



CM Maryam vows to provide best health facilities to masses in public hospitals

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has said that government was committed to improve healthcare in the province, adding that government has managed to control key challenges being faced by the patients and the doctors in public sector hospitals, including theft of medicines and the outsourcing of medical tests.



Severe rainfall causes flooding, traffic disruptions in Saudi Arabia

In Medina, the Central Haram Area near the Prophet's Mosque recorded 36.1 mm, while other notable areas such as Al Masjid in Badr and Quba Mosque saw 33.6 mm and 28.4 mm, respectively. The National Centre of Meteorology (NCM) has forecasted continued rainfall across various regions, including Mecca, Medina, Qassim, Tabuk, Northern Borders, and Al Jouf.

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Cabinet Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presides over a federal cabinet meeting on Tuesday



Photo: PID

Three soldiers martyred, 19 terrorists killed in KP intelligence-based operations

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: On 6-7 January 2025, Nineteen Khwarij were sent to hell in three separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

On reported presence of Khwarij, an intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in general area Matani, Peshawar District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and resultantly, eight khwarij were sent to hell.

Another intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Baizai, Mohmand District. In ensuing fire exchange, eight Khwarij were effectively engaged and neutralised by the security forces.

In third engagement in Karak District, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location as a result of which three khwarij were



sent to hell. However, during intense fire exchange, three brave sons of soil, Lance Havaldar Abbas Ali (age: 38 years, resident of District Ghizer), Naik Muhammad Nazir

(age: 37 years, resident of District Skardu) and Naik Muhammad Usman (age: 37 years, resident of District Attock), having fought gallantly, paid the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat.

Sanitisation operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the

country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have paid tribute to Pakistan Army's soldiers for embracing martyrdom during an operation against terrorists in KP. Moreover, President Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have also lauded security forces for killing 19 terrorists in various operations in KP.

PM Shehbaz Sharif in a statement said that the sacrifices of the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army in war against terrorism will never go in vain. He expressed the determination to completely eliminate all forms of terrorism from the country.

Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has lauded security forces for foiling terrorist design in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa District and sent 19 terrorists into hell.

UAE agrees to roll over payment of \$2b due by Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates has agreed to roll over the payment of \$2 billion due by Pakistan this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday.

Sharif said he met with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan while he was on a personal visit to Pakistan on Sunday.

"In a one-on-one meeting, he said...there is a \$2 billion dollar repayment due and we are extending this," Sharif told reporters in a televised press conference.

"I asked for the UAE to invest a few billion dollars in

key investment projects and that would be helpful," Sharif added.

"He said the UAE was committed to this investment and the two countries share brotherly ties," he said.

Securing external financing has previously been a key condition for the International Monetary Fund to approve bail-out deals for the cash-strapped nation.

The next review by the IMF of its \$7 billion, 37-month loan programme to Pakistan is expected in February.

Pakistan's \$350 billion economy has struggled for decades with boom-and-bust cycles, needing 23 IMF bail-outs since 1958.

Pakistan made tremendous achievements in sports arena during past few months: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah said on Tuesday that Pakistan had made tremendous achievements in the sports arena during past few months.

Delivering his speech at the opening ceremony of Media Cricket League 2025, he said upcoming International Cricket Council's Champions Trophy being held in Pakistan will prove to be a landmark achievement of the country.

The minister congratulated the organizers and sponsors of this event and thanked them for promotion of positive activities like sports.

He said that Shalimar Cricket Ground was a beautiful and scenic stadium in the foothills of Margallas and the spectators were going to watch good entertainment.

He said that Ministry of Information and Broad-



casting will also award the winner and runner up teams of the event.

Tarar said that Shangai Cooperation Organization summit hosted in Islamabad was a manifestation that Pakistan was capable of organizing big events.

He remarked that hosting the Champions Trophy will improve Pakistan's positive and soft image in the world.

He said that sports were also included in recently launched "Ur-raan Pakistan program" which was a political programme.

Barrister Gohar says PTI-Govt talks not stalled

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Tuesday dispelled the impression that the party's talks with the government had stalled, adding that two meetings had already been held while the third one would be held as well.

Talking to the media in Islamabad, he said it was PTI leaders' demand that they be allowed to meet former prime minister and the party founder Imran Khan at Adiala Jail. "It would have been better if we had been allowed to meet today. When there were no issues with our first meeting with Imran, why now?" He said he was hopeful that the PTI-government talks would succeed.

Barrister Gohar also dispelled the impression that a delay in the pronouncement of the verdict in the 190 million pounds case (Al-Qadir Trust case) was the consequence of any deal. "This case is fake. In fact, all cases filed against the PTI founder are part of a political witch-hunt."

The reason, the PTI chairman went on to say, the decision in the case had not been pronounced as yet was that those in the corridors of power wanted to put pressure on the party. "But they are mistaken that they can browbeat the party in this way," he added.

95 dead as 6.8-magnitude quake strikes Xizang, China; military launches swift rescue operations

Spokesman Report

XIGAZE: A total of 95 people have been confirmed dead and 130 others injured as of 3 pm Tuesday, after a 6.8-magnitude earthquake jolted Dingri County in the city of Xigaze in Southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region at 9:05 am Tuesday (Beijing Time).

The epicenter was monitored at 28.5 degrees north latitude and 87.45 degrees east longitude. The quake struck at a depth of 10 km, according to a report issued by the China Earthquake Networks Center.

The local government of Xigaze held a press conference on Tuesday afternoon, which began with a moment of silence for the victims.

The Global Times learned from the Xizang Military Command's Xigaze Military Sub-command that rescue teams have been mobilized to head toward the epicenter. Videos from the scene show significant damage to the roads leading to the epicenter, and buildings along the route showing varying levels of damage. The sub-command is rapidly deploying



personnel to the affected area to participate in rescue efforts.

As of 11:25 am Tuesday, a regiment of 160 personnel from the sub-command has reached Jijiao Bridge in Dinggye county, while a company of 40 personnel has been dispatched to areas near Dingri Airport.

The Global Times also learned from the Xizang Military Command that at 1:00 pm, the General Hospital affiliated to the Command dispatched 50 medical personnel to the earthquake-stricken area

in Xigaze.

By 1:15 pm, the second batch of rescue forces from the Xigaze Military Sub-command, totaling over 680 personnel, had been deployed to three directions — Dingri, Lazi, and Sa'gya—to assist in the rescue efforts in nearby towns and villages, working tirelessly to protect people's lives and property. Video footage from the scene showed a regiment from the Xigaze Military Sub-command rescuing a child from the rubble and providing emergency medical assistance.

SC judge questions 'executive's role as judge' in military trials of civilians

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Justice Jamal Mandokhel of the Supreme Court's (SC) constitutional bench on Tuesday said that how on earth the executive could play the role of a judge in the event of any crime committed against it.

During the hearing of the petition filed against the annulment of the trial of civilians in military courts, Justice Mandokhel remarked, "The constitution is explicit that the executive could not act as a judge. This is a basic point in the entire case."

A seven-member bench, headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, heard the plea. "There is a provision for anti-terrorism courts in the law," he said, and questioned, "How could the executive itself become a judge when there is such a provision?"

Khawaja Haris, counsel



for the Ministry of Defence, replied he agreed what he had said.

Justice Mandokhel was of the view that only the trials of members of the armed forces could be held under the Army Act.

Disagreeing with the judge's remarks, Haris said that no that was not case. "People belonging to other walks of life can also be tried in military courts."

Continue on Page 7

CM Maryam Nawaz chairs Provincial Apex Committee meeting



LAHORE: Provincial Apex Committee meeting was held at Chief Minister Secretariat Lahore; chaired by Maryam Nawaz, Chief Minister Punjab. The forum took a holistic view of the security situation in the province and measures being taken to meet the challenges and mitigate multifaceted threats, including jointly conducted

IBOs. The forum paid tribute to the Law Enforcement Agencies and Security Forces for their relentless efforts and sacrifices for the peace of the country. The forum was briefed on the comprehensive security plan for the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy. Special focus was laid on tri border

areas security to break the nexus between crime, illegal spectrum, and terrorism besides ensuring foreign nationals security, especially the Chinese nationals employed on CPEC and non CPEC projects. The forum underscored the need for registration of madrassas, regulating use of loud-speakers and driving out the illegal

foreign nationals who remain the spoilers of peace in the province. The forum also apprised on the massive capacity building of the CTD, Punjab Police and expansion of the Punjab Safe City Project to all the districts. The forum reaffirmed the joint resolve to continue working in synergy to ensure public safety and well-being.

A delegation led by Amanullah Wazir met to Imran Wazir

Umer Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: After meeting with the Governor, a delegation led by former NA candidate and Pakistan People's Party District President Amanullah Wazir from South Waziristan Lower met with Advocate Imran Wazir, Chairman of the Red Crescent Merged Districts.

The delegation included Chairman Ghulja Ahmad Khan, Chairman Karezkot Ware Khan, and Chairman Sara Khorra Sarfraz.

During the meeting, the delegation appreciated the services and performance of the Red Crescent merged Districts and encouraged Chairman Imran Wazir.

They also complained about the closure of the Sharif Khan Basic Health Unit (BHU) for the past month and urged its immediate reopening.

Furthermore, the delegation demanded the construction of more basic health centers and hospitals in Shakai, Spin, and Angoor Adda.

Chairman Imran Wazir welcomed the guests and assured them of resolving their issues promptly. He emphasized that the people of the tribal areas have a right to services, which will be continued. Imran Wazir also mentioned that he had discussed the resumption of activities with National Headquarters Chairman Shahid Ahmad Laghari, and good news will be announced soon.

DG Nursing Punjab visit Nursing College Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Director General Nursing Punjab, Tahira Shahid, stated that the Nursing College Attock is playing a vital role in providing quality education to nurses and Lady Health Visitors (LHVs), equipping them to face future challenges. She made these remarks during a surprise visit to the college. Controller Nursing Examination Board Punjab, Mrs. Tanzila accompanied her. DG Nursing Punjab visited various departments and classes of the college, interacted with trainee nurses and LHVs, and gathered information about the facilities being provided to them. She congratulated the college principal, Madam Naveeda Iqbal, and the teaching staff for achieving a 100% result in the recent annual exams and expressed hope that this standard would be maintained in the future. The DG appreciated the renovation work of the college and approved funds for the improvement of water supply in the nursing hostel and the renovation of staff residences. She also announced that the LHV examination center would be established within the college to save them from traveling to Rawalpindi. Additionally, she approved the introduction of specialization in Pediatrics and Gynecology, as well as the commencement of Post-RN classes. Approval was also given for an excursion for the class that achieved a 100% result in the annual exam. Earlier, Principal Naveeda Iqbal briefed the DG Nursing about the college and highlighted the facilities available and the challenges faced.

Attock police Successful Operation against drug Dealers

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock police's successful operations against drug dealers continue, nearly 3 kg of hashish, 40 liters of liquor, and 150 grams of heroin recovered, 6 suspects arrested.* According to details, under the instructions of District Police Officer Attock, Dr. Sardar Ghyas Gul Khan, Attock police have been conducting successful operations against drug dealers. In this series, City Police Station Attock recovered 1,420 grams of hashish from drug dealer Abdul Rehman, son of Lal Hakeem, resident of Farooq Azam Colony, Attock. On the other hand, City Police Station Hassanabdal recovered 800 grams of hashish from Ali Raza, son of Masood Ahmed, resident of Islampura Hassanabdal, while Attock Khurd Police recovered 600 grams of hashish from Muhammad Babar, son of Almas, resident of Mansar. Bhatar Police Station, in a crackdown against liquor suppliers, recovered 20 liters each from Muhammad Imran, son of Muhammad Riaz, and Rashid Mahmood, son of Abdul Latif, residents of Bhalot, Tehsil Fateh Jang, during checking. In another operation, Hazro Police Station recovered 150 grams of heroin from drug dealer Asif Ali, son of Jabbar Ali, resident of Jatial. Attock police have registered separate cases in different police stations and have put the suspects behind bars.

Condemnation of Unlawful Demolition and Actions in Hyderabad

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Ayaz Latif Palijo, the leader of the Qaumi Awami Tehreek, condemned the demolition of houses established for over 50 years near Wah Wah in Qasimabad, calling it unlawful. He also condemned the firing, shelling on residents, and arrests. He stated that in major cities like Karachi and Hyderabad, illegal colonies of Afghan, Bengali, and other foreign nationals have been set up, taking over land despite orders from the Supreme Court. Instead of removing these illegal foreigners, the authorities have continued providing them with amenities like electricity and gas, offering them protection. Meanwhile, the local landowners in Qasimabad are facing demolition of their homes to favor the builder mafia supported by the ruling class.

Ayaz Latif Palijo demanded the halt of house demolitions near Wah Wah, compensation for the losses incurred, and the release of the detained residents. He further stated that PPP ministers are backing the drug dealers, bandits, and builder mafias throughout Sindh, leaving common people deprived of justice.

CDA rolls out smart solutions, beautification, overseas investment plans

ISLAMABAD, JAN 07 (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA), under the leadership of Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa, is making strides in development projects aimed at transforming Islamabad into a modern, eco-friendly, and investor-friendly city.

In a progress review meeting held on Tuesday, Chairman Randhawa reviewed updates on various initiatives, including solid waste management, urban beautification, and smart technology integration. Senior CDA officials and board members were present at the meeting.

The Chairman was briefed on the outsourcing process for solid waste management services, with advertisements for the bidding process already published. This step aims to improve waste management efficiency across the city.

Chairman Randhawa was informed about efforts to enhance the city's aesthetics. Sculptures and modern designs are being installed along major roads, median strips, and green spaces. Modern, energy-efficient lighting will also be permanently installed on key roads such as Srinagar Highway and Club Road.

Randhawa emphasized the need for swift implementation, directing officials to expedite the installation of lights and finalize plans to upgrade the city's model nursery.

He proposed an innovative business model to make the nursery a sustainable enterprise.

Digital smart parking has already been launched at eight locations across Islamabad, making parking payments fully digital.

Husn-e-Qirat

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Imran Nazeer presenting shield to winner of the "Husn-e-Qirat" Competition, during Sofie Festival at Al-Hamra Arts Council in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Prison head constable Protests over Unpaid Salary, Offers to Sell Daughters

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A head constable of Women Nara Jail, Hyderabad, reached the press club with his three young daughters, holding placards stating "Daughters for Sale" in protest against non-payment of his salary.

Taufique Hussain Shah, the prison head constable, revealed that he was posted at Women Nara Jail, where the jail superintendent allegedly ordered him to take a female inmate out without parole, which was illegal. Upon his refusal, the superintendent marked him absent and stopped his salary for the past four months, leaving him and his family in extreme financial distress.

"I can no longer bear to see my daughters starving," Shah said. He also stated that he has now been transferred to the bacha jail, but there, the superintendent asks him to resolve his issues with the Women



Jail's administration. Meanwhile, the Women Jail's superintendent directs him back to the bacha jail, leaving him helpless.

Head constable appealed to the Minister for Prisons, Ali Hassan Zardari, to intervene and ensure his salary is released while reinstating him at Women Nara Jail.

On the other hand, when contacted, Syed Nadeem Akhtar, Superintendent of the Bacha Jail, told Daily The Spokesman that he had no role in stopping Shah's salary. "He joined the Bacha jail on the 6th of last month, but his official posting is still at Women Nara Jail. Only they can clarify why his salary has been withheld," Akhtar said. He further added that Shah was not regular in his duties and often made excuses to remain absent.

Attempts to contact the Women Nara Jail's superintendent for their response remained unsuccessful.

Despite being acquitted by the court, the police continue to harassing: Widow

Qayoom Sarohi

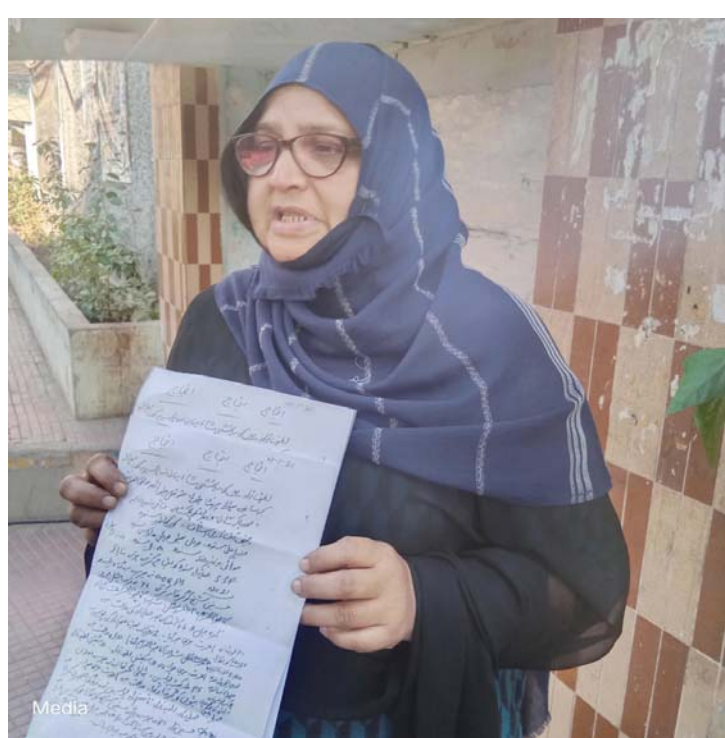
HYDERABAD: A widow in Hyderabad has accused the police of harassing her and half-frying her son. Shazia Sheikh, a resident of Latifabad No. 10, alleges that her 22-year-old son, Hassnain, has been falsely implicated in 74 cases of motorcycle theft and drinking since 2021. Despite being acquitted by the court, the police continue to harass them.

Shaikh claims that on January 1, 2025, her son was arrested by the Fort Police, forced to drink alcohol, and then shot in the leg, leaving him disabled. He

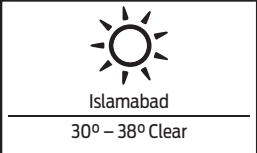
was then sent to Central Jail. She alleges that former SHO Fort Anwar Khanzada and his private person Ali Rana are behind this matter.

Additionally, Shaikh accuses KK Zardari ASI of the GOR police station of sexually assaulting her under the pretext of searching her home. She claims to have filed a case against him, but the police allegedly obtained a false medical certificate to dismiss her case.

Shaikh, a poor widow, is seeking justice and protection from police harassment. She demands that the Interior Minister and IG Sindh take



notice and conduct an inquiry into her allegations.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:45 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 3:37 pm
Maghrib 5:15 pm
Isha 6:44 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Chairman Senate urges youth to play role in shaping nation's future

City Desk

KARACHI: He was addressing the Quaid-e-Azam Leadership Summit and Quaid-e-Azam National Leadership Awards in Karachi organized by the Youth Parliament in collaboration with the Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sindh.

The event was attended by Sindh Ministers Syed Sardar Ali Shah and Saeed Ghani, youth representatives, civil society and media professionals.

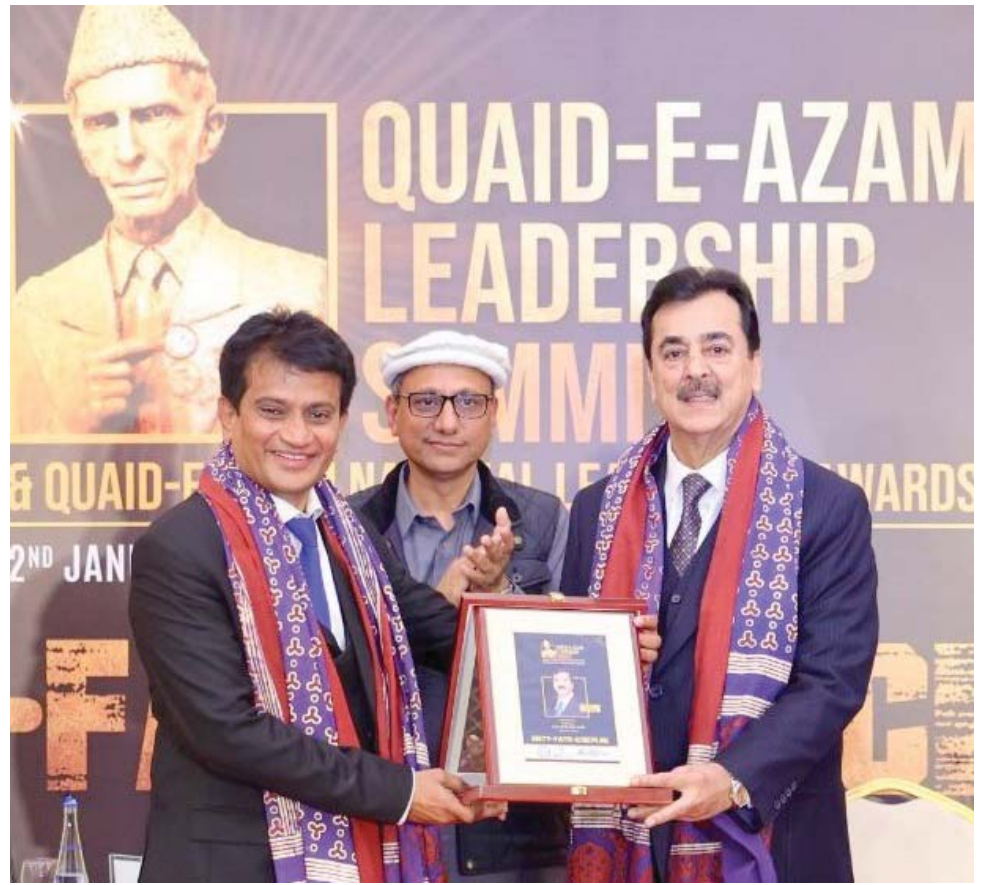
Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that the Quaid's life and legacy is a beacon of hope, courage and dedication for the nation and it is a pride to address those who carry the hopes and aspirations of our beloved father of the nation.

Seed Ghani Minister for Local Government & Housing Town Planning, Government of Sindh addressing the audience underscored the significance of channelizing the potential of youth bulge to lead the country on path of progress and realizing the

dreams of the country's founding father.

Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Minister for Education & Literacy, Mines & Minerals, Government of Sindh, addressing the audience, stressed the need for revising the educational curriculum and promoting political education.

Anthony Naveed, Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly in his speech while addressing the youth said your energy, innovation, and determination are the key to overcoming the challenges



we face today. Rizwan Jaffer thanked the Senate Chairman Youth Parliament assistance in organizing the gathering and supporting the youth.

Calligraphic Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov along with Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan Dr. Maen Khreasat taking keen interest in the Calligraphic Art pieces during exhibition "Timeless Serenity of Calligraphy and Arts" by Azeem Iqbal at Pakistan National Council of Arts in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SSP Khairpur takes strict notice of murder of Mir Muhammad Noonari: Main accused arrested

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KHAIRPUR: On the directives of SSP Khairpur, Touheed ur Rehman Memon, SHO Shah Latif Police Station, Ali Sher Sheikh, and his team took swift action to arrest the main accused involved in the murder of Mir Muhammad Noonari.

The police team successfully apprehended Saawan, son of Mato Khan, the main suspect in the murder case.

It is important to note that the arrested suspect confessed to killing Mir Muhammad due to a domestic dispute.

Further investigation of the arrested suspect is underway.

SSP Khairpur, Touheed ur Rehman Memon, assured that every effort would be made to ensure that the accused receives the severest punishment for this heinous crime.

SSP Khairpur also praised the police team for their prompt action and successful operation.

Punjab Arts Council organized Hazrat Shah Hamdan Conference

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with International Shah Hamdan Association organized "Shah Hamdan Conference" to commemorate the birth anniversary of the great leader of Muslim Asia, Syed Ali Hamdani, also known as Hazrat Shah Hamadan. The conference was presided over by prominent scholar Dr. Ghazanfar Mehdi, with Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture, Shazia Rizwan, as the chief guest. The event also included the introductory presentation of a Ph. D. thesis on Hazrat Shah Hamadan by distinguished researcher Dr. Hussain Ahmed from NUML University. Dr. Ghazanfar Mehdi emphasized that promoting the teachings of Hazrat Shah Hamadan could help eliminate terrorism and sectarianism from



the country. Chief Guest Shazia Rizwan stated that Shah Hamadan serves as a great bridge between Central Asia, Kashmir, and Pakistan. She highlighted that Shah Hamadan studied at the madrasa of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya

in Multan and was a disciple of Hazrat Shah Rukn-e-Alam. Dr. Hussain Ahmed expressed pride in having compiled over 100 works of Hazrat Shah Hamadan from the British Library and other esteemed universities, stressing the

need to republish these invaluable contributions. Prominent scholar Amirullah Aseer from Chakwal remarked that Hazrat Shah Hamadan strengthened cultural ties between Central Asia and the region.

MNA Riaz Fatyana is public representative: Chaudhry Kamran

Zafar Chishti



TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the details, The patron In-Chief of Kamalia Tajar Ittehad Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat, talking to the Daily The Spokesman said that MNA Riaz Fatyana is actually a public representative because he has done many development works in his constituency. Among them are Kamalia University, College Upgradation, Sewerage, Roads etc. Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat added that Riaz Fatyana also provided jobs to the unemployed youth of his constituency. A true representative is one who cares about the people of his constituency and thinks about them. Riaz Fatyana is the only public representative who thinks about the people of her constituency. He said that Riaz Fatyana wins MNAs seat every time due to his good performance. Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat said that he stands with MNA Riaz Fatyana and will continue to stand.

Price control magistrates performance meeting held

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration is constantly active regarding the supply of food and drink at the official price across the district. A meeting was held on the performance of price control magistrates on the direction of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu. Additional Deputy Commissioner Zeeshan Labbha Masih chaired the meeting. The Additional Deputy Commissioner reviewed the performance of all Price Control Magistrates. He said that strict action will be taken against the shopkeepers selling essential items at prices higher than the fixed rates. No shopkeeper shall charge more than the prescribed rate. Traders and shopkeepers should display price lists prominently.

Dr. Malik Abrar demand to govt for provide electric buses to private educational institutions

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain, Central President of the All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, demanded that the government provide electric buses to private educational institutions across the country because in light of court orders, about 95% of private schools cannot afford to buy buses worth crores.

In his statement issued here yesterday, Malik Abrar Hussain said that before making a decision about the private education sector, a consultation process should be adopted with the relevant stakeholders so that it helps in better decision-making for school owners and parents of children. He said that instead of taking action against schools and colleges, the position of stakeholders should be heard, the government should provide cheap, environment-friendly transportation options. The crisis of environmental protection and air pollution requires immediate government action! The government should also be obliged to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities.



Turkish Ambassador visits NUML: Strengthening Academic and Cultural Ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Today, the Ambassador of Turkiye, H. E. Irfan Neziroglu, along with the Education Attache, Dr Mehmet Toyran, visited the National University of Modern Languages. The visit, marked by meaningful discussions and a series of engaging activities, reinforced the enduring ties between Pakistan and Turkiye while exploring new avenues for academic and cultural collaboration.

Upon arrival, the Turkish Ambassador was warmly received by the Dean and Head of the Department.

The Ambassador met with the

Rector NUML, Major Gen (r) Shahid Mehmood Kayani HI(M), where discussions centred on enhancing bilateral cooperation in research and education. DG NUML, Brig Shahzad Munir was also present during the meeting. Rector NUML lauded the strong brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, emphasizing the shared history, cultural affinity, and mutual respect that unite the two nations. The Rector also highlighted NUML's commitment to fostering educational excellence and deepening collaboration with Turkish institutions, especially in areas like language learning, faculty exchange, and joint research initiatives.

On the occasion, the Dean of the Faculty of Languages, Dr Jamil Asghar Jami, expressed profound gratitude and honour for hosting the Turkish Ambassador. He highlighted Turkiye's pivotal role as a geographical and cultural bridge and underscored the long-standing friendship between the two countries. The Dean emphasized the opportunities for Pakistan to learn from Turkiye's advancements in education, technology, and cultural preservation.

The visit concluded with a vibrant interaction session where the Ambassador engaged with students and faculty in a friendly and informal setting. He reiterated the importance of creating



supportive environments for language learning and cross-cultural under-

standing. The Turkish Ambassador was bid a

warm farewell by the Rector, Dean, and faculty members.

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Aman Exercise: A Promising Feat of Naval Diplomacy

Ahmad Ibrahim

Naval forces have always been a symbol of strength and prestige for maritime nations. Historically, navies have been employed for power projection and safeguarding maritime trade routes. However, with the evolution of the global political system, the role of navies has also expanded into far more intricate and multifaceted realm. Ken Booth, in his book, *Navies and Foreign Policy (1977)* presented the concept of trinity of naval forces and broadly categorized the responsibilities of naval forces into military diplomatic and policing roles. Based on his illustration, modern naval forces are not only characterized by war fighting and constabulary capabilities, but also by their ability to effectively conduct naval diplomacy.

In general, naval diplomacy is an art of using naval means as political instrument for securing national objectives short of war. According to Kevin Rowland, naval diplomacy is sub-component of military diplomacy and utilizes maritime domain for securing national interests. The diplomatic functionality of naval forces is also multi-spectrum, ranging from benign roles like joint exercises, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations (HA&DR Ops), to coercive roles like forward presence and interdiction operations.

The most significant initiative taken by PN in this regard is the conduct of biennial multilateral AMAN naval exercises. PN has been organizing AMAN exercises since 2007 and till date has success-

fully conducted eight exercises. AMAN exercise is primarily directed to deepen collaboration with friendly naval forces, ensure mutual learning and collaboration, enhance force interoperability, and raise the prestige of Pakistan as a responsible maritime nation. Additionally, AMAN exercise serves as a common platform to augment professional communication amongst participating naval forces.

AMAN-23 was organized from 09 to 14 February 2023 and witnessed participation of fifty nations under the theme "together for peace". Exercise was split into two phases: harbor phase and sea phase. Harbor phase involved activities like academic seminars, scholarly discourse, and professional discussions. Sea phase included tactical maneuvers involving; anti-piracy, counter terrorism, combat search and rescue, gunnery firing, and air defence exercises.

The most promising aspect of AMAN exercises is International Fleet Review (IFR) consisting of ship formations of host and guests' naval forces. In AMAN-23, nine warships from Pakistan Navy, two patrol vessels from Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), and seven warships from friendly nations, including China, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and the United States, took part in fleet review. The exercise concluded with the participating ships forming up in traditional AMAN formation to signify collective resolve under the motif "together for peace".

Another unique feature of AMAN-23 was the parallel conduct of the first of its kind

Pakistan International Maritime Exhibition and Conference (PIMEC) and International Maritime Conference (IMC). Both PIMEC and IMC were held at Karachi expo center from 10 to 12 February during the harbor phase. The main objectives were to highlight Pakistan's potential in blue economy and provide a common platform to national and international maritime firms to interact and showcase their projects. In sum, 133 exhibitors, including 21 international firms and 112 local firms participated in the exhibition. Similarly, IMC was held with the theme "Embracing blue economy—challenges and opportunities for developing countries," and included presentations by distinguished foreign and national speakers. The conduct of maiden PIMEC and IMC was an admirable

attempt by the Pakistan Navy to set the flag for the projection of maritime awareness, promotion of the blue economy, and exploration of the untapped potential of Pakistan.

The importance of Aman exercise has augmented even further considering rapidly transforming geo-political and geo-strategic dynamics of the Indian Ocean. Recently, the Red Sea Crisis has exposed the vulnerability of international maritime trade and limitations of modern naval forces against new-age asymmetric threats. AMAN exercise brings

together navies from various nations which subsequently fosters mutual collaboration for safety and security of vital maritime trade routes. Additionally, by promoting collaborative approach to

maritime security, AMAN exercise can effectively dilute the destabilizing impact of the Indian Navy's expanding footprint in the Indian Ocean under the pretext of a net-security provider. In sum, this exercise supports multilateral engagement for balanced power dynamics in the Indian Ocean, undermining India's regional hegemonic ambitions.

In the year 2025, ninth edition of AMAN exercise will be conducted in conjunction with Inaugural AMAN dialogue. The AMAN dialogue, in particular, will offer a forward-looking platform for continuous discourse on evolving maritime challenges and opportunities, fostering a collaborative environment for addressing future security concerns in maritime domain. Pakistan's proactive approach in hosting these events will position it as a key player in promoting peace and security in the Indian Ocean for years to come.

In essence, naval diplomacy is gradually becoming a crucial component of Pakistan's foreign policy toolkit. It enables the country to assert its maritime interests, contribute to regional stability, and engage constructively with the international community. AMAN exercises represent a remarkable feat of naval diplomacy by the Pakistan Navy, effectively advancing both regional and international maritime cooperation. These exercises have allowed Pakistan to project a positive national image, develop maritime awareness, enhance interoperability with friendly forces, and build mutual trust and comradeship. Through such initiatives, Pakistan continues to strengthen its diplomatic ties and affirm its commitment to maintaining a secure and stable maritime domain.



UN food agency condemns Israeli attack on its Gaza aid convoy

The WFP issued a statement on Monday condemning the attack and insisting that its vehicles had been clearly marked. At least 16 bullets struck the convoy of three vehicles carrying eight staff members which came under fire near Wadi Gaza checkpoint. Thankfully, no staff members were injured in this terrifying encounter, the agency added.

All necessary clearances had been obtained from the Israeli authorities and WFP said that it was just the latest example of the complex and dangerous working environment confronting its teams.

The development comes amid reports that a missile struck a flour distribution warehouse in central Gaza run by a UN aid partner at the weekend, leaving three humanitarian workers seriously injured.

UN agency teams in the vicinity of the storage depot described hearing people screaming after the strike. They also reported looting and gunfire after Sunday's blast at the MAAN Development Center facility.

It has been 15 months since war erupted in Gaza, prompted by Hamas-led terror attacks on Israel that left some 1,200 dead in October 2023 and more than 250 people taken hostage.

Reported ceasefire talks between Palestinian officials and Israel have yet to result in an agreement to halt the violence or release those captured.

To date, Israeli bombardment from the air, land and sea continues to be reported across the Gaza Strip, where a harsh winter has set in.

Eight babies are reported to have died from hypothermia and more than 45,300 Palestinians have been killed and over 107,700 injured; one in five of that number has sustained life-changing injuries since 7 October 2023, according to the authorities.

In Lebanon, the UN peacekeeping force there has urged all sides to the conflict to step back from any move that could jeopardize their fragile ceasefire, after Israel Defense Forces (IDF) deliberate and direct destruction of a line of withdrawal marker in southern Lebanon.

In a statement condemning the move at the weekend, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) described how peacekeepers observed an IDF bulldozer destroying a blue barrel marking the line of withdrawal between Lebanon and Israel in Tabbouleh, as well as an observation tower belonging to the Lebanese Armed Forces immediately beside a UNIFIL position there.

The development marks a flagrant violation of resolution 1701 and international law, the UN Mission insisted, in reference to the Security Council resolution that was adopted following the 2006 war in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, seeking to end their conflict.

In recent days, UNIFIL has also reported ongoing IDF operations north of the UN-patrolled Blue Line, despite a 60-day ceasefire agreement signed on 27 November 2024 by the Governments of Israel and Lebanon.

Specifically, it calls for Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon and for Hezbollah to end its armed presence there, within the same timeframe.



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

UK's Pakistani Sexual Grooming Gangs

Regrettably, Pakistan and Pakistanis have frequently been featured in global headlines for predominantly negative causes for all wrong reasons. Currently, social media is inundated with reports of UK-based Pakistani-origin sex grooming gangs that targeted underage white girls by luring them with lavish presents and money, gradually ensnaring them in a cycle of drug and alcohol addiction.

Reportedly, once completely under their control, these innocent and underage girls were relegated to sex slaves, exploited to satisfy their primal, malevolent desires, and sold to other clients at exorbitant prices, generating substantial profits. These gangs grow so resourceful and influential that when the victims' dads attempted to rescue their daughters, they were caught by the authorities and incarcerated.

The brutality and senselessness of these crimes against humanity were evident in the statements of a victim who had the fortitude to disclose her horrific and terrifying experience on X, emboldened by the courageous stance taken by Elon Musk. She stated, "I was subjected to repeated sexual assault during my childhood by multiple perpetrators." Other victims divulged their horrific experiences. One victim said she was forced to have sex with at least 20 men in one night; another said she was forced to drink vodka and was vomiting over the side of the bed while being raped by "countless men." Another said that the perpetrators would pass the girls to their friends, often to settle a debt. Yet others said that they were plied with drugs, alcohol, and fast food and then taken to "chill houses" across the north of England to be abused. One 13-year-old victim became pregnant and had an abortion.

Some comments on X have exacerbated tensions by introducing racial and inflammatory rhetoric. One post alleged that local Imams

supported or condoned the actions of a group of men, claiming it was a form of punishment for girls who did not adhere to specific dress codes and were considered outsiders. This was labeled by some as "sexual Jihad." Other comments suggested that the police hesitated to investigate the scandal thoroughly, fearing accusations of racism or Islamophobia. Additionally, some speculated that law enforcement agencies might have been financially influenced to avoid involvement in the case.

A comment on X criticized the UK Parliament for failing to approve a national-level inquiry into grooming gangs, dismissing it as a matter for local councils. Meanwhile, many commentators alleged that some MPs were misled or influenced into voting against the investigation, with accusations that powerful individuals or groups offered them significant bribes.

Elon Musk in his tweet demanding King Charles to dissolve Parliament after its denial of a comprehensive inquiry into grooming gangs. Referring to the scandal as "state-sponsored evil," he charged Keir Starmer of neglecting victims during his tenure as CPS chief. Elon Musk charged Keir Starmer with silencing the investigation when he was Head of Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) from 2008 to 2013. Knowing about the scandal and grooming gangs, he hushed up the inquiry, citing systematic, legal, and jurisdictional reasons. However, later, Starmer admitted that during that time the court system let down vulnerable girls.

The involvement of the predominantly Muslim in these grooming gangs, especially Pakistanis, is unexplainable, as neither Pakistan's social and cultural norms allow this cruel behaviour, nor Islam and any Muslim society allow or sanction these kinds of gruesome and abhorrent acts against the innocent girls irrespective of their religious, ethnic, or racial identity.

The Qur'an strictly prohibits rape and all forms

of illicit sexual relations (zina). It states, "And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way." The Qur'an also prescribes severe punishments for zina based on marital status: unmarried individuals receive 100 lashes, while married individuals face stoning to death. Even during times of war, Islamic teachings strictly prohibit harm to non-combatants, including women and children, emphasizing justice and morality.

In Pakistan, rape and extramarital sexual relations are addressed with stringent legal measures. The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) criminalizes rape, prescribing severe punishments, including the death penalty or life imprisonment, particularly for crimes involving minors or individuals with disabilities. The Criminal Law Amendment (Offense of Rape) Act 2016 mandates DNA testing and ensures in-camera trials to protect victims' identities. The Hudood Ordinances, especially the Zina Ordinance, criminalize consensual extramarital relations, while the Protection of Women Act 2006 provides additional safeguards for victims.

Pakistani society, deeply rooted in traditional and religious values, strongly condemns immorality, including extramarital relations. Such acts are heavily stigmatized, and individuals convicted of immoral or illicit behavior are often ostracized.

It is imperative for both traditional and social media to report on these abhorrent acts without associating them with any specific religion, ethnicity, or nationality. Individuals involved in such crimes should be treated solely as criminals, held accountable for their immoral and unlawful acts driven by greed and depravity. Generalizing their actions to represent Pakistani society or Islam is both unfair and unjust. Media must avoid generalizations that stigmatize entire communities for the actions of a few.

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Sorry Health Plight in Pakistan

Pakistan's healthcare system faces severe challenges, including hyperinflation, uneven distribution of resources, chronic government negligence, and inadequate public hospital performance. These issues have left many vulnerable; exorbitant private healthcare costs have exacerbated the crisis. Pakistan ranks 154th out of 195 countries in terms of healthcare quality, indicating a pressing need for improvement.

Pakistan faces a severe public health crisis, marked by a high prevalence of water-borne and contagious diseases. The prevalence of these diseases is alarming, with 7 million Pakistanis living with diabetes and cancer accounting for 8% of deaths. Other major health concerns include hepatitis, tuberculosis (affecting 5% of the population), high blood pressure, malaria (23% prevalence), typhoid, and mental and venereal diseases. These alarming statistics highlight the urgent need for action to prevent devastating consequences, especially for malnourished populations in rural Sindh and Balochistan.

Pakistan, with 60% of its population comprising youth, faces a critical challenge: inadequate access to healthcare. This scarcity has far-reaching social, psychological, and mental health consequences, hindering the development of productive, skilled, and healthy citizens. A weakened population undermines Pakistan's progress.

Notably, medical checkups have become unaffordable due to exorbitant healthcare costs. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 40% of Pakistanis lack access to essential healthcare services, with alarming consequences. The Sehat Card initiative is

commendable but faces challenges. However, the initiative has two major limitations: it diverts attention from state-owned hospitals to private ones and only covers major surgeries.

Epidemic, endemic, and local diseases require urgent attention. Pakistan's state-owned hospitals face multifaceted challenges, including mistreatment of healthcare professionals, shortages of life-saving medicines, administrative irregularities, and high doctor absenteeism rates. Moreover, private hospitals and doctors have faced criticism for unethical practices, such as accepting gifts from pharmaceutical companies, charging exorbitant fees, and prescribing unnecessary medications to poor patients.

Healthcare is a cornerstone of societal well-being; its absence severely impairs national development. To address the current crisis, strict hospital surveillance and mobile healthcare units in rural areas are vital. The government must increase its healthcare budget, which is currently at 2% of GDP. Effective reforms, like investing in primary healthcare and public-private partnerships, can boost healthcare quality.

Furthermore, to ensure comprehensive care, the Constitution should guarantee the right to health, prioritizing healthcare nationwide. Standardizing doctors' fees based on their qualifications and experience will promote transparency and affordability. Therefore, Pakistan's healthcare system demands immediate government intervention.

In conclusion, Pakistan's healthcare system urgently requires government attention. Every citizen deserves access to free, quality healthcare facilities, which should be provided with utmost urgency.



Qamar Bashir



Khalil Rehman Gharshin

ECO Arts and Calligraphy Exhibition opens at PNCA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The ECO Cultural Institute, the Ministry of National Heritage & Culture Division, and The Diplomatic Insight, in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), organized the exhibition "Timeless Serenity of Calligraphy and Arts" to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of ECO member states. The exhibition, inaugurated at PNCA Islamabad by Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), showcased calligraphic masterpieces and artworks by prominent artists from ECO member countries, including Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. The event highlighted the region's cultural diversity and unity through its artistic treasures.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan emphasized that the ECO region's unparal-

leled cultural diversity is its greatest strength, serving as a bridge between civilizations and a foundation for peace, prosperity, and mutual respect. He noted that the exhibition exemplifies the ECO's commitment to nurturing cultural bonds alongside economic and technical cooperation.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Farhat Asif, President IPDS and TDI highlighted the transformative power of cultural diplomacy in building bridges between nations. She emphasized that art and culture are fundamental tools for fostering dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among diverse communities.

Dr. Saad Khan, President of the ECO Cultural Institute, underscored the significance of showcasing the artistic achievements of the ECO region. He pointed out that the region's artistic legacy is not only a source of pride but also a vital means for fostering peace, dialogue, and collaboration among member states.

Mr. Muhammad Asif Noor, Chief Executive of The Diplomatic Insight Group, expressed appreciation for the tireless efforts of Hassan Nasir Jami, Federal Secretary of the Ministry of National Heritage & Culture Division, in promoting Pakistan's soft image internationally and strengthening cultural linkages across the globe. He also acknowledged the dedication of Muhammad Ayub Jamali, Director General PNCA, and Ms. Maryam Ahmad, Director of the Art Gallery, whose contributions were pivotal in making the exhibition a success.

The exhibition featured exquisite calligraphy and intricate crafts from across the ECO member states, with each piece reflecting the unique cultural identity and heritage of its country of origin. The artistic mastery of renowned Pakistani calligrapher Azeem Iqbal was also prominently displayed alongside other notable works, demonstrating the shared values and traditions that bind the ECO nations while celebrating their



distinct artistic expressions. The exhibition will remain open

to the public until January 14, 2025, offering a unique opportunity to experience and appreciate the artistic diversity and heritage of the ECO region.

Pakistan's High Commissioner calls on President of Maldives, presents his credentials

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's High Commissioner Vice Admiral (R) Faisal Rasul Lodhi on Tuesday called on President of the Republic of Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Muizzu and presented his credentials to the President.

The President of the Maldives stressed the importance of deep brotherly relations between the two countries and expressed his best wishes.

The High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Vice Admiral (R) Faisal Rasul Lodhi, presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Maldives in a traditional and dignified ceremony.

The ceremony was held this morning at the Maldives Headquarters. The High Commissioner was escorted to the Headquarters by the Cultural Band of the Maldives National Defence Force.

The Deputy Head of Staff, Zulqarnain Ahmed also accompanied the High Commissioner.

The meeting was also attended by the President's Chief of Staff Abdullah Fayyaz, the President of Maldives' Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Naseer and the Maldives'



Foreign Secretary Fatima Anaya. During the meeting, President Dr Mohamed Muizzu congratulated Vice Admiral (R) Faisal Rasul Lodhi on

his appointment as the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the Maldives. The High Commissioner conveyed his congratulations and best wishes

to the President of the Maldives on behalf of the President and the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

KPK govt committed to providing exceptional facilities tourists in line with Imran Khan's vision: Advisor for Tourism

Noorulhassan Gujjar

JEDDAH: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is committed to providing exceptional facilities and support to local and international tourists in line with Imran Khan's vision to boost tourism. Advisor for Tourism, Zahid Chuna-zeb, while addressing the Hazarewal Overseas Community, stated that key projects, including the Tourist Guard Force, are underway to make the province more attractive to tourists.

A grand dinner was organized in honor of Zahid Chuna-zeb, who recently performed Umrah, by the Hazarewal Overseas Pakistanis Forum and the Tanawal Hazara Welfare Association. The event was attended by forum officials and prominent personalities, with Chaudhry Noor-ul-Hassan Gujjar, Pres-



ident of the Hazarewal Overseas Pakistanis Forum, presiding over the ceremony.

In their speeches, Chaudhry Noor-ul-Hassan Gujjar, Imtiaz Qureshi, Atif Khan Tanoli, Muhammad Iqbal, Rafiq Swati, Raja Bashir, Arif Tanoli, Sardar

Rafiq, Muhammad Wasim, Azam Awan, Muhammad Tahir, and Mian Khan Aajiz warmly welcomed Zahid Chuna-zeb and congratulated him on performing Umrah. They also praised his efforts to enhance facilities for tourists in the province.

During the event, overseas Pakistanis highlighted their concerns, including the demand for a separate police system for overseas residents and the establishment of the Hazara province.

In response, Zahid Chuna-zeb assured that the issues of overseas Pakistanis would be addressed on a priority basis. He remarked, "Overseas Pakistanis are our true asset, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, under Imran Khan's vision, is committed to providing the best facilities for tourists. Imran Khan has termed tourism as the backbone of Pakistan's economy, and we are working hard to realize this vision. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the province is progressing towards new avenues of development, and steps are being taken to resolve public issues promptly."

Private Educational institutions are playing their Best Role in Promoting Education



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) Colleges South Punjab Professor Dr. Farid Sharif has said that private educational institutions are playing their best role in promoting education and providing good training along with education of the new generation and in an area like Suraj Miani. Due to good educational institutions, highly qualified principals and teachers, it is a pleasure to get good education and training for parents with less resources, he expressed these views while speaking as a special guest on the occasion of the annual distribution of awards and results at Uniq Science School. Did the directors on this occasion School Professor Muhammad Yusuf Siddiqui and Dr. Muhammad Younis Siddiqui said that there is no shortage of intelligent students in Multan, they just need a good environment and educated teachers, which is present in our institution. We want to make Pakistan according to the dreams of Quaid-i-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal. Principal Dr. Amir Ali Siddiqui said that students should be interested in curricular and extra-curricular activities from the very beginning, was done Yes, our annual results are also 100% and in sports competitions, students from nursery to matric are also prepared. He congratulated the successful students and parents and encouraged them to work harder. Focus only on studies, we want to see them at the top.

Embrace the next generation of Vlogging and Storytelling with Infinix ZERO Flip

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Infinix, a revolutionary smartphone brand in Pakistan committed to empowering the youth through the latest technology, proudly announces the launch of its latest flagship phone, the Infinix ZERO Flip. Designed for creative minds and adventure seekers, the ZERO Flip is now available for order offline at outlets nationwide for PKR 234,999/-. Equipped with a ground-breaking 4K front and rear pro-stable vlogging camera, the Infinix ZERO Flip delivers unmatched video quality for all your vlogging and content creation needs. The impressive 50MP main camera, featuring 4K 30FPS recording with stabilization capabilities, captures stunning detail and clarity, making it ideal for producing high-quality content that stands out.

"As a leader in the smartphone market, Infinix is committed to driving innovation that empowers the youth to unlock their full potential. We believe that cutting-edge technology should be accessible to everyone, enabling them to express their creativity, share their stories, and make a lasting impact on the world. The Infinix ZERO Flip is a testament to our vision of blending innovation with user-centric design, ensuring that young creators have the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly digital landscape." - Simon Feng, CEO of Infinix.

To conclude, the Infinix ZERO Flip redefines the boundaries of mobile technology, offering a seamless blend of innovation, performance, and creativity. Its 4K Pro-Stable vlogging capabilities, paired with industry-leading stabilization, make it an indispensable tool for anyone passionate about storytelling or capturing life's most dynamic moments.

ATM 2025 to address soaring growth within the aviation sector as connectivity takes centre stage

Commerce Desk

DUBAI: Several leaders from the international aviation sector are expected to participate in the 32nd edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM), which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from 28 April to 1 May 2025, discussing some of the most pressing topics in the industry.

Several sessions are slated to take place throughout the four-day event, covering a variety of trending topics, ranging from sustainable aviation and new technology to the return of corporate

travel and the rise of airport entertainment, under the show theme, 'Global Travel: Developing Tomorrow's Tourism Through Enhanced Connectivity'.

One particular topic expected to garner attention is the anticipated increase of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), which, according to the latest findings from the International Aviation Transport Association (IATA), has seen SAF production double in 2024 to 1 million tonnes, with production expected to top 2.1 million tonnes in 2025.

Regionally, Emirates and

Ethihad have significantly reduced CO2 emissions using SAF on routes including Singapore Changi Airport, Amsterdam, London Heathrow, Paris, Lyon, Oslo, and Japan.

New technology will also be addressed due to its increasing role in supporting airports and airlines to drive operational efficiencies and reduce costs. Artificial intelligence (AI), for example, supports aviation industry professionals in various ways, from streamlining the customer journey to tracking weather, optimising routes, and even under-

taking predictive maintenance. It has become an integral tool for the aviation industry, analysing scenarios to determine potential disruptions and providing data-driven decisions that minimise risk.

Leading examples include London Heathrow Airport's pilot AI-assisted air traffic control system, the Japan Airlines AI-powered baggage management system, and Gatwick Airport's AI-powered smart-stand technology, developed to enhance how aircraft turnarounds are managed.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
116,052.68	116,255.12
Day's High	Day's Low
116,843.41	113,677.50
Index Value	Change
30,563,989,053	-202.44
Percentage	Time
-0.17%	7 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,245.28	-4.38
Percentage	Time
0.053%	7 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
42,662.63	-43.93
Percentage	Time
-0.10%	7 Jan, 12:01 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
40,083.30	+776.25
Percentage	Time
+1.97%	7 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	175.00	177.25
Bahrain Dinar	736.40	744.40
Canadian Dollar	195.10	197.50
China Yuan	37.97	38.37
Danish Krone	38.08	38.48
Euro	289.50	292.25
Hong Kong Dollar	35.44	35.79
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.77	1.83
Kuwaiti Dinar	895.50	905.00
Malaysian Ringgit	61.27	61.87
New Zealand \$	154.13	156.13
Norwegians Krone	24.2	24.50
Omani Riyal	720.75	729.25
Qatari Riyal	75.8	76.50
Saudi Riyal	73.95	74.50
Singapore Dollar	204.75	206.75
Swedish Korona	24.76	25.06
Swiss Franc	303.71	306.51
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	75.60	76.25
UK Pound Sterling	349.00	352.5
US Dollar	278.60	280.10

Federal Minister for Planning visits, PTA Office Korangi

City Desk

KARACHI: Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development, Special Initiatives & Inter Provincial Coordination, visited PTA's Office in Korangi-Karachi and was welcomed by Chairman PTA, Mr. Hamid Zahur along with Mr. Danish Aman, Vice Chairman PTA along with several members of the PTA.

The gathering discussed various matters with the Minister sb as below:

With regards to the FBR, Chairman PTA suggested taking the leather sector back to zero rated regime as well as to keep it in the fixed tax regime instead of final tax regime. He strongly emphasized on the timely disbursement of pending refunds of income tax, sales tax and duty drawback to the leather sector, which are now pending for more than 4 months.

While inviting Mr. Ahsan Iqbal to the annual Pakistan Mega Leather Show to be held in Lahore from 26-28th January 2025, Chairman PTA recommended to setup proper slaughtering houses and abattoirs specially for the



Eid ul Azha, when around 6 million animals are slaughtered and need proper facilities for

the storage of hides and skins available then. The infrastructure and availability of water was also discussed where the Minister assured his personal involvement to improve the overall situation for the businesses in Karachi.

Exports from the Leather Sector now stand at 85% from the value added sector and 15% from the raw material and further efforts need to be made to jointly increase the export of the leather sector to USD 2 billion by 2029, in line with the vision of the Planning Ministry under its flagship URAAN PAKISTAN program.

The meeting ended on a very positive note with the Minister sb's assurance to meet the PTA again in February along with the relevant personnel from the Ministry of Commerce, Finance and FBR.

PTA is making strong follow up with the Minister Secretariat for resolution of issues as pointed out during the meeting. While conclusion, Mr. Danish Aman, Chairman, PTA SZ delivered vote of thanks to the Chairs especially Mr. Ahsan Iqbal for sparing time for attending the meeting.

Protest

RAWALPINDI: Activists of Anjuman-e-Tajran (Cantt) hold protest in favor of their demands in City.



Photo: Online

inDrive celebrates top drivers with recognition and rewards



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: inDrive, the leading ride-hailing company in Pakistan, recently organized a landmark event to celebrate and honor its top-performing drivers for their dedication and exceptional contributions to the platform. The event marked a significant milestone in the company's commitment to driver empowerment and support, offering exciting rewards to its most outstanding drivers in Karachi.

Ali Hassan, DA Specialist for Pakistan, emphasized the importance of drivers in the success of the platform, stating, "To say that we value

the drivers who use our platform is an understatement. Without them, there would be no ride-hailing service.

The event also featured the esteemed Chief Guest, Ms. Rehana Yasmeen, Emergency Officer Medical and Training Wing Rescue 1122 Sindh, who praised inDrive's commitment to its drivers. "It is inspiring to see how inDrive values its drivers and invests in their well-being. These drivers are not just service providers; they are integral to the community and the economy. Supporting them is crucial for the growth of the ride-hailing industry in Pakistan," she remarked.

Nation's Bank Collaborates with LCWU to Revolutionize Fee Collection Using 1LINK Technology



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan has partnered with Lahore College for Women University (LCWU) to implement a fee collection system on an aggregation model powered by 1-Link. This collaboration introduces a seamless and secure fee payment process, offering students unparalleled convenience and accessibility. With this partnership, students can now pay their fees through NBP's Digital App or

any other bank across Pakistan. NBP has positioned itself as the master collector, supported by an efficient and transparent reporting system that ensures real-time, accurate financial insights for LCWU.

The agreement was led by Mr. Farhan Durrani, Senior Vice President of Digital Solutions at NBP, along with senior representatives from the Retail Banking Group, including Mr. Tanveer Sheikh, Regional Head, Lahore East, and Mr. Rashid Anwar Alvi, Branch Manager of Jail Road, NBP.

Representing LCWU, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shagufta Naz, along with her team, attended the event to celebrate this significant milestone. The partnership offers key benefits to LCWU and its students, including the convenience of fee payments anytime, anywhere, with no additional charges. The advanced reporting system enhances institutional transparency and efficiency, while the initiative supports the digital transformation of Pakistan's education sector.

President FPCCI Atif Ikram meets with DG FIA

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh met DG FIA Ahmed Ishaq Jahangir, Additional Director Cybercrime Wing Waqaruddin Syed, Additional Director Immigration Abbas Ahsan, Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail

was also present. During the meeting, Atif Ikram Sheikh said that FPCCI is an apex organization with 274 trade bodies including associations and chambers of commerce. People have issues with FIA immigration, cybercrimes and smaller issues in which we want a focal person to be appointed by the FIA and one by the federation who will coordinate with each other and decide the issues. DG FIA Ahmad Ishaq

Jahangiri welcomed the proposal of Federation President Atif Ikram and said that the private sector is very important for the economy of any country. Both your problems and suggestions are important for which we will appoint a focal person to avoid any kind of problems in future and resolve the issues in a good manner. After the meeting, DG FIA Ahmed Ishaq Jahangiri presented the shield to Pres-



President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh presented the shield Chamber of Commerce to DG FIA.

Faysal Bank wins Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmark Awards 2025

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Faysal Bank Limited (FBL), one of Pakistan's leading Islamic banks, has been honoured by Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) Awards 2025. Faysal Bank secured a remarkable set of 14 awards, comprising 10 Best Practice Awards, and 4 Progressive Category Awards. This accomplishment consolidates the Bank's position as a leader in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in Pakistan.

Mr. Monis Mirza, Head of Human Resources; FBL, said: "Our recognition at the GDEIB Awards 2025 reflects Faysal Bank's

unwavering dedication to fostering a culture of inclusion and equity. This achievement is not merely a milestone—it's a testament to our sustained commitment to setting new standards for DEI in the banking sector while creating meaningful impact across our communities. We remain committed to building on this foundation and continuing our journey toward an even more equitable, and inclusive future."



Pakistan trade delegation to visit Bangladesh this week: High-profile meetings expected

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that FPCCI is taking a prominent multi-sectoral exporters' delegation to Bangladesh this week to strive for a breakthrough in economic, commercial and trade relations between the two countries. The delegation is looking forward to meeting Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor to the interim government of Bangladesh and Sheikh Bashir Uddin, commerce advisor to the interim government, he added.

It is pertinent to note that H. E. Mahbulul Alam, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Karachi, visited Federation House to brainstorm and discuss the activities and scope of FPCCI delegation's Bangladesh visit. He extended his full support in expeditious visa issuance and facilitation to the genuine Pakistani businessmen for trade promotion activities. Mr. Zaki Aijaz, Regional Chairman & VP FPCCI and Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, will also be a part of the delegation.

Mr. Saquib Fayaaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, informed that FPCCI delegation will also visit Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) to explore avenues of mutual cooperation and study international trends in various established and emerging industries. The delegation will also participate in Pakistan - Bangladesh Business Forum next week in Dhaka to be organized by Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI), on January 13, 2025.

Mr. Aman Paracha, VP FPCCI, elaborated that on the back of socio-economic and religious similarities, bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh are bound to grow; and, Pakistan has a lot to learn from microfinance model of Bangladesh for poverty alleviation through creating enabling environment for cottage industries & SMEs; employment generation and women emancipation

PCB chairman commits strategic support for uplift of hockey

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi has said the PCB will provide strategic support for the uplift of hockey and other support in the country.

During a meeting with former Olympians Shahbaz Senior and Khawaja Junaid at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) Gaddafi Stadium here on Tuesday, he urged the need for reforms in hockey, adding the PCB remains committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure the uplift of sports in Pakistan.

The former stars of Pakistan hockey hailed Chairman Naqvi's principled stance on the ICC Champions Trophy, besides swift reforms undertaken to improve Pakistan's cricket structure.



The former hockey greats emphasised the need for a similar pace of reforms to revitalise Pakistan's hockey system.

The meeting centred on exploring sustainable measures to promote hockey across Pakistan.

Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi reit-

erated his unwavering support for the development of the sport, acknowledging hockey's status as the national game and its illustrious legacy.

"Hockey is Pakistan's national sport and holds a proud history of global achievements. Restoring its past glory remains a priority, and we will extend our full support to achieve this," Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said.

Shahbaz Senior and Khawaja Junaid provided insights from their visits to German and Dutch hockey clubs, sharing best practices for youth development and grassroots initiatives. They also briefed Chairman PCB on the scheduled tour of the German National Junior Hockey Team to Pakistan in March 2025, underscoring importance of international engagements in fostering growth of hockey.

Zone VI Whites reach the Semi Finals of Woodward Trophy U-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant Batting by Azaan and Fine bowling by Medium Pacer Asad Omar Zone-VI Whites moved into Semi Final of the Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament when they beat Zone-I Whites by 101 runs in the 1st Quarter Final at KCCA Stadium.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

After the end of the Match Former Test Cricketer Shadab Kabir Given the Medicam Man of the Match Award to Muhammad Azaan of Zone-VI Whites.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-VI Whites 219/8 in 40 overs. Muhammad Azaan 60 5x4 2x6, Muhammad Soman Kabir 48 5x4, Talal Mehmood 41 6x4. Abdul (Icm) 5/39.

In reply Zone-I Whites 118 all out in 32.5 overs. Abdul Moiz 32 4x4, M. Faizan 30 7x4. Asad Omar (mf) 3/24, Niqab Shafiq 2/16, Murtza Taqi 2/22, Abdul Hayee 2/27.

Pakistan penalised for slow over-rate in Cape Town Test

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan have been fined 25 per cent of their match fee and penalised five ICC World Test Championship points for maintaining a slow over-rate against South Africa in the second Test in Cape Town.

Richie Richardson of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after Pakistan were ruled to be five overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration.

In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined five per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time.

In addition, as per Article 16.11.2 of the ICC World Test Championship playing conditions, a side is penalised one point for each over short. Consequently, five World Test Championship points have been deducted from Pakistan's points total.

Pakistan captain Shan Masood pled guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Nitin Menon, third umpire Alex Wharf and fourth umpire Stephen Harris leveled the charge.

Injury-time goal by Abraham hands AC Milan Italian Super Cup win



RIYADH: Tammy Abraham's injury-time winner sealed a remarkable turnaround as AC Milan defeated Inter Milan 3-2 in a thrilling Italian Super Cup final in Riyadh, overturning a two-goal deficit early in the game.

Inter had taken the lead through Lautaro Martinez at the end of the first half and Mehdi Taremi doubled their advantage two minutes after the break.

Milan pulled one back five minutes later with Theo Hernandez scoring directly from a free kick and Christian Pulisic equalised 10 minutes from time. The game looked set for a penalty shootout until Abraham stunned Inter by netting the late winner.

The win denied Inter what would have been an unprecedented fourth consecutive Super Cup trophy, and allowed Milan to equal Inter's haul of eight wins in the competition.

India legend slams Virat Kohli for his on-field behavior against Australia

Legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar has criticised India's star batter Virat Kohli for shoulder-bumping young Australian batter Sam Konstas and for his overall on-field behaviour during the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Kohli made headlines during the tour of Australia, not for his batting prowess, but for his behaviour on the field. He showed glimpses of his on-field aggression during the first three matches of the series, but he completely lost his cool in the fourth Test.

Sam Konstas took the world by storm on his debut as he attacked an in-form Jasprit Bumrah early in his innings on the opening day of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne in front of a sold-out crowd.

Konstas' charge against India's best bowler frustrated the fielding team. However, Kohli failed to control his emotions and bumped the batter's shoulder, leading to an exchange between them.

"What Kohli did with the shoulder bump is simply not cricket," Sunil Gavaskar wrote in his column in The Sydney Morning Herald. "Indians are not shy to retaliate if provoked, but here the provocation was simply not there."

"The one thing that players learn with experience is that it's futile to try and get back at the crowds, who have come to have a good time, so booing players is never personal but just a way to entertain themselves."

Throughout the series, the vocal home crowd directed loud boos at Virat Kohli for his behaviour.

The star did not back down either as he provoked the Sydney crowd during the fifth Test by mimicking the infamous sandpaper scandal that had marred Australia's tour of South Africa in 2018.

"To react to that doesn't do the player any good, and in fact, does more harm. Kohli must understand that whatever he does to react to the crowd actually puts more pressure on his teammates, who also then become targets of the spectators," Gavaskar added.

All Pak Inter-Board Girls Sports Gala 2025 concludes at PSB, Hockey stadium

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Inter-Board Girls Sports Gala 2025, organized by the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), concluded successfully at the Pakistan Sports Board, Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Started on January 4, the event brought together teams from 19 education boards across Pakistan, who participated in various sports, including badminton, table tennis, hockey, and athletics.

All Pak Inter-Board Girls Sports Gala 2025 concludes at PSB, Hockey stadium All Pak Inter-Board Girls Sports Gala 2025 concludes at PSB, Hockey stadium All Pak Inter-Board Girls Sports Gala 2025 concludes at PSB, Hockey stadium

The players demonstrated exceptional talent, dedication, and sportsmanship, making the gala a memorable event.

In the competitions, Gujranwala Board claimed first place in badminton, with Lahore Board and Islamabad Board securing second and third positions, respectively.

In table tennis, Lahore Board took first place, followed by Abbottabad and Islamabad Boards. Hockey saw Lahore Board emerge as champions, while Mardan and Islamabad Boards achieved second and third positions. In athletics, Lahore Board won first place, Faisalabad



Board took second, and Islamabad and Mirpur Boards shared the third position. Lahore Board was also crowned the overall champion and awarded the Best Athlete title.

Speaking at the event, Executive

Director IBCC Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah had been broadened to try ordinary citizens in military courts.

Chairman FBISE Dr. Ikram Ali Malik expressed his gratitude to all partic-

ipating boards for contributing to the success of the gala, making it a lively and inspiring event. The gala exemplified the spirit of competition and unity, celebrating the talent of young athletes across Pakistan.

SC judge questions 'executive's role as judge' in military trials of civilians

Continued from Page 1

He added the SC in the past had ruled that the civilians who worked under the Pakistan Army could be court-martialled.

At the outset, Justice Amin said that today the bench would only hear the civilians' military trial case and all other cases had been delisted.

Justice Mandokhel went on to say whether a citizen lost his fundamental rights after having been recruited into the forces.

Haris said that the Act could not be challenged merely on the basis of infringing upon fundamental rights.

"The issue of military courts is completely separate from that of Article

175 of the constitution," the judge said.

"What would be the situation if a citizen walks up to a military checkpoint despite having been stopped? Will he be tried in a military court for interfering in official duty?" he questioned.

Haris expressed his inability to comment on these remarks.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar said the answer to this was simple. "If that citizen is found committing an act that has been declared an offence under the Act, then he would be tried in a military court. But he only stands close to a checkpoint, this will not constitute an offence."

Justice Musarrat Hilali opined that Justice Mandokhel's question was most

pertinent. "Where a civilian will be tried in case he has a scuffle or an argumentation with army personnel at a checkpoint."

She went on to say that the powers had been broadened to try ordinary citizens in military courts.

Justice Mandokhel said that the purpose of the Army Act was to discipline the personnel of the armed forces.

Then addressing Haris, he said the way he was defining the Act, it would cover everything.

The bench ordered the Punjab government to submit a report on the state of prisoners in Punjab jails convicted in the May 9 cases when Hafeezullah Niazi complained that

the convicts were not being treated according to the jail manual.

As the hearing drew to a close, Niazi walked up to the rostrum.

But he was stopped by Justice Amin who said he was afraid he (Niazi) would raise political issues in the court.

However, Niazi assured him he would not, adding that the military courts did not give any reason for declaring the May 9 suspects guilty. "The rights other prisoners enjoy in jails have been denied to those serving prison terms in connection with the May 9 violence," he complained.

Later the court adjourned the case's hearing until tomorrow. Khawaja Haris will continue his arguments tomorrow.

Aurangzeb vows to complete rightsizing plan...

Continued from Page 8

The minister said the committee has decided to merge Ministries of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, and States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) whereas CAD was abolished, adding there were 80 entities associated with these ministries, these have now been reduced to 40.

Minister Aurangzeb said that under Wave 2, the committee considered the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Commerce Division, the Ministry of Housing and Works, and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. Out of their 60 entities, 25 would be wound-up, 20 reduced and nine merged or shifted.

He said that under the ongoing Wave 3, five ministries have been notified, including the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training,

Information and Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture, Finance Division and Power Division.

Sharing details about the committee, the minister said that in June of last year, the Prime Minister had constituted the committee, headed by the Finance Minister, with ministers, MNAs, representatives from coalition partners, the private sector, and high-level officials as its members.

He said the body's Terms of Reference (ToRs) were aimed at reducing federal government expenditures and improving its efficiency. He said the committee was tasked with reviewing the performance of different ministries and their entities over the last thirty to forty years to decide whether they should be rolled-back or considered for improved efficiency.

Aurangzeb said that the committee decided to proceed

in a phased manner for the efficient implementation of the recommendations, considering 5-6 ministries in batches.

He stated that all the ministries and representatives of attached departments were given a full opportunity to explain their points of view, adding that the discussions on each entity had taken several days.

The minister said that when a decision was made by the committee regarding any ministry/entity, it was forwarded to the Prime Minister to obtain endorsement from the Federal Cabinet. After ratification, it came back for the implementation plan, he added.

In his opening remarks, the minister said that the government had achieved macroeconomic stability, which would now lead the country towards sustainable growth, steering it away from the 'boom and bust'

cycle.

He said the incumbent government had changed the fundamental DNA of the economy towards export-led growth by engaging the private sector to lead the economy. He also mentioned that the government was making structural reforms, improving taxation, and ensuring end-to-end digitalization.

Aurangzeb said that the Faceless Customs Assessment System (FCAS), under the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) transformation plan, would be formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister on Wednesday, adding its benefits had already started to materialize.

Answering a question, the minister said with a strong conviction that there would be a significant reduction in government expenditures, which would be reflected in the

next federal government budget.

To a question he said, Aurangzeb said the government wanted to take things in right direction whether International Monetary Fund (IMF) say yes or not. He said, although rightsizing was an IMF structural benchmark; however government was doing it because it is requirement of the country.

To yet another question, the minister said that the rightsizing would be done and implementation would be ensured. All departments and all ministries are under review, he added "We have taken that bold step which no administration and no government was able to take."

Speaking on the occasion, Bilal Kiyani said main aim of rightsizing was not only to reduce expenditure but also improve efficiency and remove duplication. He said, the rightsizing process was being done diligently and comprehensively.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the inter-ministerial committee for the International Conference on "Girls Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities" at Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Aurangzeb vows to complete rightsizing plan of 43 ministries by June-end; 150,000 vacant posts abolished

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday expressed confidence in completing the analysis and implementation plan of rightsizing 43 ministries and their 400 attached departments by June 30 of the current fiscal year to reduce expenditures and improve efficiency of the government.

"During course of this fiscal year, before June 30, all of this process will be done, All 42 ministries, (As CAD has already been abolished) and their attached departments, their recommendations and implementation (will be

done)," the minister said at a press conference while sharing the six-month performance of the High-powered Committee on Rightsizing of the Federal Government.

He was accompanied by Convener of the National Parliamentary Task-force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Bilal Azhar Kayani and Ambassador at Large Dr Salman Ahmad, who is heading the Implementation Committee.

Briefing the journalists, the minister said, it had been decided that 60% vacant regular posts (that have not come in payroll), which stood at 150,000, would be abolished or declared as dying posts, creating



a real a real financial impact. "All is being done after proper ratification from the federal cabinet."

The committee, he said, also decided to outsource general non-core services

including cleaning, plumbing and gardening to bring efficiency, adding the number of contingency posts would also be reduced.

He said, it has also been decided that the ministry of

finance would have live visibility on the cash balances of the all government entities. "It cannot happen that at one side we are borrowing and on other government departments have idle cash balances." However, he added, it has nothing to do with people, but to improve efficiency, adding it was being implemented in all ministries.

He said, under Wave-1, six ministries including Kashmir Affair and Gilgit Baltistan, SAFRON; Information Technology and Telecom; Industries and Production; National Health Services Regulations and Coordination; Capital Development Authority (CAD) were processed.

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SEZs Survey Enables Data-Driven Decisions: A. Aleem Khan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 9th meeting of the Approval Committee of Board of Investment was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan in which provincial Governments including Gilgit Baltistan were represented. This meeting took important decisions regarding Special Economic Zones including approval of the Land Lease Policy. Furthermore, it was decided to amend the Special Economic Zones Act



and reduce the notice period for convening the meeting from 21 to 7 days so that important initiatives for these

Zones can be completed without any delay.

Federal Minister for Board of Investment Abdul Aleem

Khan, said that the completion of the survey of 35 industrial Zones across the country, identification and resolution of their problems is a great progress and an important achievement that will have a positive impact on the country's economy, as well. He added that the upgrading of Special Economic Zones has been done in the shortest possible time and important steps have been taken to ensure better quality in this regard. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan directed that all the provincial Governments and relevant departments

should be sent this survey report of Special Economic Zones. He indicated that now digital data of these industrial Zones is available which is mutual property and all relevant institutions must get benefit out of it. He said that it is very important to hold regular and timely meetings of the Approval Committee of Board of Investment to resolve matters quickly so the next meeting of this Committee should be convened again in February.



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while high-

lighting the legal fraternity's significant contribution to society, has urged lawyers to play their due role in protecting the constitution and implemen-

AJK PM urges lawyers to work for rule of law

tation of rule of law in the State. The PM said this while addressing a function held under the aegis of AJK Bar Council here today.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM announced a grant of land for the construction of lawyers' offices. Terming the legal fraternity as a beacon of hope for society, the PM Haq also announced a three-fold increase in the grants for lawyers' welfare. Regarding his Vision Program 2025, the PM said that the government would unveil this development plan soon.

The vision programme would usher in a new era of development and prosperity in Azad Kashmir. Alongside the development, the PM said that resources were being created for the welfare of the people. He said that men of wisdom play an important role in civil society. The institutional dialogue, he said, was imperative to safeguard the system. He said that the government

has eliminated cast and community based discrimination.

He said that the taxes of the Federal Finance Bill were not applicable on any other source of income except salaries. The ceremony was attended by government ministers Mian Abdul Waheed, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sardar Javed Ayub, Abdul Majid Khan, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Professor Taqdees Gilani, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Vice Chairman Bar Council Ashfaq Kazmi, Advocate General Azad Kashmir Sheikh Masood Iqbal, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division Masood Ur Rehman, members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council and others. Addressing the ceremony, Vice Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council Syed Ashfaq Kazmi appreciated the PM for his government's people friendly initiatives.

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Ishaq Dar meets Zardari, Bilawal in high level meeting

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: There has been a high-level contact between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

According to reports, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar met with PPP leadership, and the meeting also included President Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto, according to sources. The meeting took place at the President House.

Sources indicate that the discussions between the two parties are yet to reach a conclusion, with the Punjab power-sharing formula being a major point of contention.

PML-N has reportedly requested until the second week of January for further consultation on the matter.

The PPP leadership has demanded full implementation of the written agreement with the Deputy PM, sources say.

The ongoing negotiations between PML-N and PPP are focused on addressing PPP's demands and concerns, including the key points of the Punjab power-sharing formula.

In response, Ishaq Dar assured

PPP leadership that their concerns would be addressed, sources revealed.

Earlier, PPP instructed its central and provincial leaders to openly criticize the government's policies in Punjab and at federal level.

According to party sources, the PPP leadership has provided guidelines to its leaders to expose the government's flawed policies.

Sources revealed that silence on the government's wrong policies would be tantamount to supporting them. PPP leaders had previously expressed their reservations about the government's policies to the party leadership. The party has now decided to take a more aggressive stance against the government's decisions.

PPP has made it clear that it will not tolerate the government's wrong policies and will continue to speak out against them, sources revealed.

Earlier, PPP MNA Abdul Qadir Patel expressed concern over the internet speed in Pakistan and questioned the authorities about the type of firewall being used that is hindering internet access.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Visit Karachi for a One-Day Trip

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will arrive in Karachi today for a one-day visit. During his trip, the Prime Minister will visit the Pakistan Stock Exchange, accompanied by Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb and other ministers, including the Chairman of the

Federal Board of Revenue.

According to reports, Prime Minister Sharif will also hold meetings with important personalities from the business community, including the Federation Chamber and Karachi Chamber. Additionally, he will review the implementation of the Fee Less System at the South Asia Port Terminal.

Ahsan directs preparing business plan for recently launched PakSat-MM1



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) to prepare a comprehensive business plan for recently launched PakSat-MM1, the country's first multi-mission satellite.

He passed these directives during a meeting with SUPARCO chairman Muhammad Yousaf Khan, who called on him here, a news release said.

The meeting focused on various key initiatives including the commercialization of the PakSat-MM1 satellite and advancements in agricultural monitoring technologies.

The minister emphasized the need to collaborate with the Ministry of Information Technology to formulate a detailed strategy for the satellite's commercialization to maximize its benefits.

The SUPARCO chairman briefed the minister on the organization's efforts in modern agricultural monitoring, which are helping farmers achieve improved crop yields.

PAF training aircraft crashes in Risalpur



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A training aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force crashed in Risalpur, located in the Nowshera district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to police reports, the aircraft went down in fields near the runway wall.

Following the crash, a fire erupted within the aircraft, and there are unconfirmed reports indicating that

the pilot on board may have been killed. Emergency services were quick to respond, with Rescue 1122, along with ambulances and fire brigade teams from the Pakistan Air Force and Army, arriving at the scene to manage the situation.

The police confirmed that the debris from the aircraft is situated near the runway and has been secured by security personnel for further investigation.