



**Funding by India's RAW fuelling terrorism in Pakistan: CM Bugti**

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti on Tuesday said that Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is involved in channeling funds to terrorists for destabilizing Pakistan but the government will thwart their evil designs.



**Pakistan welcomes 2025 with fireworks, festivities**

Pakistan joined many parts of the world on Wednesday to welcome 2025 with fireworks and festivities. People thronged famous spots in different cities to celebrate the New Year. Happy New Year to Daily The Spokesman readers

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Uraan Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Deputy Prime Minister, Federal Ministers, Provincial Governors, Chief Minister Punjab, Prime Minister AJK and other dignitaries holding copies of "National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-2029," during its launch at a ceremony "Uraan Pakistan" on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

**PM unveils 5-year economic transformation plan; stresses unity, harmony for success**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday launched the five-year National Economic Transformation Plan "Uraan Pakistan," which aims to achieve sustainable export-led economic growth based on 5Es—exports, e-Pakistan, environment, energy, equity, and empowerment.

The prime minister, addressing the launching ceremony of the homegrown national economic plan (2024-29), highlighted that having achieved macroeconomic stability, the all-out focus would

be on boosting growth through targeted investment and reforms.

However, the prime minister said the success of the five-year plan which specifically focuses the development in IT, agriculture, exports and mining and mineral sectors was linked with national unity and political harmony and collective efforts by all stakeholders, including political parties, institutions, and the people.

The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers, Balochistan and KP governors, Punjab Chief

Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, provincial ministers, diplomats, businessmen, and experts.

He vowed to make the focused efforts on increasing the annual investment in various sectors to US\$10 billion. Over the next five years, he said the government's key priority will be to stimulate economic growth especially through exports, he added.

"The government has achieved the macro-economic stability due to teamwork of the federal cabinet, the deputy prime minister, provincial chief ministers, and the institutions," he said adding he never experienced

this kind of cooperation that he received from the Chief of the Army Staff.

He told the gathering that the government would create a conducive environment and incentivise the private sector to promote the export-oriented industry as the "export-led growth will be the pivot of "Uraan Pakistan" for being the ultimate savior for the Pakistan economy."

He regretted that a huge chunk of the country's resources went to waste annually due to corruption, leakages in electricity and gas, and lack of reforms in various sectors. He said the Federal Board of

Revenue had the potential to multiply its revenue collection for which the institution was being reformed.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also reiterated his openness about the Charter of Economy among the political parties, as both the political and economic stability with interlinked.

He congratulated Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, entire federal cabinet, government officials, and provincial chief ministers for their great efforts to carve out this home-grown five-year plan.

**Govt announces increase in petrol, diesel prices on New Year's Eve**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government increased the petrol and diesel prices on the eve of New Year, dashing people's hopes for a decrease in fuel prices.

As part of the fortnightly revision, the petrol price has been increased by 56 paise per litre to Rs258.66 and high-speed diesel by Rs2.96/litre to Rs258.34.

The new prices will take effect at midnight.

Oil prices were on track to end 2024 with a second consecutive year of losses on Tuesday, but were steady on the day as data showing an expansion in Chinese manufacturing was



balanced by Nigeria targeting higher output next year.

Brent crude futures fell by 7 cents, or 0.09%, to \$73.92 a barrel as of 1306 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude lost 4 cents, or 0.06%, to \$70.95 a barrel.

At those levels, Brent was down around 4% from its final 2023 close price of \$77.04, while WTI was down around 1% from where it settled on December 29 last year at \$71.65.

**Ahsan terms Uddan Pakistan Program a 'revolutionary' step towards sustainable economic growth**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday described the incumbent government's five-year home-grown national economic plan (2024-29), titled 'Uddan Pakistan,' as a 'revolutionary' step towards achieving much-needed sustainable economic development.

"It is a revolutionary step that can be successful by forging greater national unity, avoiding political chaos or any political long marches. Instead, what is required is an economic long march, so that we can compete with the world in an effective way," he said in a televised statement before the formal launch of the five-year plan.

Initially, he said, the government had taken some 'instant' measures to effectively tackle the challenges at hand, but there was a need for long-term planning on



a continuous basis to make the country prosperous and economically strong.

The minister mentioned that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, during its previous tenures, had launched Vision-2010 and Vision-2025, but these could not be fully implemented due to political instability.

"But now, the government has once again prepared a five-year plan that will prove to be the foundation for sustainable economic development," he said, adding that the benefits of the national economic plan would be passed on to the common man in the form of better education, health, increased employment and business opportunities.

**Ali Muhammad calls for meeting between PTI founder, Nawaz Sharif, Zardari**

**City Desk**

MARDAN: Ali Muhammad Khan, a senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has stated that a meeting between Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif, and Asif Ali Zardari could serve as a solution to the country's political problems.

Khan emphasised that the key to resolving all political issues lies in the release of Imran Khan. He believes that the PTI founder's release would help reduce political tension in the country.

He further added that such a meeting is essential for democracy, noting that discussions between Zardari, Sharif, and Imran Khan are necessary.

Ali Muhammad Khan also called for electoral reforms to be carried out before the upcoming elections, suggesting that changes should be made in the Election Commission as well.

**Tensions escalate at Karachi's Numaish Chowranghi as police, protesters clash**

**Khurram Jaffrani**

KARACHI: Clashes were reported between police and protesters, who had staged a sit-in against recent killings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Parachinar, at Karachi's Numaish Chowranghi on Tuesday as the provincial government tasked authorities to maintain order.

Live footage from the area showed policemen firing tear gas shells at protesters and protesters hurling stones at them.

Demonstrators reportedly smashed a police vehicle, leading to severe clashes. They allegedly set fire to motorcycles and a car, with four motorcycles and one car reported to have been burned.

The sit-ins, which have persisted for a week, have blocked major thoroughfares in response to the recent killings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Parachinar.

Protesters have demanded the reopening of a road in the Kurram district city that has been closed for 90 days, affecting access to essential food and medicines, as reported by traffic police and organizers.

Activists and leaders from the mainstream religio-political party Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM) stated that they would



continue their sit-ins across Karachi after failed negotiations with police and city officials a day prior.

According to a statement from the Karachi Traffic Police spokesperson, sit-ins took place at 13 locations throughout the city.

Key areas affected included MA Jinnah Road near Numaish Chowranghi, Kamran Chowranghi in Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Jauhar Mor, Block 19-20 in Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Safoora Chowranghi, Abul Hasan Ispahani Road, Five Star Chowranghi, University Road near Metro, Shamsuddin Azeemi Road in Surjani Town, Sharea Pakistan at Ancholi, Nawab Siddiqi Ali Khan

Road in Nazimabad-1, Power House Chowranghi at Nagan, and Sharea Pakistan at Ayesha Manzil. Traffic has been redirected through alternative routes due to such closures.

Tuesday marked the eighth day of protests in the city. Demonstrations that had briefly ended earlier in the day restarted, with protesters gathered at Abbas Town, Ancholi, and Ayesha Manzil.

Amid the crackdown, MWM central leader Allama Syed Hasan Zafer Naqvi threatened that "the protest would continue come what may. We will resume protests at the locations where they were previously ended."

**Matters with SA progressing positively: Dr. Musadik Malik**



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik Tuesday said that matters with Saudi Arabia (SA) are progressing positively and expected to be finalized soon.

Speaking to the media, the minister dismissed reports claiming that the federal cabinet had approved the sale of a 15% stake in the Reko Diq project. He clarified that these reports are baseless and inaccurate.

He explained that a price negotiation committee is overseeing the process to ensure timely and efficient negotiations. While progress has been made, he said that no final decision has been reached yet.

**PM's economic reforms package to boost growth, improve lives: Tarar**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaulah Tarar said on Tuesday that the prime minister's homegrown economic reforms package will significantly improve citizens' lives, stimulate growth, and strengthen the economy.

In an exclusive statement regarding the prime minister's five-year National Economic Transformational Plan 2024-29, titled "Udan Pakistan: Homegrown National Economic Plan," Tarar revealed that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will unveil the ambitious agenda today.

Tarar stated that Pakistan has moved from the verge of



default to stability and is now on the path to progress. He expressed gratitude, highlighting improvements in all economic indicators.

Describing the Home-Grown Economic Agenda as a reform-driven plan centered on "Made in Pakistan," Tarar stressed its vital role in fostering economic growth and bringing positive change to the people of Pakistan. The economic reform agenda is designed to accelerate the country's development and ensure the prosperity of its citizens.

# Kalabagh Dam will dry up Sindh: Murad Ali Shah

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

THATTA: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah stated that the Kalabagh Dam would dry up Sindh, and he would not allow even a single drop of Sindh's water to be reduced. He expressed sorrow over the incidents in Kurram Agency and Parachinar but highlighted that protests are causing public inconvenience.

Speaking to the media after inspecting the lining project of the KB Feeder in Jhimpir, Murad Ali Shah mentioned that the next phase of the Malir Expressway would be completed by 2025. He stated that the expressway would reduce travel time for those leaving Karachi to just one hour.

The Chief Minister also conducted an aerial inspection of the KB Feeder lining project. He noted that this is a joint initiative by the federal and Sindh governments, though the



federal government provided fewer funds this year. Shah added that 40% of the project would be completed

this year, and the capacity of the KB Feeder has been increased. Provincial Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro

is personally overseeing the project. Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Parachinar, he expressed deep sorrow and stated that the Sindh government had sent aid through the Red Crescent at the Governor's request.

While Sindh's government does not oppose peaceful protests, Shah mentioned that talks with MWM are ongoing, and efforts are being made to end the sit-ins. He revealed that sit-ins at eight locations have been resolved, but protests continue at four spots. Murad Ali Shah stated that action will be taken against these protests, although some people may become upset. However, the Parachinar issue will be resolved locally, and there is no related issue in Sindh.

In Karachi, other protests will be resolved through dialogue or action. Lastly, he announced plans to expand BRT bus services across Sindh.

## Sindhi Hari Tahreek to convene nationwide 'Hari Conference' at Bhit Shah on 16 February

Correspondent

LARKANA: The central President, Sindhi Hari Tahreek, Comrade Ghulam Mustafa Chandio has announced a national-level Hari Conference on February 16, 2025, at Bhit Shah to address critical agrarian issues, including land tenure reforms, the Tenancy Act, sustainable agriculture and water management.

Chandio criticized the government's plans for six new canals and corporate farming, calling them threats to farmers' livelihoods and Sindh's environment, vowing resistance to such policies.

Sindhi Hari Tahreek, inspired by Rasool Bux Palijo's philosophy, has been dedicated to fighting for farmers' rights and social justice since 1975.

The conference will gather stakeholders from across Pakistan to propose solutions for challenges facing the agricultural community and reassure the commitment to farmers' rights, social justice and solidarity with society.

## Youth is the most valuable asset of any nation, says Tariq Khan Yousafzai

Correspondent

TAKHT BHAI: Youth is the Most Valuable Asset of Any Nation, Says Tariq Khan Yousafzai, Young journalist and human rights activist Tariq Khan Yousafzai, in a conversation with media correspondents, emphasized that the youth are the most valuable asset of any nation. Their skills, hard work, and passion can lead any country on the path of progress. If provided with education, training, and opportunities, young people can use their creative abilities to open new doors to development. Talented youth not only succeed in their own lives but also play a crucial role in the welfare of society. Through modern technology, research, and innovation, they bring new ideas and inventions to the world. Their progress guarantees the progress of the nation, as their determination and hard work bring positive changes to society.

Youth are the future of any nation, and their energy, intelligence, and creativity are pivotal to a country's development. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders, and the nation's success depends on their training, education, and character-building. The youth must realize their responsibilities and equip themselves with the power of education to serve their country.

## Patrolling Police Faisalabad Region finalise security plan for New Year night

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: SP Patrolling Mirza Anjum Kamal, while talking to the media, said that we have issued a security plan for the New Year Night of the Patrolling Police Faisalabad Region. Cases will be registered against one-wheelers, those who shoot in the air and those who set off fireworks. Action will also be taken against the mechanic or mechanic who prepares a motorcycle for one-wheeling. All forces and officers will provide security duty on the highways in their bay area. They will remain alert to prevent any untoward incidents. Mobiles of patrolling posts will patrol the highways with chalk. A crackdown is underway against liquor sellers, anti-social elements will be arranged on the New Year Night as well. One-wheeling and shooting in the air can cause the death of human life, it should be avoided. Parents should play a positive role in the reformation of their children. Youth should never do such acts that will bring law enforcement agencies into action and parents have to face trouble.



## NHA accord approval to construct interchange on Wafaqi Mohtasib's direction

ISLAMABAD: Pursuant to the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, the National Highway Authority (NHA) has accorded its approval to construct an interchange for a Housing Society - 18 near Motorway link road in Islamabad.

According to details, the Elite Estate (Pvt) Ltd. moved an application stating that it has established a housing society near the M-I and M-II link road on the Islamabad-Lahore Motorway and deposited an amount of Rs.5 million as the processing fee for construction of an interchange.

It was followed by submission of a drawing containing the interchange's design and a cheque amounting to Rs.72,585,000/- in the National Highway Authority back in 2019.

The housing society in its application to the Wafaqi Mohtasib stated that the NHA, despite a lapse of considerable time, had been using delaying tactics which has been causing hardship to the residents of the said society. The NHA finally accorded its initial approval to set up the interchange, following a series of hearings in the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Secretariat. The Head of the Society concerned in a letter addressed to the Wafaqi Mohtasib, expressed his profound thanks for this gesture.

## PPRA, CCP sign MoU for transparency in public procurement processes

ISLAMABAD: The

Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration in promoting transparency, competition, and integrity in public procurement processes. The MoU was signed by Managing Director of PPRA Hasnat Ahmad Qureshi and Chairman CCP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu in a ceremony held in the office of CPP here on Tuesday, said a press release. This strategic partnership aims to establish a cooperative and information-sharing mechanism between the two organizations. A key focus of the collaboration is PPRA's ongoing transformation of public procurement from manual to electronic mode through its e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (e-PADS) platform. This initiative underscores the government's commitment in ensuring fairness and curbing anti-competitive practices such as cartelization in public procurement.

Explaining the significance of the MoU, Hasnat Ahmad Qureshi said that both organizations will work together to uphold the vision of the prime minister for promoting transparent and competitive procurement practices, fostering greater accountability and efficiency in public sector procurements.



## Agreement

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kazim Niaz, Federal Secretary Economic Affairs, and Asad Aleem, Deputy Country Director of Asian Development Bank, signing an agreement on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

# Lord Qurban Hussain met with Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD/MUZAFFARABAD: Lord Qurban Hussain, a prominent member of the British House of Lords, met with Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, the Prime Minister of the Azad Government of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, at the Jammu and Kashmir House on Tuesday. The meeting, which also saw the presence of Ministers Faisal Mumtaz Rathore and Sardar Javed Ayub, focused on strengthening ties between Azad Kashmir and the international community, particularly in relation to the Kashmir issue. During the discussions, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq emphasized the need for greater cooperation in the fields of youth exchange programs for university students and the expansion



of technical circles. He underscored the importance of drawing interna-

tional attention to the ongoing human rights violations in Indian-occupied

Kashmir, particularly in light of the region's ongoing struggle for freedom. The Prime Minister called on the Kashmiri diaspora, particularly the community in the United Kingdom, to play an active role in raising awareness about Kashmir's plight.

He urged that the British Parliament, along with other international forums, must join efforts to expose India's atrocities in the region and advocate for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Prime Minister Haq also highlighted that the development and prosperity of Azad Kashmir remain top priorities for the government. He shared that significant progress is being made on several mega projects aimed at improving the welfare of the people, including plans to develop an airport in Mirpur.

# A strong Pakistan is the guarantor of Kashmir's freedom: Sardar Attique



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that our mission and that of Kashmiri brothers is accession to Pakistan.

A strong Pakistan is the guarantor of Kashmir's freedom. The people of occupied Kashmir want to join Pakistan. Despite all the pressure, negative tactics and atrocities, India could not end the freedom struggle of Kashmiris, the Muslim Conference will continue

to play a full role for the success of the freedom movement.

These views were expressed while talking to Muslim Conference leaders and youth wingworkers. He said that the Muslim Conference is struggling vigorously for the freedom movement and the completion of Pakistan.

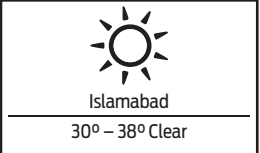
At present, the Kashmiri people are fighting the war for the completion of Pakistan and millions of Kashmiris have sacrificed their lives to achieve this goal and the time is not far when the sacrifices made by Kashmiris will bear fruit and the blood of martyrs will not go in vain.

The Muslim Conference will continue to fully support the Kashmiris. He said that Pakistan is an obstacle to India's expansionist ambitions, Pakistan's dream of achieving independence for occupied Kashmir is unfulfilled. In India, which has ushered in democracy, oppression and injustice are being committed against minorities under the patronage of the government.

After August 5, 2019, India has started a plan to evict the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir from their land. The properties of the Kashmiri people are being burned, even

their homes are being burned. Innocent Hurriyat leaders in jails do not even have access to medical facilities. Many freedom fighters have been brutally martyred inside jails.

There is no street in occupied Jammu and Kashmir that has not been a victim of Indian state terrorism. In such a situation, Kashmiris who migrated from occupied Jammu and Kashmir to Azad Kashmir have become quite restless as to why the world is not paying attention to the atrocities and barbarities that are going on in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:43 am  
 Zohr ..... 12:11 pm  
 Asr ..... 3:32 pm  
 Maghrib ..... 5:10 pm  
 Isha ..... 6:39 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**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  
 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

**Collaboration between parliament, civil society vital for national progress: Syedaal**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan on Tuesday underlined the vital role of strong connections between Parliament and civil society in advancing society intellectually and creatively.

He expressed these views during a meeting with delegations comprising lawyers and civil society representatives. "Such interactions enhance performance and provide opportunities to benefit from diverse perspectives," he remarked.

Highlighting the contributions of lawyers' organizations and civil society, Syedaal Khan underscored their critical role in raising awareness among the younger generation about pressing societal issues.

He further stressed the importance of collaboration among institutions in key sectors such as sports, health, and education.

Referring to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's developmental initiatives in Balochistan, the Deputy Chairman expressed gratitude for the government's focus on empowering the province's youth.

He particularly lauded the laptop scheme for its positive impact on students, emphasizing the need to extend its reach to remote areas.

# Speakers at AIOU seminar call on institutionalization of Islamic social finance

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Speakers of a day-long pre-conference seminar titled "Elimination of Interest from the Economy: Sustainable Islamic Banking and Investment Practices" has called on institutionalization of Islamic social finance. They emphasized the need for practical steps to eliminate riba (interest) in light of the 26th Constitutional Amendment and the recent decision of the Federal Shariat Court.

The speakers stated that eliminating riba from the country requires a movement, and results will only be achieved if everyone actively participates in this struggle. They cited the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) statement condemning those who take, give, document, or witness interest-based transactions, declaring them equally sinful.

Addressing the seminar, Justice Dr. Muhammad Anwar of the Federal Shariat Court said that eliminating riba is an integral part of our faith. He urged that we must not consider the conse-

quences of ending interest but instead align the financial system with Allah's commands. He praised the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Allama Iqbal Open University for initiating this vital dialogue and called on other universities to raise awareness about this critical issue.

Justice Dr. Anwar congratulated the Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohiuddin Hashmi, on organizing the seminar and suggested hosting another dialogue on this topic before the International Conference on Islamic Finance scheduled for April.

Dr. Ahmed Khalid, Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration at Brunei Darussalam University, presented his paper on Islamic finance. Prof. Dr. Mohiuddin Hashmi elaborated on the objectives of the seminar, stating that this dialogue on eliminating riba will continue and serves as a precursor to the upcoming International Conference in April. He highlighted that the Open University has established a department of Islamic Finance offering a four-year BS program,



Other speakers included Sahibzada Muhammad Qamarul Haq, Principal of Jamia Muhammadi Sharif; Hafiz Atif

Waheed from Al-Quran Academy, DHA Phase II, Lahore; and Advocate Qaiser Imam from Islamabad High Court.

**Sunset**

ISLAMABAD: A view of last sunset of 2024 during cloudy weather in the Federal Capital.

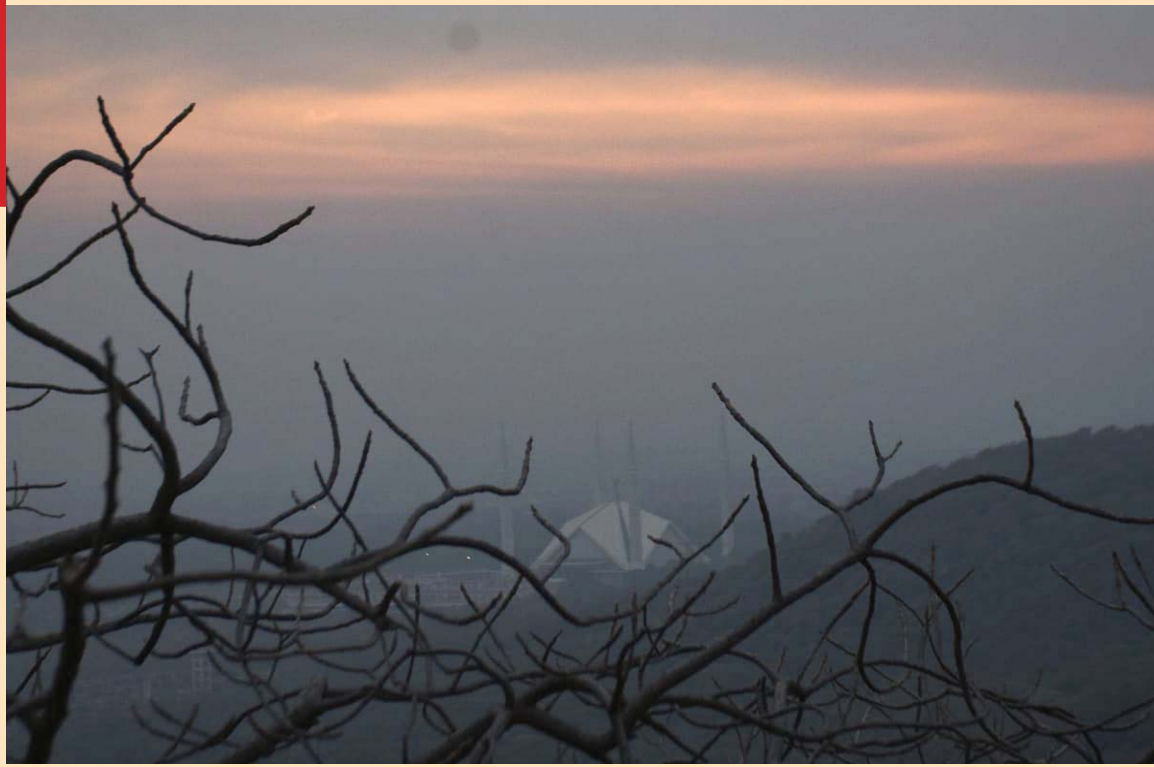


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Anti-Corruption Achievements in Multan Region During 2024

**Zain Khan**

MULTAN: Under the directives of Director General Anti-Corruption Punjab, Sohail Zafar Chattha, Regional Director Anti-Corruption Multan Region, Basharat Nabi, achieved remarkable results in 2024. He resolved 1,890 complaints and 383 inquiries, issued FIRs against 111 accused individuals, conducted 29 trap raids, and secured convictions against two individuals in the Anti-Corruption Court.

A total of 138 individuals were arrested from Multan, Khanewal, Vehari, and Lodhran districts, recovering a sum of 1.49 million rupees. Additionally, 16 marlas of land



belonging to the Basic Health Unit Chak No. 121/151 in Mian Channu were reclaimed. In FIR No. 22/24 of Police Station Headquarters Multan

Circle, Officer Naveed Anjum recovered 64,000 rupees. Furthermore, medicines worth 376,263 rupees and a Suzuki WagonR (MNE-209) valued

at 4.457 million rupees were also recovered.

Director Basharat Nabi set a record recovery in the Multan region, depositing a total of 82.42 million rupees into the Punjab Government Treasury — the highest amount in Multan's history. Speaking to the media, Basharat Nabi attributed this success to the dedication of his officers and expressed optimism for achieving even greater recoveries in 2025. He also commended all employees and officers for their efforts.

He emphasized strict adherence to the Government of Punjab's zero-tolerance policy against corruption and the vision of the Director General Punjab.

## Continued Operation against Encroachment: AC Kamalia Iqra Nasir

**Zafar Chishti**



TOBA TEK SINGH: Encroachment Operation, many items seized. According to the details, on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, Assistant Commissioner and Administrator Municipal Committee Kamalia Iqra Nasir and Chief Officer Ali Raza issued instructions to continue the operation against encroachment in the city without discrimination, while implementing the enforcement staff. Municipal Committee Eid Gah Road, Kalma Chowk While taking action against encroachment in other areas including, confiscated goods and imposed fines. On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Iqra Nasir said that the operation against encroachment will continue in a phased manner and the shopkeepers should keep their goods within the limits of their shops, otherwise the goods will be confiscated and an FIR will also be registered.

## Nation salutes to Quaid-e-Azam for his wisdom, strategy and sacrifices: Sheikh Abdul Waheed

**City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: President of the Central Anjunn e Tajran, Liaquat Road, Rawalpindi, Sheikh Abdul Waheed said that the nation salutes the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, for his wisdom, strategy and sacrifices. The survival and integrity of Pakistan are hidden in the thoughts of the Quaid. By implementing which, Pakistan will gain a prominent position at the international level.



President of the Central Anjunn e Tajran, Liaquat Road, Rawalpindi, Sheikh Abdul Waheed said this while addressing a ceremony held at the Rawalpindi Arts Council on Quaid-e-Azam's Day. Addressing the participants, he said that Pakistan is an independent and sovereign Muslim state, which must be guided by the thoughts of the Quaid-e-Azam. No undue interference from anyone, including America, is acceptable. Sheikh Abdul Waheed said that we have not forgotten the separation of East Pakistan. The sacrifices made by our ancestors for the independence of Pakistan are engraved on the pages of history. Pakistan's armed forces are still fighting to eradicate terrorism. Our Pakistan Army soldiers are still sacrificing their lives to maintain the integrity of Pakistan. Sheikh Abdul Waheed said that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed made Pakistan a nuclear power. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif conducted nuclear tests during his government and sent a message that no one should dare to look at Pakistan, otherwise we will have to give a reply.

## Unseen Diplomacy of Soft Power: Culture as a Catalyst for Change

**Muhammad Zeb**

While traditional diplomacy focuses on formal negotiations and political agreements, a less tangible yet equally powerful force is quietly shaping international relations: cultural diplomacy. This "soft power" encompasses the exchange of ideas, values, and cultural expressions, fostering mutual understanding and building bridges between nations.

From music and art to cuisine and literature, cultural exchanges offer a unique window into the soul of a nation. They transcend linguistic barriers, fostering empathy and appreciation for diverse perspectives. By showcasing the best of their cultures to the world, nations can build positive images, attract tourists, and cultivate lasting friendships.

For example, Pakistan's vibrant Sufi music, exquisite handicrafts, and renowned hospitality can serve as powerful tools of cultural diplomacy. By showcasing these unique cultural expressions on the international stage, Pakistan can not only enhance its global image but also foster deeper understanding and cooperation with other nations.

Furthermore, cultural diplomacy can play a crucial role in promoting peace and understanding in conflict zones. Through joint cultural initiatives, such as music festivals, art exhibitions, and educational exchanges, communities can bridge divides, foster dialogue, and build trust.

In today's interconnected world, cultural diplomacy is not merely a matter of entertainment; it is a strategic tool for advancing national interests, promoting peace, and fostering a more interconnected and harmonious global community. By embracing the power of culture, nations can cultivate stronger relationships, build bridges of understanding, and create a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.

## Youth Leading the Charge against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The excessive consumption of ultra-processed foods has drastically elevated the risks of cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and other life-threatening conditions. Sugary drinks, dairy desserts, candies, and baked goods rank as the primary sources of added sugars in our diets, exacerbating health risks. These products, devoid of essential nutrients and fiber, deprive our bodies of the components critical for optimal well-being.

This alarming issue was highlighted during a youth sensitization session organized by the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) at the Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) in Islamabad. Addressing the session, Mr. Sana Ullah Ghumman, General Secretary of PANAH, emphasized the urgency



of tackling unhealthy dietary habits. Citing the International Diabetes Federation, he revealed that diabetes and its complications claim approximately 1,100 lives daily in Pakistan. Unhealthy diets are significant contributors to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, kidney failure, and other

fatal non-communicable diseases (NCDs). He further underscored the high levels of sugar, sodium, and trans fats in ultra-processed foods as major culprits behind these preventable deaths.

As part of these efforts, PANAH's session at CUST equipped students

with data-driven insights and practical strategies to raise awareness about the dangers of ultra-processed foods. The program also encouraged creative advocacy for implementing higher taxes on such products, fostering a generation dedicated to shaping a healthier future.

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# Artificial Intelligence: Shaping the Future of Technology

**Sheikh Muhammad Hamza Naeem**

**A**rtificial Intelligence (AI) is fundamentally reshaping the world, driving technological innovation and transforming industries by enabling machines to perform complex cognitive tasks such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. Siri and Alexa to groundbreaking advancements in healthcare, finance, and education, are proving transformative. AI uses machine learning and deep learning techniques to analyze vast amounts of data, predict trends, and improve systems autonomously. AI's rapid evolution, while offering immense potential, also introduces challenges, including ethical concerns, privacy issues, and the fear of job displacement, which have sparked debates globally. Experts argue that with responsible development and careful regulation, AI can address complex issues such as climate change, disease diagnosis, and personalized medicine, opening new avenues for innovation.

AI is no longer just a futuristic concept; it is now integrated into everyday life, simplifying tasks and improving efficiency. Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant are commonplace, helping users with everything from setting reminders to controlling smart home devices. AI powers recommendation systems on platforms like Netflix and YouTube, ensuring content is tailored to individual preferences. In Pakistan, AI-enabled apps like Careem and Bykea are improving urban mobility by optimizing routes and service delivery. Navigation apps like Google Maps provide real-time traffic updates and suggest optimal routes, demonstrating how AI makes daily life more efficient and convenient.

AI presents numerous opportunities for Pakistan to improve governance, healthcare, education and agriculture. In healthcare, AI-powered tools can bridge the gap between rural and urban areas by providing remote diagnosis and improving access to medical services. Predictive AI models can assist in early disease detection, potentially saving lives and reducing healthcare costs. In education, AI's potential to personalize learning experiences is revolutionary, ensuring students receive individualized attention and resources that match their learning styles. AI can also address Pakistan's challenges in remote education by making learning more accessible through digital platforms. Pakistan's agricultural sector, which is central to the economy, stands to benefit from AI-driven precision farming. AI can help monitor crops, optimize irrigation, and predict weather patterns, tackling issues related to food security and resource management. However, Pakistan must overcome significant challenges to fully adopt AI. These include the need

for improved infrastructure, better access to quality data, and the development of a skilled workforce.

Government initiatives such as the Digital Pakistan Vision are steps in the right direction, but more investment in research and collaboration with global tech leaders is required to maximize AI's potential.

While AI transforms industries and economies, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is critical for personal and professional success. EI refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and the emotions of others. In workplaces, EI is essential for effective leadership, conflict resolution, and teamwork, contributing to a productive and positive work environment. In education, EI helps teachers connect with students, manage classroom dynamics, and promote emotional development. EI also plays a crucial role in personal relationships, improving communication, empathy, and understanding. Furthermore, as awareness of mental health grows EI is becoming increasingly vital for managing stress, anxiety, and emotional resilience. In Pakistan, EI is crucial in overcoming societal challenges, particularly in workplaces and family dynamics. With a growing tech sector, industries like IT, healthcare, and education benefit significantly from EI, as it helps leaders and employees navigate complex emotional dynamics, resolve conflicts, and foster collaborative work environments. In

family and societal settings, EI helps individuals manage generational gaps, balance traditional values with modern perspectives; and build stronger, more empathetic relationships. In Pakistan's education system, emotionally intelligent teachers are essential for addressing bullying, promoting inclusivity, and supporting students' emotional growth. Furthermore, EI's role in mental health is increasingly recognized in Pakistan, where it helps individuals manage stress, anxiety and emotional challenges, especially in underserved areas. By fostering EI at the community level, Pakistan can work towards reducing polarization and promoting empathy across diverse cultural and religious groups.

For Pakistan to fully harness the potential of both AI and EI, significant investment in education, infrastructure, and research is essential. Developing AI education programs and fostering public-private partnerships can accelerate technological progress, while promoting EI at all levels can enhance societal cohesion and workplace productivity. By integrating AI into critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and agriculture, and prioritizing EI development across communities, Pakistan can position itself for sustainable economic growth, social harmony, and a competitive edge in the global digital landscape.

*Writer is student of Bahria University, Islamabad*

## Pakistan's sports goods exports to China register increase in 2024

In the first 11 months of 2024, China imported basketballs, footballs and volleyballs (commodity code: 95066210) worth USD 10.7 million from Pakistan, an increase of 6.68% compared with the same period last year, according to data from China's General Administration of Customs.

The development highlights Pakistan's growing status as a global hub for high-quality sporting goods, as well as reflects its growing economic ties with China.

Pakistan has an enduring practice of producing high-quality sports goods, including footballs, basketballs, volleyballs and other accessories. Experts believe that the country's skilled artisans are renowned for their expertise in this field. Despite its superb craftsmanship and a large pool of workers, the industry's poor access to international markets has hampered its growth for a long time.

However, China provides Pakistan with an excellent opportunity to expand its influence and open up new markets now. As the world's largest manufacturing country, China has advanced manufacturing technology, a huge economic volume and a complete trade network, all of which can help Pakistan's sporting goods industry to undergo significant changes, CEN reported on Tuesday.

Sheikh Mohammad Shariq, chief representative of the National Bank of Pakistan, noted that during his tenure in China, he witnessed a growing interest in sports among the Chinese people, which is driven by a health-conscious middle class and government-backed fitness initiatives, creating a strong market for sporting goods. Pakistani footballs, a specialty product of Sialkot manufacturers, remain a major export, while basketballs and volleyballs have also seen growth due to their growing popularity in Chinese schools and professional leagues.

China's expanding grassroots sports programmes and preparations for hosting major sporting events have increased demand for high-quality equipment. The surge in exports highlights the strengthening trade ties between Pakistan and China under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Shariq added.

Pakistan is converting from traditional sports goods to innovative designs. The country now caters to a broader audience, meeting the diverse demands of sports enthusiasts worldwide by breaking through the tradition and adopting more diverse designs, Sony Iqbal, Chairman of the Small & Medium Enterprise (SMEs) Association in Pakistan told.

Pakistani industry leaders are optimistic about continued growth in exports as Chinese companies increasingly recognize the reliability and craftsmanship of Pakistani manufacturers. "We have upgraded our machinery and training programs to meet global standards. The growing demand for our sporting goods in China validates our efforts and encourages us to explore other international markets, said Mohammad Ahmed, a well-known exporter from Sialkot.



Cartoon Arab News Cartoon by Mohammed Rayes

## Why Packaged Milk Fails to Gain Public Trust in Pakistan

**A** closer look at the public's preference reveals a significant inclination toward loose (raw) milk over packaged milk in Pakistan. Despite being the third-largest milk producer globally, ensuring the supply of pure milk remains a challenge. A report from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FPCCI) Policy Research Unit also noted that raw milk represents 95% of Pakistan's milk market, and 5% is packed. Besides this, with current inefficiencies in supply chain systems, 20% of the milk production-worth PKR 370 billion, or about 12.4 billion liters-are wasted each year. In comparison with neighbor India, Pakistan still trails significantly behind. The Indian milk market is expected to reach \$71 billion by the end of 2024, whereas Pakistan's milk market size is expected to stand at only \$6.04 billion.



**Jibran Ahmed**

Loose (raw) milk is widely available through local vendors or milkmen and is known for its natural nutritional value. However, its quality and hygiene often come under scrutiny as it is neither processed nor preserved following health standards. On the other hand, packaged milk, generally known as tetra-packed milk, is processed with advanced methods such as pasteurization or ultra-high temperature (UHT) treatment. This not only helps in ensuring bacterial safety but also extends its shelf life without compromising the nutritional quality.

One of the major reasons for the dominance of raw milk is the convenience offered by the local vendors who deliver the milk directly to the customers' doorsteps. In addition, milk is purchased from these traders on credit and at cheap rates and, hence, very accessible for most. However, raw milk in towns costs around PKR 170 to PKR 250 per liter and even in Karachi around PKR 300 a liter. There are other cultural issues. Many consumers go on relying on raw milk as their families have utilized it for generations, thereby solidifying the belief that it is better than packaged milk.

Packaged milk is approximately PKR 380 per liter, whereas raw milk is relatively cheaper. The difference of price and affordability of this raw milk is the sole reason why consumers are not opting for packaged milk and instead are opting for this loose milk. Besides, there is also this myth that packaged milk comes with preservatives and chemicals that help extend its shelf life. On the contrary to that, the protective layers of tetra packs act as a barrier that limits bacterial growth, and when one opens the pack, the milk just lasts for a few days like raw milk.

The 18% sales tax on packaged milk imposed in Pakistan has made the product even more expensive than other countries such as France, Australia, and the Netherlands. A Bloomberg report reports that a liter of UHT milk in Karachi costs PKR 370 (\$1.33), while

in Amsterdam, it costs \$1.29, in Paris it costs \$1.23, and in Melbourne \$1.08. Countries like Canada, India, and Bangladesh have minimal or no VAT on dairy products to make it affordable. This tax burden has resulted in a 40% decline in the consumption of packaged milk in Pakistan, which is unaffordable for many consumers.

Raw milk is usually banned in most countries due to high bacterial contamination risks. In Pakistan, the heavy reliance on loose milk, which is often produced and transported under unsanitary conditions, poses severe health risks. Total Plate Count (TPC) for raw milk in Pakistan stands at 30 million/ml, which is 30 times higher than the international safe limit of 10,000 per milliliter. While packaged milk is subject to quality checks at all supply chain levels to meet safe and healthy standards, consumers are still skeptical of its safety.

It will not work to upgrade production techniques of the Pakistani dairy market by themselves. To dispel the wrong perception about processed milk, awareness should be given to the masses through publicity. Making the packing and quality and price better could increase processed milk by much percentage among the consumer segment, where safe and quality milk for consumption could reach the doorstep of people. By correcting the mismatch of perception, packaged milk may come forth as the viable alternative for ensuring better health and well-being in the future.

*Writer is associated with Department of Food Science and Technology, BZU Multan*

## The End of 2024 and the Beginning of 2025

**T**ime's law is that just as night changes into day, every year closes the chapters of its past and opens the door to the upcoming year with new dreams and hopes. 2024 has bid farewell, carrying with it successes, failures, experiences, and lessons, while 2025 stands before us with the dawn of a new beginning. Each year is a new message of history and hope, one that opens new paths for nations, societies, and individuals.

**Global Situation in 2024:** 2024 was a year filled with numerous challenges and changes at the global level.

Political instability, especially in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, continued with ongoing conflicts. The world economy faced significant pressure, especially due to rising inflation and the energy crisis, which created hardships for the citizens of many countries. On the other hand, climate changes emerged as a global crisis, with severe heat waves, floods, and natural disasters affecting human lives and economies. Technological advancements were another significant highlight of the year, especially with notable strides in artificial intelligence and space exploration.

**The Situation in Pakistan:** For Pakistan, 2024 was a year of trials, where political and economic crises added to the suffering of the people. Inflation, unemployment, and an unprecedented rise in the cost of living remained unaddressed by the government, making life even harder for the masses. No significant progress was seen in the social sectors, particularly in education and healthcare. Political instability, the inactivity of parliament, and disputes over elections became major obstacles to the country's progress. Agriculture, which is the backbone of Pakistan's economy, suffered considerably. Water scarcity, climate change, and the lack of modern agricultural technology slowed the growth of this crucial sector.

**The Situation in Sindh:** 2024 proved to be a year of severe challenges for

Sindh, with no notable progress in education, healthcare, or social sectors. Particularly, agriculture, which plays a vital role in Sindh's economy, was deeply affected. Water shortages, floods, and poor agricultural policies caused significant losses for many farmers. The misuse of natural resources and the lack of timely measures contributed to the collapse of the agricultural sector.

Climate changes further impacted Sindh, with extreme heat waves, storms, and continuous rainfall causing major destruction. Floods left thousands homeless and devastated agricultural lands. The government's negligence regarding agricultural issues worsened the situation for farmers.

**Hopes and Goals for 2025:**

The new year brings with it hope and opportunities. To turn these into reality, effective policies and continuous efforts at the national level are required. The education sector eagerly awaits new policies and effective planning, especially for improvements in government schools. In the new year, the health sector will require the government to take practical steps to provide basic facilities and improve quality. Special attention needs to be given to agricultural and environmental issues. The use of modern technology in agriculture can significantly increase production. Building water reservoirs, constructing new canals, and implementing policies related to climate change can protect agriculture from collapse. There is also a need to create local and global investment opportunities, reduce unemployment, and strengthen the economy.

**Key Takeaway:** As we remember the hardships of 2024, we must move forward into 2025 with new passion and action. If we continue our efforts with honesty, dedication, and effective strategies at the national level, this year can become a memorable chapter, not only for us but also for the generations to come. Remember, every new year opens a new horizon of hope, which can only be achieved through action.

# Ambassador Khalil Hashmi calls on Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with Mr. Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China, who called on the Minister at Finance Division today. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs.

During the meeting, Senator Aurangzeb highlighted the significant strides made on the economic front, particularly the growing business and investor confidence in Pakistan. He underscored the importance of robust economic diplomacy and collaboration, emphasizing the need for greater economic partnerships in Pakistan's expanding economy.

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi briefed the Minister on his ongoing efforts to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China. He shared details of high-level visits, exchanges, and agreements aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two nations, especially in the areas of trade, investment, and economic collaboration.



The meeting ended with expression of commitment to further deepening the strategic and economic ties between Pakistan and China, recognizing the immense potential for mutual benefit in the years to come.

## “Unity in Diversity”

# Rufayda Hamdard College of Nursing Celebrated Christmas with the theme

City Desk

KARACHI: This year Hamdard University Attached Rufayda Hamdard College of Nursing was assigned by the Hamdard University to arrange Christmas Celebrations with the theme, “Unity in Diversity” to foster unity among different segments of Pakistani society.

The Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly, Honorable Anthony Navid was the Chief Guest while His Grace Cardinal Joseph Coutts blessed this Celebratory-Cum-Thought Provoking event as Key Speaker.

Besides University's Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Syed Shabib-ul-Hasan & Deans Prof Dr Asadullah Larak and Prof Dr Raza-ur-Rehman of the University, Bridg Dr Roliaz ul Haq, CEO, HUH and a large number of christian families of students, employees and guests at Madinat-ul-Hikmah Main Campus in Gadap Town met to commemorate the happiness and joy on the Birth of Lord Jesus Christ.

The hall was twinkling with colourful lights balloons and a beautifully decorated twinkling Christmas tree. The beautiful rhymes and christmas songs sung by carol further added the blissfulness of the X-Mas.

The Chief Guest Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Mr. Anthony Naveed while speaking on the theme “Unity in Diversity” referred to the Quid-e-Azam's vision expressed in his historic address on 11th August 1947 of inclu-



sive society. He said that this vision was incorporated in the 1973 Constitution and now it is in the implementing phase.

His grace the Cardinal Joseph Coutts who is also bestowed with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz by the State for his life long contributions for promoting Interfaith Harmony—said, “Pakistani society needs a healing touch together by all segments of the society. He mentioned his deliberations with Shaheed Hakim Said about how to foster unity among various segments. His Eminence the Cardinal Arch Bishop referred to the Gaza War and Wars in Ukraine and Africa. He said the Lord Jesus was declared the Prince of Peace.

The founder of Gospel Society of Pakistan Rev. Shafiq Gill said that the essence of Christianity lies in Love

and Forgiveness and Service. He said this is the panacea of our world full of conflicts and wars for petty interests the few.

Professor Sarfaraz Masih spoke on how to reclaim the lost glory of Pakistan's theoretical base i.e a multi cultural multi religious, democratic and tolerant society as envisioned by our great founders. The professor said reminded of how christian soldiers defended Pakistan in 1965 war. He added that nursing has great potential to reclaim and build the tolerant Pakistan. While speaking Mr. Shabir Hussain—eminent Nursing Leader—reminded the audience about contributions of christian community in Pakistan Movement, defence and later on developing the newly established country referring to Quid's companion S. P Singha the great christian leader

and Speaker of united Punjab Assembly whose decisive role helped Pakistan's creation.

Mr. Kaleem Ahmed Ghias, the Registrar of Hamdard University, and various Deans and the Principal Rufayda-HCN, Assoc. Prof. Alia Nasir delineated the traditions of Shaheed Hakim Said and that of her sole heires daughter Chancellor Sadia Rashid to promote inclusive culture within Hamdard University, in the attached hospitals and beyond in the larger society. Their consistent efforts are evident from the political and religious leaders presence in the University.

The Momento were presented to His Grace Cardinal, the Deputy Speaker and to the speakers before a rich refreshment arranged by the University high ups.

# Teachings of Masooma-e-Sindh, Bibi Maham (SA), should be highlighted, along with promoting interfaith harmony

Correspondent

KARACHI: The Fourth Annual International “Masooma-e-Sindh Bibi Maham, Interfaith Conference” was held on Sunday at Karachi, where the teachings of Sayyida Khadija bint Imam Musa Kazim (AS), also known as Bibi Maham (SA) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) were honored. This conference provided an opportunity for scholars, intellectuals, and leaders from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, as well as people from various walks of life, to understand and unite around the message of Bibi Maham teachings, piety, wisdom, compassion, and unity.

Messages were issued for the conference participants by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Provincial Minister for Religious Affairs Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi, and Member of the National Assembly Shazia Marri, which were repeatedly shown to conference attendees on the SMD screen. These statements highlighted the importance



of Bibi Maham's teachings in promoting interfaith harmony and unity among people from diverse backgrounds. Governor of Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, praised the efforts of the Zaireen Khidmat Committee at the Masooma-e-Sindh shrine, which organized this event in collaboration with the Department of Culture Sindh and the Karachi Editors Club. The Governor said in his message that the life of Bibi Maham (SA) is the best example of faith, wisdom, and compassion. He also appreciated the book launch of Abdul Sattar Dars during the conference. Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, in his message, stated that the theme of this year's conference—interfaith harmony—is highly significant and an urgent need of the times. He emphasized the importance of promoting harmony among people of all religions in accordance with

Bibi Maham's teachings. He described Sindh as a cradle of tolerance and mutual understanding and said that events like this highlight these values. He also praised literary activities, calling them a reflection of Sindh's cultural heritage.

Provincial Minister for Religious Affairs and Endowments Sindh, Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi, called the “Masooma-e-Sindh Conference” an important platform for promoting peace and mutual understanding. He added that Bibi Maham's teachings inspire us to adopt shared values of humanity and harmony.

Member of the National Assembly and Central Secretary for Information Pakistan Peoples Party, Shazia Marri, referred to Bibi Maham as a symbol of compassion, moderation, and devotion and praised the role of the “Masooma-e-Sindh Conference” in promoting global values. She also described literary contributions as inspiring for future generations and stated that this conference would prove to be a significant

and exemplary step in bringing people from different sectors of life together to form a more inclusive, peaceful society aligned with the message of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS).

The members of the Zaireen Khidmat Committee of the Masooma-e-Sindh shrine expressed their gratitude to the Governor of Sindh, Chief Minister of Sindh, Provincial Minister for Religious Affairs and Auqaf, and the MNA Shazia Marri for issuing messages to promote the teachings of Bibi Maham (SA).

They also thanked the Director-General of Culture Department Sindh, Manawar Ali Mahesar, and his staff for their collaboration in organizing the annual Masooma-e-Sindh Conference to promote interfaith harmony. They also appreciated the exceptional hosting of Agha Shirazi, whose passionate presence and expert hosting ensured the event ran smoothly, and he received direct praise from the participants for his professional and unique hosting of this event.

## Pakistan's New HC Muhammad Saleem Arrives in Canada

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The High Commissioner-designate Mr. Muhammad Saleem has arrived in Ottawa on December 29, 2024. With a distinguished diplomatic career and a passion for fostering international cooperation, Ambassador Saleem brings exceptional leadership and vision to this role. Muhammad Saleem graduated with a Master's degree in Diplomacy and Strategy from the National University of Malaysia. He joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1995 and since then has served at various positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad, and Pakistan's Diplomatic Missions abroad including the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Romania and Canada. He also served as Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Republic of Tanzania from 2020-2022.



Ambassador Saleem has consistently worked to build on meaningful partnerships, address global challenges, and promote shared values on the international stage. He is eager to deepen the strong and historic ties between Pakistan and Canada. Through initiatives focused on political, economic, investment, trade, higher education, cultural exchange and people-to-people contacts, he aims to further strengthen the existing collaboration and explore new avenues of cooperation between the two friendly countries.

## Faisalabad Press Club elections held



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: In the annual elections of Faisalabad Press Club, 23 candidates contested for 15 seats on the executive body, in which the following 15 candidates were declared successful in the order of (1) Afshan Batool 286 (2) Rifat Anwar 276 (3) Muhammad Naeem Shakir 265 (4) Rana Tauseef Yousuf 238 (5) Ali Raza Malik 236 (6) Tawfiq Yousuf 236 (7) Rana Hina Jamil 233 (8) Nadarman 231 (9) Rana Mohsin Farooq 220 (10) Saleem Rajput 212 (11) Shahid Mahmood 211 (12) Rana Idrees 202 (13) Kamal Butt 190 (14) Arshad Ansari 168 (15) Saeed Tahir 151 (2) votes. Earlier, President Shahid Ali New TV Senior Vice President GA Tanveer Kohinoor TV 2 Vice President Zafaran Sarwar Daily Business Report, Rida Sindhu Sama News Secretary Azadar Hussain Abidi City 2 Joint Secretary Aurangzeb Malik GNN News Nadeem Nadeem Jawadani Daily Babbar Sher News, Finance Secretary Malik Shaukat Ali New TV Information Secretary Owais Sattar 365 News have been elected unopposed. Today, the Press Club was bustling all day long. Council members participated in large numbers. The elections were held peacefully. Respected city businessmen, organizations, lawyers and district administration came to the Press Club to watch the peaceful elections. They appreciated the transparent elections and expressed hope that the new administration will strive hard for the betterment of journalists.

## Gazans reeling from closed hospitals & denial of humanitarian aid: UN



UNITED NATIONS: Essential services that sustain life — healthcare, emergency aid, and humanitarian access — are being systematically dismantled as Israel presses on with its deadly attacks in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

A stark example of this escalation was highlighted by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who confirmed that the Kamal Adwan hospital in North Gaza was now out of service.

On 27 December, the facility was raided, its patients and staff were forcibly evacuated, and its director detained.

The humanitarian fallout has been severe. Ten patients were transferred to the Indonesian Hospital, which itself has since ceased functioning due to a lack of water, electricity, and sanitation.

Of these patients, four were arrested by Israeli forces at a checkpoint, leaving the remaining seven patients, 15 caregivers, and health workers stranded in deplorable conditions.

The delivery of aid to affected areas has faced relentless obstacles. UN Associate Spokesperson Florencia Soto Nino-Martinez noted that over 150 attempts to access North Gaza since October had been denied by Israeli authorities.

Even missions initially approved have encountered severe delays. Between 27 and 29 December, three out of four aid missions to the area were blocked.

One mission succeeded on Sunday, delivering basic medical supplies, food, and water to survivors evacuated from Kamal Adwan.

However, the situation remains dire. OCHA emphasised that it should not require breaking a siege to help survivors in critical need. “Aid workers must be granted safe and unhindered access to assist people wherever they are,” she said.

Armed looting has further exacerbated the crisis, with two incidents over the past three days in southern Gaza targeting dozens of truckloads of supplies.

These incidents not only reduce the availability of desperately needed aid but also expose aid workers to grave risks.

Meanwhile, Israeli restrictions on commercial and humanitarian imports continue to paralyse operations, leaving families in urgent need of food, shelter, and clothing as winter conditions intensify.

The UN called on all parties to respect humanitarian principles in order to ensure the protection of civilians and the safe delivery of aid. As the crisis deepens, the international community must act swiftly to address the mounting needs and protect the most vulnerable.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank remains precarious, with millions dependent on immediate, sustained support.

For those trapped amid the violence, the stakes could not be higher.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
115,126.90	115,258.99	
Day's High	Day's Low	
116,700.01	114,804.80	
Index Value	Change	
29,065,723,755	-132.09	
Percentage	Time	
-0.11%	31 Dec, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,173.02	+52.01	
Percentage	Time	
+0.64%	31 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
42,431.89	-141.84	
Percentage	Time	
-0.33%	31 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	288.20	290.95
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	308.12	310.92
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.45	76.10
UK Pound Sterling	347.35	350.85
US Dollar	278.10	279.60

# PTA and Huawei Pakistan Sign MoU to strengthen collaboration in IT and Telecom sector

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Huawei Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration in IT and Telecom sectors. The agreement, signed at PTA Headquarters, focuses on capacity building, technology innovation, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion.

The partnership aims to drive advancements in 5G, Artificial Intelligence, and IoT while promoting secure digital infrastructure and bridging the digital divide.

Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman (HIM), remarked, "This MoU represents a significant step in Pakistan's digital transformation, enabling enhanced infrastructure and fostering innovation for sustainable growth."

Deputy CEO Huawei Pakistan, Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masud, highlighted, "Huawei remains committed to empowering Pakistan's digital ecosystem and advancing its technological capabilities."

This collaboration aligns with Pakistan's vision of a digitally empowered economy, fostering technological excellence and equitable access to IT services nationwide.



## Meeting

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holds a meeting with Mr. Jameel Ahmad, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, at the Finance Division on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

# CCP imposes Rs 275 million in penalties for cartelization and deceptive marketing in 2024

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant crackdown on anti-competitive practices, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has levied penalties totaling Rs 275 million in 2024. These fines were imposed on companies found guilty of cartelization, collusion, and deceptive marketing in various sectors, including paint manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, dairy products, and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). This action underscores the CCP's ongoing efforts to ensure fair competition in Pakistan's markets.

As part of its policing efforts, the CCP issued 32 showcause notices to companies across sectors such as fertilizer, real estate, education, public procurement in power distribution companies, pharmaceuticals, and FMCG. These notices were in response to potential violations of the Competition



Act related to cartel activities and deceptive practices.

Additionally, the Commission initiated seven fresh inquiries into industries like transportation, telecommunication, construction, and FMCG for suspected cartelization and collusion, which contravene sections 3 and 4 of the CCP Act. Several companies involved in sectors such as the transportation of edible oil, tele-

communications, electric fan manufacturing, and construction were found to be in violation of anti-competitive laws. Meanwhile, FMCG, pharmaceutical, and services sectors were investigated for engaging in deceptive marketing practices, breaching section 10 of the Act.

Moreover, the CCP recovered Rs 100 million approximately in penalties from violators by

successfully securing judgments in courts, marking the highest-ever penalty recovery since the Commission's inception. The CCP concluded 11 inquiries into cartelization cases in sectors like wheat flour, public procurement, energy, FMCG, civil aviation, and steel. Another four investigations into deceptive marketing were finalized in the FMCG, construction, pharmaceutical, and automobile sectors.

Furthermore, in 2024, the CCP approved 64 merger applications and granted 56 exemptions, predominantly in the FMCG, LNG, power, real estate, telecom, textile, and renewable energy sectors. The Commission also issued a policy note to the Ministry of Science and Technology, recommending amendments to Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) regulations to mandate the inclusion of manufacturing and expiry dates on cement bags.

# EFP and MUSIAD sign MoU to Boost Pakistan-Türkiye Bilateral Trade

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a significant step toward enhancing bilateral trade and investment, the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) and MUSIAD (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association of Türkiye) signed a noteworthy Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Istanbul. The MoU marks a new

chapter in Pakistan-Türkiye bilateral relations and sets the stage for promoting and strengthening trade ties between the two nations, with a special focus on fostering economic collaboration and advancing mutual trade. Both EFP and MUSIAD are committed to advancing this partnership and ensuring the successful implementation of the EFP Strategic Roadmap to achieve the target of \$5

billion in bilateral trade.

The signing ceremony was attended by key representatives from both sides, including Mehmood Arshad, EFP Board Member and Chairman of the EFP Economic Council, who led the Pakistani delegation. Syed Hasnain Mazhar, EFP Board Member, represented the EFP Board of Directors. Davut Altunbas, Vice President of MUSIAD,



Abdullah Bozlatli, Chairman of the MUSIAD Trade Office, and Osman Nuri Onugoren also represented MUSIAD. Nauman Aslam, the Consul General of Pakistan in Istanbul, also graced the occasion.

# Garment exporters want national dialogue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

## Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Stressing the need for taking bold steps for a resilient future of the country, the Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) said on Tuesday that the government's revised NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions), submitted in 2021 under the Paris Agreement, shows Pakistan's commitment to ambitious climate action and adaptation strategies.

PRGMEA North Zone Chairman Dr. Ayyazuddin observed that the Pakistan aims to achieve a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Of this, 15% is unconditional, while 35% is

contingent on international financial support. He said that the updated NDCs set a target of 60% renewable energy in the national energy mix by 2030, ensuring a sustainable and low-carbon energy future.

He said that by 2030, Pakistan plans to ensure that 30% of all vehicles on its roads are electric, reducing emissions from the transport sector. He said that a nationwide ban on coal imports complements expanded nature-based solutions, highlighting Pakistan's dedication to environmental sustainability. Key adaptation strategies include enhancing water recharge and flood risk reduction, as well as increasing protected areas from 12% to 15% by 2030.

# Consultation Paper on Improvement in Conduct of Corporate Briefing Session

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued a Consultation Paper on potential areas of improvement in the overall conduct of listed companies during the Corporate Briefing Session (CBS). This exercise is aimed at ensuring that listed companies hold these sessions in true letter and spirit to provide investors and research analysts an opportunity for timely and accurate dissemination of information relating to financial and operational matters.

As the apex regulator of the capital markets, SECP firmly believes in greater transparency in the stock market. CBS provides a unique opportunity to listed companies for sharing deeper insights into their operations and address any potential concerns of relevant stakeholders. It is envisaged that through improvements in the conduct of CBS, the enhanced transparency will boost investor confidence in the stock market, which in turn will aid in efficient price discovery.

The Consultation Paper covers potential areas of improvement which have been identified based on a holistic review of the prevalent practices in capital market, feedback received from the relevant stakeholders and international research. Broad areas for improvements include: mandatory audio-video recordings, mandatory optionality for online participation, establishment of centralized repository for recordings, availability of written transcripts, mechanism for sending questions in advance, feedback surveys, and mandatory presence of CEO and CFO.

## Mr. Ashfaq Yousuf Tola Appointed President of South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA)



## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) proudly announces that Mr. Ashfaq Yousuf Tola, a distinguished Past President of ICAP, has been appointed as the President of the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA), effective January 1, 2025, for a one-year term. SAFA is a highly regarded professional body representing accountants across the South Asian region.

Mr. Tola is a Fellow member of both the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), having served as Vice President of SAFA in 2024, he has actively contributed to its growth and initiatives, particularly through his instrumental role in forming SAFA's Economic Advisory Committee in 2024, where he became the inaugural Chairman. The committee addresses regional economic challenges and offers strategic insights.

Mr. Tola's expertise extends beyond professional bodies. He serves on the Policy Board at the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives and has held numerous influential roles, including Minister of State of Pakistan, Chairman of the Reforms and Resource Mobilization Commission, and President of ICAP for the term 2022-2023. His tenure on ICAP's Council since 2017 and leadership of several committees highlight his commitment to excellence and governance in the accounting profession.

# DG Sports presided over an important meeting to review different key issues

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry has presided over an important meeting to review different key issues regarding provincial level phase of Khelta Punjab Games at the National Hockey Stadium on Tuesday.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem and Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum attended the meeting in person while all the Divisional and District Sports Officers of Punjab participated through video link.

All the Divisional and District Sports Officers of the province briefed the meeting regarding the divisional stage dues of the Khelta Punjab Games. Various administrative committees have been constituted for the smooth holding of provincial level phase of Khelta Punjab Games.

Addressing the meeting, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry further said that Sports Board Punjab is making excellent arrangements for holding competitions of provincial level phase of Khelta Punjab Games in a befitting manner. "Before this, the competitions of district and



divisional level phase of Khelta Punjab Games have been completed quite successfully," he added.

Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that the sports contingents from all divisions of the province will participate

in the provincial level phase of Khelta Punjab Games. "The competitions of provincial level phase of Khelta Punjab Games will be organized at different sports venues of Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC)".

Director General Sports and Youth

Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry said that these competitions will play an important part in the development of sports culture across the province. "Hefty cash prizes of Rs 10 crore will be distributed among the top position holders of Khelta Punjab Games".

# PCB awards Tower Sports live-streaming 2025 rights

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday that the Tower Sports has been awarded live-streaming rights for all home international cricket from January to December 2025 in the Pakistan region.

The rights were awarded following a transparent tender process. During the next 12-month period, Pakistan will host four Test matches, which includes two Test-match series against West Indies scheduled at the Multan Cricket Stadium from 17 to 29 January. Pakistan will also host 16 ODIs, which include four matches from the tri-nation series



involving New Zealand and South Africa and also 15 T20Is.

PCB Chief Operating Officer Sumair Ahmad Syed said that the PCB congratulates Tower Sports for taking part in the bidding process and winning it.

"I want to thank the Tower Sports for their commitment and support towards Pakistan cricket and look forward to this enriching partnership for not just the two parties involved but also the fans across the country. We will be hosting multiple bilateral series in the next 12 months, which also include a tri-nation tournament as well. I am delighted for the fans who in this digital era will be glued to their screens and witness the action through live-streaming available to them."

Duraidd Qureshi, CEO HUM Network of which Tower Sports is a subsidiary said that this achievement underscores HUM Network's commitment to empowering

youth and building a vibrant future for sports in Pakistan. By bringing exclusive coverage of Pakistan's cricket matches to digital platforms, HUM Network aims to revolutionise how cricket is experienced by fans, offering unparalleled access to their favorite sport. This initiative not only celebrates the spirit of cricket but also serves as a unifying force, fostering national pride and collective enthusiasm. "We believe in using our platforms to amplify the love for cricket, which is an integral part of our national identity, and to create opportunities for the younger generation to connect, celebrate, and grow through their shared passion for the game."

# Day two of Begum Kulsum Saifullah Tennis C'ships witnesses standout performances

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The second day of the 10th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships 2024 witnessed some standout encounters at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Tuesday.

In the Men's Singles first round, M. Hamza Aasim claimed a commanding win over M. Huzaifa Khan (6-0, 6-4), while Uzair Khan outlasted M. Talha Khan in a gruelling three-setter (6-4, 5-7, 6-2). Abdullah Adnan delivered a strong performance against Bilal Asim (6-2, 6-3) and Muhammad Abid displayed impeccable form, defeating Asad Zaman (6-0, 6-0). Shahzad Khan, Heera Ashiq, and Yousaf



Khalil also registered convincing wins to advance to the next round.

In the Boys 18 & Under category, Azan Shahid eased past Muhammad Dawood (6-2, 6-2), and Rubab Faisal triumphed over Ismail Aftab (6-3, 6-3). M. Salar and Bilal Asim also secured victories, with the latter delivering a flawless double bagel performance against Hazrat Ali (6-0, 6-0).

In the Boys 14 & Under competition, Rayyan Khan

defeated M. Hamza Khan (4-0, 4-0), while Arsh Imran overcame Rajam Taha (4-0, 4-1). Mozam Babar advanced through a walkover.

The event, organized annually by the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), commemorates the late Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan, mother of PTF Patron Senator Salim Saifullah Khan. It has attracted Pakistan's top-ranked players, including Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, and Heera Ashiq, among others.

As one of the most prestigious events in the national tennis calendar, the tournament provides a platform for seasoned athletes and rising stars to compete at the highest level.

# Rohan Noori clinches double titles at GCC Open Tennis Championships

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Gun and Country Club (GCC) Open Tennis Championships came to an end on Tuesday with Rohan Noori emerging as the champion in both the Men's Singles and Boys' Singles events.

In the Men's Singles final, Rohan Noori defeated Adil Farooq from Islamabad Police in an exciting match, securing the title with a score of 8-5.

Noori's double triumph was sealed when he won the Boys' Singles final, beating Mahd Mehmood with a score of 8-4.

In the Ladies' Singles event, Shiza Sajjid defeated her younger sister, Lala Rukh in a thrilling final with a score of 8-6.

The three-day tournament featured over sixty players competing in various events. The finals were attended by distinguished guests, including Nadeem Irshad Kiyani, Secretary Inter-Provincial Coordination, who distributed prizes and certificates among the winners and runners-up.

Other notable attendees included Tariq Mehmood Murtaza, Chairman Islamabad Tennis Association (ITA), Col Tufail Iqbal Din Zia, Secretary Pakistan Tennis Federation, Tufail Cheema, Secretary ITA and Imran Afraz Khan, Secretary Gun Club and Hamid ul Haq, former Davis Cup Captain.



# From Immature to Unbeatable: The Transformation of the Saudi Arabian Cricket Team

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Saudi Arabian cricket team's recent victories against regional powerhouses UAE and Oman mark a historic turning point in the team's journey, showcasing a transformation from underdog status to emerging contenders. This extraordinary evolution is credited, in large part, to the strategic leadership and expertise of Mr. Muhammad Ali Khan, the team's Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, who joined the squad in 2021.

When Khan took over, the team consisted of players who were largely inexperienced and engaged in part-time training routines. However, he saw untapped potential within the squad and initiated a comprehensive plan to elevate their performance to international standards. His approach focused on instilling the principles of elite athleticism, underpinned by modern sports science.

Khan revamped the team's training program by introducing cutting-edge exercise techniques and designing rigorous conditioning schedules tailored to meet the demands of competitive cricket. Recognizing the crucial role of nutrition in athletic performance, he also emphasized structured dietary plans to optimize players' physical endurance and recovery.

A hallmark of Khan's methodology has been his commitment to staying ahead in the field of sports science. He consistently integrates the latest innovations into the team's regimen, ensuring that Saudi players are equipped with the physical and mental preparedness required to compete at the highest levels.

The results have been nothing short of remarkable. The team's victories against UAE and Oman, two of the strongest Associate cricket teams in the Gulf region, are not only a reflection of their growing skills but also a testament to the effectiveness of Khan's strategic guidance.

As the Saudi Arabian cricket team continues to rise, the name Muhammad Ali Khan will remain synonymous with their success. His contributions have laid a solid foundation for the team's journey toward becoming a formidable force in international cricket, earning respect and admiration on and off the field.



# Zone-II Whites, Zone-I Whites reach Quarters of Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament



**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Karachi: Zone-II Whites move into Quarter Final after beating Zone-I Whites by 147 runs became Group Champion of Group "C" and Zone-I Whites also qualify for the Quarter Final after secured 2nd Position of the same Group.

**Scores in Brief:**

Zone-II Whites beat Zone-I Whites by 147 at KCCA Stadium. Zone-II Whites 221/8 in 40 overs. Haris Naveed 47 8x4, Azan Ahmed 45 3x4, Aliyan Khan 41, Muhammad Karim 32 Mahab Furqan 25, Sufyan Khan 2/25, Muhammad Farman 2/42. Zone-I Whites 74 all out in 25.4 overs. Yousuf Khan 26, Muhammad Farman 16. Sagheer Ahmed (rlb) 4/16, Jawwad Ahmed (sla) 3/17.

Sagheer Ahmed received the Medicam Man of the Match Award.

In the 2nd Match Zone-VII Blues winning their 2nd Match from Group "A" to beat Zone-IV Blues by 88 runs at Pak Star Ground.

Zone-VII Blues 220 all out in 34.1 overs. Muhammad Saqib 45 6x4, Adil Khan 31, Shayan Ahmed 26, Muhammad Sarim 24, Zohaib Khan 22, Sahil 22. Mehrab Ali (rlb) 4/53, Hafiz M. Beval Khan 2/43, Abdul Samad 2/45.

Zone-IV 132/8 in 40 overs. Ashar ullah 35 not out, S. Owj Mehdi 23, Muhammad Saqib (sla) 4/9. Later Azam Khan Coordinator RCAK given the Medicam Man of the Match Award to Saqib Khan of Zone-VII Blues.

# Year Ender 2024: A glance at Pakistan cricket team's rollercoaster ride

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Greenshirts faced heavy defeats in bilateral series and ICC tournaments, however, they also showed shades of brilliance with their remarkable comebacks in 2024.

The outgoing year also marked star batter Babar Azam's resignation from captaincy of all formats, a change in the PCB management and the sudden departure of foreign coaches.

Starting 2024 with a white-wash

Pakistan kicked off 2024 with a disastrous start as Shan Masood's first assignment as Test captain culminated in a whitewash defeat 3-0 on Australian soil.

The humiliating defeat was followed by a 4-1 loss in the T20I away series against New Zealand in January.

Pakistan cricket team then played the Blackcaps in a home series, only managing a series draw.

Shadab Khan guides United to PSL 2024 title

Islamabad United captain Shadab Khan was brilliant throughout the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 to help his team lift the trophy for the third time.

Islamabad United defeated defending champions Multan Sultans in a thriller to win the final of the showpiece tournament.

A bumpy ride ahead of T20 World Cup 2024

Pakistan cricket team's road to T20I World Cup 2024 had them on a rollercoaster ride as they secured a 2-1 series victory against Ireland.

However, the following T20I series against England left them

concerned about their preparations as they lost the series 0-2 to England, a major blow to their confidence going into the tournament.

The historic exit from T20 World Cup 2024

Pakistan cricket team began their campaign with a disastrous start after they lost to the tournament's co-hosts USA in a Super Over.

United States vs Pakistan Highlights, T20 World Cup 2024: USA Hand Shocking Defeat To Pakistan In Super Over | Cricket News

Shattered by the heart-breaking loss to the USA, the Greenshirts were defeated by arch-rivals India by six runs while chasing a modest target of 120 runs.

While the 2009 T20 World Cup champions won their remaining two games against



Canada and Ireland, the match between the USA and Ireland was washed out, confirming the Pakistan cricket team's historical exit from the competition.

Bangladesh white-wash Pakistan

Pakistan cricket sank to new lows when they suffered their first-ever defeat to Bangladesh, their first home loss to the visitors in the longest format since 2001.

Stats: Bangladesh's break-

through series win deepens home crisis for Pakistan | Cricbuzz.com

Bangladesh outclassed the hosts in all departments and won the series 2-0.

A comeback for the ages

After facing a defeat in the first Test against England at Multan, Aqib Javed arrived at the scene and the famous industrial fans emerged in the ground ahead of the second Test.

The PCB also rested senior

players including Babar Azam, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Shah Afridi, while introducing spinners Noman Ali and Sajid Khan.

Pakistan beat England, Pakistan won by 152 runs, 2nd Test, at Multan Cricket Stadium

The measure proved a masterstroke as Noman and Sajid dismantled England's batting lineup in the two games, taking 39 out of 40 wickets as Pakistan won the remaining two Tests, securing the series 2-1.

Mohammad Rizwan scrips history as white-ball captain

Mohammad Rizwan left fans stunned after winning the three-match ODI away series 2-1 on Australian turf.

The series win was the first on Australian soil since 2002.

Pakistan win first ODI series in Australia since 2002; Rizwan dedicates victory to the fans -

Firstpost

Mohammad Rizwan, however, could not provide the same result in the T20I series, as the Pakistan cricket team were swept aside 3-0.

Greenshirts thrash Zimbabwe in white-ball series

Mohammad Rizwan's next assignment was the three-match ODI away series against Zimbabwe.

Pakistan won the series 2-1, while Agha Salman led the national team in the T20I series, guiding the side to a 2-1 victory.

First to whitewash South Africa on home turf

After facing a 2-0 defeat in the T20I series, the Pakistan cricket team made a remarkable recovery in the ODI series and whitewashed the hosts 3-0, becoming the first team to ever achieve the milestone.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of Pakistan's envoys at key multilateral and bilateral Missions at Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 31, 2024.



Photo: PID

## DPM Dar calls for continuity of policies, unity, hard work to achieve economic goals

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday stressed the need for unity, hard work, and continuity of policies to achieve the economic goals of the government.

He said Pakistan was blessed with huge resources worth of over \$10 trillion in

mines & minerals, stones and hydrocarbons that could be utilized for ensuring socio-economic development of the country.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the government's five year homegrown plan titled "Uraan Pakistan", the deputy prime minister recalled that back in 2013, when Pakistan was on the verge of default and all macro-

economic indicators were seriously negative, the PML-N government under the leadership of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif took the challenge and worked really hard to bring the country out of crisis.

He said the people at that time had to face 18-hours electricity load shedding, economy was in shatter and extremism was on the rise.

The government, that won elections on the basis of three Es (electricity, economy, extremism), delivered successfully and achieved all the three Es.

He said in 2017, the country's economy posted 6% growth, and inflation was as low as 4%.

Ishaq Dar pointed out that the PDM government led by PM Shehbaz Sharif also

took the charge in the most serious crisis, and it successfully brought the country out of default like situation.

"All we need to do is unity, and hard work, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is leading from the front," DPM Ishaq Dar said adding that "The way the government is performing, I am sure that we will be able to achieve the goals provided we remain on track".

## Naval Chief Presides Over Command & Staff Conference at Naval Headquarters

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Command and Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy concluded at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. The conference was chaired by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf. The forum reviewed the maritime situation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and deliberated on measures to ensure safety and security of national sea trade passing through the region.

During the conference, preparations for the upcoming PN multinational Exercise AMAN and the maiden AMAN Dialogue were reviewed to ensure the befitting conduct of these momentous events of inter-



national significance. Moreover, the forum also discussed matters related to the geo-strategic environment, national security, operational preparedness, training, and troops welfare. Comprehensive briefings on important ongoing and future developmental projects of Pakistan Navy were also

presented to Chief of the Naval Staff.

Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized on the importance of strengthening maritime security and maintaining combat readiness to effectively respond to any aggression against Pakistan. He commended the initiatives

undertaken to enhance capabilities through the acquisition of emerging technologies.

The Naval Chief also expressed satisfaction with the operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy in the face of prevailing maritime challenges and praised the morale and motivation of troops at all

levels. The Command and Staff Conference is the apex decision-making body of the Pakistan Navy, where Chief of the Naval Staff, along with all Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders, reviews the Pakistan Navy's policies and plans.

## Toll tax on highways and motorways increased once again

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government has increased the toll tax on highways and motorways once again. The toll tax on cars on highways has been increased to Rs60, wagons to Rs100 and buses to Rs200. Small trucks on national highways will have to pay Rs250 and big trucks to Rs500.

The toll tax on cars on the Islamabad-Peshawar M-1 has been increased from Rs460 to Rs500. The toll for M-1 vevan will be Rs700, for Coaster Rs1000 and for buses Rs1450. Large trucks on the motorway from Islamabad to Peshawar will have to pay Rs2300. The toll tax on cars on the Lahore-Pir Abdul Hakeem Motorway will have to be paid Rs700 instead of Rs650.

The toll for cars from Pindi Bhattian to Faisalabad and Multan has been increased to Rs950 instead of Rs850. The toll tax on cars on the Multan-Sukkur M-5 will be paid Rs1100. Toll tax on DI Khan to Hakla Motorway M-14 increased to Rs600. Ministry of Communications has issued a notification and it will be implemented from January 5, 2025.

## Twin blasts one civilian dead, 12 injured including three FC men in South Waziristan

## Umer Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Twin blast rock in South Waziristan Lower on Tuesday. A devastating day in South Waziristan Lower district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa began with a remote-controlled bomb blast in Azam Warsak Bazar, Tehsil Birmal.

According to District Police Officer South Waziristan Lower Asif Bahader, the explosion claimed the lives of one civilian and injured nine others. The injured were rushed to District Headquarters Hospital, Wana, where two critically injured individuals, including a child, were transferred to Dera Ismail Khan for further treatment.

The Police Officer said, preliminary investigations revealed that the explosive material was planted in a motorcycle, which detonated as people passed by, causing widespread destruction. Shops and vehicles were also damaged in the blast, which occurred near a funeral procession. The police have launched an investigation into the incident, which has sent shockwaves throughout the region.

In a separate incident, a second explosion occurred



in the Daza Ghundai area of Wana, targeting a Frontier Corps (FC) vehicle. Three FC personnel were injured in the blast, which happened as they were en route to investigate the earlier explosion. The injured were shifted to Scouts Hospital Wana for treatment.

Local political and social figures have strongly condemned both incidents, expressing deep sorrow and regret over the loss of life and property. The twin blasts have raised concerns about the security situation in South Waziristan Lower, which has witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks in recent times.

## Farewell call by Ambassador Donald Blome on Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: H. E Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, paid a farewell call on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division today. During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, with a focus on economic cooperation and bilateral relations.

Senator Aurangzeb briefed the Ambassador on Pakistan's economic outlook, emphasizing the government's reform agenda aimed at achieving macroeconomic stability and ending the boom-and-bust cycle through export-led growth. He highlighted the key sectors of the economy where reforms are being pursued to foster sustainable growth.

The Minister expressed gratitude to the United States for its invaluable support in facilitating the signing of the Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) and the subsequent Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International

Monetary Fund (IMF). Senator Aurangzeb also acknowledged the critical role of the US as Pakistan's largest trading partner and a significant market for Pakistani goods and services.

The Finance Minister particularly noted the growing IT export sector, emphasizing the substantial potential for further expansion of digital exports to the US. He highlighted the promising prospects of enhancing trade in the IT and digital services sectors, with both countries poised to benefit from closer economic ties.

Ambassador Blome expressed his appreciation for the strong and enduring relationship between the United States and Pakistan and reiterated the commitment of the US to continue supporting Pakistan's economic reforms and growth.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides expressing their desire to further strengthen bilateral relations, especially in the areas of trade and economic collaboration.

## Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza visits NHQ



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza visited Naval Headquarters Islamabad and met Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf. Matters of mutual

interest, contemporary geo-political situation and emerging maritime security challenges were discussed during the meeting.

General Sahir Shamshad Mirza appreciated the role of Pakistan Navy in ensuring maritime security in the region.

## Former GB CM Khalid Khurshid awarded 34-year jail

## Bureau Report

GILGIT: An anti-terrorism court in Gilgit-Baltistan on Tuesday awarded 34-year jail sentence to former chief minister Khalid Khurshid Khan for threatening security personnel and institutions.

In July 2023, Khalid Khurshid, who is also PTT's regional president, was disqualified by the GB Chief Court for allegedly obtaining a licence from the GB Bar Council based on a fake degree. A month later, police registered a case against him for allegedly possessing a fake law degree. In September this year, the Peshawar High Court granted him protective bail in cases registered across different parts of the country.

On Tuesday, Judge Rehmat Shah of the GB ATC sentenced Khurshid to 34 years in prison and fined him Rs600,000 for threatening security personnel and institutions, including the chief secretary and chief election commissioner, during a party rally on July 26 at Ittehad Chowk, Gilgit.



The case against Khurshid was registered at the Gilgit City Police Station under various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

The former chief minister had failed to appear in any hearing despite repeated court notices. Khurshid was also given a defence lawyer who argued his cases.

Judge Shah also ordered the GB inspector general of police to arrest Khurshid and send him to jail, and ordered the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) director general to block his national identity card.