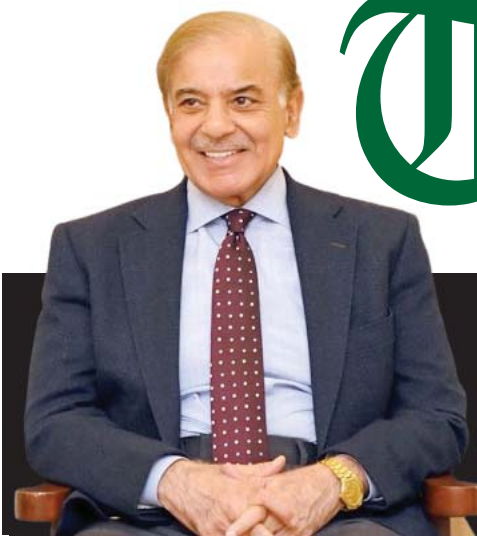


Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم کو شیعہ نے جردی، انہوں نے کہا ہم سے
ابو ابراہیم سے بیان کیا ان سے اس نے بیان
کیا اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول
اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا اگر جنت (کی فضیلت)
نہ ہوتی تو میں انصار کا ایک فرد بننا پسند کرتا
اور اگر دوسرے لوگ کسی دای میں نہیں اور
انصار ایک دای یا گھاتی میں نہیں تو میں انصار
کی دای یا گھاتی میں چلوں گا۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 7344)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



C-5 nuclear power plant milestone in Pakistan, China cooperation: PM

In a post on X, he said, "The plant will contribute 1200 megawatts of electricity. I congratulate PAEC and CNNC on this remarkable achievement. Pak China Dosti Zindabad."



Punjab gov committed to serving the province's people: Azma

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that the Punjab Government is continuing its mission of tirelessly serving people of the province. Azma Bukhari said that several important public welfare projects were launched during this year.

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Meeting on Gwadar Airport

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on matters related to New Gwadar International Airport on Monday.



Photo: PID

New Gwadar International Airport to bring prosperity to area: Prime Minister

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the New Gwadar International Airport will bring prosperity in the area, and it will also create new job opportunities.

Extending gratitude to China for constructing an international standard airport equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the prime minister said the airport was an example of Pakistan-China great friendship.

The prime minister, chairing

the meeting on matters related to the New Gwadar International Airport directed the relevant authorities to chalk out a strategy to make the new airport a busy transit point.

He also directed to improvement of the road system linking the New Gwadar International Airport with other areas of the country, especially the province. Additionally, the prime minister also ordered to ensure fool proof security arrangements for the new airport.

During the meeting, the prime minister was informed that

flights from Gwadar to Muscat would be started from January 10, 2025, whereas talks with regard to starting the domestic and international flight operations by the airlines of Pakistan, China, Oman and United Arab Emirates from Gwadar were underway.

Similarly, the current duration of flight operation of Pakistan Airlines (PIA) between Karachi and Gwadar will soon be increased to three times per week.

It was informed in the meeting that the Gwadar Airport was the largest airport in the country

in terms of area which will be capable of handling A-380 airplanes whereas 400,000 people will travel through the airport annually.

Pakistan Airport Authority has already issued the Aerodrome Certificate to the New Gwadar Airport whereas the Pakistan Customs has also notified the airport.

Additionally, the meeting was told that the first part of East-Bay Expressway, meant to improve road link with the Gwadar International Airport had been completed while the feasibility

of the second part was being prepared.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Defence and Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and other relevant high officials.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister for Privatization, Investment and Communication Aaleem Khan participated in the meeting via video link.

Govt to launch National Economic Transformation Plan today

(tomorrow), Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday.

"The transformation plan is based upon several factors which need to be addressed and achieved if Pakistan wants to develop and progress in future," the minister said while addressing a ceremony of the 47th Specialised Training Programme of Pakistan Administration Service in Lahore.

In a briefing held in 2022, Iqbal outlined a four-point strategy proposed by the previous administration aimed at revitalising the economy.

The plan focuses on boosting exports, attracting foreign investment, enhancing the tax-to-GDP ratio, and addressing the challenges posed by loss-making state-owned enterprises.

In April, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed the need for a comprehensive five-year strategy to double the country's exports.

He highlighted the significance of a collaborative approach, directing the Ministry of Trade to develop the export strategy in consultation with successful entrepreneurs and industry stakeholders.



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The govern-

ment would unveil the National Economic Transformation Plan for the next five years on Tuesday

IHC accepts PTA's petition against extra tax deduction

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday accepted the petition of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) against deduction of extra amount by Federal Board of Revenue in line of advance tax.

IHC's Justice Babar Sattar issued the detailed order on the petition of PTA, which was filed

in 2018 against the decision for deduction of Rs1.37 billion as advance tax.

The court also imposed a fine worth Rs100,000 on deputy commissioner Inland Revenue and instructed him to pay the amount to the petitioner within one month.

The court said that the petitioner stated that the FBR assessed the advance tax again. The PTA stated that the tax department

deducted the amount from bank account without serving prior notice. The high court said that it is essential to serve notice to the tax payer as per the income tax ordinance.

The court said that the action without following the due process is the violation of fundamental rights of the petitioner.

It said that the PTA filed application to the department against



the cutting of extra amount. The commissioner Inland Revenue was bound to take decision on petition within two month but matter was not concluded within

the said period.

The court directed the FBR to take decision within two month on the application after issuance of this verdict.

Govt will approach int'l community over military sentencing concerns: Rana Ihsaan



United Kingdom] if there is any misunderstanding," he said while appearing on Aaj News programme Spotlight with Munizae Jahangir.

"We will take up [the matter] with them and inform them how matters are run here as people sentenced by military courts have the right of appeal," he added.

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government would approach the international community to clarify its concerns over the sentencing of civilians by military courts, Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, the prime minister's coordinator, said on Monday.

"The government will approach them [European Union, United States, and

the international community and the International Court of Jurists have expressed concerns over the sentencing of 85 civilians by a military court in Pakistan. They were being awarded jail terms for being involved in May 9 events when violent protesters vandalised state buildings and military installations after former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested in a graft case in Islamabad.

PTI to present two demands to government following consultations

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The second round of negotiations between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the government is set to take place on January 2 at the Parliament House in Islamabad. Jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party has decided to present two key demands to the ruling coalition following consultations.

Since Khan's imprisonment last year on multiple charges, the relationship between the PTI and both the government and military establishment has soured significantly. The deterioration has been marked by protests that often turned violent amid government crackdowns.

In light of the unrest, Khan formed a five-member committee to engage in talks with "anyone," indicating a change in the PTI's parliamentary approach. In response, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assembled a committee composed of ruling coalition members.

The first meeting between the government and PTI committees took place on Monday, marking the beginning of much-anticipated negotiations aimed at reducing political tensions in the country.

The PTI has set a January 31 deadline to finalise the negotiations. Earlier, Sanaullah indi-



cated that the government would be willing to "accommodate such a request."

Significant progress has been made regarding the negotiations, sources said as PTI leaders have discussed demands for the formation of a judicial commission and the release of prisoners.

They added that the PTI would formally present the above mentioned demands in writing to the government team. The party would seek the establishment of a judicial commission to investigate the events of May 9 and November 26.

It is expected that PTI would be at its full strength, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq would chair the talks between the two sides, according to a notification issued by the National Assembly Secretariat. The meeting is scheduled for January 2 at 11:30 am. Like the last time, it would be an in-camera meeting.

'Imran Khan will take back civil disobedience call if two demands are met'

Grand jirga to meet today in Kohat to find solution for Kurram

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Grand Jirga, engaged in a peace-keeping mission in the region, is set to hold its next meeting tomorrow in Kohat, under the leadership of Commissioner Motasim Billah.

The members of the Jirga have reported that one party has signed a 14-point agreement, while the second party is yet to provide its signatures.

During the upcoming decisive round, significant decisions are anticipated, particularly as the second party has requested a two-day extension

for further consultation. The concluding discussions are scheduled for Tuesday at 11am.

Jirga members have expressed their commitment to finalizing the agreement as soon as possible, emphasizing that unanimous consent from all parties is vital. There is a strong consensus among the members regarding the urgency of reaching an agreement through mutual consultations.

In light of the ongoing crisis, Jirga members have highlighted the dire conditions in Kurram District, where over 300 innocent children have

There is no benefit to Islam and faith without obedience to the Prophet (PBUH)

Qayoom Sarohi

KARACHI: The command of Allah states, "Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) will be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His favor." The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Whoever treats my Ahlul Bayt (AS) with kindness, I will intercede for them." Based on these two clear directives, that Islam and faith are of no benefit if one loves the Prophet (PBUH) but does not show affection toward his Ahlul Bayt (AS). Remember, the Quran declares affection for the Ahlul Bayt (AS) as obligatory.

These thoughts were expressed by Dr. Saeed Talibi Nia, Munawwar Ali Mahesar, Mubashir Mir, Syed Manzar Naqvi, Zawar Abdul Sattar Dars, Syed Ammar Ali Shah Naqvi, Allama Ayaz Qomi, Syed Shabbir Raza Rizvi, Pastor Ateeq Qaiser, Sardar Amar Singh, Mukesh Kumar Jedia, Zawar Niaz Hussain Laghari, Brigadier Syed Karar Hussain, and others during the fourth annual "Masooma-e-Sindh Interna-

tional Interfaith Conference" held at Ibrahim Jyo Auditorium, Liaquat National Library, Karachi. The event was organized by the Zaireen Khidmat Committee in association with Karachi Editors Club, and Sindh Department of Culture on the Sunday evening. The event was hosted by Agha Shirazi very beautifully and smoothly which was loudly appreciated by the participants of the Conference.

The speakers highlighted that following the tragedy of Karbala, many Sadat (descendants of the Prophet's family) were compelled by circumstances to migrate from the Arabian Peninsula to various parts of the world. A majority chose the land of Sindh, as its inhabitants—regardless of religion—possessed deep love and reverence for the Prophet (PBUH) and his family. Sindh is honored to host Sadat such as Sayyida Ruqayyah bint Ali (AS), known as Bibi Pakdaman, a daughter of Imam Ali (AS); Sayyid Abdullah Ashtar (AS), known as Abdullah Shah Ghazi, a great-grandson of Imam Hasan

al-Mujtaba (AS); and Sayyida Khadija Maham bint Imam Musa Kazim (AS). The shrine of Sayyida Ruqayyah is in Lahore, while the shrine of Sayyida Khadija Maham is located in Agham Kot, Sindh.

It is a matter of great happiness that the magnificent shrine of Bibi Pakdaman has been completed, and the Sindh Auqaf Department recently approved a project to construct the shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh Bibi Khadija Maham bint Imam Musa Kazim (AS). The foundation stone has also been laid. However, over the past 6-7 years, a group of 4-5 known miscreants has been actively conspiring to incite religious tension in the area and has also interfered in the construction work, causing it to be halted.

During the conference, performances of Na'at and Manqabat were delivered by Ustad Mazhar Amrao Bandu Khan, Kishwar Adeel Jafri, Kamal Amrohi, Nasir Agha, Dr. Javed Manzar, Dua-e-Zahra Dars, Shahbaz Ali Lanjwani, and others.



Media Talks

CHINIOT: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh, talking to the Media Persons on Monday.



Photo: PID

Traffic accident claims three lives, two injured in Upper South Waziristan

Umer Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A devastating traffic accident occurred on Monday in Upper South Waziristan District, resulting in the loss of three PTM Workers lives and leaving two others injured. According to rescue officials, the accident took place at Badar Bridge in Tehsil Ladha, South Waziristan Upper where a Fielder car traveling from Wana to Makin met with the unfortunate incident.

Rescue Coordinator, Shah Nawaz Wazir, said that the car's high speed at Badar Bridge led to its fall into a deep ditch, causing the fatalities and injuries. The rescue team promptly responded to the incident, shifting the deceased to their native areas in Wana and shifted the injured persons to the District Headquarters Hospital Wana.

Rescue officials said the victims who lost their lives in the accident were identified as Rooh Ullah, Mehmood,

and Riaz, while the injured included Zeenat Ullah and Shafiq. According to rescue officials, all the occupants of the vehicle were en route to attend a Mehsud tribes peace Jirga in Makin on Monday when the tragic incident occurred. Unfortunately, the Fielder car was completely destroyed in the accident.

Prominent political and social figures from Upper South Waziristan and Lower South Waziristan two Districts have expressed their profound sorrow

and grief over the tragic incident. Their heartfelt condolences reflect the widespread impact of the tragedy on the community.

The tragic loss of life has sent shockwaves throughout Waziristan, leaving an indelible mark on the region. The incident has evoked an outpouring of emotions, with many struggling to come to terms with the devastating loss. As the community mourns, they remain united in their solidarity and support for the affected families.

Govt committed to providing quality education, says Khalid Maqbool

LAHORE, DEC 30 (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has said that government is committed to improving the quality of education and using all possible resources for it.

Inaugurating the National College of Arts (NCA) Bachelor's Degree Show 2024 in Lahore on Monday, Dr. Maqbool commended the students for their innovative ideas and artistic efforts, emphasizing that such exhibitions offer students a platform to express their creativity. He also extended his congratulations to the NCA administration for organizing the successful event.

Always Stand with Traders says Ch. Kamran

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the Details, Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat patron In-Chief of Kamalia Tاجر Ittehad, Talking to Daily the Spokesman, said that the purpose of the tاجر ittehad is that we are bringing all the tاجers together on one platform so that the union of tاجers can be maintained. Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat said that tاجers are facing numerous problems due to which the tاجر is worried. We are trying to eliminate the problems of our tاجر brothers. Tاجers are the backbone of our country, because of tاجers the country runs and develops.



Tاجers are the honor and glory of our country. He said that we are always stand with our tاجers brothers and are with them in their sorrows.

Newly elected office bearers of Takht e Bhai Press Club continue to receive congratulations

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: newly elected officials of Takht e Bhai Press Club (Registered) continue to receive congratulations. Prominent figures from the political, social, and other walks of life in the region visited the press club to congratulate the officials on their success. The visitors included Dr. Imran Johar (MS, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital), Tariq Khan (President of Anjuman Tajiran Takht e Bhai), Irfan Mohmand (former candidate from PK-60, Pakistan Peoples Party), Haji Hussain (President of Tahafuz Pakistan Media Council), Haq Nawaz Khan (Washington Post representative), Muhammad Riaz, Arshad Mohmand (Deewa Radio), Malik Irshad (leader of Awami National Party and Nazim of VC Seri Behlol), Riaz-ul-Haq (Managing Director of Radio Watan Takht e Bhai), and Murad Ali. On this occasion, the newly elected officials of Takht e Bhai Press Club (Registered) were also present, including President Muslim Khan Sabir, Joint Secretary Javed Alam Mohmand, Finance Secretary Muhammad Shahid Khan, Senior Journalist Izzat Muhammad Khpelwak, young journalist Tariq Khan Yousafzai, Matiullah Mati, Zahid-ur-Rehman, Zahid Akhuzada, Imran Zaman, and Javed Ahmed. The visitors, while congratulating the officials, expressed their confidence that the newly elected representatives of Takht e Bhai Press Club would fulfill the high expectations of the local community. The public hopes that these officials will adhere to the principles of journalism, highlight the issues of the region, and play an active role in serving the people.

Irshad Ali Chandio Congratulates Newly Elected Hyderabad Press Club Body

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Divisional Director of the Information Department Hyderabad, Irshad Ali Chandio, extended his congratulations and best wishes to the newly elected body of the Hyderabad Press Club.

On behalf of the Information Department Sindh Hyderabad, Irshad Ali Chandio congratulated the newly elected President Khalid Khokhar, Vice President Ali Naem, General Secretary Hamid-ur-Rehman, Joint Secretary Mujahid Ali, Treasurer Jay Prakash, and the members of the governing body, including senior journalists Ali Hassan, Lala Rehman Samoon, Junaid Khanzada, Hamid Sheikh, Muhammad Hussain Khan, Ahmed Khan Sheikh, Muhammad Iqbal Mallah, Mansoor Mari, Zafar Hakro, and Naveed Qaimkhani.

To mark the occasion, Irshad Chandio presented bouquets of flowers to the newly elected office-bearers and conveyed his good wishes. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed hope that the newly elected officials would contribute positively to the development of Hyderabad and the welfare of journalists.

IESCO, CDA join hands to tackle electricity theft, streamline connections

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) have pledged to work together on critical electricity-related challenges in the federal capital.

The announcement followed a high-level meeting between IESCO's Chief Executive Officer and CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, held on Monday.

The meeting focused on tackling issues such as electricity theft, illegal connections, overbilling, and payment disputes between the two entities.

Both sides expressed a shared commitment to improving coordination and resolving longstanding concerns.

A key outcome of the meeting was the decision to establish a joint committee tasked with addressing mutual issues, including overbilling and phased resolution of financial dues between CDA and IESCO.

"Police crack down on suspects in Sujawal robbery of Polish tourists"

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

SUJAWAL: Sujawal police have conducted raids at various locations to apprehend the muggers involved in the robbery of Polish tourists on the main Sujawal-Badin Bypass on Sunday. The tourists, Kowalczyk Jakuo Tomasz (aka Jacub) and his spouse Scantamburlo Mae Elisabeth (aka Merry), were deprived of their cell phones, cash, and other valuables in broad daylight.

Inspector Haq Nawaz Baran, the DIB In-charge of Sujawal, has been suspended for his alleged negligence in providing timely information about the Polish couple's visit. The couple is on a world tour by bicycle and reached Thatta on Saturday after traveling for seven months.

According to credible sources within



the district police department, around 40 suspects have been arrested so far in an effort to recover the stolen items. An FIR has been registered at the Sujawal

Police Station under sections 397 and 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code.

Provincial Minister for Culture and Tourism Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah has taken immediate notice of the incident and directed the authorities to arrest the suspects and recover the stolen items promptly. The minister termed the incident "regrettable" and assured that the government would provide complete security to foreign tourists.

To demonstrate the government's commitment to supporting visitors, the minister also directed the provision of new mobile phones to the affected tourists. Home Minister Zia ul Hassan Lanjhar has sought a detailed report from SSP Sujawal Dr. Khalique Pirzada regarding the incident and instructed the district police chief to utilize modern investigative techniques to ensure swift justice.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:43 am
Zohr 12:10 pm
Asr 3:31 pm
Maghrib 5:09 pm
Isha 6:38 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

AIOU's admissions to Begin Tomorrow



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Admissions for the Spring Semester 2025 from Matriculation to PhD programs of the Allama Iqbal Open University will begin tomorrow (Wednesday, January 1, 2025). Admission forms and prospectuses for all programs will be available online on the university's website www.aiou.edu.pk. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood has directed the heads of regional campuses to assist and guide prospective students.

Mushaal slams India for converting Parades on earth into slaughter house

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of unlawfully imprisoned Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Mohammad Yasin Malik, highlighted Kashmir's multifaceted identity, saying it's not only renowned for its breathtaking beauty, but also for its rich cultural heritage and resilient people.

Speaking at an event "Kashmir Jannat Nazer", Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation praised the initiative for highlighting the rich cultural legacy of Kashmir and its role in promoting peace and understanding.

She said that Kashmir was not only known as a paradise on earth because of

its breathtaking and unparalleled beauty, but it was also a beacon of cultural richness and resilience.

However, Mushaal lamented that the Indian occupation forces converted the Paradise on earth as a killing field and garrison city, where they were given free rein to abuse, humiliate and massacre Kashmiri men and women.

She said that events like 'Kashmir Jannat Nazir' served as a reminder of our shared heritage and the importance of promoting harmony, peace and unity through cultural expression, besides showcasing Kashmiri handicrafts, traditional attire, cuisine and music.

The Principal of the College presented Mushaal with a Kashmiri Cap as a symbol

of solidarity.

The chairperson while visiting the stalls pointed out that such events provided the people an opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich traditions of Kashmir, fostering a deeper appreciation for its cultural heritage.

She emphasized the role of cultural festivals in bridging divides and promoting unity, as Kashmir's culture reflected the spirit and creativity of its people.

However, Mushaal said that the culturally rich scenic valley had been reduced into a slaughter house by Indian forces, who were committing atrocities including human rights abuses, enforced disappearances and killings.



Below the poverty line

ISLAMABAD: Gypsy cen searching recyclable items from piles of rubbish alongside a road at Gollra area in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Jay Salik always ready to give their rights to the minorities, says Naeem Asim

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman International Human Rights Forum (Nobel Peace Prize) Syed Muhammad Naeem Asim has said that Jay Salik has done a lot for minorities. He is a politician who is not accused of corruption. Even today, he is living in rented houses. I think Pakistan needs such leaders. They are always ready to give minorities their rights. These views were expressed during a meeting with renowned minority leader and former MNA Jay Salik at his resi-



Chairman International Human Rights Forum (Nobel Peace Prize) Syed Muhammad Naeem Asim said that I have been associated with Jay Salik since he became a federal minister. Since then, I have met him. He has done a lot for

minorities. There are politicians who are not accused of corruption. Even today, they are living in rented houses. I think Pakistan needs such leaders. They have a lot of fame at the international level. Their way of doing politics is public. Politicians. They stand up for injustice, they are always ready to give minorities their rights, they have always worked for the betterment of the country and the nation, I think they deserve to be encouraged, their style of politics and service to minorities and the country should be appreciated.

PML-N Celebrates the Birthdays of Nawaz Sharif and Khail Das Kohistani

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) celebrated the birthdays of Leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Member of National Assembly Khail Das Kohistani by cutting a cake at Talpur House, Qasimabad.

The event was hosted by PML-N leader Mir Yasir Talpur, with a large number of party workers, political leaders, civil society members, and journalists in attendance.

After cutting the cake, Kohistani spoke to the media, saying, "I am praying for the health and long life of Leader Nawaz Sharif. Under his leadership, our party has always worked for the welfare of the people, and we will continue to do so." He also highlighted the government's performance, emphasizing that the party will keep working for the public's well-being.

The event was attended by senior PML-N leaders including Naseer Memon, Khalid Shaikh, Rafiq Qureshi,



President of PML-N Women's Wing Sindh Zahida Baloch, and senior journalists Bashir Bhatti, Allah Bux Kumbhar, Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi, and Noor Alam Shah. Mir Yasir Talpur welcomed the guests, leaders, and workers attending the event and expressed gratitude for making the celebration a success.

Mahnoor Ali Wins U13 Girls' Title, Sohail Adnan Takes U13 Boys'

City Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's rising squash stars, Mahnoor Ali and Sohail Adnan, have made history by winning their respective categories at the prestigious Scottish Junior Open 2024. Mahnoor Ali triumphed in the Girls U13 category, while Sohail Adnan secured victory in the Boys U13 category, cementing their positions as two of the brightest young talents in the sport.

In a dominating performance, Mahnoor Ali claimed the Girls U13 title with a flawless 3-0 victory over India's Divyanshi Jain in the final. The set scores of 11/5, 11/5, and 11/7 showcased her outstanding skills, composure, and resilience on the court. This victory adds to Mahnoor's growing list of accomplishments, which includes her historic win at the 2024 US Junior Open Squash Championship and gold medals at the Australian Junior Open and Borneo Junior Open in 2023.

Sohail Adnan, another rising star, claimed the Boys U13 title in a hard-fought final, showcasing his impressive technical skills and mental toughness. His victory at the Scottish Junior Open follows his recent win at the Asian Junior U13 Championship in June 2024, further solidifying his place as one of the top junior players in the world. Sohail's dedication and relentless pursuit of excellence continue to inspire young athletes across Pakistan.

Abdul Razak Dawood, founder of the BARD Foundation, which has supported both Mahnoor and Sohail in their journey, expressed his pride in their achievements: "Mahnoor and Sohail's victories are a testament to their talent and hard work. With the right support, they have shown that Pakistani athletes can compete and win on the global stage. Mehreen Dawood, representing the BARD Foundation, commented: "Our mission is to empower athletes like Mahnoor Ali & Sohail Adnan to dream big and achieve greatness. Their success at the Scottish Junior Open is a moment of pride for the entire nation and an inspiration for countless young girls aspiring to make their mark in sports."

Pakistan Reports 68th WPV1 Case of 2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health has confirmed the detection of the 68th wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) case of 2024 from the country.

On Monday, December 30, the lab confirmed the case from DI Khan. This is the 10th polio case from DI Khan this year.

Pakistan is responding to the resurgence of WPV1 this year with 68 cases reported so far. Of these, 27 are from Balochistan, 20 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 19 from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and Islamabad.

Polio is a paralyzing disease that has no cure. Multiple doses of the oral polio vaccine and completion of the routine vaccination schedule for all children under the age of five is essential to provide children high immunity against this terrible disease.

The Pakistan Polio Program conducts multiple mass vaccination drives in a year, bringing the vaccine to children at their doorsteps, while the Expanded Programme on Immunization provides vaccinations against 12 childhood disease free of charge at health facilities. It is crucial for parents to ensure vaccination for all their children under the age of five to keep them protected.

A sub-national Polio vaccination campaign was conducted across Punjab, Sindh, KP, AJK, GB, and Islamabad from 16 - 22 December vaccinating over 42 million children. The campaign's second phase started today in Balochistan. To keep children safe, it is critical for parents to welcome vaccinators among them and bring their children forward for vaccination.

KP govt to fund 4,000 weddings for underprivileged girls'

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur discussed welfare initiatives, including the use of Zakat and dowry funds.

The meeting was attended by the Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, senior officials of the Social Welfare Department, Commissioner Peshawar, DC Peshawar, and other relevant authorities.

Discussions covered the utilization of Zakat and dowry funds, along with other welfare initiatives by the provincial government.

Key decisions were made to support underprivileged segments of society that include mass wedding program.

Over 4,000 underprivileged girls will benefit from collective wedding events funded by the provincial government. Each bride will receive Rs. 200,000 in cash.

Events to be held at divisional and district levels. Transparency to ensure only eligible beneficiaries receive support.

It was decided that Panahgah (Shelter Homes) to be permanently funded through the provincial budget, and distribution of wheelchairs to disabled students, starting with higher education institutions.

Authorities were tasked with establishment of old age homes with living and recreational facilities.

The meeting decided launch of "Orphan Cards" to provide Rs. 5,000 monthly to school-going orphans and proposal to introduce "Ration Cards" offering Rs. 5,000 monthly to elderly widows.

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Afghanistan the Graveyard of Empires

Do not put your hand in the wolf's den." This famous saying emphasizes that those who heed its wisdom avoid deadly attacks and live longer, while those who ignore it often suffer. Unfortunately, our leadership seems to have disregarded the essence of this adage and has dared to reach into the wolf's den of Afghanistan, hoping to emerge unscathed.

Earlier this year, Pakistan carried out airstrikes inside Afghanistan, which generated a strong reaction from the Taliban leadership. Their narrative was straightforward: Pakistan's security agencies should focus on safeguarding their own frontiers, managing their internal law and order, improving intelligence capabilities, preventing their citizens from illegally crossing international borders, and refraining from blaming neighbors for their own shortcomings and weaknesses.

Their narrative carries a lot of weight, as millions of dollars from a poor nation, where 40% of the population lives below the poverty line, were spent to build a barbed-wire wall along the Afghanistan border to prevent cross-border movement. Unfortunately, this wall has proven to be ineffective, as if it does not exist. Smuggling across the border continues unabated, cross-border movement remains unstoppable, and terrorist activities have intensified more than ever before.

Perhaps we have only partially learned from cross-border attacks carried out by the USA in various countries and by India, particularly in Pakistan. These countries, while successfully eliminating cross-border threats, also strengthened and fortified their internal security. They did so by implementing foolproof border controls, creating effective surveillance systems, identifying internal threats before they could cause harm, and addressing internal political discontent.

These measures ensured comprehensive reinforcement of both internal and external security.

One example is the USA after the 9/11 attacks. The country drastically revamped border control protocols worldwide. Security measures for air, rail, land, and sea travel were fortified on a global scale. Within the United States, the Department of Homeland Security was established to evaluate and strengthen the nation's security apparatus. This department assessed civil and military installations, identified gaps, and implemented comprehensive security protocols to eliminate potential threats effectively.

Another example is India, which implemented drastic constitutional changes by bringing Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir under federal control. Since then, a foolproof security protocol has been established across the region. Since 2019, there have been no significant cross-border incursions into the Jammu and Kashmir valley, nor any major freedom movements. Under high-security measures, the Indian government has successfully implemented mechanisms to suppress any substantial freedom movements permanently.

Turning back to the situation in Afghanistan, we seem to have forgotten the well-known adage that Afghanistan is the "graveyard of civilizations." This has been proven true in both the distant and recent past, with no evidence suggesting this will change in the foreseeable future.

I vividly recall an interview with an American general who was in charge of operations in Afghanistan after 9/11. He stated that while the adage might have been true for other nations in the past, it would not apply to the United States, given its superior technology and top-notch training. However, the world

witnessed the humiliating withdrawal of Allied forces in 2021, leaving behind billions of dollars' worth of military hardware, abandoning Afghan allies to the mercy of the Taliban, and fleeing on C-130 aircraft. The harrowing images of Afghan civilians clinging to the aircraft's wings and falling to their deaths were etched into global memory.

Perhaps the Pakistani armed forces believe themselves to be better equipped and trained than the Allied forces, with superior strategies and tactics. This conviction might have led them to carry out airstrikes inside Afghanistan, aiming to eliminate cross-border threats. However, they have failed to stop the infiltration of the Pakistani Taliban—citizens labeled as Khawarij to foster further hatred against them—while disregarding Pakistan's constitution, which forbids discrimination based on color, creed, or religion.

The first airstrike was unexpectedly absorbed by the Afghans, which was uncharacteristic given their history of never letting any humiliation go unavenged. However, the second airstrike appeared to exceed their tolerance.

This time around, their patience wore thin, and they retaliated in kind. However, unlike Pakistan, they added an interesting and calculated twist. Rather than claiming they attacked inside Pakistan, they stated their actions were directed across the hypothetical line, targeting elements they held responsible for planning attacks within Afghanistan. This subtle reframing allowed them to justify their actions without formally acknowledging the border they do not recognize.

With the perception of the Pakistan Army at an all-time low, the Afghan government's commitment to establishing a direct trade link with China through the

Wakhan border to reduce its reliance on transit trade through Pakistan, the separatist movement in Balochistan, and the alienation of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) from the central government—combined with the prevailing popular narrative against the Pakistan Army—Pakistan finds itself in a precarious position. The ethnic linkage of the Pashtun population in KP and Balochistan with Afghanistan further complicates matters, alongside the country's ongoing economic and financial meltdown.

Pakistan's lack of sovereignty, exacerbated by its dependence on Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and China for maintaining critical reserves to avoid default, highlights its vulnerability. Given these challenges, it is in Pakistan's best interest to improve relations with its neighbors, as its ties with Iran, India, and Afghanistan are perhaps at their lowest point. Instead of taking actions that further deteriorate peace and exacerbate belligerent behavior, Pakistan should focus on fostering better diplomatic and economic relationships to stabilize the region and ensure long-term security and prosperity.

If both sides fail to pursue a negotiated settlement, the consequences could be catastrophic. Continued airstrikes and retaliatory attacks risk escalating into open conflict, destabilizing the region and worsening humanitarian crises. For Pakistan, further escalation could strain its already fragile internal security, undermine its international standing, and deplete critical resources. For Afghanistan, emboldened by its ability to strike back, the conflict could cement its role as a destabilizing force in the region. A peaceful resolution through dialogue is urgently needed to prevent these dire outcomes.

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

CAIR calls on Biden to demand release of Gaza hospital director kidnapped by Israeli forces

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a prominent Muslim advocacy group, Sunday called on US President Joe Biden to demand the release of Dr Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital, who was kidnapped by Israeli forces.

The hospital was the last functioning medical facility in northern Gaza and Friday's Israeli bombing put it out of service.

According to media reports, Dr. Safiya was assaulted before being detained on Saturday.

CAIR also condemned Israel's targeted attacks on hospitals and its killing, kidnapping and abuse of medical staff and patients.

Those kidnapped by Israel at the hospital described being beaten, spit on, stripped and left in the cold for hours as they were held and interrogated. "They took photos of all of us. They spat on us. They humiliated us," one man said. "Before releasing us, they put a number on everyone's chest and back."

In a statement, CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said

"Israel's ongoing genocidal assault on medical personnel, patients and hospitals must be condemned by all people of conscience who value international laws and norms.

"The Biden administration, which is complicit with Israel's genocide, must call for an end to Israeli attacks on medical facilities throughout Gaza and must demand the release of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya."

Since Oct 7, 2023, Israel has slaughtered more than 45,000 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The World Food Program now says Israel is forcibly depriving over two million people of access to food, water, shelter in Gaza.

The whereabouts of Abu Safiya and other hospital staff are unclear, CAIR said. As calls grow for information on Abu Safiya's fate, a picture has circulated on social media depicting him as "one of the most honorable examples of resilience."

"Dr. Hussam Abu Safia stands as one of the most honorable examples of resilience, embodying its noblest form. Like the roots of Palestine's olive trees, older than Israel's entire existence, Dr. Hussam represents steadfastness," 'Martyrs of Gaza' wrote in a post on X.

"Abducting doctors is a war crime, and silence in the face of such crimes is an even greater offense."



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

China 2025—The Future in Focus

In a world that seems to shift under our very feet, the call for genuine cultural understanding and cooperative global relationships has never been more pressing. The recent Sichuan gathering served as an evocative reminder of the extraordinary potential of international dialogue. But beneath the surface of such events lies a deeper conversation, one that points to broader dynamics at play—such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—and how these global movements can shape a more interconnected, sustainable world, especially for countries like Pakistan.

The recent meeting in Sichuan highlighted this truth, with attendees discussing not just their economic goals but also their backgrounds, principles, and aspirations for the future. It is this interaction, this nurturing of comprehension at the personal level, that could ultimately become the most lasting legacy of the BRI. In this context, cultural diplomacy is crucial—it aids in dismantling outdated obstacles and establishing the trust required for cooperation that goes beyond simple economic exchanges. The cultural aspect is particularly important for Pakistan. The nation's abundant and varied heritage provides a distinctive opportunity for interaction, which can improve the connections established through the BRI.

Integrating cultural awareness into economic collaborations can avoid misconceptions and enhance stronger, more durable connections among nations, establishing a basis for growth that endures well into the future. However, do not be misled: although the opportunities for achievement are significant, the BRI faces its challenges. Amid worries regarding financial sustainability, increasing political tensions, and the potential for creating economic dependencies, challenges abound. Numerous partner nations, such as Pakistan, have expressed worries regarding the

increasing debt load tied to these projects, and the sustainability of such initiatives is still up for discussion. The promise of prosperity from the BRI needs to be approached with caution and balance taking into consideration the social and environmental effects of these ambitious projects.

To realize the BRI's extensive potential, a more open and inclusive method is essential. This implies involving local communities from the beginning, making certain that environmental and social factors are central to the planning process, and establishing strong financial oversight systems.

For Pakistan, this implies utilizing the BRI not merely for immediate economic gains, but also guaranteeing that its lasting results are sustainable and fair, serving all parts of society, not only the political elite. A crucial, yet frequently neglected, element of the BRI is the participation of young people. The youth are the builders of the future, and their involvement in these intercultural initiatives will decide if they are genuinely transformative or simply transactional.

Funding educational exchanges and youth initiatives is essential for cultivating a generation that is economically savvy, culturally informed, and dedicated to the ideals of global collaboration. These future leaders will uphold the spirit of collaboration, guaranteeing that the connections forged through projects such as the BRI are reinforced for future generations. Amidst the significant hurdles the world confronts—climate change, political unrest, economic inequality—projects such as the BRI present a ray of hope. However, their success relies on a readiness to value shared prosperity above personal competition, sustainability over unlimited growth, and cultural interaction over isolationism. China's participation in this worldwide movement is crucial.

With the BRI, China is not only building infra-

structure—it is weaving a network of human connections that go beyond borders and ideologies. The future of international collaboration relies on the capacity to merge economic prospects with cultural comprehension, making sure that these alliances are more than just transactional, but also transformational.

The planet has never been as interconnected, and as we think about the future, it's evident that projects like the BRI can guide us toward a more peaceful international system. A request that prioritizes cultural diversity, sustainable development, and the involvement of young people. The current challenge is to go past aspirations and transform these ideals into reality—for the advantage of every nation, for all future generations.

In the next five years, China will remain an influential player on the international stage in the fields of economy, technology, and geopolitics. It will focus on sustainable development, leadership in terms of technology, and new and more effective cooperation with countries from other parts of the world. It will seek to transform the country into a consuming economy by enhancing the social well-being and strength of its middle-income earners. China will dominate artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and quantum computing; and will promote green energy solutions and electric vehicles to fight climate change. Its key space programs such as the Chinese Space Station will equally place the country firmly on the map of space-exploring nations. China will seek international cooperation through international organizations such as the United Nations and Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRICS) and engage the developing countries through the provision of financial and infrastructure facilities. Connectivity, innovation, and sustainability will be the primary focus areas of China making it one of the leading countries in the world.

(The writer is a Peshawar-based analyst and Secretary General of the Pakistan China Friendship Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter. He can be reached at syed.gilani@gmail.com)



Analysis

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

Registration of Madaris and Their Certifications: New Laws, Conditions, and Potential Benefits

After more than a month of controversy surrounding the law on madrasah registration, President Asif Ali Zardari—who had initially withheld his assent—finally signed the Societies Registration (Amendment) Act 2024 into law. This was immediately followed by the promulgation of an ordinance amending the act.

Here are Key Provisions of the Act Madaris established before the enactment must register within six months.

Newly established madaris must register within a year.

2. Annual Reporting: Madaris must submit an annual report of their educational activities and audited accounts.

3. Prohibition of Extremism: Madaris cannot teach or publish material promoting militancy, sectarianism, or religious hatred.

4. Modern Subjects: Madaris must incorporate basic contemporary subjects into their curriculum according to available resources.

(The ordinance seeks to reconcile differences between traditional madaris boards and new ones established after 2019, granting madaris autonomy while ensuring compliance with the law.) Registration Requirements Under the Societies Act, 1860

For madaris owners, the following conditions must be met for registration:

1. Online Registration Facility: Charitable organizations can now register online.

2. Minimum Members: A society must consist of at least seven members.

3. CNIC Copies: Valid CNIC copies of all seven members.

4. Office Proof: Proof of the society's office location.

5. Resolution: A signed resolution by all office bearers for registration.

6. Objectives: The society's aims must align with Section 20 of the Act.

7. Articles of Association: Signed by at least three office bearers.

8. List of Office Bearers: Including names, addresses, occupations, and designations.

9. Affidavit: An attested affidavit confirming no prior registration of a similar society and no pending judicial/criminal proceedings against any member.

10. Tax Certificates: Copies of National Tax Numbers (NTNs) of all seven members.

11. Detailed Forms: Information as per Supreme Court and Home Department guidelines.

12. Treasury Fee: Payment of Rs. 2500 via treasury challan.

13. Submission of Documents: Online application through <http://society-reg.punjab.gov.pk/> and submission of hard copies to the registration office.

With the law in place, how will it benefit madrasah students? Will their certifications gain broader acceptance, especially from the Higher Education Commission (HEC)?

In 2021, when madrasah boards were established, the policy stated:

"The HEC will recognize certifications issued by newly established madrasah boards, provided students enrolled after the board's official notification by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training." The question now arises: How will certifications from madaris registered under the Societies Act align with HEC's equivalence policies? Will these certifications carry the same recognition, or will they face additional scrutiny? This remains a crucial point of discussion as the new system unfolds.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Pakistan appreciates Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia & Somalia

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Monday lauded the Ankara Declaration which would resolve the differences between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Federal Republic of Somalia.

The Ankara Declaration came under discussion during a meeting between H. E. Dr. Jemal Bekir, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the FDR Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Turkmenistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, and H. E. Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, Additional Secretary (Africa) for the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

During the meeting, Ambassador Dr. Jemal praised the crucial role played by the Republic of Türkiye in mediating the dialogue between the two sisterly countries for resolving their differences which would further integrate the region and ensure regional



peace, prosperity and development.

He said the Ankara Declaration is a manifestation of the comprehensive foreign policy reforms undertaken by the Government of Ethiopia, which gives top priority and focus to its neighboring countries to integrate the region

by ensuring lasting peace and sustainable development.

The Ambassador said the declaration is based on a win-win scenario and aimed at accomplishing peace and stability in the region, and providing Ethiopia an access to sea as enshrined

in the international laws.

The FDR Ethiopia has rendered numerous sacrifices for global peace by consistently participating in the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in the region and beyond, the Ambassador remarked.

On the other hand, Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan commended the Ankara Declaration as a crucial initiative for the regional peace, stability and development.

The dialogue is only solution for all the problems, he said while acknowledging the pivotal role played by the FDR Ethiopia in regional peace and stability.

During the meeting, both sides also reviewed the full spectrum of the relations between the FDR Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and also discussed future initiatives for further strengthening their bilateral ties including the Single Country Exhibition scheduled for May, 2025 in Addis Ababa.

Occupation state's boasting about destroying Jabalia is a disregard for international legitimacy: Palestine

News Desk

Demands urgent international action to stop the genocide and attacks of armed settler militias



In full view of the international community, the Israeli government boasted about completing the complete destruction of Jabalia camp, and announced its transition to the stage of destroying Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun as is currently happening, in official confessions of committing the most heinous forms and manifestations of genocide, including mass killings, destroying hospitals, and using the policy of starvation as a weapon in the aggression. It publicly demands the evacuation of the remaining residents who have tasted all kinds of suffering over 15 months of genocide, hunger, and deprivation, to throw them into an endless cycle of displacement in a tight circle of death or forced displacement, especially in light of the winter and severe cold that has so far claimed the lives of 6 Gazan children.

It has become clear that the Israeli government is deliberately fabricating successive agendas and documenting them as a distraction to hide its plans and consecrate its occupation of the Gaza Strip and change its features, if not turn it into a scorched earth unfit for human life.

This is at a time when attacks by armed settler militias against Palestinians, their land, property and holy sites are escalating, as happened recently in the town of Silwad, in a practical translation of official Israeli incitement and racist calls issued by more than one Israeli official to expand the areas of settlement farms and pastoral settlement circles at the expense of citizens' lands, as part of a blatant plan to complete the illegal unilateral measures to annex the West Bank under the slogan of imposing Israeli law on the settlements.

The Ministry calls on the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities in putting an end to Israel's disregard for relevant UN resolutions, especially Resolution 2735 and the General Assembly resolution calling for the implementation of the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice within 12 months.

Meeting between UBG Secretary General and Somalia's Ambassador



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: United Business Group (UBG, FPCCI) Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari met with Somalia's Ambassador, Sheikh Noor Muhammad Hassan, at the Somali Embassy in Islamabad on Monday. The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral trade and cultural ties. Also present on the occasion were former President of Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of Ba-Waqar Pakistan, Waqar Bakhtawari; ICCI Executive Member Roohail Anwar Butt; Fatima Hassan; and the Deputy Head of Mission Yasin Mohamud Mire. Counsellor Jama Hassan and other officials from the Somali Embassy.

During the meeting, Somalia's Ambassador shared that he has served as a minister in various ministries in Somalia and is primarily a politician. He expressed his commitment to enhancing relations, promoting trade, and strengthening diplomatic ties between the two countries during his tenure in Pakistan. Sheikh Noor Muhammad Hassan highlighted the significant improvement in Somalia's security situation and extended an invitation to Zafar Bakhtawari to visit Somalia with a trade delegation.

Zafar Bakhtawari remarked that Somalia is a vital and resource-rich country in Africa. Enhancing trade with Somalia would further deepen mutual relations. Introducing UBG, he explained that it is a representative organization of Pakistan's business community, led by its Patron-in-Chief, S. M. Tanveer, a prominent industrialist.

Waqar Bakhtawari stated that Pakistan's business community is ready to provide all possible cooperation to strengthen ties with Somalia. He expressed gratitude for the Ambassador's interest and support, noting that fostering close relations between the people of both nations could open new avenues for global trade.

Roohail Anwar Butt highlighted the quality and popularity of Pakistani products in the Somali market. He stressed the importance of establishing direct connections between traders from both countries to make trade easier and more beneficial.

This meeting underscored the mutual commitment to fostering stronger trade and cultural relations between Pakistan and Somalia.

A grand dinner hosted in honor of Ghulam Mustafa Diwan by Pakistan Overseas Forum

Special Correspondent

JEDDAH: Pakistan Overseas Forum Saudi Arabia organized an elegant dinner event in Jeddah to honor Ghulam Mustafa Diwan, the central vice-chairman of the forum, who is visiting from the USA after performing Umrah.

The event was attended by a large number of forum officials, leaders of various political parties, and esteemed members of the community. Participants congratulated Ghulam Mustafa Diwan on the blessing of performing Umrah and praised his welfare services.

While addressing the event, the forum's General Secretary Mazhar Iqbal Anjum highlighted the various welfare projects and initiatives of the forum. He emphasized that the forum is not only striving to resolve the issues of overseas Pakistanis but is also actively contributing to welfare activities.

Chaudhry Shafqat Mahmood, Pres-



ident of the Pakistan Investors Forum, Chaudhry Akram Gujjar, Chairman of Pakistan Muslim League-N, and Chaudhry Tasawar, President of the Pakistan People's Party, commended the services of the Pakistan Overseas Forum in their speeches. They stated that the forum acts as a bridge for overseas Pakistanis and urged all political parties to enhance their cooperation with it.

In his speech, Ghulam Mustafa Diwan appreciated the love and hospi-

tality of the Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia. He congratulated the West Region President Fida Hussain Khokhar and his team for organizing the event. He stressed that overseas Pakistanis need to unite for their rights and work collectively to find solutions to their problems.

At the end of the event, West Region President Fida Hussain Khokhar thanked all the guests and assured them that the forum would continue its services. He stated that the forum's

team is working tirelessly for the welfare and resolution of the community's issues.

During the event, the participants emphasized the role of overseas Pakistanis in the country's development and discussed the need for further measures in this regard.

Prominent attendees included forum officials Babar Hussain Bajwa, Mazhar Qayyum Tarar, Waseem Irshad Khokhar, Zakaullah Pannu, and others. Notable community figures such as Sardar Ashfaq Ahmad Khan from the Muslim Conference, President of the Pakistan Welfare Forum Sharif Zaman, Raja Riaz from the Committee, Engineer Sajjad Khan from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Chairman of Pakistan Welfare Association Bashir Khan Swati, General Secretary Raja Muhammad Bashir, Ihsan Elahi Gujjar, Mian Rizwan-ul-Haq, Engineer Riaz Shaheen Afridi, Mughal, Babar Akram Awan, Imran Khan, and others were also present.

Hope 4 Humanity organized a Christmas and New Year Party

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Hope 4 Humanity organized a Christmas and New Year Party for the children and families of Newham. The event was a great success, with over 400 attendees.

Among the attendees, Chief Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, London Borough of Newham, Mr. Lucky Singh, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Additionally, Councillor Jennifer Bailey attended as the elected representative.

The children were thrilled and had immense fun as the entertainer captivated them with magic tricks and lively performances. Young dance groups delivered spellbinding performances, leaving the audience amazed. Their incredible talent brought the crowd to their feet, clapping enthusiastically



in appreciation.

The event also featured entertainment for adults. Renowned international singer Sohail Salamat Ali Khan mesmerized the audience with his melodious songs. His performance

enchanted both adults and children, with many rising to their feet to applaud his talent.

Hundreds of gift hampers were distributed among the children, including a top raffle prize—a

one-night stay at the Good Soul Hotel.

The event concluded with a grand feast, leaving everyone delighted.

Special congratulations to Junaid Ali BEM for organizing such a successful and memorable event.

A Stunning New Addition to Pakistan's Hospitality Landscape Opens in the Skardu Valley

Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan: The Pearl-Continental Hospitality Division of Hashoo Group, one of Asia's leading hospitality service providers, in partnership with renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Syed Imran Ali Shah, proudly announces the opening of PC Legacy Skardu, an upscale hotel poised to redefine the hospitality landscape in the region and open new avenues for tourism in Skardu.

Located just minutes from Skardu International Airport, the hotel offers unparalleled convenience for travelers from both within Pakistan and abroad, thanks to direct flights connecting many countries to the region. With a dedicated 24/7 airport shuttle service, guests can step off their flights and immediately experience

luxurious surroundings, making PC Legacy Skardu an ideal destination for both domestic and international tourists seeking adventure or relaxation in one of the world's most scenic destinations.

PC Legacy Skardu stands out for its distinctive design, personally envisioned by Dr. Shah, who ensured every detail reflects a perfect harmony between modern sophistication and the untamed beauty of Skardu. The Rafsal Skyline Tower and Restaurant, an iconic feature of the property, includes a ground-floor gym, two luxury suites, and a rooftop space that offers uninterrupted views of the majestic Karakoram



Analysis

Munaza Kazmi

mountain range.

The hotel offers a range of accommodations, including Standard Rooms, Junior Suites, Executive Suites, and Chalets, catering to all types of travelers. Each room is equipped with air conditioning, central heating, complimentary Wi-Fi, and 24/7 room service to ensure maximum comfort and convenience.

Dining at PC Legacy Skardu is a highlight, with guests able to enjoy expertly prepared local and international cuisines at the all-day dining restaurant or breathtaking views at the rooftop eatery. For those seeking a more casual setting, the on-site coffee shop provides a relaxing

space for light refreshments. Business and leisure travelers alike will appreciate the state-of-the-art fitness facilities and versatile indoor and outdoor event spaces. Guests eager to explore Skardu's renowned attractions can avail themselves of bespoke tour packages provided by Pearl Tours and Travel.

Speaking about the partnership, Dr. Syed Imran Ali Shah remarked, "PC Legacy Skardu is an embodiment of the beauty and heritage of Skardu Valley and a realization of my personal vision. The design reflects my belief in blending modern comfort with the awe-inspiring surroundings of the region. It's a space where guests can truly connect with the soul of this extraordinary destination."

Bastien Blanc, CEO of Hashoo Group's Hospitality



Division, added, "PC Legacy Skardu is a milestone in our journey to redefine hospitality in Pakistan. This property embodies our commitment to delivering exceptional experiences by combining the region's natural wonders with world-class service. We are confident

it will set a benchmark for hospitality in Skardu and beyond, welcoming domestic and international tourists from the many countries now connected with direct flights."

The hotel is ideally located for travelers eager to explore the region's unique attractions,

such as the serene Upper and Lower Kachura Lakes, the ethereal sands of Katpana Lake and Cold Desert, the ancient Buddha Rock, and the historic Kharpocho Fort.

PC Legacy complements the Hashoo Group's diverse hospitality portfolio by providing modern comfort paired with cultural authenticity, offering a distinctive experience that aligns with both the approachable midscale charm of Hotel One and the refined luxury of Pearl-Continental Hotels and Resorts. With the success of PC Legacy Hunza, renowned for its breathtaking views of Rakaposhi, and the upcoming PC Legacy Hyderabad, the brand continues to set new standards in hospitality, celebrating the distinctive character of its destinations and creating memorable experiences across Pakistan.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
115,258.99	111,351.17
Day's High	Day's Low
115,422.34	111,916.70
Index Value	Change
30,074,178,876	+3907.82
Percentage	Time
+3.51%	30 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,121.01	-28.77
Percentage	Time
-0.35%	30 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
42,600.38	-391.83
Percentage	Time
-0.91%	30 Dec, 11:40 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
39,894.54	-386.62
Percentage	Time
-0.96%	30 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	174.75	177.00
Bahrain Dinar	736.16	744.16
Canadian Dollar	194.60	197.00
China Yuan	37.99	38.39
Danish Krone	35.45	35.85
Euro	288.75	291.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.44	35.79
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	897.17	906.67
Malaysian Ringgit	61.63	62.23
New Zealand \$	154.77	156.77
Norwegians Krone	24.22	24.52
Omani Riyal	720.46	728.96
Qatari Riyal	75.7	76.4
Saudi Riyal	73.80	74.35
Singapore Dollar	202.82	204.82
Swedish Korona	24.99	25.29
Swiss Franc	308.58	311.38
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.45	76.10
UK Pound Sterling	348.20	351.7
US Dollar	278.05	279.55

Pakistan witnessed transition from bad to recovering economy in 2024: Experts

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director SDPI on Monday said 2024 has been a year of economic stabilization and recovery as negative GDP growth, heightened policy and inflation rates had transitioned to positive indicators showing reviving growth trajectory.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) hosted an insightful seminar on Pakistan's Economic Outlook for 2024 as part of its Monday Seminar Series, with prominent experts discussing the country's economic trajectory amidst political and global challenges.

Dr Suleri acknowledged the substantial progress made in 2024, citing a projected 3% GDP growth, a tripling of foreign reserves to \$12.25 billion, and a significant reduction in inflation and policy rates.

Dr. Shafiqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director at SDPI, opened the session by highlighting the government's growing confidence in Pakistan's economic recovery. Referring to a recent press conference by the Finance Minister, Dr. Munir noted the optimistic economic indi-



cators, signaling a potential turnaround after a challenging 2023.

Dr. Khaqan Hassan Najeeb, senior economist stressed that Pakistan's economic recovery was only the third time in the last decade that the

country had turned to the IMF for assistance. He emphasized the need for urgent reforms in taxation, agriculture productivity, and fiscal expenditure, warning that without substantial restructuring, Pakistan's growth rate would

remain below 1%. Dr. Najeeb also called for improved economic diplomacy, particularly with China, to unlock potential investment avenues.

Dr. Fareeha Armughan, another SDPI expert, highlighted the government's substantial increase in social protection allocations, marking a historic high of 594 billion rupees. However, she pointed out that critical sectors like education and institutional governance remain underfunded and mismanaged. According to Dr. Armughan, aligning fiscal decisions with climate change and disaster risk reduction policies was crucial for long-term stability.

Dr. Sajid Amin Javed, Deputy Executive Director at SDPI, concluded the session by noting the decline in inflation rates and rupee stabilization. However, he emphasized that the government must remain cautious and proactive in 2025, particularly in energy inflation and employment targets. He warned that despite improvements, the economic foundation remains weak and needs stronger administrative measures, especially in sectors like agriculture and IT.

Visit

LAHORE: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing at Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) on Monday.



Photo: Online

JS Bank Launches Priority Banking Services Nationwide



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: JS Bank, recognized as one of Pakistan's fastest-growing financial institutions, has announced the launch of its Priority Banking services, a tailored offering designed to meet the diverse needs of its most valued clients. The initiative underscores the bank's

commitment to delivering personalized solutions for an elevated banking experience.

"This initiative reflects our commitment to addressing the evolving needs of our clients," said Basir Shamsie, President & CEO of JS Bank. "By providing personalized solutions and exceptional service, JS Priority Banking aims to

strengthen trust, foster long-term relationships, and deliver an enriched banking experience that empowers our customers to achieve their financial goals."

JS Bank's Priority Banking services represent a significant step toward redefining banking standards in Pakistan. With a focus on accessibility, innovation, and personalized care, the

bank continues to set a benchmark for customer-centric excellence in the financial sector.

This launch reaffirms JS Bank's position as a forward-thinking institution, leveraging innovation to enhance financial accessibility and deliver meaningful solutions in an ever-changing global financial landscape.

A grand start to 2025: Infinix's tech-fueled New Year extravaganza

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: - Infinix, Pakistan's leading smartphone brand, kicked off 2025 with a bang through its much-anticipated WOOOW New Year 2025 campaign at Emporium Mall, Lahore. This tech-fueled celebration brought together innovation, entertainment, and festive cheer, creating unforgettable moments for Infinix users and fans.

"Infinix is thrilled to bring the New Year Celebrations 2025 campaign to life, offering our fans an opportunity to celebrate in a grand and unforgettable way," said Simon Feng, CEO of Infinix. "This event reflects our

commitment to connecting with our audience through groundbreaking technology and innovation, delivering user-focused experiences that combine technology, entertainment, and fun." From cutting-edge tech showcases to engaging interactions, the WOOOW New Year celebration at Emporium Mall Lahore delivered an unparalleled experience. It set the tone for 2025, leaving attendees with lasting memories and a sense of excitement for what's to come. As Infinix continues to push the boundaries of technology and entertainment, fans can look forward to even more exciting events and campaigns in the year ahead.

JazzCash Unveils Buy Now, Pay Later for Fashion & Tech Lovers - Shop Today, Pay Later!



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: JazzCash, Pakistan's leading fintech platform, has launched Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL), a convenient alternative to traditional credit cards. The service is now available in retail stores for the electronics shopping platform Telemart and the fashion brand EGO and will soon be launched for leading brands, including MBasics, Alkaram, Dune London, and more.

As consumers look for ways to manage their budgets in today's economic climate, BNPL introduces a timely solution, allowing them to break down payments into three easy instalments over 60 days and purchase whatever they want via JazzCash, enhancing the shopping experience of its 45 million customers. On top of that, the service will bring incremental revenue and a large customer base for the brands partnering with JazzCash for Buy Now, Pay Later.

"Our goal at JazzCash is to bring innovative solutions relevant to Pakistan's market, for both customers and businesses," said Aamir Aftab, Chief Product Officer at JazzCash. "BNPL offers people increased purchasing power, allowing them to manage their finances more flexibly while helping businesses attract more customers with simple payment options."

A Strategic Partnership between HBL Microfinance Bank and HBL Zarai Services

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: HBL Microfinance Bank (HBL MfB), Pakistan's leading microfinance bank, and HBL Zarai Services Limited (HZSL), the pioneer agriculture-specialized extension services company in Pakistan, are proud to announce a strategic partnership aimed at empowering farmers through improved access to financial and agricultural support services. This collaboration underscores a shared vision of fostering sustainable agricultural development and enhancing rural livelihoods.

Under the partnership, HBL

MfB, with its extensive expertise in providing tailored financial solutions to smallholder farmers, will establish a presence at HBL Zarai's Deras, thus offering microfinance products designed to meet their agricultural needs.

Highlighting the significance of this collaboration, Mr. Amir Khan, President & CEO, HBL Microfinance Bank, remarked, "Our partnership with HZSL is a step forward in strengthening the backbone of Pakistan's economy — the agriculture sector. As Pakistan's largest microfinance bank and a leader in agricultural financing, we take pride in supporting rural communities

with innovative financial solutions that address their unique challenges. Together with HZSL, we aim to empower farmers by providing them with the resources, knowledge, and tools to make informed decisions, enhance their agricultural practices, and access financial services needed to thrive in an evolving landscape."

"This partnership reflects our vision to provide holistic solutions to the farming community," said Mr. Amer Aziz, CEO, HZSL. "By combining HZSL's expertise in agronomic support on both sides of the agriculture production equation with HBL MfB's financial services, we are creating a platform that



addresses the comprehensive needs of farmers, helping them achieve greater productivity, and sell efficiently and to grow sustainably."

Over 150 families receive solar panels from LONGi



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: LONGi, a global leader in solar panel manufacturing, held a donation delivery ceremony in Padri Village near Lahore, over 150 families received small solar panels in the donation drive across the country, known as LONGi Horizon. This initiative aims to bring sustainable and reliable energy solutions to underserved communities and marks a significant step toward addressing energy challenges in rural areas, where access to electricity remains limited.

Afaq Ali Khan, Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Solar Association (PSA), attended the event as an honorable guest. The donation event in Padri Village Lahore included the distribution of solar panel packages as part of a larger initiative, with a total of 150 solar panels distributed. The donation package included a complete solar panel solution, including the LONGi Horizon solar panel, controller, battery, fan, and lights. Of these, 50 panels were provided to Padri Village Lahore, 50 to a village near Karachi, and 50 to a village near Islamabad.

This initiative reflects our belief in creating a sustainable future through renewable energy," said Ali Majid, General Manager for the Central Asia Branch of LONGi Pakistan, at the ceremony. "We are proud to support communities like Padri Village and hope to inspire further adoption of clean energy solutions to address pressing energy needs. This is an initiative we will continue supporting underserved communities like Padri Village across Pakistan in the future as well."

Australia win Test thriller to lead series after late India collapse

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Australia ripped out seven Indian wickets in the final session of a dramatic fourth Test in Melbourne on Monday to win a thriller by 184 runs and go 2-1 up in the five-match series.

India crumbled to 155 all out with just 12.5 overs left in the match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and will need to win the final Test starting in Sydney on Friday to level the series and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Set an unlikely 340 to win, India looked well placed to salvage a draw when opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant batted through the second session in unflustered fashion to take their side to 112-3 at tea.

But Pant perished trying to slog part-time spinner Travis Head for six to spark a collapse as India's last seven wickets fell for 34 runs from 20.3 overs.

Top-scorer Jaiswal was out for 84 to Australia captain and man-of-the-match Pat Cummins, who took 3-28, and Nathan Lyon ended the contest when he trapped Mohammed Siraj lbw to spark wild scenes of jubilation among the home team.

Pace bowler Mitchell Starc said the home side never lost faith they could force victory in the last session.

"There were a few patches through the day with the wicket not doing a whole lot, but we managed to find a way," Starc said.

"I think that's just a feature of the group at the moment, is that calmness, to have that belief that we can get the job done."

The departure of Pant for 30, caught on the boundary from a wild shot, ended an 88-run partnership and rejuvenated the Australia bowlers.

Ravindra Jadeja and first-innings centurion Nitish Kumar Reddy came and went quickly before Cummins ended Jaiswal's gritty 208-ball knock in controversial fashion.

The 23-year-old was given not out to a caught-behind appeal from an attempted hook.

But the decision was overturned by the TV umpire on visual evidence that the ball had changed direction, even though no noise was picked up by technology.

Akash Deep was caught at short leg off Scott Boland, who took 3-39, before

Jasprit Bumrah scored his second duck of the match.

A tenacious Washington Sundar was left not out five after facing 45 balls. Cummins completed an inspirational Test, taking six wickets in total and scoring 90 runs, the best batting match tally of his career.

"Two bloody good teams" He terrorised India's top order, removing opposing captain Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul before Starc dismissed Kohli from the last ball before lunch.

Rohit, who has not scored more than 10 in the three Tests he has played in the series, said the early demise of the three veteran Indian batsmen removed any prospect of chasing their target.

"We wanted to set the platform where the last two sessions, if we had wickets in hand, we can go for those runs. But they bowled perfectly as well," Rohit said.

"Then we wanted to fight till the end but unfortunately couldn't do it. It is pretty disappointing.

"If you look at the overall Test match, we had our opportunities, we had our chances."



Rohit said Australia's final-wicket stand of 61 between Lyon and Boland in the second innings was a major dent in their push for victory.

It came after exceptional Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who took 5-57 in the second innings and nine wickets in the match, had reduced the hosts to 91-6 midway through day four — a lead of less than 200.

The final Australia second-innings wicket was finally taken early on Monday when Lyon was bowled for 41 by Bumrah, leaving Boland 15 not out.

The match set the record attendance for any game of cricket in Australia, with 373,591 going through the gates over five days.

Head said the players had found the crowds and atmosphere inspiring.

"I don't think we've ever witnessed something like that so, yeah, what a week to be involved in," he said.

"It's two bloody good teams going at it, and I felt like it ebbed and flowed throughout and it's probably one of the best Test matches that I've been involved in.

"It's just nice to come out with a win. It's been a long five days."

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Members of the Pakistan Olympic Association

Sports Desk

LAHORE: On behalf of the Pakistan Cycling Federation and the Pakistan Federation Baseball, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected members of the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA).

Your unopposed election is a testament to the immense trust and confidence placed in you by the sporting community of Pakistan. We are confident that, under your visionary leadership, the nation's sports sector will achieve remarkable milestones, fostering growth, unity, and excellence on national and inter-



national platforms.
Elected Members and Their Positions:
1. Arif Saeed – President
2. Fatima Lakhani – Senior Vice President
3. Ishrat Ashraf – Lady Vice President
4. Andleeb Sandhu – Lady Vice President
5. Muhammad Khalid Mahmood – Secretary

General
6. Muhammad Jahangir – Deputy Secretary General
7. Ahmer Malik – Treasurer
8. Tehmina Asif – Lady Associate Secretary General
The Pakistan Cycling Federation, under the leadership of President Idris Haider Khawaja and Secretary General Moazzam Khan

Klair, along with the Pakistan Federation Baseball, led by President Shaukat Javed and Secretary General Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, take immense pride in congratulating the newly elected team.

We pledge our unwavering support and are confident that your leadership will invigorate the sports ecosystem in Pakistan. Together, we can inspire a brighter future for athletes and bring pride to the nation.

We eagerly anticipate close collaboration with the Pakistan Olympic Association to further develop and elevate sports in the country.

Sohail Khan hits double ton, Fahad Ansari hit century in Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Four more matches were decided in the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament yesterday at various Grounds of the City.

The Highlights of the days play was brilliant Double Century 240 by Sohail Khan, 138 by Fahad Ansari and Deadly bowling by leg spinner Arshad Khan 6/25.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricant.

Scores in Brief:

Dawood Sports beat Pak Surti CC by 209 runs at Young Fighter Ground. Dawood Sports 412/6 in 40 overs. Sohail Khan 240 16x4 23x6, Zakir Malik 62 6x4 2x6, Obaid ur Rehman 51 3x4 2x6, Zaid Hassan 3/61.

Paj Surti CC 203 all out in 30.3 overs. Sabeeh Siddiqui 81 9x4 1x6, Israr Ahmed 34, Tehseen Ahmed 25. Zakir Malik 3/23, Taha Waqr 3/54, Jawed Ahmed 2/30.



In the 2nd Match Muhammad Hussain c.c beat Korangi Al-Falah c.c by 7 Wickets at KCCA Stadium. Korangi Al-Falah CC 193 all out in 39.3 overs.

M. Shafiq 59 2x4, Syed Taimoor 47, Sajjad Hussain 44. Aqib Rizvi 3/38. Sohail Khan 2/24, Yasir Hussain 2/51.

Muhammad Hussain CC 194/3

in 22.4 overs. Sohail Khan 73 9x4 2x6, Arif Khan 48 not out, Kunwar Jamshed 38, Yasir Hussain 28. Muneeb Ahmed 2/41.

In the 3rd Match Baqai Dolphon CC beat Ghaziani CC by 244 runs at Baqai Ground. Baqai Dolphon CC 357/5 in 40 overs. Fahad Ansai 138 22x4 1x6, Sharoze Siddiqui 64 7x4, Arshad Khan 52 2x4, Ubais ullah 49. Osama 2/50, Hasnain 2/77.

Ghaziani CC 113 all out in 28.5 overs. Hamid Ali 22, Osama 22. Arshad Khan (rlb) 6/25, Uzair 2/7.

In the Fourth Shahi Bagh CC beat SMS Gymkhana by 8 Wickets at Eid Gah Nazimabad Ground. SMS Gymkhana 186 all out in 31 overs. Kashif Akhtar 56 5x4 2x6, Muhammad Omar 52 4x4 2x6, Fared Khan 31. Khafid ul Nabi (sla) 4/15, Huzaifa Munir 3/28, Subahan Sadiq 2/52.

Shahi Bagh CC 182/2 in 22.1 overs. Shahzar Hussain 67 5x4 3x6, Huzaifa Munir 56 6x4 4x6, Muhammad Haseeb 33, Muhammad Arsalan 26.

India vs Australia Test draws record-breaking crowd at MCG

MELBOURNE: The Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) witnessed a historic milestone during the fourth Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test, setting a new attendance record for a Test match in Australia, GeoSuper reported.

Over five days, 373,691 fans packed the iconic venue, surpassing the previous record of 350,534, which had stood since 1937 when Australia faced England under the legendary Sir Donald Bradman's captaincy.

The final day of the blockbuster Test against India drew an extraordinary crowd, with 51,371 fans entering the gates by the first session and more expected later in the afternoon.

This figure exceeded the 43,867 fans who attended day four—a rare occurrence that surprised the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC), the organisation managing the MCG.

The attendance breakdown across the five days included daily figures of 87,242, 85,147, 83,073, 43,867 and 74,362. The MCC underestimated the crowd for the fifth day, leading to logistical challenges, including significant traffic congestion due to limited gate access.

Yarra Park, typically reserved for special events, was opened for public parking to accommodate the influx.

This historic turnout follows India's impressive draw at the MCG during the 2022 T20 World Cup, where 90,293 fans witnessed the thrilling match against Pakistan and 82,507 attended the clash against Zimbabwe.

In the final hour of play at the MCG, Australia secured a dramatic victory in the Test match, to claim a 2-1 lead in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Australia clinched the win by taking seven wickets in the final session, thwarting India's efforts to save the game.

Australia posted a first-innings total of 474, led by Steve Smith's 140 and Marnus Labuschagne's 72, with Jasprit Bumrah taking 4-99. In their second innings, Australia scored 234, with Labuschagne contributing 70, while Bumrah excelled again with figures of 5-57.

In reply, India managed 369 in their first innings, powered by a century from Reddy (114) and Jaiswal's 82, as Scott Boland claimed 3-57. In the final innings, India was bowled out for 155 despite Jaiswal's valiant 84, with Pat Cummins and Boland sharing the spoils with 3-28 and 3-39, respectively.

Australia clinched the match by 184 runs.

PSB initiates sport clubs' scrutiny to ensure NSF's legitimacy, transparency



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has initiated a comprehensive scrutiny process of sport clubs across the country to ensure the legitimacy and transparency of National Sports Federations (NSFs).

The move comes after a recent meeting, chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), which emphasized the crucial role of sport clubs in the national sports structure.

The PSB also referred to another meeting of its board wherein it was decided to initiate club scrutiny. All provincial sport ministries, departments, boards and directorates were asked to conduct a thorough scrutiny of clubs at all levels, from tehsil to provincial associations. The scrutiny will focus on verifying the registration details of clubs and their respective associations.

A detailed report in a specific format is required from each level, including information on club names, locations, office-bearers, CNIC numbers, dates of registration and grants received from the government. The PSB expects to receive these reports within 30 days of the issuance of this letter. By ensuring that only genuine and well-structured sport organizations operate at all levels, the PSB aims to promote the development of sports nationwide and enhance the overall quality of sports in the country.

Main draw matches of Begum Kulsum Saifullah Tennis C'ships on Tuesday

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The stage is set for the main draw of the 10th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships 2024 as the final round of qualifiers concluded at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Monday.

In the Men's Singles Qualifying Final Round, players including Rayank Khan, Abdul Basit, Murtaza Hussain, Mujahid, M. Haziq Asim, Ahtesham Humayun, M. Yahya, M. Talha Khan and Omer Jawad emerged victorious, earning their spots in the main draw.

The tournament, which honours the memory of Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan, mother of PTF Patron Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, has attracted over 200 entries nationwide across six categories that include Men's Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies' Singles, Boys' 18 & Under Singles, Boys' 14 & Under Singles and Boys' 12 & Under Singles.

Pakistan's top-ranked tennis stars, including Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, Barkatullah, Shahzad Khan, Yousaf Khalil, Heera Ashiq, Meheq Khokhar, Amna Ali Qayum, Sheeza Sajid and nd Soha Ali are also featuring in the event.

The main draw matches will commence on Tuesday at 9:30 am.

Pakistani misses out as nominees for ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year unveiled

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The nominees for the ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year award have been revealed, featuring stand-out players Wanindu Hasaranga and Kusal Mendis from Sri Lanka, Azmatullah Omarzai from Afghanistan, and Sherfane Rutherford from the West Indies. Each nominee has delivered exceptional performances throughout 2024.

Wanindu Hasaranga, known

for his all-round capabilities, emerged as a key player, taking wickets consistently with an average of one every three overs. He kicked off the year impressively, claiming 11 wickets in his first three ODIs. A highlight of his season was a stunning 7-19 against Zimbabwe in Colombo. Hasaranga also took six wickets against Bangladesh in March and recorded 3-58 against India in August, followed by 2-18 and 4-40 in matches against the West Indies in October.

Kusal Mendis, the wicketkeeper-batsman for Sri Lanka, showcased remarkable batting consistency, scoring half-centuries against six different teams and a century against New Zealand. His standout performance was a commanding 143 runs in Dambulla, complemented by a 74 not out in Pallekele, leading to an impressive batting average of over 50 in ODIs for the year. Mendis also excelled behind the stumps, achieving 19 dismissals in 2024. Under his and Hasaranga's contributions, Sri Lanka had a successful ODI campaign, winning 14 out of 17 matches.

Azmatullah Omarzai, the Afghan all-rounder, made a significant impact with both bat and ball. His unbeaten 149 against Sri Lanka in February was a remarkable performance, followed by another half-century against the same team. Omarzai played a crucial role in Afghanistan's historic ODI series win over South Africa, scoring an unbeaten 86 and taking 1-17 in



the second ODI. He continued his excellent form against Bangladesh, where he contributed a match-winning 70 not out and 4-37 in the series-deciding match.

Sherfane Rutherford, the

aggressive West Indies batsman, demonstrated his dynamic batting style throughout the year. He opened the year with three consecutive half-centuries against Sri Lanka, amassing 204 runs in the series at a strike rate

of 107.36. His impressive form continued with a sensational 113 off just 80 balls against Bangladesh in December, along with scores of 24 not out and 30, helping his team secure a 3-0 series victory.

ECNEC meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of ECNEC at PM Office on Monday.



Photo: PID

ECNEC approves seven projects costing around Rs 217 billion

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Monday chaired the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) which approved seven development projects costing around rupees 217 billion.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Provincial Ministers and Federal Secretaries attended

the meeting.

It approved the increase in scope of Irrigation component of Sindh Emergency Flood Rehabilitation Project and the revision of scope for CAREC Corridor road infrastructure project falling in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

It also approved the revised scope of Karachi Water Supply and Sewerage Improvement Project at cost of Rs 25.4 billion besides approving the World Bank funded project GRADES with aim to improve attendance and learning outcomes in schools of Punjab.

Chairperson BISP Meets Vice President of Pakistan Association of Australia



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid met with Mr. Ali Murtaza, Vice President of the Pakistan Association of Australia, to explore avenues for enhancing skill development opportunities for BISP beneficiaries. The meeting focused on connecting deserving individuals with high-quality training institutions, both domestically and internationally, to equip them with skills that are in demand in the local and global job markets. Mr. Iftikhar Hussain Sherazi, Bureau Chief Dawn News was also present

in the meeting.

Senator Rubina Khalid stressed the importance of empowering BISP beneficiaries through skill development. "Our aim is to enable individuals to become self-reliant," she stated. "Providing them with quality training that aligns with market demands will not only help them secure suitable employment opportunities but also improve their economic conditions."

Mr. Ali Murtaza assured Senator Rubina Khalid of his full support in facilitating skill training opportunities for BISP beneficiaries in Australia. He presented the Chairperson with a shield as a gesture of goodwill.

President directs relief of Rs 24.136 million to bank fraud victims

City Desk

ISLAMABAD, 30 DECEMBER 2024: President Asif Ali Zardari has directed six banks to provide financial relief amounting to Rs 24.136 million to 31 victims of bank fraud. He gave these directions while deciding upon 31 representations filed against the decisions of the Banking Mohtasib. The President upheld the Mohtasib's decisions in favour of the victims, delivering justice for the defrauded banking customers.

Twelve representations filed by United Bank Ltd (UBL)

were rejected, with the bank being directed to compensate the victims with Rs 11,570,191. In ten cases, Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB) was instructed to refund Rs 5,291,500. Five representations filed by Allied Bank Ltd (ABL) were dismissed, and the bank ordered to return Rs 4,049,742 to affected customers. Three representations by the Bank of Punjab (BOP) were also dismissed, mandating the bank to refund Rs 2,315,000. Askari Bank Ltd was directed to refund Rs 490,000 in one case, while Habib Bank Ltd (HBL) was instructed to pay Rs 420,000



to a customer in another case.

The victims were defrauded by individuals posing as bank representatives, who acquired sensitive banking details through deceptive phone calls and subsequently drained funds from their accounts. Upon discovering

the fraudulent transactions, the customers approached their banks for redress but were denied relief. The affected parties then sought relief through the Banking Mohtasib, who ruled in their favour. In response, the banks filed separate representations with the President, challenging these decisions.

Hearings were conducted at Aiwan-e-Sadr, and after listening to the petitioners and respondents and perusing the relevant record, the final decisions were delivered. The decisions reflect the President's commitment to providing justice and prompt

relief to the people.

The President also emphasised the crucial role played by the Banking Mohtasib in safeguarding citizens against the maladministration of commercial banks and financial fraud. He said that the Banking Mohtasib was a vital institution for the swift resolution of complaints, offering victims timely justice without the burdens of prolonged legal procedures.

The President has also encouraged the public to utilize the services of the Banking Mohtasib to address banking disputes and fraudulent activities.

PML-N marks Foundation Day with renewed call for National Unity and Stability

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan emphasized the importance of national stability and collective responsibility during his address at the Foundation Day celebration of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The event, held at the Central PML-N Secretariat in Chak Shehzad, Islamabad, witnessed a large gathering of political leaders and workers, including prominent figures such as Tariq Fazal Chaudhry and Raja Khurram Nawaz.

Highlighting PML-N's commitment, Jam Kamal stated, "The party took the risk of forming a government in challenging circumstances,



sacrificing its political advantage for the greater good of the country." He stressed the need to prioritize national stability over political unrest, urging all stakeholders to work towards a unified and prosperous Pakistan.

Addressing the opposition, Jam Kamal called for constructive dialogue within Parliament rather than street protests. "Go and ask the people of Gaza and Syria the value of their own

country. We must show a sense of responsibility," he remarked, emphasizing the importance of preserving Pakistan's stability and progress.

The minister lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Shar-

if's dedication and leadership during difficult times. "I have never seen such a hard-working leader in my life," he said, adding, "If anyone else were in his place, they could not have stabilized the country's economy." He credited the Prime Minister's hands-on approach, which has helped attract foreign investment, lower interest rates, reduce inflation, and boost exports.

"Every challenge is taken as an opportunity by the Prime Minister. His micro-level involvement is necessary given the state of affairs he inherited," Jam Kamal explained, urging political parties to acknowledge the government's efforts and work collectively to bring the nation out of crisis.

CM, UAE envoy discuss collaboration in agriculture, IT, green energy

Bureau Report

LAHORE: UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hammad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabbi met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to discuss economic cooperation, development projects and promotion of tourism in Punjab.

She agreed to a proposal to establish a working group between Punjab and the UAE to take bilateral cooperation to a higher level, and invited UAE investors to invest in Punjab. She assured special incentives and conducive environment for UAE investors.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif appreciated UAE's support in Pakistan's socio-economic development. She said, "We value UAE's support in infrastructure, health, education and energy sectors." She added that Pakistan-UAE relations are based on mutual trust and respect. Maryam Nawaz highlighted that Pakistan and UAE share the same vision for regional stability and



prosperity. UAE Ambassador Hammad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabbi congratulated the Chief Minister on her successful visit to China, and praised her for the ongoing development projects and her climate

change-related initiatives.

He said that the UAE wants a developed Pakistan and stands by the government and people in this journey.

He stated that the UAE wants to work

on more projects in Pakistan. He also appreciated the Punjab government's commitment to promote sustainable development through public-private partnership.

Govt should show seriousness instead of obstinacy: Riaz Fatiana



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the Details, Press Conference of MNA Kamalia Riaz Fatiana at Choudhry House Kamalia. Former Chairman Market Committee Kamalia Chaudhry Faisal Qazafi, former Chairman Chaudhry Rizwan Ahmad Nusrat and Patron In-Chief of Kamalia Tajer Ittehad Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat, Chaudhry Furqan along with others were present. In the press conference MNA Riaz Fatiana said that the opposition has expressed confidence in the Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. He further said that the government should show seriousness instead of obstinacy. The government and the opposition should sit together and increase the political process.

When political stability comes, the country will move forward and

the national prestige of Pakistan will be better in front of the world. Riaz Fatiana said that when the resignation process took place in the assembly

So I opposed it. When people were leaving the party, I organized the biggest gathering. After May 9, bank accounts raided at my house were seized. I voted all for the party. Did not vote for the 26th Amendment. My son, former MPA Ahsan Fatiana, was kidnapped twice. I still sit on the opposition benches. The party showed Non-seriousness to me on the show cause notice. I said sit in Sanjani Chowk, I don't know whose decision it was to go to D Chowk

Whoever made the decision to go to D Chowk should think about it, the martyrdom and injuries are regrettable. We should reorganize the party and have a dialogue with my friends in all political parties.

Tarar mourns Arshad Zuberi's demise

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, on Monday expressed deep sorrow and regrets over the passing of renowned journalist Arshad Zuberi, Deputy Chief Executive of Daily Business Recorder.

In his heartfelt condolence

message, Tarar extended his sympathies to the bereaved family, acknowledging the profound loss to both the family and the journalist community.

He praised Zuberi's dedication to the newspaper industry, recognizing his exceptional talent and invaluable contributions to the field of economic journalism.