



Commerce Minister meets Pakistani students in Korea

The students shared their experiences of studying in Korea, praising the country's advanced education system. They also provided valuable suggestions on increasing the number of Pakistani students pursuing education in Korea.



'Saim Ayub's ankle injury shows no long-term damage'

Pakistan's left-handed opening batter Saim Ayub received a mixed update regarding his recent ankle injury, sustained during a match against South Africa. While the injury is serious, with a confirmed fracture, medical evaluations have ruled out any long-term damage.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Call on

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: Online

Five khwarij sent to hell during intelligence-based operation

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 10 January 2024, Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Maddi, Dera Ismail Khan District on reported presence of khwarij.



During conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged khwarij's location, resultantly, five khwarij including Kharji ring leader Shafiqullah@Shafi, were sent to hell.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization operation is being carried out 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.

President, PM pay tribute to security forces for eliminating five terrorists in D. I. Khan operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for killing five terrorists during the operation in Dera Ismail Khan.



In separate messages received here, the president and prime minister appreciated the bravery of the security forces for killing five terrorists during successful intelligence-based operations (IBOs). The president said, "The security forces are conducting operations to eliminate the menace of terrorism. The entire nation is united against terrorism. The operations against Fitna-al-Khawarij will continue until the complete elimination of terrorism." He also reiterated the commitment to the complete elimination of terrorism from the country.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also appreciated the security forces for the successful operation against terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan. He praised the professional skills of the officers and personnel participating in the operation for killing five terrorists including the terrorist leader among others. "We will continue the war against the scourge of terrorism until its complete elimination from the country. The entire nation stands in support of its brave forces in the war against terrorism. The people of Pakistan also pay tribute to the security forces who participated in the war against the enemies of the country without caring for their lives," the prime minister said.

PM appreciates OIC's support for resolution of J&K dispute

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed appreciation for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) principled position and consistent support for the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with its relevant resolutions and those of the United Nations.

The Prime Minister was talking to Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Friday at the Prime Minister's House.

The Prime Minister thanked the OIC Secretary General for his participation in the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities, being organized in Islamabad on 11-12, January 2025. He noted that the initiative was aimed at galvanizing concrete and concerted efforts to further improve quality education and women empowerment in the Muslim World.

Deeply appreciating the Secretary General for his dynamic stewardship of the OIC, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's full support to advancing the Organization's shared priorities and objectives while making it more effective as a collective voice of the Muslim Ummah.

On Palestine issue, while strongly condemning Israel's genocidal campaign, he stressed upon the need to bring an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, ensure unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people and global accountability of Israel for its widely documented war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Secretary General thanked the Prime Minister for the warm hospitality extended by Pakistan to him and his delegation.

He said that the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities exemption Pakistan's leadership role on issues of importance for the Muslim Ummah.

Four bodies recovered after gas explosion at coal pit leaves 12 miners trapped



Bureau Report

QUETTA: Rescuers recovered the bodies of four miners on Friday after a gas explosion at a coal pit in Balochistan's Singidi left a dozen colliers trapped in the mine, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority said.

trapped miners are located approximately 4,200 feet deep. A local rescue team began the search for the workers in the private mine on Thursday, before being joined by two teams from Quetta. "An accumulation of methane gas caused the blast," said Abdullah Shawani, the head of the province's mining department, on Thursday. Pakistan's mines are known to have hazardous working conditions and poor safety standards, and deadly incidents are not uncommon. Twelve miners were killed in a gas explosion at the same mine in June last year.

Jailed ex-PM Khan warns government of taking cases to 'international level'

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has warned of taking his cases to the "international level" after what they described no legal benefit from the local courts. "Imran Khan has stated that there are no remaining options for his party and it will take its legal cases to the international level," Aleem, his sister, quoted him saying after a meeting in Adiala Jail on Friday.



The PTI founder has been behind bars for more than one year. Khan was arrested in a graft case in May 2023. Later, he was named in several cases related to corruption, May 9, and unrest. But he has denied all charges. In July 2024, there were high chances of his release when a court acquitted him and his wife Bushra Bibi in the unlawful marriage case. But hopes were dashed as the national graft buster arrested them in a state gifts reference hours after the court decision. Last year, a UN panel of experts found Khan's detention "had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running for political office."

Ayaz commends security forces for killing terrorists in D I Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday lauded the security forces for eliminating five khwarij terrorists during an operation in Dera Ismail Khan. Commending their efforts, he said, "The actions of our security forces to crush the sinister ambitions of Khwarij terrorists are highly commendable."

Interior Minister commends forces for successful intelligence based operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against khawarij terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in the elimination of five terrorists. He praised the security forces, saying that Pakistan's brave security forces have thwarted the nefarious plans of khawarij terrorists by conducting a timely operation. He added that the nation is proud of their security forces, who have achieved significant successes against khawarij terrorists. Interior Minister emphasized that the people of Pakistan stand with the security forces, and the nation looks at their successes with admiration and appreciation.

Sanctity of the Constitution will be upheld in all circumstances: Khawaja Farooq

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Azad Kashmir Assembly Leader of the Opposition Khawaja Farooq Ahmed has said that the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner is an important constitutional responsibility. Municipal and general elections have to be conducted by this institution. If any name becomes controversial in the coming days due to haste and weak consultation process, such a move can prove to be a cause of severe chaos in the state. Khawaja Farooq Ahmed said that for a person who is discharging this most important constitutional responsibility, it is mandatory to consult the Leader of the Opposition in the House on the names nominated in the



panel for the Chief Election Commissioner under Article 50, Sub-Article 4 of the Constitution of Azad Kashmir. He said that the process of consultation is going on very carefully, which

is expected to be completed in the next couple of days. As the Leader of the Opposition, it is my constitutional responsibility to consult with all the political parties of the state and consultations are also being held in this regard. Khawaja Farooq Ahmed said that two days ago, pro-India agents from abroad, without the permission of any newspaper, published a fake, fictitious The news has been made viral from abroad, which has no relation to reality. As the opposition leader and the public, I assure you that the sanctity of the constitution to which all members of the assembly, including myself, have taken an oath, will be maintained at all costs. In this regard, the consultation process will be carried out with full caution and responsibility he added.

Press Conference

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Mr. Ahsan Iqbal addressing Press Conference at the Residence of Muzaffar Ali Shujm on Friday.



Photo: PID

MQM Sindh Assembly Members meet DC Hyderabad

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Mqm Members of the Sindh Assembly, Advocate Rashid Khan and Engineer Sabir Hussain Qaimkhani, met with the Deputy Commissioner of Hyderabad to highlight the city's pressing issues. They pointed out serious irregularities in the ongoing anti-encroachment campaign, stating that while Hyderabad's residents are already deprived of job opportunities, town administrations and HMC frequently conduct encroachment drives. However, it has been observed that as these drives intensify, new street vendors and stalls appear, allegedly set up through bribery and personal connections. The members urged the Deputy Commissioner to take notice of this situation



and ensure that the anti-encroachment efforts are conducted fairly.

They also raised concerns about intentional delays in development projects. Roads such as Autobhan Road and the stretch from Fatah Chowk to Zeal Pak are being unnecessarily prolonged, with work remaining incomplete despite two and a half years passing. The residents and shopkeepers of Latifabad, particularly those near Autobhan Road, are facing severe difficulties.

Advocate Rashid Khan specifically highlighted the issues of traders from Liaquat Colony and Cloth Market, expressing concerns over the Town Administration's inefficiencies. He requested the Deputy Commissioner to take immediate steps to address these problems.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's Commitment to Farmers' Prosperity

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab has entered a new era of development and prosperity, with notable initiatives being undertaken for public welfare in all sectors. Special focus has been given to agriculture, introducing numerous programs for the uplift and prosperity of farmers, which have sparked hope for a brighter future for Punjab's farmers. In Toba Tek Singh, the launch of the "Kissan Card" is one of the most significant steps taken by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for farmers. A total of 12,229 farmers in the district have been issued Kissan Cards, providing them with interest-free loans and subsidies through a transparent and accessible mechanism. Through this initiative, farmers in Toba Tek Singh have availed interest-free loans amounting to Rs. 703,875,500. The Livestock Card is another bene-

ficial scheme, offering interest-free loans to livestock farmers for four months. These loans can be utilized to purchase feed, silage, and mineral mixtures. In Toba Tek Singh, 425 livestock farmers are benefiting from this initiative, with 411 cards already distributed. These measures are significantly increasing farmers' incomes. The "Green Tractors Scheme," introduced under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, is a revolutionary initiative for Punjab's farmers. Through this scheme, 233 farmers in Toba Tek Singh are being provided with state of the art tractors, of which 115 have already been distributed. The Punjab government is providing a subsidy of Rs. 1 million per tractor, enhancing both agricultural

productivity and energy efficiency. The Agriculture Graduate Internship Program is another significant initiative by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, offering fresh graduates the opportunity to connect with farmers and gain practical training. This program not only educates farmers about modern techniques but also creates job opportunities for young graduates in the agricultural sector. The solarization of tube wells is a vital project for promoting sustainable agriculture in Punjab. This initiative allows farmers to save electricity and achieve sustainable agricultural growth. In Toba Tek Singh, 226 farmers will be provided with solar systems. Similarly, subsidies are being offered for super seeders, which not only help reduce environmental pollution

but also increase crop yields. A total of 25 super seeders have been distributed in Toba Tek Singh, significantly benefiting farmers.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is also planning to establish Agriculture Malls in every city, providing farmers with direct access to markets for their crops and produce. This initiative will enable farmers to sell their products at better prices, improving their economic conditions. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab's farmers are entering a new era where not only is agricultural productivity increasing, but every possible step is being taken to ensure their prosperity. These efforts aim to strengthen Punjab's economy and empower farmers to build a better future, making them the pride of Toba Tek Singh and Punjab.

(Writer is District Information Officer, Toba Tek Singh)



Muhammad Shahbaz Ansari

31 students of Govt Ambala College get Honhaar Scholarship cheques



SARGODHA: A total of 31 students from Govt Ambala Muslim Graduate College Sargodha got Honhaar scholarship cheques from Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif during a ceremony held at University of Sargodha few days ago.

This was stated by Principal Professor Dr Azhar Abbas while talking to APP here on Friday. He said students, enrolled in various BS 4-Years Programs 1st semester, were selected for the scholarship based on their outstanding academic achievements.

The Punjab government is taking exemplary steps for the promotion of education and welfare of students, he added.

Action Against illegal Gas Refilling and Petrol Agencies: Mehmood Gill

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of Director General Civil Defense Punjab and Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, Operations against illegal gas refilling and illegal petrol agencies are going on rapidly throughout the district. Civil Defense under the supervision of District Civil Defense Officer Mehmood Gill. The team conducted inspections at 35 locations and During these operations, 12 shops were sealed, one FIR was registered, and four challans were issued. Civil Defense Officer Mehmood Gill said that these illegal businesses are not only dangerous to public life and property but also a violation of the law. He expressed his determination that these operations will continue without any pressure for the safety of the people. Citizens appreciated the actions of the administration and said that these operations are important to ensure safety standards in the area.



Waziristan Chalghoza union protests against Lahore customs collector



Umer Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A massive protest was staged by the South Waziristan Lower, Wana Chilgoza Union against Lahore Customs Collector Muhammad Saeed Veetto at Wana Rustam Bazar on Friday. The protesters demanded the reopening of the sealed Chalghoza store, which they claimed was illegally closed by the customs authorities.

The protest led to the shutdown of the Wana Chilgoza market, with protesters carrying banners and placards highlighting their demands. Imran Wazir, speaking to media representatives, revealed that the Chalghoza store in Lahore had been sealed by Customs Collector Muhammad Saeed Veetto, resulting in significant losses for the traders.

Zahidullah Wazir explained that the union supplies Chilgoza to various cities across the country, following all legal procedures and paying the required taxes to forest department South Waziristan. Despite this, the sealing of the store has been deemed unfair and exploitative. The protesters emphasized that the Chalghoza is a pure Local Waziristan product, not smuggled from Afghanistan.

The protesters strongly demanded that Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief General Asim Munir take immediate action against the Lahore Customs Collector and order the reopening of the sealed store. The protesters argued that despite having all official documents, the customs authorities' actions were unjustified.

In response, Lahore Customs Collector Muhammad Saeed Veetto stated that the Waziristan Chilgoza store was sealed due to suspicion and would be reopened after the investigation was completed.

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.

Attock police seizes 10 kg hashish, 10 liters liquor

Raza Naqvi

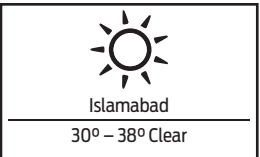
ATTOCK: Attock police have launched a widespread crackdown against drug dealers, resulting in the seizure of over 9 kilograms of hashish and 10 liters of liquor. According to details, under the directives of the Chief Minister of Punjab and the IG Punjab, the police of Attock Khurd, led by DPO Attock Dr. Sardar Ghayas Gul Khan, recovered 2,500 grams of hashish from a suspicious individual, Qaiser Tanveer, son of Muhammad Tanveer, resident of Pindi, and 1,500 grams of hashish from Asad Shehzad, son of Muzaffar Khan, resident of Haji Shah, during a patrol. Similarly, the Rango police recovered 1,400 grams of hashish from Nawan Khan, son of Alam Khan, resident of Formali, during a check. The Hassan Abdal police seized 10 liters of liquor from drug dealer Muhammad.

Providing best facilities to Hujjaj govt's top priority: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and the Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Friday, said that the government prioritizes providing the best facilities to the intending pilgrims (Hujjaj Karam) and was taking steps to facilitate them in collaboration with private Hajj groups.

Addressing a press conference along with the Chairman of the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Nasir Khan, he said that Saudi Arabia had appreciated the role of HOAP for making the best Hajj arrangements last year and "We follow the regulations of the Saudi government during Hajj".

He added that the Pakistani government are working to improve arrangements for the government quota and private Hajj pilgrims.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:45 am
Zohr 12:15 pm
Asr 3:40 pm
Maghrib 5:18 pm
Isha 6:46 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 9270831-7
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

Ziauddin University Examination Board announces annual exams to be conducted with 100% syllabus coverage

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Ziauddin University Examination Board (ZUEB), a leading examination board in Pakistan, has announced that all upcoming annual exams will be conducted with full coverage of the prescribed syllabus.

ZUEB is committed to announcing the results by the end of July 2025, as per the IBCB resolution.

ZUEB confirms no reduction in the syllabus for the annual examination 2025. The finalized syllabus remains unchanged.

All affiliated institutions, teachers, and students are instructed to follow the complete prescribed syllabus to ensure seamless academic preparation and adherence to ZUEB guidelines.

The schedule for the annual examinations 2025 will be announced soon.

Romina Khurshid urges robust climate action, highlights Pakistan's role in global climate governance

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination (MoCC), Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the urgent need for robust climate action in a seminar on "COP 29 commitments to COP 30 action: A critical analysis," held at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) on Friday.

Her remarks followed the findings of the global stocktake and the intergovernmental panel on climate change's sixth assessment report, which highlighted that the world has failed to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C.

Ms. Romina underscored Pakistan's significant contributions at COP29, particularly in technical negotiations and bilateral engagements, positioning the country as a leader in global climate discussions.

She also addressed the importance of trusted and transparent cross-border carbon markets, which can reduce the cost of implementing nationally determined contributions by up to \$250 billion annually, helping Pakistan enhance its

climate action efforts.

The panelists from MoCC, Additional Secretary Zulfikar Younas and Carbon Market Specialist Ms. Sana Rasool, along with Dr. Faisal Abbas, Dr. Majid Ali, and Dr. Salman Atif from NUST, made valuable contributions on carbon credit and the role of academia in efforts to mitigate climate impacts.

In her remarks on financial opportunities, Ms. Romina highlighted the \$300 billion annual core commitment under the Baku finance goal, along with projected \$1 trillion in carbon market flows by 2050. These financial resources, she explained, could provide substantial relief for Pakistan in implementing climate plans, particularly in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. "Pakistan must strategically position itself to access these financial flows to support its climate projects," she stressed.

Ms. Romina also discussed the potential for over \$730 million pledged for projects starting in 2025, which could be leveraged to address the damages caused by climate-induced disasters, including the losses from the devastating 2022 floods.

On gender-responsive climate action,



Ms. Romina pointed out the extension of the Lima work programme on gender, which presents an opportunity to empower grassroots women's organizations and indigenous women in climate

adaptation and mitigation efforts. Furthermore, she emphasized the importance of improving data management and reporting systems to meet international requirements, ensuring

Pakistan benefits from capacity-building initiatives and strengthening its climate governance through enhanced transparency frameworks.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Justice Aamer Farooq cut the ribbon to inaugurate the "Central Library" of Islamabad Bar Association at District Judicial Complex, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Iqbal's poetry based on the Quran, Sunnah and Ishq Mustafa PBUH

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poetry is based on the Quran, Sunnah and Ishq Mustafa. It is the primary responsibility of teachers to convey this thought to the hearts and minds of the younger generation. Translating Asrar Khudi into the Ghibi language is no less than an honor.

These views were expressed by Abrarul Haq Shakir, central leader of the All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association, at the book launch ceremony organized by Apsama Rawalpindi at The pvt School and College Hyderi Chowk. The ceremony was attended by APSAMA North Punjab President Abrar Ahmed Khan, Central Senior Vice President Muhammad Furqan Chaudhry,



Central Member Think Tank, renowned writer and poet Abrar ul Haq Shakir, Member Board of Governors Federal Education Board and President APSAMA Rawalpindi Division for Women Mrs. Sakina Taj, Colonel R. Murtaza Ali Shah, Colonel R. Fawad Hanif, Aamir Anwar, Abrar Ahmed Advocate, Agha Shahab Maqsood, Abdul Rashid Awan, Syed Adil Ali Shah, Hafiz Muhammad

Yasin, Kamran Saif Qureshi, Dr. Ijaz, Raja Noman Qamar, Adnan Nisar, Shahid Yousuf, Obaid-ur-Rehman Hazarvi, Raja Waseem Saifi, Naem Akbar, Sheikh Nadeem, Raja Asif Mahmood, Hassan Javed, Mrs. Yasmin, Mrs. Ezra, Mrs. Shafiq, Muhammad Rehan, Dr. Najaf, Asif Qureshi, Lubni Rashid, Muhammad Shahbaz Advocate, Raja Sanaullah, Qazi Zia, Qazi Naveed and others.

Abrarul Haq Shakir said that the book Asrar Khudi written by Allama Iqbal is in Persian. In Pakistan, more than 100 million people speak Punjabi and people understand things better in their mother tongue. That is why I also decided to translate Asrar Khudi in my mother tongue. Abrar Ahmed Khan said that Allah Almighty has blessed Abrarul Haq Shakir with immense talents. Due to his educational and literary services, the Government of Pakistan awarded him the Presidential Award twice. It is a great honor to translate the dictionary of the Ghibi language and then Asrar Khudi in the same language. Professor Muhammad Humayun, Dr. Ahsan, Colonel Murtaza Ali Shah and Muhammad Furqan Chaudhry also spoke.

AIOU holds a seminar on 'Modern Trends in Islamic Research'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) hosted a faculty seminar yesterday on the topic of "Modern Trends in Islamic Research". The event featured Dr. Mustafeez Ahmad Alvi, a prominent scholar from the Department of Islamic Thought and Culture, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, as the keynote speaker. The session was presided over by Prof. Dr. Shah Mohayyuddin Hashmi, Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, AIOU.

In his keynote address, Dr. Mustafeez Ahmad Alvi emphasized the importance of looking beyond the past in research. He stated, "Our research often draws lessons from the past, which is not entirely appropriate. We should take guidance from the past but not let it dominate our work. The focus of research should be on the present and future, aligning with contemporary needs and challenges."

Addressing the seminar, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohayyuddin Hashmi stressed the need for impartiality in research. "Instead of adopting a confrontational approach, we must develop a neutral and balanced attitude. The Holy Quran encourages research in several places, and the process of research is universal, rooted in scientific and global principles."

Dr. Ghulam Shams-ur-Rehman, Chairman, Department of Interfaith Studies, AIOU, delivered the opening and concluding remarks, expressing gratitude to the speakers for their participation and thought-provoking insights. The seminar was moderated by Dr. H. M Farooq Abdullah from the Department of Interfaith Studies, AIOU.

The event witnessed a large turnout of university faculty members and students.

DSP Traffic Police Announces Driving Classes for SLS College Students

City Desk

JHELUM: SLS College, a British Council Gold Partner, hosted a certificate distribution and traffic awareness seminar. Chief guest DSP Traffic Police Jhelum, Tariq Shafi, praised the college's achievements and announced priority-based driving training classes for students.

Sub-Inspector Haroon Rasheed delivered a lecture on traffic rules, emphasizing road safety. Managing Director Sarfraz Malik expressed gratitude to DSP Tariq Shafi and appreciated Punjab IG's initiative to issue motorcycle licenses without testing.

The event concluded with certificates awarded to students excelling in IELTS, Computer, Spoken English, and Graphic Designing courses, along with commemorative shields presented to guests.

ISSI signs MoU with Center for International Strategic Studies, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (CISS AJK)

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Center for International Strategic Studies, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (CISS AJK), based in Muzaffarabad. The signing formalizes the institutional partnership aimed at enhancing collaboration in research, policy development, awareness, and advocacy-related to the Kashmir dispute as well as regional

and international strategic issues. The MoU was signed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI and Dr. Asma Shakir Khawaja, Executive Director, CISS AJK.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the importance of this partnership in highlighting issues of national importance and promoting national discourse on the Kashmir cause and its just solution. He lauded CISS AJK for their excellence in research and acknowledged

their active engagement on key subjects of national security. While CISS AJK and ISSI have been actively engaged, "This MoU marks a new chapter in our collaboration," stated Ambassador Mahmood.

Dr. Asma Shakir Khawaja warmly welcomed the prospects of enhanced collaboration with ISSI within the framework of the MoU. She introduced several publications by CISS AJK and emphasised areas of mutual research interest between the two institutes, including emerging

technologies and Jammu and Kashmir dispute. She underscored the importance of joint academic research on issues impacting national security.

Earlier, Dr. Khurram Abbas, Director India Study Centre at ISSI, briefed the participants regarding the ISSI and its five Centres. Ms. Tayaba Khurshid, Research Officer, outlined CISS AJK's mission, outreach, publications, and capacity-building efforts.

The event concluded with a series of recommendations by

both teams, and a commitment to paving the way for informed policy-making and enhanced public engagement and awareness of the Kashmiri perspective on the Kashmir cause.

ness of the Kashmiri perspective on the Kashmir cause.



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The USA: Global Superpower or Illusion of Strength?

The defence department budget is a very big budget. It is one trillion dollars a year, Defence intelligence included, and interest payment on national debt is \$1 trillion, which just exceeded the defence department's budget; they are over a trillion dollars a year, just in interest and rising. We are adding a trillion to our national debt, which our kids and grandkids will have to pay somehow, every three months and then soon every two months, then every month. The only thing we shall be able to pay is the interest. This does not have a good ending. So we have to reduce spending. This is insane. We need to drastically cut spending, or we are heading for a financial disaster. Time to rethink our priorities."

This horrifying picture is not that of a third-world, poverty-stricken country but of the most powerful nation in the history of mankind, the United States of America. This picture was painted by none other than Elon Musk, during his latest interview on X, who is now a close associate and advisor to President-elect Donald J. Trump.

This debt figure quoted by Musk means that every American would be required to pay \$35,928 annually toward the national debt. This burden would reduce the per capita income of every American from \$80,035 to \$44,107, a drastic decline that would push the U.S. out of the top 10 countries by per capita income, placing it well below most developed nations.

The dire scenario, as painted by Elon Musk during his interview on X, appears to have resonated with President-elect Donald J. Trump, who subsequently

tasked Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy with a formidable mandate: to drastically cut federal and state government spending, including defense, as part of a broader fiscal overhaul.

But what if Musk's analysis has overlooked critical factors? Cutting spending, particularly in areas like defense and government programs, risks undermining the U.S.'s global leadership and economic stability.

Elon Musk's proposed solution of trimming the defense budget would significantly weaken the U.S.'s ability to maintain its formidable military power, which has been the cornerstone of its global dominance. If the U.S. were to cut its defense budget from \$1 trillion to \$500 billion annually, it would severely reduce its capacity to sustain a robust global presence, project power, and respond to emerging threats. Such a reduction would open the door for rivals like China, India, and Russia—nations not burdened by comparable debt crises—to grow stronger and potentially overtake the U.S. as the world's dominant military and economic powers. This would mark a dramatic shift in the global balance of power, diminishing the U.S.'s influence on world affairs.

Moreover, this proposal seems inconsistent with the war-driven rhetoric espoused by both Elon Musk and President-elect Donald J. Trump, who have floated audacious ideas such as annexing Canada, reclaiming influence over Great Britain, conquering Greenland, taking control of

the Panama Canal, and rebranding the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. Achieving these bold, albeit controversial, objectives would require a substantial increase in defense spending, not a reduction. A diminished defense budget would make such ambitions impossible, leaving the U.S. vulnerable to external threats and unable to sustain its position as the world's only superpower.

Additionally, the formidable U.S. war machine has made the dollar an invaluable intangible asset, contributing an estimated \$1-1.5 trillion annually to the economy and effectively offsetting the negative impact of the nation's debt burden. This "dollar power" allows the U.S. to earn seigniorage revenue, enjoy reduced borrowing costs, attract substantial foreign investment, and maintain low import costs, collectively bolstering GDP and enhancing economic stability. It also enables the U.S. to borrow at lower interest rates, saving up to \$700 billion annually, while foreign investment inflows and cheaper imports further amplify its economic advantage.

If Elon Musk's proposal to drastically cut spending, including defense, is adopted, the combined impact of soaring debt obligations and the potential loss of the dollar's reserve currency status would devastate the U.S. economy. This could lead to a 53% decline in per capita income, from \$80,035 to \$37,491, significantly reducing Americans' quality of life and weakening the nation's global standing. Economically and strategically, Musk's

solution appears regressive and counterproductive, risking the very foundations of U.S. dominance.

Instead of cost-cutting, the solution lies in increasing revenue streams and redistributing the cost of U.S. military power. A key measure would be requiring NATO allies and Middle Eastern partners to bear a larger share of the cost of U.S. military deployments, emphasizing the stability these forces provide to their regions. The U.S. could also replicate China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by creating global infrastructure and investment projects, allowing it to control strategic assets, expand trade routes, and extend its economic and political influence.

Additionally, generating controlled regional conflicts could sustain demand for U.S. military hardware and services, transforming defense exports into a lucrative revenue source while reinforcing geopolitical dominance. Strengthening alliances and encouraging financial contributions to collective security frameworks, coupled with defense-driven innovation and monetizing dual-use technologies, would add resilience to the U.S. economy. These strategies ensure economic growth and maintain America's position as a global superpower without compromising its defense capabilities or risking its global leadership. The choice is clear: either adopt Elon Musk's vision or pursue the exact opposite approach to secure long-term economic and strategic dominance.

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

UN chief offers condolences amid devastating wildfires in California

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed sorrow over the raging wildfires that have devastated the Los Angeles area, claiming lives and displacing thousands.

The fires, described as some of the worst in the city's history, have burned thousands of acres, destroyed homes, and left firefighters battling to contain multiple blazes in unprecedented conditions.

"The Secretary-General is shocked and saddened by the widespread devastation caused by the fast-moving wildfires," said his Spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, in a statement released.

Guterres extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and expressed solidarity with those displaced, many of whom have lost their homes.

The fires have claimed at least 10 lives, displaced more than 100,000 people, and destroyed hundreds of buildings. Damages are estimated to exceed \$50 billion, according to US private forecaster AccuWeather.

The Secretary-General commended the courage and dedication of first responders working in "extremely difficult conditions" to protect lives and contain the fires.

More than 7,500 firefighters are battling the blazes, with officials describing the conditions as historic and dangerous.

Local fire chiefs reported that dry vegetation and winds with the force of hurricanes have fuelled the fires, leaving four out of six major ones completely uncontained.

Efforts are being further delayed by resource shortages and the challenging landscape.

Prevention and preparedness
 Rainfall levels from late 2024 until now have been below average. This has created dry conditions that, combined with the Santana Winds—a well-known weather pattern in the region—have exacerbated fire risks, according to experts.

The Santana Winds, which typically sweep through the mountains, raise temperatures and drastically lower humidity, rapidly drying out vegetation and creating ideal conditions for wildfires to spread.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted the importance of prevention strategies to mitigate the impact of wildfires, including regular clearing of underbrush in forests, available water for firefighters, and testing firefighting capacities.

Evacuation planning is another critical priority, with experts stressing the importance of avoiding blocked evacuation routes.

"Wildfires move rapidly, and any evacuation system needs to account for all people, especially those who are elderly and unable to move quickly," said James Douris of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an expert in early warning systems.

Health risks and climate factors

Beyond the immediate destruction, wildfires also pose significant public health risks.

According to WHO spokesperson Dr. Margaret Harris, wildfire smoke, a toxic mixture of pollutants, can cause premature deaths and long-term damage to the lungs, heart and brain.

Vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses, face heightened risks.

Reiterating the United Nations' commitment to global solidarity, Guterres stated that "the United Nations stands ready to provide assistance if needed."

While no formal request for aid has been made, his statement emphasized the organization's willingness to support affected communities.

Negotiating position...



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

Artificial Intelligence in Pakistan – Challenges and Opportunities

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept; it is already transforming industries, economies, and societies worldwide. In Pakistan, while the adoption of AI is still in its infancy, the potential to revolutionize the business landscape is undeniable. However, for AI to truly thrive in Pakistan, several challenges must first be addressed.

One of the most pressing hurdles to AI integration in Pakistan is the country's IT infrastructure. High-speed, affordable internet remains inaccessible to many. Without reliable connectivity, businesses cannot fully harness the capabilities of AI tools that rely on real-time data processing and communication. Moreover, the lack of robust data collection and storage systems hampers the effectiveness of AI technologies. Data is the lifeblood of AI; without proper infrastructure to capture, store, and process data, AI applications cannot reach their full potential. To overcome these challenges, both the public and private sectors must prioritize investments in modernizing Pakistan's IT infrastructure. This includes expanding access to high-speed internet across the nation and establishing data centers to support AI-driven operations.

AI can optimize supply chain management, determine efficient delivery routes, and help Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) avoid stockouts or overstocking, reducing costs and enhancing customer satisfaction. AI-powered personalized loyalty programs could also help tailor promotions based on purchasing behavior, boosting sales and customer retention. To implement such solutions, OMCs must invest in Internet of Things (IoT) devices and train their workforce in AI technol-

ogies, ensuring the staff can manage and utilize these tools effectively.

The automobile sector is another example of where AI can drive innovation. A powerful AI application can minimize downtime by analyzing data to forecast machinery failures before they happen. AI can also optimize the supply chain by identifying bottlenecks, improving logistics, and enhancing inventory management. For example, AI models could predict high-demand periods for vehicle parts, ensuring optimal inventory levels and timely production. By using AI to manage production lines, automotive companies can increase efficiency, reduce waste, and improve delivery timelines. Moreover, AI can play a key role in the design process by helping manufacturers analyze data on vehicle performance and environmental conditions. This application of AI not only increases productivity but also promotes sustainable practices in the manufacturing industry.

Marketing agencies, too, stand to benefit from AI by automating repetitive tasks such as content generation, social media posts, and video scripts tailored to specific audiences, saving time and resources in content production. AI-driven sentiment analysis can also help agencies better understand customer feedback and online trends, leading to more refined marketing strategies. For instance, AI algorithms can analyze the performance of social media ads in real-time, allowing marketers to quickly adjust their campaigns to increase engagement and conversions. Furthermore, AI can facilitate hyper-targeted campaigns, such as creating culturally relevant video ads

tailored to different regions of Pakistan. Personalizing content at this level helps brands resonate more with local audiences, ultimately improving campaign effectiveness.

These are just a few examples of how AI can enhance industries. The practical applications of AI extend far beyond these sectors alone; it has the potential to revolutionize virtually every field. Whether in healthcare, transportation, aviation, the service industry, fashion, distribution, or any other domain, AI offers vast opportunities to transform operations, increase efficiency, and foster innovation. In healthcare, for example, AI-powered diagnostic tools can analyze medical images with higher accuracy, improving patient outcomes. AI can help optimize public transportation systems, reducing congestion and improving traffic flow. In aviation, AI can be used for predictive maintenance of aircraft, enhancing safety and reducing costs. AI in logistics can enhance distribution channels, reduce delivery times, and minimize costs. From improving diagnostic accuracy in healthcare to optimizing flight routes in aviation, AI's versatility allows it to drive significant improvements across a wide array of industries.

While the benefits of AI are clear—such as time and resource savings, improved precision, and increased profits—the road to AI adoption in Pakistan is not without its challenges. A collaborative approach is essential. By addressing these challenges and fostering collaboration across sectors, including industry stakeholders, academia, and local AI innovators, Pakistan can unlock AI's transformative potential. These groups can contribute valuable insights into how AI can be most effectively adopted in Pakistan's unique socio-economic context.

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Analysis

Shah Rukh

Youth and the Army: Building a Lasting Partnership for National Security II

In the 21st century, national security extends beyond physical borders. The digital era has introduced new security challenges, and Pakistani youth have proven essential in protecting the nation's digital infrastructure. With an increase in cyberattacks from both state and non-state actors targeting everything from government systems to critical industries and institutions, youth have become indispensable in defending Pakistan's cyberspace. One notable example of youth involvement in cybersecurity is the Pakistan Cyber Emergency Response Team (PakCERT), which works diligently to protect the country's digital assets from evolving threats. Beyond traditional roles in the military and intelligence sectors, many young Pakistanis are contributing to national security by advocating for peace, social stability, and conflict resolution. Organizations such as Peace Foundation Pakistan and the Youth Parliament of Pakistan have played a central role in fostering dialogue and promoting national unity, particularly in regions impacted by terrorism, sectarian violence, and ethnic divisions. Youth-led programs focused on countering violent extremism have proven essential in communities vulnerable to radicalization. Young activists and social workers, often collaborating with law enforcement and community leaders, have facilitated interfaith and interethnic dialogue to resolve local conflicts and promote peace. A notable example is the Youth Against Terrorism (YAT) movement, which brings together young Pakistani students, activists, and professionals to raise awareness about the dangers of extremism and the importance of social harmony. Through

awareness campaigns, workshops, and public discussions, this initiative empowers youth to become agents of change in their communities, diminishing the appeal of militant ideologies.

Pakistani youth also contribute significantly to national security through volunteerism, particularly in disaster response, humanitarian aid, and community resilience efforts. Whether responding to natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, or engaging in local security initiatives, young volunteers are often on the frontlines of national stability. For instance, during the 2010 floods, young volunteers played a crucial role in providing immediate relief, distributing food, offering medical assistance, and helping affected communities rebuild. During the COVID-19 pandemic, young volunteers were vital in spreading information, supporting frontline workers, and ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations. This spirit of volunteerism is also evident in youth-led organizations like The Citizens Foundation (TCF) and Indus Hospital, where young people are making significant contributions to enhancing public health, education, and social infrastructure—key pillars of national stability and security.

Pakistani youth and the Pakistan Army stand united, working in harmony for the nation's security. The bond between these two vital components of national defense is strong and unbreakable. Any malicious attempts by our enemies to sow divisions between our youth and armed forces will ultimately fail, as the entire nation continues to support and collaborate with our courageous military to safeguard the security of Pakistan.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan meets Korea Eximbank official in Seoul

Spokesman Report

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a meeting with UM Sung-Yong, Executive Director of the EDC Operation Group at the Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank), at the Pakistan Embassy in Seoul.

The meeting focused on the progress of ongoing development projects in Pakistan and opportunities for future collaboration.

During the discussion, Executive Director UM Sung-Yong provided an overview of the ongoing projects in Pakistan, highlighting the processes involved in their approval, scrutiny, and execution.

He appreciated the role of Pakistani departments for their efficient handling of projects from concept stage to completion.

UM Sung-Yong also announced that

\$1.1 billion has been allocated from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for development projects in Pakistan for the period 2022-2026.

He noted that while the allocation reflects Korea's strong commitment to Pakistan, only two loans worth \$113 million have been approved so far.

He emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation to expedite approvals for the remaining projects.

The Executive Director further expressed optimism for deepening cooperation in the future and appreciated Pakistan's efforts to foster an enabling environment for international development partnerships.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan conveyed Pakistan's gratitude to Korea Eximbank for increasing EDCF funding to \$1 billion. He also raised the following key points during the meeting:

Minister Jam Kamal Khan emphasized the need for Korea Eximbank to establish an EDCF country office in Pakistan, which would enhance coordination and accelerate project approvals.

He urged Korea Eximbank to expedite the formalities for the 12 pending projects to ensure timely implementation.

While acknowledging the \$1.1 billion allocation for 2022-2026, the minister stressed the importance of increasing the pace of project approvals to maximize the utilization of these funds.

The meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their commitment to strengthening development cooperation and exploring avenues to expand mutual engagement in the future. The establishment of a Korea Eximbank country office in Pakistan is expected to be a significant step in advancing these efforts.



Pakistani Investors Forum Announces New Annual Slogan: 'Let's Make Pakistan Greater'

Special Correspondent

JEDDAH: The Pakistani Investors Forum has announced its new annual slogan for the year: "Let's Make Pakistan Greater." The forum's annual event was held in Jeddah, attended by Consul General Khalid Majid, Commercial Counselor Saadia Khan, former and current forum officials, members, and prominent community figures.

The event was hosted by Chaudhry Zaheer Ahmed. During his speech, the forum's president, Chaudhry Shafiqat Mehmood, emphasized that if every overseas Pakistani sends at least \$370 or more in foreign remittances monthly, it could significantly strengthen Pakistan's economy and help eliminate debts. He appealed to the Pakistani community to play a vital role in the country's progress.

Highlighting the forum's annual performance, Chaudhry Shafiqat Mehmood shared that meetings were held with the Saudi



Chamber of Commerce and other relevant institutions to facilitate Pakistani investors, which were met with substantial support. He announced that the forum would soon make

advancements in the health sector, supported by Saudi organizations.

He also stated that remittances from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan are the highest compared

to other countries, and if overseas Pakistanis send \$300 through formal banking channels, the economy could achieve further growth.

Commercial Counselor Saadia Khan

praised the forum's efforts, stating that it not only meets expectations but exceeds them. She announced a three-day exhibition of Pakistani products to be held in Jeddah in early February, with participation expected from 130 companies from Pakistan. The exhibition aims to further strengthen trade relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

The Consul General of Pakistan in Jeddah, Khalid Majid, urged Pakistani investors to work for the country's development above political affiliations. He assured that the consulate would fully cooperate with the Investors Forum and announced the provision of a dedicated office for the forum in the consulate's new building.

The event also featured speeches from Press Counselor Chaudhry Irfan, Faisal Tahir Khan, and the forum's founding members, Naqab Khan and Salman Arain. They shared their investment experiences and encouraged Pakistani investors to utilize their skills and contribute to the country's growth.

Seminar on Sustainability of Indonesian Palm held at a local hotel in Karachi



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The Indonesian-Pakistan Seminar on Palm Oil 2025, titled "Strengthening Sustainable Palm for the World," was organized by the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi, jointly hosted by the Indonesian Palm Oil Association (IPOA) and the Palm Oil Supplier Association of Pakistan (POSAP). The seminar was held at a prominent hotel in Karachi and featured insightful addresses from renowned international speakers, including Dr. Mohammad Fadhil Hasan, Head of Foreign Relations GAPKI-IPOA; Mr. Sohail Bhatti, Senior Vice President of POSAP; and Dr. Hammad Hassan, Associate Professor of Regenerative Medicine

at Aga Khan University.

The event commenced with opening remarks by Mr. Teguh Wiweko, Acting Consul General of the Indonesian Consulate. This was followed by an address from Mr. Naveed Gilani, Chairman of POSAP. Mr. Eddy Martono, Chairman of GAPKI-IPOA, then highlighted the significance of palm oil trade between Indonesia and Pakistan. Dr. Rizal A. Lukman, Secretary General of the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), also delivered an engaging presentation on sustainable palm oil practices and global trade. He also invited the Thailand government to join the CPOPC, being the 4th biggest producer of Palm Oil in the world.

The seminar was moderated by Mr.

Ahmed Syofian, Economic Counsellor at the Indonesian Consulate General. Distinguished dignitaries graced the event, including H. E. Mr. Surashete Boontinand, Consul General of Thailand in Karachi; Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCCI and former Chairman of PCMA and Mr. Irfan Soomro, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan. The event brought together owners of the edible oil industry, diplomats from various countries, and other stakeholders, creating an enriching platform for knowledge sharing and networking.

The evening concluded with a sumptuous dinner, allowing participants to engage further in discussions and forge meaningful connections.

Minister of Islamic Affairs, Republic of Maldives, Calls On IIUI President



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from the Republic of Maldives, led by H. E. Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed, Minister of Islamic Affairs, Maldives, paid a courtesy visit to the President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed. The delegation included Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs, Maldives Mr. Ali Ahusan, First Secretary Ms. Aminath Zuhudha, and Second Secretary Mr. Ismail Mufeed.

The delegates are participating in an international conference hosted by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training Islamabad in collaboration with the Muslim World League,

titled the International Conference: "Girls' Education in Muslim Countries: Challenges and Opportunities".

During their visit, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed warmly welcomed the delegation from the Maldives, briefed them about the salient features of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), and highlighted IIUI's commitment to fostering international academic collaborations and addressing global educational challenges. The meeting included discussions on mutual academic interests, potential collaborations, and strategies to overcome obstacles in promoting girls' education in Muslim countries.

The delegation expressed their appreciation for the warm reception and commended IIUI's role in

advancing education and fostering dialogue among Muslim nations.

Later, the delegates were given a comprehensive briefing about the university's vision and achievements. They also participated in an interaction with IIUI officials, including Prof. Dr. Abdul Rahman, Vice President (A&F); Prof. Dr. Amna Mehmood, In-Charge Female Campus; and senior officials and faculty members.

During the interaction, a Maldivian student who had studied at IIUI shared his experiences and reminisced about his time at the institution.

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to advancing educational partnerships and fostering excellence in the Muslim world.

Pakistan and Africa

Metropolitan International United College Hosts MIUC Dialogue Series 2.0

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Roots International Education Group, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, successfully hosted the MIUC Dialogue Series 2.0 today. The event, titled "Pakistan and Africa: Unlocking Opportunities Through Trade, Culture & Collaboration," brought together an esteemed panel of diplomats, policymakers, and scholars to discuss avenues for strengthening ties between Pakistan and African nations.

The dialogue featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, H. E. Jauhar Saleem (Ambassador, IRS), H. E. Sohail Mehmood (Ambassador, R), and H. E. Hamid Asghar Khan (Additional Foreign Secretary for Africa, MOFA). Joining them were ambassadors from African nations, including H. E. Mohamed Karmoune (Morocco), H. E. Titus M. J. Abu-Basutu (Zimbabwe), H. E. Hareriau Fatou (Rwanda), H. E. Sheikhmur Mohamed Hassan (Somalia), and H. E. Saima Syed (Pakistan's Ambassador to

Senegal). Other notable participants included Ms. Amna Khan (Director General, ISSRA), Mr. Sameh Ahmed (DHM, Egypt), and Mr. Brian Witbooi (Counsellor, South Africa).

Representatives from academic and strategic institutions added valuable insights, including Maj Gen (R) Raja Aftab Khan (Principal, CIPS, NUST), Brig Imran Ahmed Tahir (Director ME&A, Directorate DEPO), Col. Badar Munir (Deputy Director Africa, Joint Staff HQs), and Lt. Col (R) Faiz (ISD). Contributions from Dr. Sadia Sulaiman (Director,

Area Study Center, QAU), Ms. Nadia Rauf (Deputy Director Africa, MOFA), and Ms. Ariba (Research Associate, ISSI) further enriched the discussion.

This engaging session explored trade, cultural exchange, and strategic partnerships, highlighting the shared potential for economic and cultural growth between Pakistan and Africa. The dialogue underscored Pakistan's commitment to fostering collaboration and building bridges for mutual prosperity.

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to provide our students



with valuable opportunities for learning and growth. By engaging with thought leaders, we aim to empower them

with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a globalized world. This dialogue and future initiatives will open doors for

students, helping them become leaders who can shape a better future for themselves and their communities.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
113,247.29	112,638.26	
Day's High	Day's Low	
113,554.07	112,013.59	
Index Value	Change	
18,689,624,716	+609.03	
Percentage	Time	
+0.54%	10 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,248.49	-71.20	
Percentage	Time	
-0.86%	10 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
41,918.40	-716.80	
Percentage	Time	
-1.68%	10 Jan, 12:02 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
39,190.40	-414.69	
Percentage	Time	
-1.05%	10 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	173.25	175.50
Bahrain Dinar	737.40	745.40
Canadian Dollar	194.35	196.75
China Yuan	37.97	38.37
Danish Krone	38.08	38.48
Euro	288.75	291.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.47	35.82
Indian Rupee	3.19	3.28
Japanese Yen	1.77	1.83
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.65	906.15
Malaysian Ringgit	61.28	61.88
New Zealand \$	153.98	155.98
Norwegians Krone	24.16	24.46
Omani Riyal	721.75	730.25
Qatari Riyal	75.9	76.60
Saudi Riyal	74.00	74.55
Singapore Dollar	204.5	206.5
Swedish Korona	24.76	25.06
Swiss Franc	303.71	306.51
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	75.65	76.30
UK Pound Sterling	344.50	348
US Dollar	278.75	280.25

Precarious Law & Order FPCCI & Sindh Police to have closer liaison: President FPCCI

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has extended his full support to Sindh Police in maintenance of Law & Order from the platform of the apex body. We have a common objective of safe & secure; economically-vibrant; business-friendly and prosperous Sindh - and, business community is the real stakeholder and at the receiving end of law & order challenges. Therefore, it is in our own interest to support Sindh Police in its tremendous show of courage and sacrifices, he added.

It is pertinent to note that Mr. Javed Alam Odho, Additional Inspector General - Karachi, Sindh Police, has paid a detailed visit to the Federation House for an interactive session with business, industry and trade community to answer their question and address their grievances.



Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh also apprised that AIG has briefed FPCCI on the performance of Sindh Police over the last few months - which

is categorically showing declining crime rate in Karachi. Nevertheless, he admitted, a lot more needs to be done to fully restore investor confi-

dence. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, Mr. Aman Paracha, Mr. Asif Sakhi and Abdul Mohamin

Khan, VPs FPCCI, discussed sectorial, transportation, ports, regional, inter and intra-provincial law & order issues being faced by the business community.

Mr. Javed Alam Odho, AIG Sindh Police, briefed the large ensemble of the prominent industrialists on e-tagging, facial recognition camera, safe city and other technological initiatives on the lines of other developed industrial cities of the world. Additionally, thousands of police personnel are being hired and at various stages of the recruitment process.

It was decided during the meeting that Mr. Ikram Rajput, Convener of FPCCI's Standing Committee on Law & Order for Sindh Region, will be nominated as the focal person from FPCCI's side to convey the complaints and grievances to the high-command of Sindh Police for their swift and satisfactory resolution.

Preparation of OIC

ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in planting grass and trees on the green belt in the middle of the Suhrawardy Road as Serena Chowk Interchange is about to complete very soon in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SAFA Board Meeting- New leadership appointments and key discussions for 2025



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The 86th Board Meeting of the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA), accompanied by a series of high-level committee meetings, was held today at Karachi. The event marked a significant milestone with the announcement of new leadership appointments and key deliberations aimed at advancing the accountancy profession in South Asia.

During the meeting, Mr. Ashfaq Yousuf Tola was appointed as the President of SAFA for 2025, with Mr. Mohammad Humayun Kabir assuming the role of

Vice President. The appointments were announced by CA. (Dr.) Jai Kumar Batra, Permanent Secretary of SAFA, who emphasized the strategic direction and strong leadership these appointments bring to the federation for the year ahead.

A highlight of the proceedings was the special addresses by Mr. Jean Bouquot, President of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), and Mr. Farrukh Rehman, President ICAP, who together emphasized the transformative power of collaboration in addressing regional and global economic challenges.

All Pakistan Handicrafts Association meeting held at FPCCI, Lahore

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: A remarkable and unforgettable meeting of the All Pakistan Handicrafts Association was held at the grand hall of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). This event marked a new chapter in promoting the skills and talents of artisans, both men and women, and bringing their craftsmanship to the global stage. Following a successful program in Sindh, Punjab, with a renewed spirit and commitment to empowering talented individuals. The event was led by the capable, experienced, and dignified Chairperson of the Association, Ayesha Farooqi.

Speeches were delivered by FPCCI Vice President Zaki Aijaz, renowned industrialist Usman, and Umar, the owner of Saleem Fabrics. Business legend Maryam Khan highlighted the pivotal role of women in the growth of the handicrafts industry, emphasizing that this sector is an integral part of Pakistan's culture and economy. Famous poet and businessman Amjad Iqbal Amjad presented revolutionary ideas to elevate handicrafts to the global level, which were



met with great appreciation.

Ayesha Farooqi, Fatima Waseem, Shabbir Chauhan, Faiza Ahmed, and Sana Naseer Sheikh, whose presence added grace and prestige to the occasion.

The event's excellent arrangements were handled by Uzma Hamza, whose dedica-

tion and effort were evident in every detail.

In his speech, Zaki Aijaz offered full support for the development of the handicrafts industry and appreciated the role of women. At the conclusion of the meeting, all participants unanimously agreed that under the leadership of Ayesha Farooqi,

'TBA Karachi Hosts an Insightful Public Lecture by Professor Janaki Bakhle from UC Berkeley'

Commerce Desk

JANUARY: IBA Karachi hosted a thought-provoking Public Lecture, "Savarkar and the Making of Hindutva", by the Janaki Bakhle, Professor of History from the University of California, Berkeley, at the City Campus.

Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA Karachi, commenced the lecture by introducing Professor Bakhle's acclaimed book, "Savarkar and the Making of Hindutva". Dr. Zaidi highlighted the book's significance in understanding the complex historical and ideological foundations of Hindutva, emphasizing its scholarly depth and relevance to contempo-

rary discourse.

The discussion explored his revolutionary activities, his contributions to political thought, and the debates surrounding his vision and influence. In her lecture, Professor Bakhle contended that Savarkar's ideology, often labeled as 'Hindu fundamentalism,' was profoundly influenced by the historical circumstances of its time and did not develop in isolation.

Professor Bakhle's talk explored Savarkar's strong anti-Muslim sentiments, emphasizing that these views were shaped mainly by regional historical contexts rather than direct interactions with large Muslim communities.

CCP stresses for level playing field for business at RCCI

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) organized an advocacy session on Competition Law for members of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), highlighting the need for fair competition to drive economic efficiency.

Mr. Saeed Ahmad Nawaz, Member of the CCP, emphasized the importance of a level playing field for businesses across all sectors. The session was attended by a significant

number of businessmen and corporate lawyers.

The session featured a detailed presentation by Ahmed Qadir, Director General of MIU, who explained the core components of the Competition Act, 2010. Qadir provided insights on issues arising from abuse of dominant position, prohibited agreements, deceptive marketing practices, and mergers and acquisitions.

RCCI President, Usman Shaukat, acknowledged the crucial role of the CCP in fostering fair competition and creating an equitable business



environment. He expressed concern over the dominance of large businesses, which often marginalize small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Shaukat emphasized the

need for continued support and a conducive environment for the growth of SMEs in Pakistan.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Khalid Farooq, Senior

Vice President RCCI, who expressed gratitude to the CCP for its ongoing efforts to support businesses and ensure a fair and competitive market in Pakistan.

61% of Pakistani businesses consider Data protection as main concern for IT Security

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: According to the recent Kaspersky IT Security Economics report, the majority of companies globally find the loss of productivity, securing complex tech environments, and enabling data protection to be the most concerning business issues, driven by growing IT security needs and requirements. In Pakistan data protection is a major business concern, while issues with business process outsourcing are also named by organizations as problematic.

The Kaspersky IT Security Economics report is released every year to analyze the changes in budgets, breaches and business challenges affecting IT Security decision makers. This report is compiled from interviews with IT and IT security professionals from organizations of different sizes and industries. The survey was carried out in 27 countries across Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, North America, the Middle East, Turkey and the Africa (META) region, including Pakistan.

Data protection is an important concern that was expressed by 33% of companies globally and 61% in Pakistan. Respondents were worried about this because they regularly encountered the physical loss of devices by employees and experienced leakage of data from corporate systems caused by both external and internal reasons.

According to the report, downtime and lost productivity are the most concerning business problems caused by ineffective IT security, an opinion expressed by 38% of companies globally and 20% in Pakistan. They encounter this problem mainly because of long time taken to detect and remediate threats. Additionally, 19% of organizations in Pakistan also mention issues with business process outsourcing as their major concern.

Kaspersky recommends using all-encompassing solutions such as from the Kaspersky Next product line, that provide real-time protection, threat visibility, advanced investigation and response capabilities for companies of any size and industry.

Asif defeats Sri Lanka's Irshath to clinch SAARC Snooker Championship

A Sports

COLOMBO: Pakistan's seasoned cueist Mohammad Asif proved his class once again, defeating Sri Lanka's Thaha Irshath in a flawless final to win the 3rd SAARC Snooker Championship at the Moors Sports Club here on Friday.

The reigning world champion showcased his unmatched skillset in the one-sided affair, winning the match in straight frames.

With his victory, Mohammad Asif has now etched his name as the second Pakistani to claim the SAARC Snooker title, joining Asjad Iqbal, who won the inaugural edition in 2019.

Asif got off to a flying start, comfortably taking the first frame with a 67-point break to stamp his dominance early on.

The second frame, however, was where Irshath showed glimpses of resistance. At one



stage, the Sri Lankan cueist seemed to have control of the frame, but a crucial error on the

pink allowed Asif to bounce back and seal the frame 73-46.

WhatsApp channel The third frame started with a rare slip from Asif, as a scratch

on his initial break gave Irshath an early lead.

However, the Sri Lankan's inability to capitalize on the opportunity proved costly. Asif swiftly turned the tables with a 58-point clearance, extinguishing any hopes of a comeback.

By the fourth frame, Asif had all the momentum and showed no mercy. With a spectacular 50-point break, he outclassed Irshath 109-6.

The final frame was the icing on the cake for Asif, as he delivered a crushing 74-0 win to complete the rout and lift the title in style.

It was a dominant tournament for Mohammad Asif, who remained unbeaten throughout. His impressive campaign included a hard-fought semi-final victory over fellow Pakistani Muhammad Naseem Akhtar, who had also been undefeated until their encounter.

President, PM congratulate Muhammad Asif for winning 3rd SAARC Snooker Championship

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated Pakistani cueist Muhammad Asif on winning the third SAARC snooker championship.



In separate congratulatory messages, the president and prime minister lauded Muhammad Asif for demonstrating his best game in the entire championship particularly the final.

"Muhammad Asif brought laurels to Pakistan in the game of snooker. I pray for Muhammad Asif's success in the future as well," President Zardari said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also felicitated cueist Muhammad Asif on winning the third SAARC snooker championship.

"Muhammad Asif won an important snooker championship and brought the country's name to the limelight in the whole world. The whole nation is proud of you," the PM said. He also expressed best wishes for Muhammad Asif's future.

Pak former coach Mickey Arthur gets new role in UK

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: Mickey Arthur, the head coach of Derbyshire, has been appointed as the director of cricket for the Northern Superchargers, a franchise in England's Hundred competition. This dual

role will see Arthur continuing his commitment to Derbyshire while lending his expertise to the Superchargers in a largely advisory capacity.

Despite Derbyshire's challenging 2024 season—finishing last in Division Two of the County Championship with only one win in 14 matches and missing out on knock-outs in both the T20 Blast and the Metro Bank One-Day Cup—Arthur's wealth of managerial experience, including a stint as Pakistan's team director, has made him a valuable asset to the Superchargers.

In his new role, Arthur will provide guidance on team recruitment and support the head coaches of the men's and women's teams, Andrew Flintoff and Lisa Keightley, respectively. However, Derbyshire emphasized that his involvement with the Superchargers will not detract from his primary responsibilities at the county, particularly during the Metro Bank One-Day Cup, which overlaps with the Hundred.

"Derbyshire remains my primary focus, and I'm committed to achieving our goals of bringing success to the club," Arthur stated. He highlighted Derbyshire's philosophy of encouraging players and staff to grow by engaging with new environments.

Derbyshire's chief executive, Ryan Duckett, reaffirmed Arthur's dedication to the club. "Mickey lives and breathes Derbyshire, and we see this opportunity as a way to showcase the talent and work happening here," Duckett said. He also praised the positive developments over the winter, including key players like Wayne Madsen and Zak Chappell winning silverware overseas and others like Harry Moore and Pat Brown representing Derbyshire within England's setup.

With preparations intensifying for the 2025 season, Derbyshire is optimistic about turning their fortunes around under Arthur's leadership. His dual role reflects his versatility and the high regard in which he is held across different formats of the game.

Novak Djokovic says he was 'poisoned'



Novak Djokovic was "poisoned" by the food he ingested while detained during his 2022 Australian Open visa saga, the former world number one told GQ in an interview released on Thursday.

The Serbian 24-times major winner had his visa cancelled ahead of the tournament following days of drama over Australia's COVID-19 entry rules and his unvaccinated status, and was detained in a Melbourne hotel shared with asylum-seekers.

"I realised that in that hotel in Melbourne I was fed with some food that poisoned me," said Djokovic, who is known to monitor his diet strictly.

"I had some discoveries when I came back to Serbia. I never told this to anybody publicly, but discoveries that I was, I had a really high level of heavy metal. Heavy metal. I had the lead, very high level of lead and mercury."

GQ said Australia's Department of Home Affairs had declined to comment on the matter, citing privacy reasons.

Djokovic told Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper this week that he still has trauma from his experiences three years ago and feels stress arriving at the city's airport.

The 37-year-old begins his campaign for a record-extending 25th major title at the Australian Open next week.

Bhitshah Eleven Wins Inter-District Cricket Tournament in Matiari

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

MATIARI: The Inter-District Matiari Cricket Tournament, organized by the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Sindh, concluded successfully at Ali Waris Cricket Ground, Bhitshah. In the final, Bhitshah Eleven defeated Saeedabad Eleven by 49 runs to claim the title.

Saeedabad Eleven won the toss and opted to field. Bhitshah Eleven set a challenging 221-run target in 20 overs, with Lala Ramadan scoring 40 runs and Wazir contributing 52 runs. In response, Saeedabad Eleven managed 172 runs, falling short of victory.

The final match was attended by Deputy Commissioner Matiari, Muhammad Yousuf Sheikh, as the chief guest, along with Assistant Commissioner Hala Dr. Mazahir Buriro, District Sports Officer Matiari Jaleel Ahmed Halepoto, Assistant Sports Officer Imran Panwar, DO Works and Services Nisar Ahmed Sheikh, Mohammad Soomar Wafa, Gul Mohammad Qambrani, Seth Diwan Gagan Das, Prakash Singh, and Abdul



Rahim Khoso.

At the closing ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Matiari awarded the winners' trophy to Bhitshah Eleven, while Saeedabad Eleven received the runners-up trophy. Individual awards were also presented to Wazir Ali (Best Player of the

Final), Mohammad Khan (Best Bowler of the Tournament), and Bilal Rajput (Best Batsman). Speaking at the event, Deputy Commissioner Matiari praised the tournament's role in youth development and commended the efforts of the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs. He emphasized

that such events foster healthy competition and provide young players with valuable opportunities.

The tournament's success has raised hopes for further cricket promotion in Matiari, with expectations for more similar initiatives in the future.

National Track Cycling Championship 2025 Begins with Enthusiasm in Lahore

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: On the first day National Track Cycling Championship 2025 kicked off with great enthusiasm at the Cycling Velodrome, Nishtar Sports Complex, Lahore. The grand opening ceremony was graced by the esteemed Chief Guest, Mr. Khizar Afzaal, Director General Sports Punjab & Youth Affairs. Also in attendance were Mr. Idris Haider Khawaja, President of the Pakistan Cycling Federation, and Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, General Secretary.

The championship, a key event in Pakistan's cycling calendar, showcased high-energy performances on its first day, with cyclists competing fiercely to secure top positions. The results of the opening day events are as follows:

1KM Time Trials - Men

1st Position: Izzat Ullah (WAPDA)

2nd Position: Saqib Javaid (Punjab)

3rd Position: Zahid Ali Imran (WAPDA)

1000 Meter Sprint - Men



1st Position: Saqib Javaid (Punjab)

2nd Position: Izzat Ullah (WAPDA)

3rd Position: Saim Hayat (WAPDA)

500 Meter Time Trial - Women

1st Position: Adeen Abbass (HEC)

2nd Position: Ghazala (WAPDA)

3rd Position: Sadaf (WAPDA)

1000 Meter Sprint - Women

1st Position: Adeen Abbass (HEC)

2nd Position: Sadaf (WAPDA)

3rd Position: Ghazala (WAPDA)

Addressing the gathering,

Mr. Khizar Afzaal congratulated the Pakistan Cycling Federation for successfully organizing the championship, despite the challenging state of the velodrome. He praised the Federation's leadership, particularly Mr. Idris Haider Khawaja and Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, for their dedication to promoting cycling in Pakistan. He also emphasized the urgent need for infrastructure upgrades, calling for a modern and fully equipped velodrome to support the development of cycling talent in the country.

Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, in his remarks, thanked the Director General for his support and lauded the athletes for their stellar performances. He reaffirmed the Federation's commitment to overcoming challenges and advancing cycling as a national sport.

The championship will continue over the next few days, with top cyclists from across Pakistan competing in various events. Stay tuned for more thrilling performances and results.

SC judges raise questions about fairness of civilians' military trials

Continued from Page 8

Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi added that field court martial trials involve defence lawyers but no formal judges. He elaborated that during military trials, a defence lawyer and a fellow officer are appointed to assist the accused, ensuring cross-examination of witnesses.

Advocate Khawaja Haris, representing the Ministry of Defence, argued that the Army Act is a special law with distinct procedures for evidence collec-

tion and trial.

He assured the SC constitutional bench that the detailed procedure for military trials would be explained in the subsequent sessions of his arguments.

Justice Musarrat Hilali remarked during the hearing that the FIRs filed on May 9 included provisions under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). She questioned how military trials were conducted under those provisions. She asked the Defence Ministry's lawyer, "You provided

examples of military trials in the United States. If such trials take place in other countries, who acts as the judge?"

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar noted that military officers preside over court martial trials worldwide. Khawaja Haris assured the court that officers conducting court martial trials are experienced in handling trials.

Justice Musarrat Hilali raised another question, citing an incident where airport lights were turned off to allegedly force an

army chief's plane to leave the country. She remarked, "Passengers' lives were endangered, and the plane had minimal fuel. Yet, this one incident led to the imposition of martial law. Even after martial law, this trial did not proceed in a military court."

Khawaja Haris countered, "How can someone not present on the plane commit hijacking? The Supreme Court later reviewed the case and acknowledged that the plane had sufficient fuel."

He argued that hijacking is not

an offence listed under the Army Act, which is why the trial could not be conducted in a military court.

Justice Ameenuddin Khan responded, "Alright, the distinction on this point is now clear. Let's move forward." However, Justice Musarrat Hilali interjected, saying, "Wait, one more question arises here. If hijacking involves a warplane or military aircraft, where will the trial take place?"

Justice Jamal Mandokhail

added, "With a majority, you can include hijacking and even Section 302 under the Army Act tomorrow. Who can stop you? We must also protect the rights of seven to eight hundred thousand soldiers. Appeals against military court decisions can only be reviewed on grounds of bad faith or jurisdiction."

Justice Musarrat Hilali reiterated, "The FIRs of May 9 contained ATA provisions. I still do not understand how military trials were conducted under those

sections."

During the proceedings, the additional attorney general informed the court, "Military courts only took up cases of individuals whose presence at the crime scene was proven."

Although the number of accused was over 5,000, only 105 individuals with concrete evidence against them were subjected to military trials."

Later, the court adjourned the hearing till Monday, January 13, 2025.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazal ur Rehman.



Photo: Online

SC judges raise questions about fairness of civilians' military trials

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court seven-member constitutional bench headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, continued hearing the intra-court appeals challenging the validity of trying civilians in military courts on Friday.

During the proceedings, Justice Jamal Mandokhail emphasised the need for those convicted by military courts to have the right to appeal in civilian courts.

According to the TV channel, Justice Mandokhail stated that while the military court appeals can be heard to a limited extent, the merits of the cases are not



debatable.

Justice Mandokhail remarked, "Our armed forces consist of over 700,000 individuals. We are here to ensure

justice for both civilians and military personnel. Military courts must adhere to fair trial procedures."

He questioned the competence

of military officers to issue severe punishments such as the death penalty and expressed concerns about the trial processes in military courts.

Justice Mandokhail asked the lawyer of the ministry of defence to please satisfy the trial procedure in military courts, as I have been in this field for 34 years, and still I do not consider myself complete, so does an army officer have enough experience to hear sentences up to the death penalty?

Justice Mandokhail said there is a difference between the Army Act and other laws; the constitution protects all fundamental rights.

Justice Musarrat Hilali

observed that the officer conducting the trial does not announce the verdict himself. Instead, the trial is forwarded to a senior officer who makes the final decision.

Justice Musarrat Hilali also raised concerns about how an army officer, who was not present during the trial, could write down a judgement in the case.

Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan noted the general perception that military courts primarily focus on issuing punishments only. He shared his experience from the Balochistan High Court, where court-martial appeals allowed defendants to hire lawyers of their choice.

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Regional innovation, expertise in RE to help SA shun fossil fuels & embrace greener, sustainable future: Dar

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday underlined that the regional sharing of innovation and expertise in the realm of renewable energy could help South Asia to collectively reduce its dependency on fossil fuels and embrace a greener and sustainable future.

The deputy prime minister (DPM) and foreign minister was virtually addressing the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) Conference 2025 titled "South Asia's Economic Outlook: Challenges & Opportunities".

"Renewable Energy is a deep dive into opportunities and

innovations. Energy security is vital for economic stability. In Pakistan, energy crisis has long been a challenge but it is also an area where immense opportunity lies. It has one of the largest untapped renewable energy potential in the world with solar and hydro-power committed to diversify our energy mix," Dar said.

DPM Senator Dar said the world was facing intricate problems ranging from global economic uncertainties, impact of climate change and need of a robust governance to navigate these turbulent times. "Yet it is also a moment of great opportunity. Pakistan has mapped a journey for reforms and transformation aimed at stabilizing our economy and



fostering sustainable growth. We are focused on creating an ecosystem that supports investment, promotes exports and harnesses our potential of human capital," he added.

The deputy prime minister believed that sharing insights

and best practices at this forum would help the participating nations to chalk a path towards more effective governance across the region and each session of this conference underscored a critical aspect of South Asia's economic future.

He said a strategic trade policy framework, energy diversification initiatives and digital transformation agenda were a few examples of Pakistan's commitment to building a resilient economy. Policy reforms and governance were need of the hour and no longer optional but rather imperatives, he said, adding, "In Pakistan this means addressing structural bottlenecks, strengthen institutions in ensuring accountability and transparency at every level. Pakistan's ongoing reforms in tax policy, public financial management and regulatory framework aimed at creating an environment conducive to business and investment, he added.

Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai to visit Pakistan for girls' summit

Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai will attend an international summit on girls' education hosted by her native Pakistan, where she was nearly killed by militants as a schoolgirl.

Yousafzai was evacuated from the country in 2012 after being shot by the banned TTP, who were enraged by her activism, and she has returned to the country only a handful of times since.

A spokesperson for the Malala Fund charity confirmed Yousafzai will appear in person at the summit, which will focus on education in Islamic nations.

"I am excited to join Muslim leaders from around the world for a critical conference on girls' education," she said



Friday in a post on X.

"On Sunday, I will speak about

protecting rights for all girls to go to school, and why leaders must hold the

Taliban accountable for their crimes against Afghan women & girls."

Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the Afghan Taliban government have been invited to attend, however officials from the neighbouring country have not responded to AFP requests for comment.

Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls and women are banned from going to school and university.

Girls are only allowed to attend primary school, while women are largely restricted to working in segregated environments in health or education.

The Taliban administration claims that Islamic law "guarantees" the rights of Afghan men and women.

PM hails departure of PIA's first flight to Paris after European routes reopened

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated the nation on departure of the first flight of Pakistan Airlines (PIA) to Paris following restoration of PIA flight operation to Europe.

The prime minister, in a statement said the restoration of PIA flights to Europe will facilitate the overseas Pakistanis as they will benefit from the direct flights.

He noted that due to suspension of flights, the national airlines had to incur huge losses worth billions of dollars and also had to lose its reputation.

"By the grace of Allah Almighty, the incumbent government has restored the identity of the national airlines," the prime minister said.

After restoration of flights to Europe, PIA will move towards news development and progress, he added.

In this regard, the prime minister said Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif, the relevant



departments and their officers and staff deserved appreciation.

The PIA's flight will reach Charles de Gaulle Airport Paris at 1700 hours Paris local time on Friday.

Flights will be operated twice a week to Paris from Islamabad – every Friday and Sunday providing direct air connectivity between Pakistan and France along with increased trade and tourism opportunities.

PM felicitates nation on record increase in foreign remittances

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday felicitated the nation on record increase in foreign remittances in December 2024, saying that the claims of those who had been chanting to halt the country's economy had proven to be baseless.

The foreign remittances during December 2024 increased to US\$3.1 billion against November 2024, posting month-on-month growth of 5.6%.

In a press statement, the prime

minister said the remittances witnessed a record growth of 29.3% in December 2024 against same month (December 2023) of last year.

"Record increase in the foreign remittances reflects the strong commitment of the overseas Pakistanis for playing their role in development of the country," the prime minister said.

After achieving economic stability, Pakistan is now on the path of economic growth, the prime minister said adding that the government was determined to ensure national development and public welfare.

AJK President to address forthcoming Judicial Conference in State metropolis



Bureau Report

MIRPUR (AJK): Chief Justice of High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Justice Sadaqat Hussain Raja called on AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood

Chaudhry at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis.

Both the AJK High Court Chief Justice and AJK President discussed in detail the issues of mutual concerns and judiciary related matters, it has announced officially.

"On this occasion, Justice Sadaqat Hussain Raja gave a detailed briefing to the President about the under trial cases and other matters of the High Court of AJK.

Justice Raja, on this occasion, gave a formal invitation to the President to speak at the upcoming Judicial Conference in the state's metropolis.

Sadiq Khan appointed special assistant to PM Shehbaz

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senior diplomat Sadiq Khan has been appointed special assistant to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Khan is Pakistan's special representative on Afghanistan affairs. His new title will be equal to the title of state minister. The Cabinet Division has notified Khan's appoint as special assistant to the prime minister.

In June 2020, the government appointed Khan special ambassador to Afghanistan after he spearheaded efforts to start intra-Afghan negotiations aimed at ending Washington's longest war in the landlocked country.

However, Khan resigned as Pakistan's special representative to Afghanistan in March 2023. "After serving close to three years as Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, I have requested the government that the time had come



for me to move on and focus on my personal pursuits — family, books and agriculture/environment," he said in a series of tweets on March 1, 2023.

Khan said he was grateful to the prime minister and all the other stakeholders for their "whole-hearted support" to him as special envoy. "I deeply appreciate the hard work of many of my colleagues who spent long hours to make the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship work," he added.