joseph's Catholic Cathedral Church, Rawalpindi, underscoring the spirit of inclusivity and harmony.

The congregation extended a warm welcome to the COAS, expressing gratitude for his presence and solidarity during this cherished occasion.

On this festive day, the COAS conveyed his heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community across the nation. He emphasized that Christmas serves as a profound reminder of the universal values of compassion, generosity, and goodwill—principles that bind our diverse society together. He further acknowledged the remarkable contributions of Minorities and Christian community to Pakistan's cultural, social, economic and national progress, which remain a source of pride and strength for the nation.

During the occasion, General Asim Munir also paid a solemn tribute to the founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He highlighted that the Quaid's visionary leadership, unwavering determination, and steadfast adherence to the principles of Faith, Unity and Discipline not only paved the way for the creation of Pakistan but also provided a timeless blueprint for nation-building. The COAS remarked that Quaid-e-Azam's enduring commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and religion tolerance continues to inspire and guide the nation in addressing contemporary challenges, from safeguarding territorial integrity to fostering internal stability.

"As we commemorate this festive season, let us reaffirm our collective resolve to transform Pakistan into the peaceful, prosperous nation envisioned by the Quaid," the COAS concluded, urging all citizens to work tirelessly toward achieving this shared aspiration.

## Army kills 13 terrorists in South Waziristan gunbattle

### City Desk

RAWALPINDI: As many as 13 Khawarij were killed in a gunbattle with security forces personnel in South Waziristan District, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

According to an ISPR press release which was issued on Wednesday, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in general area Sararogha, South Waziristan District on reported presence of khawarij terrorists on the night between December 24 and 25.

During the conduct of the operation, troops effectively engaged khawarij location, as a result of which, 13 khawarij were sent to hell.

Killed khawarij remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as killing of innocent civilians, the ISPR statement said and added, a sanitization operation was carried out to elimi-



nate any other Khawarij found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan were determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country.

The latest operation came days after Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had claimed a raid on an army outpost near the border with Afghanistan, which Pakistani officials said martyred 16 soldiers.

Islamabad has accused Kabul's Taliban authorities of harbouring militant fighters, allowing them to strike on Pakistani soil with impunity.

A UN Security Council report in July estimated up to 6,500 TTP fighters are based there — and said "the Taliban do not conceive of TTP as a terrorist group".

## President, PM pay tribute to forces for killing 13 terrorists during South Waziristan operation

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid tribute to the security forces for killing 13 terrorists during the operation in Sararogha area of South Waziristan.

In separate statements, the president and prime minister appreciated the bravery of the security forces for killing the Khawarij during a successful intelligence-based operation.

Both the dignitaries reiterated their commitment to the complete elimination of terrorists from the country.

"Security forces are conducting operations to elimi-



inate the scourge of terrorism. The entire nation is united against terrorism and actions against Fattana Al-Khawarij will continue until the complete end of terrorism," the president said.

"The security forces will continue to crush the nefarious intentions of the enemies of humanity in the same way. The nation is proud of the fearless youth of the security forces," the prime minister said.

# Sindh Govt plans a mega construction project to attract investors and expatriates

 **Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

KARACHI: The government of Sindh is working aggressively to boost economic activities across the province, including a mega construction project in Karachi to attract foreign investors and overseas Pakistanis, this was stated by Sharjeel Inam Memon, Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit.

Speaking as a chief guest at the 18th Build Asia International Conferences and Exhibition at Expo Center on Tuesday, he said the mega project is related to the construction sector which will generate job opportunities for many skilled and educated individuals across the province.

He also revealed that the Sindh Government is also talking with the Chinese government to set up an assembly plant for the manufacturing of buses in the province. Besides, there are also options under consideration to introduce EV cab schemes and import of additional 100 buses to meet the urgent requirement of transportation for masses of the province.

The Sindh government has met



high-level delegations of various Chinese investors and businessmen from different sectors, facilitating them in Dhabajee Special Economic Zone, which is also a part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, to establish various projects in near future.

We are working to attract investment to Karachi across the country and the world in cooperation with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SFIC). Karachi remains the best destination for doing business in Karachi, he remarked.

Farhan Anis, Vice President Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan said the construction sector is witnessing innovation and upgradation of technology at a faster pace to improve standard of life and work.

Build Asia Exhibition and Conferences is the flagship event for the construction and allied sector in Pakistan which connects stakeholders and introduces various emerging concepts of sustainable and environment-friendly construction.

The three-day event showcases the latest trends, technologies, and innovations shaping the future of the construction industry and brings together key stakeholders from across the country. Several exhibitors from 10 different countries are participating in the event, which is expected to attract more than 35,000 visitors from over 42 ancillary sectors, including aluminum, brick, cement, glass, marble, paint, steel, tiles, and transportation.

The event also featured seminars on real estate investment and financing trends in Pakistan and PropTech and Smartech first regional moot on tourism, hospitality and real estate.

## Protest

KARACHI: Activists of MWM hold a protest in favor of their demands at Numaish Chowrangi in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Sarafa Association joined in Kamalia Tajir Ittehad

 **Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the details, on joining the Kamalia Tajir 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 Tajir 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 Tajir ittehad along with his cabinet and the Kamalia Tajir 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 Tajir Ittehad and Ahsan Shafiq was elected as deputy secretary. Patron in-Chief Chaudhry

Kamran Ahmad Nusrat administered the oath to the members of Sarafa Association and Chairman Malik Shafiq Shahid administered the oath to the newly elected office bearers.

President Kamalia Tajir Ittehad Chaudhry Tariq Hassan Rahmani assured all the members that they are always standing together for the rights of tajers. General Secretary of Kamalia Tajir 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.

## GSM-TCI conducted a workshop on RAISE

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: GSM-TCI Islamabad in collaboration with the District Health Office, conducted a comprehensive workshop on the RAISE (Reflective Action and Awareness to Improve Self-reliance and Efficiency) tool. This interactive session brought together representatives from Data, Store, Admin, Facility, Procurement, Media,


and Engagement, as well as the District Health Officer, to assess gaps and strategize actionable solutions. By leveraging the RAISE tool, the participants worked collectively to identify areas of improvement within the district's health system and family planning services.

The insights gained will guide the development of future action plans to strengthen and enhance



family planning uptake and across the district, reinforcing TCI's commitment to "Scaling Impact with Efficiency, Strengthen service delivery TCI's commitment to "Scaling Sustaining Progress Together".

## Eco-friendly packaging factory in Balochistan

 **Rafiullah Mandokhel**

QUETTA: A new eco-friendly packaging factory, Al-Khair Corrugated Carton Factory, has been inaugurated in the provincial capital Quetta, marking a significant milestone for Balochistan's economic development.

Supported by the European Union's Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) programme, the factory addresses a critical supply chain gap, reduces reliance on external suppliers, and promotes sustainable practices.

Owned by entrepreneur Khair Muhammad, it received a PK 30 million rupees matching grant, enabling the import of advanced machinery from China and Germany. This initiative not only creates local jobs but also aligns with global climate goals through the use of recyclable materials.

The event also saw the distribution of matching grants worth PK 54 million rupees to 14 small and medium enterprises continuing its efforts to strengthen rural economies. The success of the 3rd Cycle Cheque Distribution Ceremony highlights the transformative potential of these initiatives for the region's economy.

The European Union-funded Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) programme, implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in collaboration with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA).

## Smoking damages heart and lungs: Dr. Shahid Gill

 **Zafar Chishti**



TOBA TEK SINGH: According to details Sakina Hospital Kamalia Chief Executive, MBBS, MCPS and Assistant Professor Dr. Shahid Iqbal Gill talking to Daily The Spokesman said that by smoking a person suffers from suitable diseases like heart and lungs so people should avoid smoking to be safe from diseases. He further said that nowadays our young generation is very addicted to smoking due to which people are getting heart attack problems. I request parents to take care of their children so that they don't get addicted to smoking. In the End, Dr. Shahid Gill said that the government should also ban cigarettes so that our young generation can be safe.

## 148th Birth Anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah celebrated nationwide with Zeal

 **Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

KARACHI: The 148th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was celebrated across Pakistan, including Karachi, with great enthusiasm and national spirit. The day began with gun salutes in federal and provincial capitals, followed by special prayers for peace, prosperity, and progress after the Fajr prayer.

A change of guard ceremony took place at the Quaid's Mausoleum, where the cadets of the Pakistan Military Academy assumed their duties. Major General Iftekhar Hassan Chaudhry, Commander of the Pakistan Military Academy, paid homage to the Quaid by laying a floral wreath, offering prayers, and sharing reflections on the unparalleled services of the Father of the Nation.

The Pakistan Air Force contingent also presented a salute, and representatives of the armed forces paid their respects by offering prayers and laying floral wreaths at the mausoleum. Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah also visited the mausoleum and shared their sentiments during their addresses.

Speaking to the media, Governor Tessori emphasized the significance of the Quaid's contributions and praised Pakistan's progress, citing the continuous growth of the stock exchange and international support in overcoming crises. He highlighted external threats to Pakistan's development and called for collective efforts to resolve national issues, particularly addressing the aftermath of incidents like those on May 9 and November 24.

The day concluded with nationwide celebrations, reaffirming the nation's commitment to the Quaid's vision for a prosperous and united Pakistan.

## Takht Bhai Press Club Elections: All Candidates Elected Unopposed

 **Tariq khan Yousafzai**

TAKHT BHAI: Takht Bhai Press Club Registered Elections: All Candidates Elected Unopposed In the elections of Takht Bhai Press Club (Registered), all candidates have been elected unopposed. Muslim Khan Sabir has been elected as President, while Akbar Khan Yousafzai has been chosen as General Secretary. The President of the Bar Association Takhte Bhai, Advocate Saifullah Khan, formally issued the notification for the unopposed success of all cabinet members. For the year 2025, the electoral supervisory committee established for the elections of Takht Bhai Press Club was chaired by senior journalist Haji Murad Ali Murad, with Ibrahim Syed Yousafzai and Rafiullah Pamir as members. The committee received nomination papers for five cabinet positions within the designated time frame. No other candidates submitted nomination papers, nor did the committee receive any objections against the nominees. Consequently, the committee announced the successful candidates. Muslim Khan Sabir was elected as President, Hidayatullah Mehmood as Vice President, Akbar Khan Yousafzai as General Secretary, Javed Alam Mehmood as Joint Secretary, and Muhammad Shahid as Finance Secretary. Additionally, The President of the Takht Bhai Bar Association, Advocate Saifullah Khan, formally issued the notification of success for the elected candidates of the Takht Bhai Press Club.

## ICT Police strengthen security for 245 Churches

ISLAMABAD: In preparation for Christmas celebrations, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have deployed more than 1,500 officers to secure 245 churches across the district on Wednesday.

A public relation officer told APP that the deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad is personally overseeing all duties related to the security arrangements.

He added special security measures have been implemented at sensitive churches, where additional patrol teams are conducting regular surveillance.

To maintain public safety, police and volunteers have been assigned to conduct body searches at church entrances.

Furthermore, special patrol squads are patrolling around the churches, while security checks at the city's entry and exit points have been intensified.

In an effort to prevent any untoward incidents, all city areas have been thoroughly checked, and supervisory officers are in constant communication with church management to ensure effective security coordination. Additionally, sensitive churches are being monitored via Safe City cameras.

To manage traffic flow, the police have formed special squads to maintain order, particularly around leisure spots. The spokesperson stated that strict action would be taken against individuals involved in dangerous activities such as one-wheeling or hooliganism.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

Fajr .....	5:41 am
Zohr .....	12:08 pm
Asr .....	3:28 pm
Maghrib .....	5:06 pm
Isha .....	6:35 pm

## EMERGENCY

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

## Women Police Stations

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## HOSPITALS

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

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

## PST to observe 30th death anniversary of Parveen Shakir

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Parveen Shakir Trust (PST) will observe the 30th death anniversary of Pakistan's legendary poet Parveen Shakir (died: Dec 26, 1994) today (Thursday) at 11 a.m.

Floral wreaths will be laid on the final resting place of the poetess in the H-8 graveyard to be followed by Fateha Khawani. This spiritual gathering will be an opportunity for attendees to reflect on Parveen Shakir's life and work, as well as to seek blessings for her departed soul. Following the wreath-laying ceremony, a Quran Khawani will be held at the residence of Mrs. Parveen Qadir Agha, PST's Chairperson.

Besides the Chairperson and the members of the trust, prominent literary figures, the poetess's colleagues, friends and officers of the Pakistan Customs will attend the Fateha Khawani and pay tributes to the poetess who is considered spokesperson of Pakistani women's sensibilities.

In order to commemorate her legacy, the Parveen Shakir Trust has organized a series of events on the solemn occasion of her 30th death anniversary.

# Mushaal highlights Christian leaders' role in Pakistan's creation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik, addressed a gathering at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce, highlighting the significant role of Christian leaders in Pakistan's creation.

Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation emphasized how Christian leaders ensured Western Punjab became part of Pakistan, with Mr. S. P. Singha, the then-speaker of the Punjab assembly, casting a decisive vote. She quoted Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's historic speech on August 11, 1947, where he

declared freedom of worship and equality for all citizens, regardless of religion, caste, or creed.

Mushaal acknowledged the contributions of minority groups, including Christians, to Pakistan's prosperity. She cited examples of distinguished individuals, such as former Chief Justices Justice Bhagwan

Das and Justice Alvin Robert, who have made significant impacts on the country.

The event was attended by prominent business leaders, including President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Usman Shoukat, Sohail Altaf, Rashid Mansoor, Qamar Zaman, Mansoor Masih, Dr. Owais, and Sony Martin.

Mushaal emphasized that Pakistan's potential to become a symbol of interfaith harmony, with minorities playing a vital role in the country's progress.

She also emphasizes the importance of global solidarity and support for oppressed groups, specifically the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine.



## Road Closed

ISLAMABAD: A view of road block in front of church due to security reasons during Christmas Day mass at St. Thomas Church, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Ayesha Faisal's Book launching Ceremony held

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of Read Foundation Islamabad Region, a ceremony was held to honor the book "Stress Management" authored by renowned scholar Ayesha Faisal. Regional Director Tariq Kayani, Dr. Zakaullah Siddique, and Aziz-ur-Rehman Mujahid addressed the event.

Speaking at the ceremony, Regional Director Tariq Kayani stated that Ayesha Faisal's work on "Stress Management" was a dire need of the time, as everyone today is suffering from depressive symptoms. He commended Ayesha Faisal for providing an easy solution to this problem in the light of the Quran, Sunnah, and science.

Dr. Zakaullah Siddique,



in his address, emphasized that every individual, particu-

larly women, should read this book. He expressed hope that

it would bring significant positive changes to domestic environments.

Aziz-ur-Rehman Mujahid highlighted that Ayesha Faisal's efforts focus on the mental well-being of individuals. He mentioned that even those on the brink of suicide and relationships on the verge of collapse have found solace and solutions through this book. He urged everyone to reap the true benefits of this remarkable work.

Principals from schools in the Sialkot, Gujrat, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, and Islamabad districts of the Read Foundation's Islamabad Region attended the ceremony. At the conclusion of the event, books were gifted to the principals, and a grand feast was arranged in honor of the participants.

## Faisal's Fourth Pothohari book celebrates regional lullabies

Staff Report



ISLAMABAD: The fourth Pothohari book, Chohtay Laray, compiled by renowned journalist and poet Faisal Irfan, has been published. This literary work, brought to life under the patronage of Makhdooma Ameer Jan Library, Nadali, and Pothohar Rahtal Usar Publications, Rawalpindi, celebrates the traditional Pothohari folk lullabies cherished in the Pothohar region.

The book features a collection of Pothohari folk poems, rich in cultural depth, including soothing lullabies and satirical verses that blend the traditional essence of Pothohari heritage with modern literary styles.

Faisal Irfan, a dedicated promoter of Pothohari literature, has previously published three highly acclaimed works: Pothohari Akhan Tay Muhawaray' Pharjhat Mahari Anni, and Hoshay. His books have received widespread appreciation from academic and literary circles. Additionally, Irfan is working on another promising title, Potohari Adab (Chand Jehtain), which is anticipated to further enrich the region's literary landscape.

The publication of Chohtay Laray has been warmly welcomed by the academic, literary, and journalistic communities of Pothohar. They have congratulated Faisal Irfan on his continued contributions to preserving and promoting Pothohari culture and literature, extending their best wishes for his future endeavors.

## Development of country impossible without the participation of the youth: Dr. Malik Abrar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association Central President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain said that the development of the country and nation is impossible without the participation of the youth. To make Pakistan a developed Islamic state, the youth must be equipped with modern knowledge.

He said this while addressing education experts and youth at a function organized at the association's office on the occasion of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 148th birth anniversary. All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain said that Quaid-e-Azam had addressed the youth in his decree in March 1948, saying, "My youth! I look to you with expectation that you are the true guardians of Pakistan. Do not be the tools of others, do not fall into their deception. Create complete unity within yourself and set an example of what the youth can do." Dr. Abrar Hussain said that by following the Quaid's instructions, the young generation can lead Pakistan to key successes. Parents and teachers should keep the young generation fully aware of the Quaid-e-Azam and the ancestors who sacrificed during independence, so that they can appreciate the precious blessing of freedom.



## Lok Virsa commemorates Quaid-e-Azam's birth anniversary with cultural festivities

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) Wednesday celebrated the 148th birth anniversary of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Wednesday with vibrant and engaging activities at the Heritage Museum, Shakarparian.

The festivities began with a special inauguration ceremony attended by government officials, the general public and students.

The event opened with a recitation of the Quran, followed by a welcome address by Executive Director, Lok Virsa, Muzaffar Ali Barki.

Speaking on the occasion, the Executive Director highlighted Quaid-e-Azam's contributions to Pakistan's independence and his vision for unity and progress. He advised the youth to follow the principles advocated by Quaid-e-Azam in his speeches which are unity, faith and discipline. A major highlight of the event was the artisans-at-work exhibition, where craftsmen and women from across the country demonstrated traditional art forms such as pottery, embroidery, and truck art. Naem Ahmed, a father of three, remarked, "The artisans-at-work exhibit was my favorite part. It's amazing to see how our cultural traditions are being preserved and shared with the younger generation. It makes me proud to be Pakistani." A cake-cutting ceremony followed, creating a patriotic atmosphere as attendees sang the national anthem.

The Mili Naghmas Show featuring patriotic songs by renowned singers and school choirs was particularly moving.

Throughout the day, documentaries on Quaid-e-Azam's life were screened, offering insights into his vision and struggles. Sadia Malik, a university student, commented, "The documentaries on Quaid-e-Azam were truly inspiring. Watching his journey reminds us of how far we've come and how much we need to do to honor his vision."

## PAC Holds Photo Exhibition 'Quaid Kay Shab O Rooz'

Special Correspondent

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council organized a photo exhibition titled "Quaid Kay Shab O Rooz." On the occasion of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's birth anniversary the exhibition showcased over 150 rare photographs depicting the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The aim of the exhibition was to educate the younger generation about the monumental struggle and sacrifices of the Father of the Nation for the creation of a separate homeland. During the exhibition, a documentary film reflecting the life and achievements of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was also screened. The event was inaugurated by Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb. She was accompanied by MNA Seema Jillani, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture Shazia Rizwan, Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA)



Zaib-un-Nisa Awan, MPA Asma Abbasi, MPA Rifat Abbasi, and Director of the Arts Council Sajjad Hussain. The chief guest, Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb, stated that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a symbol of hope and deter-

mination, whose unwavering resolve led to the creation of Pakistan. She emphasized the importance of adopting Quaid-e-Azam's principles in daily life. Member National Assesmbly Seema Jillani expressed her pride in being a

citizen of a country that was achieved through the struggle of such a dedicated, selfless, and honest leader. She added that not only experts and historians from the subcontinent but also international historians and analysts pay tribute to this great leader's wisdom, vision, and leadership. Parliamentary Secretary information & Culture Department Shazia Rizwan highlighted that Quaid-e-Azam fought for the Muslims on the basis of the Two-Nation Theory. Under his leadership, Pakistan emerged as an independent state, for which the nation pays tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. She stated that the nation is progressing in literature and culture in line with Quaid-e-Azam's vision and stressed the need to reaffirm the commitment to his teachings and unity. The event also featured speeches by Members of Provincial Assembly of Punjab Zaib-un-Nisa Awan and MPA Rifat Abbasi. The exhibition attracted a large number of citizens.

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## Only a trickle of UN emergency food aid getting to desperate Gazans

Only three per cent of food and water deliveries organized by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) have been permitted to enter areas in northern Gaza since October, when Israeli forces unleashed a ground offensive in the northern part of the besieged enclave, the United Nations reported Tuesday.

At the end of December, a joint UN convoy of nine trucks successfully reached people in Beit Hanoun, northern Gaza, who had been cut off from aid for over 75 days, it said.

Images taken by UN staffers showed desperate residents rushing out from shelters to retrieve the bottled water, flour and canned food.

WFP has put in 101 requests to deliver food to areas in Gaza's north governorate since the offensive began on 6 October: only three have been approved, including the 20 December convoy.

In a statement released on Monday, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher warned that the "near-total siege" of the northern region is "raising the spectre of famine", whilst conditions in extremely overcrowded South Gaza are creating "horrific living conditions and even greater humanitarian needs" as winter sets in.

Fletcher, who spent the last week visiting UN staff, partners and communities in several Middle Eastern countries, described Gaza as the most dangerous place in the world to deliver aid, in a year when more humanitarians have been killed than any on record.

An added concern is the breakdown of law and order, and the looting of UN supplies by armed gangs.

The military operation by Israeli forces in northern Gaza is ongoing. As well as severely limiting the delivery of food aid, the tightening siege has left up to 15,000 people without access to food, water, electricity or healthcare.

Mass casualty incidents continue to afflict the Strip.

According to media reports, at least 20 people were killed by Israeli airstrikes overnight, including in al-Mawasi, which is designated as a humanitarian zone, and the al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

## Elon Musk: A Kingmaker or a King Himself?

During my canvassing efforts in the run-up to the U. S. elections in 2024, and with my three decades of experience observing the rise of public figures from obscurity, I had the feeling that Elon Musk, one of the world's richest individuals, was using Donald Trump to enter active politics. He appeared to be spending as much as one million dollars daily on Trump's campaign, leveraging this massive investment to build intimacy with Trump and his family, thereby obliging them and positioning himself as the ideological and administrative backbone of the Trump administration. It seemed that Musk envisioned using this shortcut to ascend to the top of the political hierarchy within a few days—a level that conventional politicians spend their entire lives striving to achieve.

Elon Musk's political ambitions were manifested when he acquired Twitter, a move that did not align with his technological and space-focused endeavors but served as a strategic step into the political arena in the most effective manner. Soon after acquiring Twitter for a whopping \$44 billion in October 2022, he installed loyalists in its management and used the platform to grow closer to top politicians, ultimately bringing Donald Trump back into the fold.

By doing so, Musk was set to gain numerous advantages. To begin with, he aimed to eliminate government regulations, reduce federal oversight, and lower incident of taxation to benefit his multiple technology companies, secured lucrative contracts with top clients. Expand and

solidify his Starlink satellites to become indispensable partner with Pentagon and US military establishment by providing critical internet services in war-torn areas including war-torn Ukraine and first make SpaceX as a trusted partner for with NASA and gradually share biggest chunk of \$24.89 billion NASA budget. Additionally, infuse new life to his Boring Company for major infrastructure projects in cities like Los Angeles.

To tackle what he saw as a two-headed monster—government regulations and taxation—Musk strategically positioned himself within the Trump administration, earning the informal title of "Secretary of Cost Cutting." He joined forces with like-minded right-wing entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy to propose the creation of a new Department of Government Efficiency (D. O. G. E.).

The primary goal of this initiative was to reduce government oversight of private enterprises, shrink the size of the federal bureaucracy, and redirect the resulting savings ostensibly to improve the lives of common people. However, the plan also covertly safeguarded Musk's ambitious projects and multibillion-dollar ventures, ensuring they faced minimal regulatory and financial barriers.

In exchange for his instrumental role in helping Trump secure an unlikely victory, Musk earned the president-elect's unwavering trust. He became a permanent fixture at Mar-a-Lago, advising Trump

on cabinet appointments and building alliances with tech investors to strengthen the administration's ties to Silicon Valley. Musk's influence extended to the Trump family itself, forging personal connections so deep that he was affectionately regarded as "Uncle Elon" by the president-elect's grandchildren. Ultimately, Musk cemented his position as America's most powerful private citizen, wielding unprecedented

influence in shaping the policies and direction of the incoming administration.

Elon Musk managed to influence Donald Trump, traditionally conservative in his business approach, to embrace progressive ideas like blockchain technology, Cybertrucks, reusable rockets, electric vehicles, and Musk's ambitious projects such as inhabiting Mars and advancing space travel.

At one of his post-election public rallies, Elon Musk, while delivering a victory speech before the President-Elect, seemed to momentarily forget that it was Mr. Trump who had won the election. During his address, Musk spoke as though he himself had emerged victorious and was preparing to take the oath as the next President of the United States.

His words offered a revealing glimpse into his lofty ambitions and how deeply he envisioned himself as a central figure in the new administration. To truly capture the essence of his vision, let me share his speech verbatim with the readers.

"In the next election, we want the restoration of common sense. We want safe cities, secure borders, sensible spending, freedom of speech, and respect for the Constitution. I am incredibly excited about the future. The public has given us a mandate that could not be more clear—winning the popular vote, Congress, the Senate, and an electoral mandate by miles, with a majority of governorships and legislatures going Republican. The people have spoken, and they want change, and we are going to deliver it. They will get what they asked for. "I think this is going to be the most transformative presidency, perhaps since the founding of the country. And President Trump is picking his cabinet to make it happen. You can see it in the choices—people who have actually driven change. This is not going to be business as usual. We are going to shake things up. It's going to be a revolution. We are headed toward a fantastic future."

His entry on the public arena complemented with his proven capability as a great strategist, an outstanding visionary, and his unparalleled energy, power of innovation, and ability to accomplish even the most difficult and seemingly impossible tasks with absolute accuracy and precision, has cultivated the ambition to rise to the top of the political arena.

As Musk later put it on X, encapsulating his vision: "America is a nation of builders. Soon, you will be free to build."

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

Analysis



Qamar Bashir



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

## China's Strategic Engagement with the United Nations

China's strategic engagement with the United Nations represents a complex and multifaceted approach to balancing its ambitions for global influence with its need for domestic legitimacy. This delicate equilibrium has been a hallmark of China's foreign policy, reflecting its desire to reshape international norms while ensuring stability and support at home. This opinion piece explores the intricate dynamics of China's interaction with the UN, highlighting both its achievements and the inherent challenges.

### Historical Perspective:

China's influence started to grow significantly since the People's Republic of China became the legitimate representative of China at the United Nations. This significant moment marked the rise of China in the international system as it was then a part of a platform where its voice could be raised on the global stage.

### Balancing Act: Global Influence vs. Domestic Legitimacy:

Global Influence: China's engagement and involvement with the United Nations has been marked by the pursuit of global influence. China is part of one of the five permanent members of the United Nations and also possesses the power of veto. China has been able to shape a number of international decisions due to this power and position. These include the decision from peacekeeping to resolving conflicts. China has always promoted the vision of a multipolar world and has also used its influence to advocate for a more balanced international order.

Through the contributions in peacekeeping, China has displayed its influence in UN peacekeeping missions. China has created its image of

a responsible global actor in order to maintain stability and international security as now China is one of the largest contributors to the UN peacekeeping missions by sending not only its troops, but funds as well.

China has been aligning its ambitions and efforts to the United Nations as it is active in the realm of development and poverty alleviation that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN. One of the major projects is the Belt and Road initiative that is contributing to development and also fostering economic growth and connectivity. These initiatives and projects bolster China's image and reputation in the United Nations portraying it as a leader in global development.

Domestic Legitimacy: China's projects and activities being part of the United Nations serve its global ambitions but they are deeply intertwined to its domestic goals. The international power and prestige of China has always been used by the communist party of China to enhance and bolster its domestic legitimacy. China counters the external criticisms and internal domestic dissent by strengthening and promoting its image of a benevolent and a constructive power.

Furthermore, the engagement of China with the United Nations can be viewed as its pathway to fulfil its core interests and to defend its sovereignty. Any step taken to challenge China's sovereignty is instantly countered by China due to its position. This is why the issues of Taiwan, human rights and territorial disputes are very often discussed in the United Nations under its framework. Such assertiveness domestically resonates and reinforces the stance of government and rally public support.

Challenges and Criticism: Despite the strategic engagement of China with the United Nations, China has faced a number of criticisms and chal-

lenges. China's human rights record particularly in the regions of Xinjiang and Hong Kong are highly contentious. China argues that such steps and approaches taken by China completely align with the domestic laws of China; however, such justifications clash with the international human rights law.

Some of the principles of China put it at odds with the western democracies particularly those that are member states of the United Nations. Such principles are sovereignty and non-interference. This has led to tensions that China is probably using its power and position to shield itself from accountability. This is not only limited to the external world, rather, the people living in liberal urban regions in China are well aware of the global norms and are critical of the domestic policies that contradict such global norms.

Whereas, concerns are raised for the future interests and intentions of China amid the growing assertiveness with the United Nations. Some countries consider China's projects such as BRI as the tool for enhancing the influence and power of China and also the debt trap diplomacy.

The Future: Navigating the Dual Imperative Looking forward, China will always try to balance its global influence and its domestic legitimacy. In order to attain its objectives, China has to take nuanced approaches that address both the external and the internal imperatives. In order to further enhance the global influence, it is better if China seeks to play a more proactive and transparent role in solving the international challenges. The areas where China's influence can be enhanced are climate change, public health and conflict resolutions.

In a nutshell, the strategic engagement of China with the United Nations reflected a complex and multifaceted approach in balancing the global ambitions with domestic needs. This delicate balance can be navigated by China if China continues to contribute to global peace and devel-

## Immoral Exploitation of Freedom of Expression to Target Pak Army - I

In Pakistan, there has been an increase in propaganda against the country and its military in recent days. The Pakistani government, along with the Pakistan Army, is working diligently to address the nation's current challenges. In a significant diplomatic development, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko recently visited Islamabad, marking a noteworthy moment in the bilateral relations between Belarus and Pakistan. The visit emphasized a mutual interest in strengthening economic cooperation, defense collaboration, and political dialogue between the two countries. It also highlighted the changing dynamics of global geopolitics, as both nations seek to diversify their international partnerships amidst shifting alliances and challenges in the global landscape.

President Lukashenko's trip to Pakistan occurred against the backdrop of evolving international relations. As a traditional ally of Russia, Belarus has faced increasing international scrutiny due to its support for Moscow's actions in Ukraine. With the West imposing harsh sanctions on Belarus, the country has increasingly turned to new economic partners, particularly in Asia, to navigate these sanctions and secure its geopolitical position. For Pakistan, the visit presented a strategic opportunity to strengthen ties with Eastern Europe, diversify its foreign relations, and explore economic opportunities in sectors like trade, agriculture, defense, and technology. A key focus of President Lukashenko's visit was to enhance economic and trade relations

between the two nations. Belarus, known for its advanced agricultural technologies and manufacturing expertise, views Pakistan as an important partner across various sectors. Belarus boasts a strong agricultural industry, particularly in machinery, fertilizers, and technology. During meetings with Pakistani officials, President Lukashenko emphasized the potential for Belarus to support Pakistan in modernizing its agricultural sector, a key component of the country's

food security and economic development. Both sides explored the possibility of increasing Belarusian agricultural machinery exports to Pakistan and collaborating on the production of high-quality fertilizers. While bilateral trade has traditionally been limited, the visit revealed significant

opportunities for growth. The two countries signed several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) aimed at boosting trade, enhancing transportation links, and establishing joint ventures in sectors like pharmaceuticals, heavy industry, and IT services. Both nations expressed their goal of reaching \$1 billion in bilateral trade, a notable increase from current levels.

Defense cooperation was another major focus of President Lukashenko's visit. Belarus and Pakistan have previously collaborated in defense, with Belarus supplying military equipment and technical expertise. The visit opened new avenues for cooperation in defense production and technological exchanges.

*To be continued*

Analysis



Abdul Basit Alvi

# MD PTDC unveiled plan to launch Islamabad Sightseeing Double Decker Bus Service

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of PTDC, Aftab ur Rehman Rana unveiled the plan to launch Islamabad Sightseeing Double Decker Bus Service in Islamabad while giving a briefing to the tourism industry stakeholders. On this occasion Naveed Anjum, Manager of TDCP, Mukhtar Ali Manager TTCs and Sadia Nauman, Manager P&P of PTDC and representatives of main hotels of Islamabad were also present in the briefing session.

The briefing revealed that Islamabad Sightseeing Double Decker bus service will be launched in January 2025 under the joint venture of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) to promote tourism in the capital



city of Islamabad. Mr. Rana, while giving a power point presentation informed that government is committed to use all its energies to promote

tourism in Pakistan to make it a major sector of economic growth. He said this new initiative will provide the visitors of Islamabad a unique

experience to explore the key monuments and tourist sites of capital city through a guided tour twice a day on daily basis with pick and drop facility

from all major hotels in Islamabad. In the second phase of this program, PTDC in collaboration with private sector will also launch weekend sightseeing tours of tourist sites around Islamabad including Taxila, Rohta Fort, Ketas Raj, Kallar Kahhar, Khewra, Takht-e-Bahi, Murree, Patriata and Peshawar.

Mr. Rana said that this modern and ecofriendly double decker bus service is a landmark initiative of PTDC and TDCP which will greatly help in improving the tourists appeal of capital city of Islamabad. He said, PTDC has already developed an integrated tourism plan for Islamabad with a aim to promote the image of capital city as the gateway tourist destination of Pakistan through a collaborative approach of all the key stakeholders from public and private sector.

# Pakistan-France bilateral relations: New opportunities in trade, investment, and cooperation: Nicolas Galley

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: French Ambassador to Pakistan Nicolas Galley has said that Pakistan and France currently have excellent diplomatic and political relations. Economic, trade and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and France will be further promoted. France values Pakistan's efforts for regional peace and stability. A large number of Pakistani students are studying in France. Visa facilities have been increased for Pakistani students. The establishment of the France-Pakistan Business Forum is important as this forum has increased cooperation in the trade sector. He expressed these views during a meeting with Sardar Zahoore Iqbal, Chairman of France-Pakistan Business Forum.

Sardar Zahoore Iqbal was warmly welcomed by the French Ambassador on his arrival at the French Embassy. On this occasion, the French Ambassador Nicolas Galley, further said that



the meetings held between French President Emmanuel Macron and

Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif in recent days have proven to be very fruitful.

Speaking about the meeting, Sardar Zahoore Iqbal said that bilateral political and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and France has improved. The special efforts of the current Ambassador Nicolas Galey have greatly improved the bilateral relations between the two countries. Pakistani Ambassador to France Asim Ifikhar also played a key role in this regard.

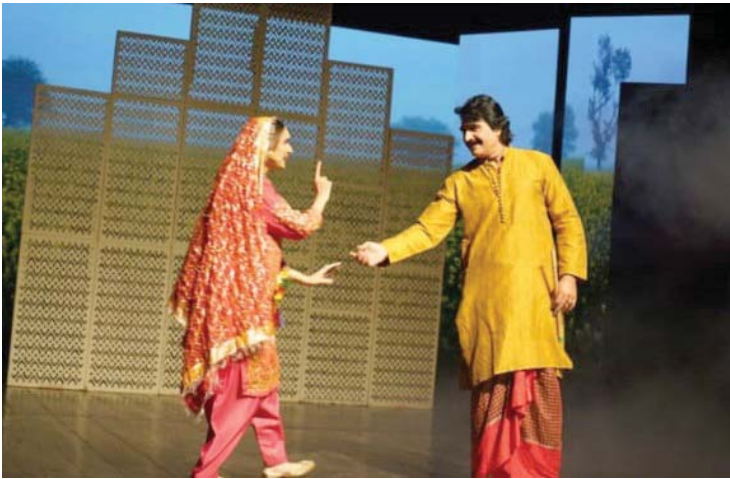
Sardar Zahoore said that big companies have their own way of doing business with regard to investment, but we had discussions with the French Ambassador regarding medium-sized business companies. He said that France dairy sector has technical expertise as well as machinery. We can take advantage of the opportunities available in Pakistan. He thank French Ambassador to Pakistan Nicolas Galley for his full cooperation.

# Dolphin Communication presented Folk tale ‘Heer Waris Shah’ in Islamabad

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: In collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of Arts and Dolphin Communication, the folk tale “Heer Waris Shah” based on the poetry of the famous Sufi poet of Punjab, Waris Shah, was presented in Islamabad in the form of a stage play. Its script was written by Arshad Chahal, the director was Ms. Asma Butt, while the assistant director was Muhammad Salman Sunni. Among the prominent artists, the role of Waris Shah was played by Shabir Shah, the role of Ranjhe was played by Kaleem Khan, the role of Heer was played by Nirmal Ali, the role of Keido was played by Mehboob Ilyas, and the role of Kherhy was played by Imran Rushdi.

A large number of spectators were present in the hall to watch Asma Butt's drama. The spontaneous acting of the



characters captivated the audience and received a lot of applause. The audience who came to watch the drama said that the drama based on the life

of Waris Shah provided quality entertainment to the residents of the twin cities. All the actors did justice to their art by showing excellent acting. Ms.

Asma Butt presented the best drama as always, Which proves that like in the past, the dramas presented on stage today also reflect our culture and traditions. Asma Butt should present more dramas featuring such historical characters so that people can take some time out of their busy lives to come and watch the drama with their families and be entertained.

On this occasion, fellow actors said that a great drama is created by combining strong impressions with acting, dialogue delivery and script techniques. On the other hand, Asma Butt said that such plays, along with providing quality entertainment to the audience, help in enlightening the youth about their culture and traditions, which promote the message of peace, love and harmony, and that even today there are people in the twin cities who keep the concept of theater alive.

# Zafar Bakhtawari’s address at air university event and tree plantation under clean and green movement

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of UBG (FPCCD), Zafar Bakhtawari, emphasized the pivotal role of education in the development of any society. He stated, “The future of our nation depends on the education and mindset of our youth. Pakistan is a resource-rich country; instead of chasing dreams abroad, everything can be found here. Focus on entrepreneurship instead of jobs. I started D. Watson with just 20,000 rupees, and today, by the grace of Allah, it has become a brand. Hard work and honesty are essential for success. A personality built on 100% honesty will always thrive.

Along with this, having skills and technical education is crucial. Whatever field you choose, ensure you have the necessary technical education for it.”

Addressing the event organized by the Mathematics Department of Air University Islamabad as a guest of honor, Zafar Bakhtawari highlighted the importance and utility of education. He encouraged students to join the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement's awareness and cleanliness campaign. He underscored the significance of their role, stating that this movement is not just about cleanliness but also about fostering a sense of responsibility.

“Environmental pollution is a grave issue today, and to combat it, we need to act individually and collectively. I invite all of you students to be part of this campaign and contribute to improving the environment through cleanliness and tree plantation. Environmental protection is a national duty, and we hope you will carry this forward,” he said.

He expressed his gratitude to the faculty and administration of Air University for incorporating this topic into their educational activities. “Our efforts should not be limited to a campaign but should become a way of life. Along with education, your practical contributions can make

Pakistan a developed and clean country,” he added.

During the event, students showcased their creativity with various models and projects. Zafar Bakhtawari visited different stalls, praised the students' efforts, and appreciated their enthusiasm.

As part of the event, a tree plantation drive was launched with the collaboration of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement. Zafar Bakhtawari formally inaugurated the campaign by planting a tree in the Mathematics Department's lawn. He remarked, “Tree plantation not only helps keep the environment clean but also

plays a crucial role in combating climate change.”

Dr. Iffat Zahra, Head of the Mathematics Department, addressed the gathering and urged students to actively participate in the Clean and Green Movement, highlighting the vital role of youth in environmental protection. Madam Aneela and Adeel Arshad shed light on the importance of cleanliness and its impact on the educational environment.

At the conclusion of the event, Zafar Bakhtawari lauded the services of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, extending his gratitude to all participants. He expressed hope that this



campaign would successfully inspire the younger generation to take an active interest in environmental conservation.

## Quaid-e-Azam Day marked with poetry recital at UAJK JV-Campus



 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Jhelum Valley Campus, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK), in collaboration with the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy, hosted a prestigious poetry recital to commemorate Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's birth anniversary. The event celebrated the Quaid's extraordinary vision, leadership, and sacrifices that led to the creation of Pakistan.

The ceremony was honored by the presence of distinguished personalities, including Director ISPR, Campus Director Dr. Imtiaz Awan, and Director General of the Kashmir Cultural Academy, Faizan Arif Mughal. Renowned poets, including Ataullah Ata, Naz Muzaffarabadi, Professor Ejaz Numani, M. Yameen, Javed-ul-Hasan Javed, Qasim Silani, and Haq Nawaz Mughal, graced the occasion with their inspiring poetic contributions. Faculty members and students attended the event in large numbers, making it a truly memorable gathering.

During the recital, the poets eloquently highlighted Quaid-e-Azam's pivotal role in the creation of Pakistan, offering profound tributes through their heartfelt verses. Their poetry reflected the Quaid's enduring legacy and served as a reminder of his tireless efforts and vision for a progressive, united, and prosperous Pakistan.

In his address, Campus Director Dr. Imtiaz Awan welcomed the guests and thanked them for their participation. He appreciated the dedication of the organizing team for arranging such a meaningful and enriching event. Dr. Awan emphasized the importance of following the Quaid's principles of unity, faith, and discipline to contribute to Pakistan's development.

Speakers at the event urged students and faculty to draw inspiration from Quaid-e-Azam's life and legacy, encouraging them to embody his values in their personal and professional lives. They reiterated that adhering to the Quaid's guiding principles is essential to building a strong and prosperous nation.

The event concluded with the ceremonial cutting of Quaid-e-Azam's birthday cake, symbolizing the celebration of his life and achievements. A collective prayer was also offered for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

UAJK remains committed to promoting educational and cultural activities that inspire students and the wider community to uphold the ideals of Pakistan's founding father.

## Trump blasts Biden over death sentence commutations



WASHINGTON: Donald Trump hit out Tuesday at Joe Biden for commuting the sentences of almost every American federal prisoner on death row, as the president-elect prepares to replace the Democrat in the White House.

President Biden, in his final month in office, announced Monday he was converting the sentences of 37 of the 40 federal inmates awaiting execution to life without the possibility of parole.

They included nine people convicted of murdering fellow prisoners, four for murders committed during bank robberies and one who killed a prison guard.

“Joe Biden just commuted the Death Sentence on 37 of the worst killers in our Country,” Trump posted on Truth Social, his social media platform. “When you hear the acts of each, you won’t believe that he did this. Makes no sense. Relatives and friends are further devastated. They can’t believe this is happening!” Biden had imposed a moratorium on the federal death penalty but was under pressure to act further before leaving the White House on January 20, amid signals from Republican Trump that he would resume the practice.

Biden rebuked the inmates he had spared and “their despicable acts,” but said he had been guided by “my conscience and my experience” to prevent the incoming Trump administration from resuming executions.

He excluded three men from his order, however — one of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombers, a gunman who murdered 11 Jewish worshippers in 2018 and a white supremacist who shot nine Black churchgoers dead in 2015. Trump confirmed he would direct the Justice Department to “vigorously pursue the death penalty to protect American families and children from violent rapists, murderers, and monsters.”

“We will be a Nation of Law and Order again!” he added.

Bull & Bears  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
112,414.80	113,924.41
Day's High	Day's Low
115,036.49	112,294.42
Index Value	Change
41,329,013,633	−1509.61
Percentage	Time
−1.33%	24 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,136.99	+34.27
Percentage	Time
+0.42%	24 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
43,130.27	+223.32
Percentage	Time
+0.52%	24 Dec, 11:57 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,036.85	−124.49
Percentage	Time
−0.32%	24 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
NewZealand \$	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

Blue economy holds immense potential for Pakistan:  
Iftikhar Malik



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Tuesday said the blue economy holds immense potential for Pakistan, given its strategic geographic location, extensive coastline of approximately 1,050 kilometers, and abundant marine resources.

In a statement here today as a maritime nation, Pakistan's blue economy encompasses a wide range of activities, including fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism, maritime transport, renewable energy, and marine biodiversity conservation. These sectors present significant opportunities for economic growth, sustainable development, and environmental preservation. He said fisheries and aquaculture sector is a vital component of Pakistan's blue economy, providing livelihoods to millions and contributing to food security. However, with proper management and investment in modern technology, the sector's productivity and exports could be substantially enhanced. Coastal tourism, another promising area, has the potential to attract both domestic and international visitors, offering economic opportunities for local communities while promoting cultural heritage and natural beauty. Iftikhar Ali Malik was of the view that despite its vast potential, Pakistan's blue economy faces challenges such as overfishing, pollution, and lack of infrastructure. Addressing these requires effective policy implementation, technological innovation, and public-private partnerships. With a clear strategy and sustainable practices, Pakistan can harness its maritime resources to foster economic growth, ensure environmental sustainability, and improve livelihoods, making the blue economy a cornerstone of its future development, he concluded.

# Khurram visits PSX; holds talks with PSX top management

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Khurram Schehzad, Adviser to Finance Minister, was invited to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) by CEO, PSX, Farrukh Sabzwari, to discuss strategies for enhancing the depth and performance of the capital market.

During his meeting with the CEO and senior management of PSX, Schehzad received a comprehensive overview of PSX's strategic initiatives aimed at unlocking potential of Pakistan's capital markets, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The CEO of PSX emphasized that, despite challenges, Pakistan's capital markets possess immense potential.

He expressed confidence that through a well-formulated strategy, PSX could realize this potential and significantly contribute to the economy.

Schehzad reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting capital market growth, recognizing its role in stabilizing as well as underpinning growth in the coun-



try's economy. Mr. Schehzad emphasized the need for the PSX and the SECP to collaboratively develop a roadmap aimed at increasing Pakistan's

weight within the MSCI Frontier Markets index, ultimately achieving inclusion in the MSCI Emerging Markets index.

He also endorsed the recommendation to form a formal committee comprising PSX, SECP, and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to leverage each entity's strengths.

This initiative would aim to foster financial inclusion, enhance public awareness, and promote seamless digitization and promoting the KSE-100 Index's remarkable returns was identified as an essential task for brokers and market participants.

Mr. Schehzad praised the relaunch of cash-settled futures as a significant step towards developing the country's derivatives market.

Collaboration with Chinese capital markets is critical to facilitate cross-border investment opportunities, broaden market access, and stimulate investor participation. With these initiatives, Pakistan's capital market is poised for significant growth, driving economic development and stability.

## PFC announced to host the first-ever single-country furniture expo in Riyadh



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Tuesday announced its plans to host the first-ever single-country furniture expo in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, next year.

Chairing here today board of directors meeting CEO PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq said this landmark event aims to showcase Pakistan's world-class, handcrafted, and intricately engraved furniture, highlighting its exceptional craftsmanship and design.

With the growing global demand for high-quality, handmade furniture, the PFC



eyes Saudi Arabia as a prime market to promote Pakistan's burgeoning furniture industry. He said expo will serve as a platform for Pakistani artisans and manufacturers to display a diverse range of products, including traditional, contemporary, and customized furniture pieces renowned for their fine detailing and superior craftsmanship.

PFC Chairman Mian Kashif Ashfaq emphasized that the event will strengthen trade ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia while offering a unique opportunity to introduce Pakistani furniture to the Middle Eastern market. He noted that the demand for hand-engraved furniture is steadily increasing worldwide, thanks to its aesthetic

## Motto of the Quaid-e-Azam is a way forward for the nation: Atif Ikram

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh while addressing the function organized on Quaid-e-Azam Day said that Quaid-e-Azam's motto of 'Unity, Faith and Discipline' is a way forward for the nation. For freedom the dedication and unwavering determination of the founder of Pakistan will always be remembered. The entire nation today pays tribute to Quaid-e-Azam for his tireless struggle for the rights of the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Federation President Atif Ikram said that today the nation should put political and group differences aside and pledge to play its role for the promotion of national stability and national unity.

We will make every sacrifice for integrity and development. We have to fight unitedly against extremism, intolerance, sectarianism and all kinds of prejudice.

Atif Ikram said that the Quaid-e-Azam realized the importance of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent where all citizens have the right to freedom of belief, profession and equal opportunities. His determination was made possible only by his steadfastness.



## Huawei ICT Academies: Most Valuable Instructor Award is this just another award?

Muhammad Rashid Mukhtar

When the term "Most Valuable Instructor" (MVI) Award is mentioned, the first impression might be that it's just another accolade for an instructor who appears to work more proactively. But the reality is far more profound. The Huawei ICT Academies MVI Award is not just about active participation or going the extra mile—it is about facilitating a critical bridge between academia and industry, fostering collaboration that empowers students and redefines their educational journey. When I was honored with the Huawei MVI Award in 2023, it was not merely a recognition of effort but a reflection of a comprehensive, results-driven framework for the betterment of graduates.

**Beyond Recognition: The Multifaceted Role of an Huawei MVI**

The Huawei MVI Award encapsulates much more than individual achievement. It embodies the collaborative ethos needed to prepare students for real-world challenges. An Huawei MVI is not only an educator but also a mentor, a career guide, and a liaison between academia and industry. The recognition comes as a culmination of tireless efforts in various domains that collectively enhance the educational ecosystem. Below, I share my journey and key responsibilities that contributed to this recognition.

**Offering Specialized Learning Opportunities**

One of the most pivotal responsibilities is to provide students with access to cutting-edge technologies and courses that align with global industry standards. Through Huawei's ICT Academy at COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), I had the privilege of introducing specialized courses such as Information Security, Cloud Computing, and Big Data. These courses were not only designed to impart theoretical knowledge but also included practical, hands-on



experiences that bridged the gap between learning and implementation.

Over the years, more than 425 students have participated in these courses, with over 100 earning globally recognized certifications. These certifications are not just an added advantage but a significant boost to their employability in a competitive job market.

**Motivating Participation in ICT Competitions**

Encouraging students to participate in competitions is another critical aspect of the role. Competitions like the Huawei ICT Competition are more than just a test of skills; they provide an invaluable platform for students to showcase their expertise on regional and global stages. In 2024, CUI's Innovation team clinched victory in the Regional Finals, an achievement that highlighted our university's commitment to excellence in ICT education. Such accomplishments are the result of continuous mentoring and encouraging students to push their boundaries.

**Integrating Industry-Relevant Content into Academia**

One of the significant milestones of my journey as an HUAWEI MVI was the integration of Huawei's ICT Academy courses into the curriculum at COMSATS University Islamabad. This integration required rigorous planning and collaboration with various academic

committees. Every summer, the university's curriculum is revised to incorporate relevant and updated course content. Huawei's ICT courses, particularly in Information Security and Cloud Computing, have become a cornerstone of our syllabus, providing students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Additionally, courses in areas like Statistics and Big Data are currently in the pipeline, further strengthening our curriculum. These inclusions ensure that our graduates are industry-ready and equipped to handle the challenges of an ever-evolving technological landscape.

**Facilitating Career Opportunities**

As an HUAWEI MVI, fostering career opportunities for students is one of the most fulfilling aspects of the role. CUI organizes bi-annual career expos that attract over 100 industrial partners, including Huawei. These expos are instrumental in bridging the gap between students and potential employers. Huawei's consistent presence at these events and its exclusive recruitment drives ensure that our students have a clear pathway to promising careers.

The success of this initiative is evident in the impressive job placement rate of CUI's graduates, with 90% of students from the Computer Science program securing jobs within their first year of graduation. Many of these graduates now

hold esteemed positions at Huawei, contributing to Pakistan's growing ICT talent pool.

The Personal Impact of the HUAWEI MVI Award

Receiving the HUAWEI MVI Award was not just a personal achievement; it was a validation of the collaborative efforts that have transformed the educational experience at CUI. It underscored the importance of fostering an environment where students are not only educated but also empowered to excel in their professional journeys.

My participation in the Global HUAWEI MVI Forum held in Shenzhen, China, was a testament to this collaborative spirit. The forum provided a platform to exchange ideas and best practices with other HUAWEI MVIs from around the world, further enriching my perspective and approach to education.

**Transforming the Educational Landscape**

The HUAWEI MVI Award serves as a beacon of the transformative impact that dedicated educators can have on their institutions and students. It is a reminder that education is not just about imparting knowledge but about creating opportunities and shaping futures. The journey of becoming an HUAWEI MVI involves:

- Continuous Learning and Adaptation: Staying updated with technological advancements and incorporating them into teaching methodologies.
- Mentorship and Guidance: Going beyond the classroom to mentor students in their academic and professional endeavors.
- Collaboration with Industry: Building and nurturing partnerships with industry leaders like Huawei to provide students with the best opportunities.
- Innovative Curriculum Development: Ensuring that the academic content is relevant, practical, and aligned with industry needs.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Academia-Industry Collaboration

The journey does not end here.

The HUAWEI MVI Award is not a destination but a milestone in a continuous journey of growth and collaboration. Looking ahead, there are several avenues to explore:

- Expanding Curriculum Integration: Incorporating more advanced technologies and courses into the university syllabus to keep pace with global trends.
- Enhancing Competition Participation: Encouraging more students to participate in regional and global competitions to showcase their skills and gain international recognition.
- Strengthening Faculty Development: Providing ongoing training for faculty members to ensure they remain at the forefront of technological advancements.
- Building a Global Network: Leveraging platforms like the Global HUAWEI MVI Forum to build a network of educators and industry leaders committed to advancing education.

The HUAWEI MVI Award is not just another accolade; it is a responsibility and a commitment to bridging the gap between academia and industry. It is about creating a holistic educational environment that prepares students for the challenges of the professional world. As an HUAWEI MVI, my journey has been one of continuous learning, adaptation, and collaboration. It is a journey that reaffirms the transformative power of education and the pivotal role that educators play in shaping the future of their students.

The success stories of our graduates, the milestones achieved in curriculum development, and the strong partnership with Huawei are all testaments to what can be achieved when academia and industry come together with a shared vision. The HUAWEI MVI Award is not just a recognition of past achievements but a motivation to continue striving for excellence in education and beyond.

*Writer is Assistant Professor COMSATS University Islamabad*

# 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 carefree 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 lifetime for children who need our support in their battle against congenital heart disease," said Zahra Somani, Aga Khan University's Chief Advancement Officer.

## Alpine Club trained athletes climbing at PSB Wall



**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Athletes from Sweet Home Cadet College/Schools, Aagohosh and other educational institutions are trained in sport climbing at PSB Climbing Wall. Alpine Club of Pakistan is regularly imparting training to athletes to hunt the talent for further development into elite pool. Zamurad Khan, HI taking great interest in climbing sent a group of 80 students for participation in a training session being conducted by Rehmatullah Qureshi with the assistance of Abu Zar, Huzaifa Imran, Umar Bilal, Hanzala Hussain and Hassan Faiz. The participants given orientation in sport climbing by the President, ACP Abu Zafar Sadiq. Whereas Rehmatullah has assistants gave them tips on climbing technical aspects. The students were also taught about conditioning and basics of fitness.

## Huaneng Cricket Tournament 2024: Team ACO wins in thrilling finale



**Sports Desk**

SAHIWAL: The Huaneng Cricket Tournament 2024 held at the Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant, concluded with an electrifying final match that saw Team Auxiliary Control Operations (ACO) clinch victory over Team Administration in a nail-biting 8-over contest.

The tournament emphasized physical fitness and mental well-being while also celebrating the friendship between Pakistani and Chinese cultures.

In a nail-biting final, Team Auxiliary Control Operations (ACO) triumphed over Team Administration by just 8 runs. The match, played in an exciting 8-over format, saw Team Administration win the toss and choose to bowl first. Team ACO set a challenging total of 96 runs for 4 wickets with Touseef Khan leading the charge, scoring an unbeaten 28 runs. Team Administration's Hafiz Shehzad took 3 wickets, putting up a strong fight.

In response, Team Administration scored 87 runs for 3 wickets with Abdul Rauf Bhatti matching Touseef's effort with 28 runs. Despite their best efforts, they fell short of the target. Touseef Khan capped off a fantastic performance by taking 2 crucial wickets, securing the victory for Team ACO.

The tournament featured six matches with four teams: Team Central Control Operations (CCO), Team Administration, Team ACO, and Team Maintenance. It kicked off with Team CCO facing Team Administration, where Administration won by 6 wickets. Team ACO also impressed with a 19-run victory over Team Maintenance in the second match.

The final rounds saw Team ACO and Team Administration battle for the championship. After a series of thrilling matches, the award ceremony concluded with Mr. Li Xin, CEO of Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant presenting the trophy to the champions, Team ACO while Vice President Mr. Huang Xuewen awarded the runners-up trophy to Team Administration.

The tournament not only promoted cardiovascular health and teamwork but also created lasting memories for all participants. With such enthusiasm and talent displayed, everyone is looking forward to the next Huaneng Cricket Tournament.

Events like this play a crucial role in fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee morale.

## Handing over trophy

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Tarar handing over the Bahria Town Pakistan Champions T20 Cup 2024-25 trophy to Stallions captain Muhammad Haris at Pindi Cricket Stadium.



Photo: APP

## Allied Bank Stallions clinch Bahria Town Champions T20 Cup with convincing win

**Sports Desk**

RAWALPINDI: Allied Bank Stallions emerged as champions of the Bahria Town Champions T20 Cup, defeating UMT Markhors by a comprehensive 75-run margin in the final at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

The highlight of the final was a sensational century by Stallions' Yasir Khan, whose brilliant knock earned him the Player of the Match award. The victory also brought the Stallions a prize of PKR 15 million, while the runner-up team, UMT Markhors, received PKR 10 million.

After winning the toss, Stallions' captain Mohammad Haris opted to bat first. The team posted an imposing total of 199/5 in their allotted 20 overs. Yasir Khan anchored the innings with a majestic 100 off 57 balls, which included five fours and seven sixes. This marked his second T20 century. He was well-supported by Tayyab Tahir, who added 17 runs during their 74-run fourth-wicket partnership.

The innings began with a rapid start, as Yasir Khan and Muaz Sadaqat added 28 runs in just 15 balls. Sadaqat fell after scoring 15, including two sixes. Despite losing Haris (21) and Hussain Talat (9) early, Yasir held the innings together. Later contributions from Jahandad Khan (22\*) and Shoaib Malik (6\*) ensured a strong finish. Akif

SUMMARY									
BAHRIA TOWN CHAMPIONS CUP T20, MATCH 20									
ENGRO DOLPHINS					20 Overs				
QADIR	40	34	ALI	4-35	4				
FAHEEM	28	23	HUSSAIN	2-38	2				
ABBAS	21	11	ZAMAN	2-41	4				
ALLIED BANK STALLIONS					14 Overs				
HARIS	52*	30	RAHEEM JR	2-28	4				
YASIR	32	20	FAHEEM	1-39	3				
MAAZ	29	15	ABBAS	1-39	4				
ALLIED BANK STALLIONS WON BY 8 WICKETS									

Javed was the standout bowler for the Markhors, picking up two wickets.

Chasing a daunting target of 200, UMT Markhors faltered as they struggled to build momentum. Early dismissals of Khawaja Nafe (6) and Fakhar Zaman (20) left them reeling at 41/2. Mohammad Ali and Jahandad Khan's disciplined bowling ensured no significant partnerships developed.

Mohammad Faizan (43) was the lone fighter, but wickets continued to tumble. Key contributions from bowlers Usman Tariq (2/23) and Abrar Ahmed (1/29) restricted the Markhors to 124/9. Mohammad Ali, who took 3/19, ended the tournament as the highest wicket-taker with 22 scalps.

The closing ceremony of the Champions T20 Cup was attended by Federal Minister for Information, Atta Tarar, as the chief guest. He distributed prizes among the players and commended both teams for their outstanding performances.

### Individual Accolades

Player of the Match: Yasir Khan for his century.

Player of the Tournament: Mohammad Ali for his all-round performance, including 22 wickets.

Best Batter: Hussain Talat for scoring 319 runs, including a century and two half-centuries.

Best Bowler: Mohammad Ali.

Best Wicketkeeper: Mohammad Haris, with nine catches, three stumpings, and 269 runs.

## Pakistan announces relaxing visa policy for cricket fans during Champions Trophy

RAWALPINDI: Information Minister Attallah Tarar on Wednesday announced that Pakistan will ease visa policy for cricket fans across the globe during the 2025 edition of the ICC Champions Trophy.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of the Champions T20 Cup, Tarar said: "Visa policy for cricket fans across the world will be eased during the ICC Champions Trophy."

His remarks came a day after the International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled official fixtures and groups for the much-awaited global cricket event, which would commence on February 19, 2025 in Karachi.

The eight-team tournament will feature 15 matches, and will be played across Pakistan and in Dubai, the top cricketing body announced, adding that all matches will be day-night encounters.

The information minister also commended the performance of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), saying: "The PCB is fulfilling its responsibilities in the best way."

Referring to India's refusal to visit Pakistan for the mega event, the minister said: "Sports should be kept out of politics."

There will be two venues in the 2025 Champions Trophy which will be hosted by Pakistan with India playing all their matches in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), under the "hybrid model" proposed by the PCB as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) refused to send its team to the neighboring country.

The minister said majority of tournament's matches would be played in Pakistan, which will help promote Pakistan's culture and tourism.

He said the foreign cricket teams will be given a warm reception in Pakistan.

Responding to a question, Tarar said that Virender Sehwag among other Indian cricketers, who were part of the 2005 team, hail Pakistan's hospitality.

The information minister urged the Pakistani spectators to come and demonstrate their passion for cricket by welcoming the visiting teams and supporting their favourite team and players. He expressed hope that the Pakistan team will put up a brilliant display of their game.

In Pakistan, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi will be the three cities to host tournament. Each Pakistan venue will feature three group games apiece, with Lahore hosting the second semi-final.

Lahore will also host the final on March 9, unless India qualify, in which case it will be played in Dubai. Both the semi-finals and the final will have reserve days.

## Abdullah Govt College hosts first Intercollegiate Kho Kho Championship

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Government Girls College Al-Noor emerged victorious in the inaugural Abdullah Govt College Intercollegiate Kho Kho Championship, defeating Government College for Women, Nazimabad, by 9-3 points in a thrilling final. Organized by Abdullah Government College for

Women North Nazimabad in collaboration with the Sindh Kho Kho Association.

Tournament Director DPE Batool Kazim said that eight teams from District central participated in the tournament, including Sir Syed Government Girls College

Nazimabad, Government Degree College for Women Nazimabad, Government Degree Girls College Block K North Nazimabad, HI Osmania Government Girls Degree College, Government Degree Girls College Al-Noor 19 FB Area, Apwa Government College for Women Karimabad, Nishtar Government College for Women 11-B North Karachi and the host Abdullah Government College for Women.

Batool Kazim said that I am deeply grateful to the Sindh Kho Kho Association for the incredible support and guidance provided by the college principal, teachers and students of the college. She said

that the efforts of the Sindh Kho Kho Association in promoting the game of Kho Kho, organizing tournaments, providing training opportunities are truly remarkable, but you have also preserved the cultural heritage associated with this beautiful game.

Professor Dr. Naveed Rab Siddiqui, Director General Colleges Sindh, along with Zohaib Memon graced the occasion as the chief guest, expressing his admiration for the girls' exceptional skills and emphasizing the potential for Pakistan to excel internationally in Kho Kho with proper support. He announced plans to expand sports activities, including the upcoming

Sindh Games.

Prof. Dr. Naveed Rab Siddiqui appreciated the efforts of Director Physical Education Batool Kazim for her excellent services. Prof. Dr. Naveed Rab Siddiqui distributed trophies, certificates and shields to the winning teams and encouraged them for their excellent performance in the tournament.

Principal Prof. Syeda Tasneem Fatima Rizvi presented a bouquet and shield on behalf of the college and thanked DG Colleges Sindh for his presence. He also thanked Sindh Kho Kho Association President Dr. Arif Hafeez for his full cooperation in organizing the tournament.



On this occasion, Subia Athar, Ghazal Hussain, Nusrat Shams, Farheen, Rashida Parveen, Uzma Askari, Fehmina Naz, Nuzhat Abbasi, Tuba Fayyaz, Hajra Hussaini, Rani Kiran, Saima Ifthikhar, Amber Bashir, Nida

Nasir, Jamila Burfat and others were also present.

Earlier, Government Girls College Al-Noor, Govt. College for Women Nazimabad and Abdullah Govt College secured the first, second, and third posi-

tions, respectively. The Fair Play Trophy was awarded to the Nishtar Government College for Women team. The referee duties in the tournament were performed by Aurangzeb Ahmed and Shahroz Alvi.

## Christmas Celebration

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif cuts a cake to celebrate Christmas 2024 on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

# General Sahir Shamshad Mirza calls on Kuwait's Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, who is on an official visit to State of Kuwait, called on HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Fahed Yousef Al Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Lieutenant General (Staff) Engineer Hashim Al Rafee, Under Secretary Kuwait National Guard, Sheikh Abdullah Mishal Al Sabah, Under Secretary Ministry of Defence, and Major General Subah



Jaber Alsabah, Acting Chief of Staff of Kuwait Armed Forces.

Bilateral issues and defence cooperation were discussed during the high-level meetings. Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitments, and emphasized the importance of exploring new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas of defense and security.

CJSC also visited Mubarak Al Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College, where he was briefed on training activities being conducted at the Academy.

Earlier upon arrival at HQ Chief of Staff, Kuwait, a smartly turned-out contingent presented 'Guard of Honour' to the Chairman JCSC.

# Finance Minister chairs meeting of Cabinet Committee on state-owned enterprises

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCSOEs) at the Finance Division today.

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry; Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada; Minister for Maritime Affairs, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh; Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP); Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP); Federal Secretaries; and senior officers from the Finance Division.

The Committee deliberated on a



summary presented by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) regarding the privatization and exploration of a Public-Private

Partnership (PPP) model for the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company Limited (SRBC). During the discussion, the Cabinet

Committee reiterated its earlier decision that organizations like SRBC will not be classified as strategic or essential. The MoIB will be required to abide by the Cabinet's earlier decision regarding non-essential and non-strategic SOEs.

In addition, the Committee reviewed the implementation status of decisions previously taken regarding various SOEs under the agendas of the Cabinet Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Railways, and Revenue Division. A presentation was given highlighting the six cases currently under implementation across these ministries, with two cases pertaining to the Cabinet Division and one each for the others. The review emphasized ensuring timely execution of all decisions.

## Iranian Ambassador extends greetings on Quaid-e-Azam's Birth Anniversary



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, extended heartfelt greetings to the Government and people of Pakistan on the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan.

In his message, the Ambassador highlighted the pivotal contributions of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal, describing them as symbols of independence, unity, and faith for the Pakistani nation.

He underscored Pakistan's significant role in the Islamic world, attributed to the visionary leadership and philosophical legacy of these two iconic figures.

# Uzbek Ambassador extends greetings on 'Quaid-e-Azam Day'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev on Wednesday extended warm greetings on 'Quaid-e-Azam Day' to the Pakistan's nations and emphasized to follow the vision of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

In a message released here, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan said that this day honours the remarkable legacy of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, whose vision and determination continue to inspire unity and progress.

He said that today, 25th December, "we proudly observe Quaid-e-Azam Day, the birthday of the great leader and founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

His legacy serves as an inspiration to all who seek justice, unity, and progress, he said.



The Ambassador said that Quaid-e-Azam laid the foundation for an independent Pakistan, setting an example of resilience and dedication to his people.

May his principles continue to lead us to new heights, reminding us that the strength of any nation lies in unity and mutual respect.

In his message on this auspicious day, he said that the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan have deep historical and cultural roots.

Today, "we continue to build bridges of friendship and cooperation, strengthen our ties and discover new horizons.

He wished that may this brotherhood grow even stronger, and our joint efforts bring prosperity and inclusivity in the workplace. "At MIH, we embrace diversity and celebrate the shared values that bring us together. This festive season is a reminder of the power of unity, compassion, and understanding across all cultures and faiths. Merry Christmas to all who celebrate! May this festive season bring you joy, love, and cherished moments with your loved ones."

He continued, "As we approach the end of the year, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication and hard work. Your efforts have been the foundation of MIH's success, and I am proud to work

# President, PM condole loss of lives in Azerbaijani airline crash near Kazakhstan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed deep sorrow on loss of precious human lives during the tragic crash of an Azerbaijani airline near Aktau, Kazakhstan.

In separate statements, the president and prime minister extended their heartfelt condolences to President Ilham Aliyev, the government, and the people of Azerbaijan, sharing their grief.

The President also conveyed his sympathies to the bereaved families, emphasizing that Pakistan stands with them during this difficult time.

"My heartfelt condolences to my dear brother President Ilham Aliyev and the people of Azerbaijan

over the loss of precious lives in this incident. Our thoughts are with the families of the deceased and we wish a swift recovery to the injured. Pakistan stands with Azerbaijan in this hour of grief," the prime minister wrote on his official X handle.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar also expressed his condolences in a post written on his official X handle. "I am profoundly saddened to learn of the tragic crash involving an Azerbaijani airliner near Aktau, Kazakhstan. My sincerest condolences to my Brother Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and to the people of brotherly Azerbaijan for the loss of invaluable lives in this incident. Our thoughts are with the families of the departed. We wish a speedy recovery to those who are injured," he said.

# Tarar accuses PTI of fueling controversy over military courts

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, on Wednesday accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of making the military court issue controversial for political gain and fabricating baseless claims to obtain concessions.

Talking to the media, he clarified that military court sentences do not infringe upon the right to a fair trial, as individuals are granted access to a lawyer, family, and still have the opportunity to appeal twice, both within the military and the relevant high court.

Tarar stated that international laws were followed in the trial of those involved in the May 9 tragedy, there were no human rights violations, and all the accused will be punished in accordance with the law.

He stated that PTI is falsely creating an anti-country narrative about the military courts, which operate legally under an Act of Parliament and in accordance with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Tarar emphasized that military



court trials are held when there is an attack on defense installations, such as the incidents at Corps Commander House, Mardan, and Bala Hisar fort.

He stressed that when such a building is attacked and burned, it is the responsibility of the defense establishment to arrest the accused, much like the railway police would file an FIR for crimes committed on the railways.

The Federal Information Minister stated that just as drug-related cases are tried in Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) courts, terrorism cases in Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs), and attacks on railway facilities are handled by the Railway Police, similarly, cases involving attacks on military installations are prosecuted in military courts.

# Maroof Int'l Hospital celebrates Christmas with cake cutting ceremony for staff

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Maroof International Hospital (MIH) hosted a heartwarming Christmas cake-cutting ceremony for its dedicated staff, bringing festive cheer and fostering a spirit of unity and goodwill. The event was a gesture of appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the hospital team throughout the year.

Haroon Naseer, CEO of MIH, shared a thoughtful message during the celebration, emphasizing the importance of interfaith harmony and inclusivity in the workplace. "At MIH, we embrace diversity and celebrate the shared values that bring us together. This festive season is a reminder of the power of unity, compassion, and understanding across all cultures and faiths. Merry Christmas to all who celebrate! May this festive season bring you joy, love, and cherished moments with your loved ones."

He continued, "As we approach the end of the year, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication and hard work. Your efforts have been the foundation of MIH's success, and I am proud to work



alongside such an incredible team. As we step into 2025, I wish you all a New Year filled with happiness, good health, and new opportunities. Let us continue to strive for excellence and make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve. Here's to a joyful holiday season and a bright year ahead!"

The cake-cutting ceremony was a joyful occasion, with staff members from all departments coming together to celebrate the holiday season. The event underscored MIH's commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive work environment, where employees of all backgrounds are valued and respected.

MIH looks forward to continuing its mission of providing exceptional healthcare while promoting a culture of unity and collaboration in the coming year.