Barkat Rice Mills

China welcomes Gaza ceasefire deal: Foreign Ministry Spokesperson

China welcomes the Gaza ceasefire deal reached between Israel and Hamas, and hopes for a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire through effective implementation of the deal, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Thursday.



Pakistan should be the soul of every student: CM Maryam

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rajabul Murajjab 16, Friday, January 17, 2025





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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding promotion of Small and Medium Enter-



44 Pakistani migrants among dozens die in Spain boat accident

Spokesman Report

MADRID: As many as 50 migrants, including 44 Pakistanis, may have drowned in the latest deadly wreck involving people trying to make the crossing from West Africa to Spain's Canary Islands, migrant rights group Walking Borders said on Thursday.

36 people on Wednesday from a boat that had left Mauritania on Jan. 2 with 86 migrants, including 66 Pakistanis, on board, the group

Forty-four of those presumed to have drowned were from Pakistan, Walking Borders CEO Helena Maleno said on X.

"They spent 13 days of anguish

on the crossing without anyone coming to rescue them," she said. The boat capsized off the coast of the disputed region of Western



the port of Dakhla, Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a post on X.

the deceased, 12 were young resi-

Pakistan said the boat was carrying 80 passengers. Among

dents of Gujrat.



ings it had received from NGOs regarding a missing boat, Spain's maritime rescue service said it had learned on Jan 10 about a vessel that had left Nouakchott in Mauritania and was experiencing problems but it could not confirm if it was the same boat.

The service said it had carried out air searches without success Asked about what warn- and had warned nearby ships.

Walking Borders said it had alerted authorities from all countries involved six days ago about the missing boat.

Alarm Phone, an NGO that provides an emergency phone line for migrants lost at sea, also said it had alerted Spain's maritime rescue service on Jan. 12 about a boat in distress.

A record 10,457 migrants, or 30 people a day, died trying to reach Spain in 2024, most while attempting to cross the Atlantic route from West African countries such as Mauritania and Senegal to the Canary islands, according to Walking Borders.

Citing the Walking Borders' post on X, the Canary Islands' regional leader Fernando Clavijo expressed his sorrow for the victims of the latest wreck and urged Spain and Europe to act to prevent further

"The Atlantic cannot continue to be the graveyard of Africa," Clavijo said on X. "They cannot continue to turn their backs on this humanitarian drama."

FO sets up crisis response center The Pakistan Embassy in Rabat is in touch with local authorities. Additionally, a team from the Embassy has been dispatched to Dakhla to facilitate the Pakistani nationals and provide necessary

Besides, the Crisis Management Unit in the Foreign Ministry has been activated and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has instructed the relevant government agencies to extend all possible facilitation to the affected Pakistanis.

The contact details of Ministry's Crisis Management Unit and focal persons in Rabat are as follows:

Telephone: 051-9207887, E-mail: cmu1@mofa.gov.pk

PM augments Youth Loan amount up to Rs1.5mln

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed to increase the youth loan amount from Rs0.5 million to Rs1.5 million under the PM's Youth Programme for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and prepare a special package for women entrepreneurs in small scale business.

The PM chaired a review meeting on the issues of SMEs and reviewed the progress on the government's initiatives for the development and facilitation of SMEs, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

PM Shehbaz Sharif underscored that the government SMEs to encourage the counthe meeting.

try's workforce for opting entrepreneurship. "Globally, SMEs play a key role in the development of the economy. The first priority of the government is to promote SMEs so that domestic exports increase. The government is trying to empower youth and women entrepreneurs so much that they not only earn self-employment but also create more employment opportunities," the Prime Minister said.

Federal Ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain, Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State Shaza Fatima Khawaja, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed, four provincial chief secretaries, representatives of SME sector and relevant was determined to facilitate senior officials participated in

PTI founder involves in 190m pound corruption case; Tarar

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said that the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), his wife and Farah Gogi were involved in a 190 million pound corruption case.

Answering a question during the Question Hour session of the Lower House of the Parliament, he said the National Crime Agency had not returned the money to the government of Pakistan but the then cabinet reimbursed the amount in a sealed envelope to the person from whom the money was taken.

Tarar said that the amount of Rs 80 billion was deposited in the Supreme Court in exchange for another fine.

The information minister replying to another question told the National Assembly that the construction of one of the largest dams in the world Diamer-Bhasha Dam would be completed in time which demand in the country.



would help reduce the risk of floods.

He informed that the land acquisition of the dam was completed in 2013 and in the first phase, the work of diversion of the Indus River for Diamer Bhasha Dam was completed by May 2024.

Tarar added that the permanent bridge was built on the dam in June 2024.

The information minister said that electricity generation was in surplus while the energy ministry was considering various proposals to meet the required electricity

£190 million case once again set for verdict

👺 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A highly anticipated verdict in the £190 million case against Pakistan judgment. Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chair-Bushra Bibi, is expected on Friday today.

Court officials have informed January 17. lawyers that the judgment will be delivered at 11:30 AM.

The case, heard in an account-

closing arguments on December 18, 2024, the judge, Justice Nasir Javed Rana, reserved the

Originally scheduled for man Imran Khan and his wife, December 23rd, the decision was postponed to January 6th, then January 13, and finally to

The £190 million case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case, centers on allegations of ability court, has been adjourned corruption against Imran Khan

multiple times. After hearing and his wife, Bushra Bibi. Prosecutors allege that during Imran Khan's time as Prime Minister, they received billions of rupees and hundreds of acres of land from Bahria Town Limited.

This was allegedly in exchange for legalizing 50 billion rupees transferred to the Pakistani government by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA). The case involves accusations of illicit enrichment and



PTI seeks judicial commission on May 9, Nov 26 events in third round of talks with govt

跨 City Desk

negotiations between the govern-

The session was chaired ISLAMABAD: The third round of by Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. ment and Pakistan Tehreek-e-In- During the meeting, the PTI saf(PTI) concluded in Parliament presented a written draft of its engaged in ongoing talks with

The government committee, which includes Irfan Siddiqui, Rana Sanaullah, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Farooq Sattar, is

Omar Ayub, Asad Qaiser, Ali Nasir Abbas, and Sahibzada Hamid Raza.

According to sources, the PTI

PTI's committee comprising prepared a draft of its demands for negotiations with the govern-Amin Gandapur, Allama Raja ment. The draft was created on opposition leader Omar Ayub's letterhead and spanned three

Barrister Gohar confirms 'positive' meeting with Army Chief Gen Asim Munir



跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has confirmed his meeting with the Army Chief Syed Asim Munir. Speaking informally to

media outside Adiala Jail, Barrister Gohar stated that he, along with Ali Amin Gandapur, met the army chief in Peshawar.

Describing the meeting as a positive development, he

expressed hope that the situation would now improve. "We presented all PTI

matters and demands during the meeting with the army chief. Negotiations are a welcome step, and I've always maintained that things should improve," he remarked.

Barrister Gohar further revealed that discussions included key issues related to national stability, and he noted a positive response from the other side during the meeting.

Friday, January 17, 2025

India cannot divert attention from Indian army atrocities committed in IIOJ&K, says Sardar Attique

跨 Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has vehemently condemned the Indian Army Chief statement declaring Pakistan as the center of terrorism expressed strong reaction and said that the purpose of the statement of the Indian Army Chief is only to divert attention from indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir and nothing else. We reject the statement of the Indian Army Chief declaring Pakistan as the center of terrorism The Indian Army Chief's statement calling Pakistan a hub of terrorism is not only contrary to facts but is also another failed attempt to base unjustified accusations on Pakistan under India's traditional policy. The international community cannot ignore India's cross-border killings and atroci-



ities further strengthen the Kashmiris' resolve for their right to self-determination, which is recognized in the UN Security Council resolutions. Occupied Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory, the final decision of which should be in accordance with the UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. In this context, India has no legal and moral right to claim the territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Such statements by the Indian leadership cannot divert international attention from the human rights violations and authoritarian tactics in occupied Kashmir. India adopts these usurping tactics to suppress the right of Kashmiris to

self-determination.

ties committed by Indian security forc-

es on innocent Kashmiris and serious

human rights violations. These atroc-

Protest

ISLAMABAD: Members of Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA) are holding placards protesting in favour of their demands outside National Press Club.



Thalassemia and Hemophilia Center inaugurated at Children's Hospital Multan: Dr Kashif Chishti

👺 Kiran Asim

Multan. Today, the Thalas-

work and efforts of Dean Chil- ty members including Prof. dren's Hospital Multan, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Rana, Dr. MULTAN: Thalassemia and Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chish- Azeem Subhani, Dr. Kamran Hemophilia Center inaugu- ti and Medical Superinten- Adeel, Dr. Usman Fawad, Dr. for their tireless work and of Punjab, especially the rated at Children's Hospital dent Dr. Kamran Asif. Dean Zubairah, Dr. Fahad, Muham-Children's Hospital Multan, mad Mumtaz Khan, Nursing semia and Hemophilia Center Prof. Kashif Chishti himself Superintendent Mrs. Tabitha doubt, this center will prove ment, whose strong support was inaugurated at Children's inaugurated the center, which Gohar and a large number of to be a great blessing for thal- and efforts made this project Hospital Multan with the hard was attended by senior facul- other doctors and staff nurses. assemia patients of South a success.



Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kashif to the Chief Minister of Chishti and Dr. Kamran Asif Punjab and the Government dedication to make this great Specialized Healthcare and project a reality. Without a Medical Education Depart-

Free medical camps held for the communities having limited access to healthcare facilities



Rafiullah Mandokhel

ZHOB: The Trust for Vaccines and Immunization (TVI), in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation, organized numerous free medical and vaccination camps for poor and marginalized communities, having limited access to the healthcare facilities in both rural and urban parts of Zhob.

The health officials in the area say, in order to improve the vaccine's acceptability and cover missed and not available children during the anti-polio drives, the camps have been set up in the Nasirabad, Hassanzai, and Sheikhan areas—on the outskirts of the city.

According to the TVI district coordinator, Rohullah Babar, holding the free medical and vaccination camps aims at providing medical facilities to the underprivileged communities and restoring their trust in vaccines.

'Vaccines play a significant role in the prevention of diseases. The parents should cooperate with the health staff and get their loved one vaccinated against polio and other diseases because vaccination is the only way to protect children from the diseases', the official urges.

Dr Abdul Qayyum, a senior pharmacist at the DHQ civil hospital, while talking to journalist Rafiullah Mandokhel says that prior to the camps, the health staff went door to door in the targeted union councils to sensitize the community members about the camps and the importance of immunization so that more people could benefit

SALU Achieves Remarkable Progress in Quality Assurance

B Qayoom Sarohi

KHAIRPUR: Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), Khairpur, has achieved an extraordinary milestone in the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Yearly Performance Report Card, letter issued by HEC Islamabad on 13 January 2025. The university's Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) has secured an impressive score of 75.16%, a significant improvement from last year's 53%, reflecting a 22.16%

Vice Chancellor Meritorious Prof. Dr. Yousuf Khushk highlights SALU's commitment to quality assurance, academic excellence, and institutional development. Special appreciation is extended to the *focal person Directorate of QEC* and team for their tireless efforts and dedication in elevating the university's performance.

He also congratulated all Deans, Heads of Departments, focal

person of PG Studies and ORIC, faculty members, administrative sectional heads, and the entire academic and administrative family for their collective efforts and commitment to achieving this success.

This accomplishment serves as a testament to the university's pursuit of excellence and its unwavering dedication to fostering a culture of quality in higher education, VC further said. SALU is proud of its faculty, staff, and students, whose contributions have strengthened the institution's reputation as a beacon of academic distinction.

Public Service is a Great virtue: Dr Nasir Ahmed Chaudhry



跨 Kiran Asim

MULTAN: First Vice District Governor Lions Clubs International 305-1 Pakistan Dr. Nisar Ahmed Chaudhry has said that public service is a great virtue. Therefore, we should actively participate in good and charitable works. Because public service is the best source of success in this world and the hereafter. He expressed these views while addressing a cake cutting ceremony organized by the Lions of Multan on the occasion of the 146th birthday of Melvin John, the founder of Lions Clubs International. He further said that Melvin John was a great human being.

He taught humanity to serve and love all over the world without discrimination of color, race, religion and nationality. Today, Lions Club members in more than 200 countries of the world are active in the light of Melvin John's philosophy of service. The guests of honor at the ceremony were former head of Lions Clubs International Pakistan Muhammad Afzal Supra, Mian Javed Iqbal, Khawaja Farooq, Chaudhry Anwar Ahmed, Professor Azam Hussain, Dr. Shahzad, Imran Raza Jafri, Waqas Saleem, Noorul Main Khakwani, Mian Imtiaz, Nasrullah Chaudhry, Muhammad Qayyum, Dawood Yousaf, Chaudhry Shafiq, Ahmed Nadeem Ansari, Syed Musa Raza, Bashir Gul, Muhammad Huzaifa, Muhammad Ahsan, members of various

Shah Ghulam Qadir and Maryam Kashmiri will take forward Nawaz Sharif's vision under their leadership: Maryam Idrees

Spokesman Report

Marvam Kashmiri met with Women's Kashmiri to mobilize the women's congratulated her on holding the recent joining the PML-N is a good addition.

successful women's workers' conven- I have been watching your political and tions in Azad Kashmir and said that ISLAMABAD: PML-N Azad Jammu the women's wing is becoming strongand Kashmir Women's Wing President er day by day under your leadership, a large number of women are joining the Wing leader Maryam Idrees at her PML-N. The efforts are commendable. residence, Maryam Idrees welcomed In the meeting, PML-N Azad Jammu the President and General Secretary and Kashmir Women's Wing Presion her arrival at her residence and dent Maryam Kashmiri congratulatappreciated her services to the party, ed Maryam Idrees on joining the party Maryam Idrees appreciated the efforts and said that the party needs educated, of Women's Wing President Maryam politically, socially and actively engaged women like you. You have taken the wing in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and right decision at the right time. Your

social activities on social media for a long time. You are playing a full role in creating awareness within the society, especially among the youth, according to the current situation. Daughters like you are the pride of the country and the nation. The party will make full use of your capabilities. In the meeting, Maryam Idrees said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is doing excellent work in the province of Punjab. She has the honor of becoming the first female Chief Minister. The projects of education, health, IT, agri-

culture, public welfare, especially scholarships for the youth are commendable. Maryam Idrees said that the PML-N, under the leadership of President Shah Ghulam Qadir, is working and moving forward according to the party manifesto and the vision of Quaid Nawaz Sharif. Every day, people from other parties are joining the PML-N. Joining Insha Allah, the Muslim League-N will make a clean sweep in the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Maryam Idrees said that according to the party manifesto and the vision of the leadership in Azad Kashmir, under



other leadership, I will play my full role she reafirmed.

the leadership of the Muslim League-N in strengthening the party and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir President women's wing, identifying problems Shah Ghulam Qadir and the Women's in women, children, education and Wing President Maryam Kashmiri and health, IT, tourism and other sectors





Namaz Timings Maghrib ..5:23 pm .. 6:51 pm

EMEDGENCY

LIMITION I
Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	922259
Rawalpindi 92	70601-20
ENGLUDY	•

ENQ	UIRY
lhi Ambulance	115
A Flight Info	114
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ailway Inquiry	117

...9270831-5

Railway Exchange

WASA Rawalpindi

позен	IALS
CMH	5611111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Chifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 ..9266316 Wapda Islamabad......9217579-80 Sui Gas Complaint..... 119, 92722490331-5022125

Saeed Memon Appointed as Secretary of the Fournalists **Protection** Commission

B Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KARACHI: Under the Sindh Assembly's Sindh Commission for Protection of Journalists and Other Media Practitioners Act, passed in 2021, the Commission has been established to safeguard journalists.

This institution, which is the first of its kind in any province of the country, aims to work for the protection of journalists.

Today, the Information Department officially issued a notification appointing Saeed Memon as the Secretary of the Commission.

Saeed Memon is a

Chevening Scholar who recently returned to the country after completing a Master's degree in Public Policy from England. Before this, Saeed Memon had served in various departments of the Sindh government.

ISSI holds IHD on 'Pakistan's Role as an Elected Member of the UNSC (2025-2026)

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an In-House Discussion on "Pakistan's Role as an Elected Member of the UNSC (2025-2026). Eminent practitioners and academics participated in the event.

General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the twin processes of turbulence and transformation in the global geopolitical landscape and the responsibility resting with members of the UN Security Council for rightfully fulfilling its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. He alluded to Pakistan's Security Council experience from the previous 7 terms, its core interests and priorities in the evolving global and regional environment, and its commitment to enhancing the role of Elected Members (E-10) and bridgebuilding amidst complex geo-politics.

During the discussion, participants emphasized the importance of Pakistan constructively engaging in Council deliberations and making positive contributions - including through upholding international law and the UN Charter; supporting the right of self-determination; stressing the implementation of UNSC resolutions; advocating the pacific settlement In his welcome remarks, Director of disputes; increasing the effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures; and strengthening the multi-dimensional peacekeeping under UN auspices.

Pakistan's long-standing contributions to UN peacekeeping operations were highlighted as a source of national pride and a vital aspect of its global responsibilities. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of utilizing the UNSC platform to foster closer collaboration among the E-10 as well as positive outreach to P-5 to help facilitate common ground on divisive issues.

Another key focus was preparing dynamics globally and in several excellent opportunity to help address international law and the UN Charter.



for future items on the UNSC agenda

regions. The discussion concluded with strategic clarity and foresight, with a shared understanding that the cate for the aspirations of developing particularly given the rapidly evolving UNSC membership offers Pakistan an nations, and uphold its commitment to

pressing global challenges, advo-

Construction

ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in their concern working during the construction project of Serena Interchange in Federal Capital.



Kausar Abbas expressed deep sorrow over the tragic boat accident in Spain

ISLAMABAD: Executive Director of the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) Syed Kausar Abbas has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic boat accident in Spain which claimed the lives of several Pakistani nationals. He stated that this heartbreaking incident highlights the dire circumstances that compel migrants to undertake perilous journeys in search of ing solidarity with the affected families, Syed Kausar Abbas



better opportunities. Express- extended SSDO's heartfelt this tragedy serves as a stark condolences and shared in reminder of the urgent need to their pain. He emphasized that address the root causes of irreg-

ular migration.

SSDO calls upon the Government of Pakistan and the international community to strengthen mechanisms for safe and legal migration while addressing the socio-economic challenges that force individuals to take such dangerous measures

Furthermore, Syed Kausar Abbas urged authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident and to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of those affected. He stressed the importance of proactive measures to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Skills must be imparted to the females for the promotion of domestic handicraft industry: Rehan Bharara

👺 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Skills must be imparted to the females for the promotion of domestic handicraft industry in Pakistan, said Mr. Rehan Naseem Bharara, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). Addressing an exhibition of handicrafts in the Government Vocational Training Institute for Women, D-Ground Peoples Colony, he said that young girls could not only earn respectable jobs for their families but also contribute their productive role in the overall national economy by getting proper training in this field. He expressed



satisfaction that the government was taking fundamental steps for the main-streaming of the female population.

BISP has also focused on skills training so that women and other marginalized segments could be made productive part of the society", he said and added that TEVTA and other institutions were also making their efforts to further expedite the economic growth of the country. The President FCCI formally inaugurated the exhibition by cutting a ribbon. Mr. Rehan Naseem Bharara also visited various stalls where the girls' students had displayed a large variety of their handmade products. He appreciated their skills and creative abilities and distributed certificates among them. Later a special shield was also presented to Mr. Rehan Naseem Bharara, President FCCI.

Exposed Conspiracies and Unyielding Spirit: Afroz Shoro Speaks Out on PTI's Struggles

Marchi Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The conspiracies of the opponents are exposed, and their dreams are shattered. Despite all the oppression, Imran Khan and his supporters have remained strong as an iron wall. This expression of thoughts was shared by the President of PTI Ladies Wing Hyderabad, Afroz Shoro, in a special interview with Daily The Spokesman. She questioned the purpose of



withholding the decision regarding the Al-Qadir Trust case despite it being reserved. The world knows that the sinister face of the institutions and government has been

Afroz Shoro further stated that despite 40 parties, including the PML-N, putting all their efforts into the state oppression, they could not make Imran Khan's supporters bow down, let alone Khan himself. The reserved decision, like many others, is another failed attempt. She added that the people of Sindh, and the entire country, have witnessed the injustice done to PTI, and this is the result: not only the supporters of Imran Khan but the whole nation shares the same sentiment.

PTI Ladies Wing leader Afroz Shoro also emphasized that history proves that oppression and tyranny never last, and justice will even-

Railway Prem Union rejected the government's expected decision to privatize the railways



Abdul Maiid

FAISALABAD: The Railway Prem Union has rejected the government's expected decision to privatize the railways and announced to launch a full-scale protest movement against it under the slogan "Privatization of Railways, Treason to the Country". The decision in this regard will be taken in a high-level consultative meeting of the Prem Union. Speaking on the occasion, Prem Union Chairman Ziauddin Ansari, President Sheikh Muhammad Anwar, Secretary General Khair Muhammad Tonio, Vice President Abdul Qayyum Awan, Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry said that in the first phase, the process of awareness and organizing of railway employees and ordinary Pakistani citizens has been started through posters and pend bills across the country. They said that a conspiracy is being hatched to destroy the railways. Under an organized conspiracy, preparations are being made to turn the railways into a steel mill and PIA. Due to the incompetence of the Ministry of Railways, the railway administration could not present the case of the railways to the government in a proper manner, due to which the government has put the railways in the non-essential category. From the Prime Minister There is $\,$ an appeal to review this decision. He said that preparations are being made to loot the assets of the Railways worth trillions of rupees, the Railways is an institution of national unity. At the end of the last fiscal year, the Railways had earned a record income of more than 88 billion, which is 40 percent more than the previous fiscal year. The Railways had received a target of 73 billion income from the government at the beginning of the fiscal year. The privatization of such a profitable institution is a conspiracy against the integrity of the country. The leaders said that the privatization of Pakistan's largest welfare institution is tantamount to treason against the country and the nation. They will not allow any scoundrel to privatize the railways. The people are being subjected to mental anguish by privatizing the cheap rides of one lakh railway employees and twenty-five crore people. The employees will shed their blood to save the railways, but they will not allow anyone to loot the railways in the name of privatization. The struggle that the Prem Union had started for the rights of railway employees under the leadership of the late Hafiz Salman Butt will be continued under all circumstances. They said that instead of privatizing the railways, they should hand them over to the workers and provide more profit than any private company. They demanded that the old system be restored by abolishing the new pension and gratuity law.

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Economic recovery is losing steam, warns **UN labour agency**

eopolitical tensions, the rising costs of climate change and unresolved debt issues are putting labour markets under pressure, according to a new report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) published on

The newly released World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025, sheds light on the deceleration of the global economy. This is impacting labour markets and stalling progress on recovery from previous economic downturns.

In 2024, global employment expanded in line with a growing labour force, keeping the unemployment rate steady, similar to

On the other hand, young people continued to face much higher unemployment rates with few signs of improvements.

Informal work and those categorized as the working poor, returned to pre-pandemic levels, and low-income countries faced the most difficulties in creating decent jobs for their citizens.

In 2024, the global economy continued to expand at a moderate rate, slowing as the end of the year beckoned. This moderate growth is expected to continue through 2025 and over the medi-

Although inflation rates came down, the economy has not fully caught up with the pandemic-related loss of earnings, in part because of weak employment growth.

Real wages, the report notes, have only increased in some advanced economies – and most countries are still recovering from the aftermath of the past crises.

Participation in the labour force has dropped in low-income countries while continuously increasing in high-income nations - mainly among older workers and women.

Still, gender gaps remain wide, with fewer women in the workforce, limiting progress in living standards.

Participation has fallen sharply among young men with many losing out on education, employment or training (NEET) programmes, leaving them vulnerable to economic challenges.

While this is especially pronounced in low-income countries, with a similar trend for young women, the pattern persisted

The global jobs gap – the estimated number of people who want to work but do not have a job – reached 402 million in 2024. This includes 186 million unemployed, 137 million who are

temporarily unavailable to work and 79 million discouraged workers who have stopped looking for jobs. Against a gradual decline in labour force participation, the jobs gap has continued its pre-pandemic downward trend but is

expected to stabilise over the next two years. The study identifies potential for job growth in green energy and digital technologies.

Renewable energy jobs have grown to 16.2 million worldwide, driven by investment in solar and hydrogen power. However, these jobs are unevenly distributed, with nearly half based

Digital technologies also offer opportunities, but the report notes that many countries lack the infrastructure and skills to fully benefit from these advancements.

USA Boosts Military, Names China Top Adversary

for Secretary of Defense nominee Pete Hegseth took place on January 10, 2025, in the Senate Armed Services Committee chambers in Washington, D. C. During the proceedings, Hegseth and senators painted a stark picture of the challenges facing the U. S. Armed Forces. A recruitment crisis, with a 42,000-person deficit, has left the military struggling to meet its personnel needs. Meanwhile, costs continue to rise, readiness declines, and morale falters

Hegseth highlighted the Pentagon's systemic failures, including its repeated inability to pass audits—a glaring inconsistency when compared to the stringent standards imposed on businesses seeking to contract with the Department of Defense.

A deeply concerning issue also emerged during the hearing regarding the treatment of service members under the Biden administration. Hundreds of thousands of military personnel who refused experimental and under-trial COVID-19 vaccine mandates were discharged, while those who experienced harmful side effects were left without compensation or support for themselves or their families. These vaccines, which would typically have undergone extensive animal trials under controlled conditions, were fast-tracked and wrapped in secrecy, with trial data hidden for 75 years.

He also alluded to nuclear triad a three-pronged military strategy designed to ensure a nation's nuclear deterrence and survivability in the event of an attack comprising land-based intercontinental

he confirmation hearing ballistic missiles (ICBMs) for rapid companies, modernizing the nuclear triad, tion, instead emphasizing cooperation, response, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) for stealthy and survivable retaliation, and strategic bombers that provide flexibility and recall capability. He said that Nuclear Tirad fell far short of its lethally, sustainability and efficacy compared to what it is being perceived by the adversaries.

> During his speech Pete expressed his resolve to tackle the 42,000 recruitment deficit, end the divisive DEI, fight for service members wrongfully purged by Biden's unconstitutional vaccination mandates, and restore the lethality in our armed forces.

Hegseth outlined a clear vision to revitalize the U. S. military, emphasizing three core objectives. First, he pledged to restore the warrior ethos within the Pentagon which are based upon unwavering commitment to mission success, perseverance in the face of adversity, loyalty to comrades, and integrity in action. Key principles include always placing the mission first, refusing to accept defeat or quit, never leaving a fallen comrade, and upholding the values of honor, courage, and resilience. This ethos fosters trust, discipline, and unity, ensuring readiness and effectiveness in all situations.

Second, he committed to rebuilding the military by aligning capabilities with modern threats. This includes revitalizing the defense industrial base, reforming the acquisitions process to eliminate inefficiencies like the "valley of death" for new defense

and ensuring the Pentagon passes audits. Rapid deployment of emerging technologies was also a key priority.

Third, Hegseth stressed the need to reestablish deterrence through the defense of U. S. borders, skies, and homeland, while strengthening partnerships and deter-

ring aggression in the Indo-Pacific, particularly from Communist China. During the hearing, the testimonies given by

Pete primarily focused on making the military machine effective and lethal and partially expressed foreign ambitions of the USA. He

emphasized an America First approach to national security, achieving peace through strength while responsibly ending conflicts to focus resources on larger threats.

Pete specifically highlighted persistent and robust aggression in the Indo-Pacific, identifying Communist China as the primary adversary. Notably, he referred exclusively to China, seemingly downplaying Russia or any other nation as a significant threat. This focus reflects a broader strategic shift in U. S. defense policy, where China has been elevated to the position of the primary geopolitical competitor.

China's rapid military modernization, economic expansion, and pursuance of its economic interests in the Indo-Pacific perhaps have positioned it as a more comprehensive and long-term rival to U.S. global influence. While, China has repeatedly declined this "No. 1 enemy" designashared prosperity, and a mutually beneficial future—rhetoric that contrasts sharply with U.S. perceptions of its strategic ambi-

Ideally, the United States should reconsider its defense policy, which has long relied on identifying adversaries as a catalyst for building its military-industrial complex and pursuing global dominance. This strategy, aimed at maintaining unrivaled military, economic, and geopolitical superiority, needs to evolve in the face of a rapidly changing world. Now is the time to reassess this approach and collaborate with global partners to establish a foundation for permanent peace, built on shared values, equitable distribution of resources, and mutual prosperity.

It is crucial to recognize that the combined destructive power of all nations is sufficient to annihilate the planet many times over. This stark reality underscores the urgency of ending the cycle of creating enemies, which invariably leads to conflict and instability. Instead, the focus should shift toward fostering cooperation, addressing shared challenges ensuring a brighter, more prosperous future for all. By embracing collaboration over confrontation, the United States can lead the way in shaping a world where security and growth are achieved not through dominance, but through interdependencies, unity and shared progress.

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



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

What comes after a Gaza ceasefire deal

between Israel and Hamas to US, Israeli, Qatari and Palestinian sources. After months of fruitless negotiations, the two sides are now closer than ever to sealing a multi-phased agreement that would bring an end to the bloodlet-

ting, allow for the release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners, and ensure a gradual Israeli withdrawal from war-ravaged Gaza.

Details are sketchy, but what is clear is that US President-elect Donald Trump has stepped in and put pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to

embrace a deal before his inauguration on Jan. 20. President Joe Biden also spoke of an agreement to be sealed soon, while Secretary of State Antony Blinken unveiled his vision for a postwar Gaza on Tuesday.

Trump will take credit for stopping the massacre and ending what had become the most horrific war against civilians in the 21st century. Netanyahu, who wasted no opportunity to derail an agreement that could have been reached many months ago, finds himself in a corner. He has not delivered a "total victory," nor has his army been able to free all hostages. Under the proposed agreement, the Israeli military will withdraw from key positions in Gaza, culminating in total withdrawal in the final phase of the ceasefire agreement.

The end of the war - a final cessation of hostilities that is yet to be agreed upon — will trigger a political crisis in Israel. Netanyahu's far-right partners have threatened to quit the coalition. Pressure will rise in Israel for an independent inquiry into the events of Oct. 7, 2023. Netanyahu's trial on corruption charges will resume. His margin of maneuverability will become much smaller. It is unlikely that he will

long-awaited ceasefire deal be able to survive politically as captives begin to return home and the world has a first glance at appears imminent, according the level of mass destruction Israel has inflicted on Gaza. Regarding the "day-after" scenario, Blink-

en's vision of a reformed Palestinian Authority role, with Arab participation, will depend on how the Trump team sees things. While Hamas has sustained significant losses in its leadership structure and

military prowess in Gaza, it has survived as a political force. What role it will have in Gaza in the future depends on the Trump White House, Israel and, to some extent, the PA. Much also depends on what

the people of Gaza want. They have paid the ultimate price for the events of Oct. 7, 2023, and it is up to them

to determine their own future. They should be allowed to do so. The biggest challenges once a ceasefire deal is adopted are to facilitate the passage of humanitarian assistance and the documentation of war crimes in Gaza.

That last challenge will not be mentioned in the ceasefire deal. But even if the war ends, the world should not ignore the fact that Israel has committed serious breaches of international law. Independent investigators and foreign journalists must be allowed into the stricken Strip. They have to report to the world the horrific war crimes that Israel has committed over the past 15 months. Accountability must be a cornerstone of any lasting agreement involving Gaza.

Meanwhile, one has to be wary of Israel's commitment to the ceasefire deal. In Lebanon, Israel has allegedly violated the agreement with Hezbollah hundreds of times. The same will happen in Gaza. Israel will find excuses to derail the deal and resume its aggression in Gaza. The $guarantors-the\,US, Qatar\,and\,Egypt-must$ make sure that an end to the war is lasting and that Israel will have no reason to resume its

Two complex issues are: who will end up ruling Gaza and when can reconstruction begin. Trump has yet to unveil his Middle East policy, especially regarding the future of the West Bank and the PA. He is reportedly eager to complete what he started with the Abraham Accords. He is to make clear his stand on Palestinian statehood and the right to self-determination. These are issues that will shape the region and the future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. More than 15 months of the Israeli war on Gaza have failed to liquidate the Palestinian issue. Despite the destruction, the targeting of women and children, journalists, doctors, medics, academics and aid workers, the world today is more aware of the just cause of the Palestinians than ever before.

And then there is the issue of inter-Palestinian reconciliation. The Palestinian leadership must conclude that reconciliation and unity are the bulwark of a just cause that the world must address and rectify. After more than 46,000 fatalities — although that figure could double once the war ends — the Palestinians must overcome their differences and find common ground if they are to plead their case to the world.

And, as much as there must be Israeli accountability, there will also have to be a Palestinian revision of the consequences of the events of Oct. 7, 2023, and the geopolitical changes that have occurred as a result. Palestinians have the right to resist the occupiers but they must agree on how to conduct their resistance. Israel has used the Hamas attacks to launch a genocidal war that has claimed tens of thousands of innocent lives and wreaked inconceivable destruction on Gaza, home to more than 2.3 million Palestinians. There will have to be lessons learned. No outside actors can tag what has happened as a victory or a loss. It is for the people of Gaza to decide. After all, it is they who have paid the ultimate price.

Osama Al-Sharif is a journalist and political commentator based in Amman. X: @ plato010

Street vending - A boon or a bane

Hussna Khattak

aving its pros and cons on society and economy, street vending has grabbed prominence in the society, at the same time creating important market linkages as well as causing revenue gaps for country's economy.

Categorized into moveable and static types, the impactful street vending had always been a vital entrepreneurial arc around the sector markets while subtending central focus on targeted population.

The sonorant carts loaded with goods or food items move through streets with melodious calls by the hawkers that reflect an announcement for door step delivery of the goods. On the other hand, static stalls decorated with a range of products that surround the arterial markets offer customers a must stop-over point.

Although street vendors provide wide ranging products and services to people with easy access and price compatibility, majority of them are uneducated and migrated from rural areas for better earning opportunities in urban societies and grab considerable market share.

No matter that she also spoke of hitches faced by of street vending like business insecurity due to lack of legal protection. "But, studies also reveal that economic loss due to this informal trade amounts to around 50 percent of monthly revenue and 200 percent of net monthly profit.'

She mentions the Raja Bazaar as beneficial hub from consumers perspective but states that informal vendors cause traffic congestion, pollution and other problems.

Giving solutions, she said, such challenges can be addressed by adopting green vehicles and implementing a more efficient delivery schedule. "Understanding the complex dynamics and developing solutions that benefit both businesses and residents can help the market thrive without inhabitants.

Seeing from customers' perspective, many among us feel comfortable in buying goods from these vendors.

"I mostly purchase vegetables, fruits, utensils and other minor routine items from these vendors," said Tahir Rauf, a retired government employee. "They meet needs of large chunk of population at their doorstep saving them from unnecessary hassle of busy bazars and markets."

"I think this source of cheaper shopping should be encouraged and channelized to secure their businesses as well as bring them into tax net," he said. "Sometimes people do not afford costly goods at main shopping malls and big markets. At that time these vendors fulfill their needs with cheaper products and closer to their homes."

Usman Shaukat, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) realizes the importance of street vending for being a 'stimulator to local economies by creating supply chain links, even if informal' and suggests to mainstreaming informal economy and integrating such non-registered vendors into formal economic system.

"By classifying them into mobile and stationary vendors for tailored regulations, enacting laws to safeguard vendors' rights, collaborating with local governments and vendors' associations can ensure a balanced policy," he pleaded.

"As vendors are also the contributors to our economy, designated zones, business timing and loans on low interest rate can flourish their busi-

ness and help them bring into tax net," he said. Usman Shaukat also offers RCCI's advocacy for inclusive policies to balance vendors' needs and urban management. "RCCI can arrange business training programs and hygiene awareness to help vendors improve their practices, advocate tax benefits and design partnerships to develop vending zones equipped with essential amenities."

Since ages, street vending serves as an important tool in creating employment through small scale businesses. Encouraging and properly channelizing street and small scale vending further deteriorating the living conditions of its can improve economic activity as well as add to revenue collection.

Pakistan High Commissioner presents LoC to Canadian **Commander-in-Chief**

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Pakistan to Canada Ambassador Muhammad Saleem presented his Letters of Credence to Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada 'The Right Honourable Mary J. May Simon'.

The ceremony held at the historic Rideau Hall, was attended by senior diplomats of the High Commission, Consul General Toronto, Consul General Montreal and Trade & Investment Counsellor, a press release issued here on Thursday

During his tête-à-tête with the Governor General, Ambassador Saleem conveyed the greetings from the President, the Prime Minister, and the people of Pakistan to the Canadian leadership and people. have a rich legacy and strong founbilateral ties. He underscored the relations and highlighted the poten-



He stated that Pakistan and Canada dations to further strengthen the significance of Pakistan-Canada

tial for greater collaboration on shared priorities.

In his remarks following the ceremony, the high commissioner stated, "I am honored to represent Pakistan in Canada, a country with which we share strong people-topeople ties and mutual interests. I look forward to working with the Canadian authorities to foster a deeper and substantive partnership with special focus on economic diplomacy.'

The high commission and the three consulates will continue with their efforts to promote bilateral engagement through active dialogue, business linkages and cultural diplomacy, he added.

The high commissioner also expressed his eagerness to engage with the vibrant Pakistani Canadian diaspora which plays a vital role in strengthening the existing friendly

Pakistani diplomat meets European Parliament's chair of Foreign Affairs Committee



跨 Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: Pakistan's Chargé d'affaires in Belgium Faraz Zaidi Thursday met Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee, European Parliament, David McAllister and discussed relations between Pakistan and European Union and avenues for deepening cooperation.

They also shared views on matters of regional and global importance. In a post on X, Faraz Zaidi said, "A very pleasant and warm meeting with Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee David Mcallister. Thorough and candid discussions on the global and regional political landscape. Looking forward to our continued positive engagement."

He also met with Head of AsiaPac 2 Division, European External Action Service Deren Derya.

Pakistani diplomat meets European Parliament's chair of Foreign

During the meeting, both sides discussed ongoing and upcoming engagements between Pakistan and European Union and explored opportunities for intensifying relations.

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad meets senior UN officials

Spokesman Report



UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan's Alternate Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, met UN Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari on Wednesday.

They exchanged views on a number of issues on the Security Council's agenda including the Middle East, Afghanistan and UN's role therein, according to a press release of the

for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

MumtazZahra takes over responsibilities as ambassador to France

Spokesman Report

PARIS: A career diplomat, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch took over responsibilities as Ambassador of Pakistan to France and Permanent Delegate to UNES-CO in January 2025. Earlier, she was serving as Spokesperson and Additional Foreign



Secretary (Strategic Communications Division & Public Diplomacy), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. Ms. Baloch had previously served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the

Republic of Korea (2020-2021) and as Minister/Deputy Head of Missionat the Embassy of Pakistan in China (2015-2020). She has also worked as Counselor for Political Affairs at the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington DC (2006-2011) and as Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, Geneva (1999-2002).

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad she served as Additional Foreign Secretary, Asia & Pacific (2022-2023), Director, Americas (2013-2014), Director, Security Council and Human Rights (2012-2013) and Director, Strategic Planning (2011-2012).

During 2014-2015, Ms. Baloch served as Director (Academic Programme) and later as Acting Director General of the Foreign Service Academy Islamabad.

Ms. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch holds Masters degree in Physics from the Punjab University, Lahore; a Masters in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, USA; and a degree in Public Administration from the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, France.

Legal fraternity holds a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law: Ahsan Bakhtawari

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, stated that the legal fraternity holds a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law, ensuring judicial independence, and providing justice to the people. He expressed these views during his visit to the Islamabad District Bar Association, where he congratulated the newly elected President Chaudhry Naeem Ali Gujar, Abdul haleem bhotto general secretary and other office bearers

During the visit, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari was accompanied by senior vice president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, vice president Chaudhry Nasir Mahmood, executive members Ishaq Sial, Roohail Anwar Butt, Mohsin Khalid, President of Malik Shabbir Awan, former senior vice president Khalid Chaudhry, Babar Chaudhry, and others.

nity and the legal fraternity is the need justice. He further assured that the Bar also spoke at the event, providing



Talagang Chamber of Commerce of the hour, enabling both sectors to Association would strengthen its role in details about the Bar's plans and public contribute to the country's socio-economic development.

ensuring the delivery of justice and the preservation of the rule of law.

In his address, Ahsan Zafar Bakht- Gujar thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Aleem Abbasi underlined the impor- Bar and expressed her determination vari congratulated all newly elected—and his delegation and highlighted the—tance of robust relationships between—to enhance their roles office bearers of the Bar Association initiatives taken by the Bar Associa- lawyers and the business community, and extended his best wishes for their tion for the welfare of lawyers and the stating that their unity could help the future endeavors. He emphasized public. He stated that the legal frater- nation tackle its challenges. Vice Presithat, as in the past, fostering strong nity has always been committed to dent Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Mastoi community and agreed on the necesties between the business commu- upholding the law and promoting social and Secretary Abdul Haleem Bhotto

service initiatives. Additional Secretary Qurrat-ul-Ain Ayesha highlighted the Bar President Chaudhry Naeem Ali Bar Association Group Leader Abdul significance of women lawyers in the

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening ties between the Bar and the business sity of working together for the development and stability of the country.

Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani congratulates the American people on National Religious Freedom Day

KARACHI / ISLAMABAD: Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council, Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, has proposed to designate a National Day of Religious Freedom at national level. While congratulating the American people on the occasion of National Religious Freedom Day in the US marked on January 16, he emphasized that the international community, including the US, has designated one annual day to promote religious freedom, so why are we lagging behind?

According to Dr. Vankwani, the Pakistan Peoples Party is known for religious harmony and tolerance. "This is my



begin with an address to the otic Pakistani minorities are nation by the Head of State, willing for hosting the events in the best interest of Pakistan." sincere wish that a national day the President of Pakistan," he on this proposed day to ensure

for religious freedom should stated, adding that: "The patri- the promotion of religious harmony and national unity

Dr. Ramesh Kumar further

while compiling their reports,"

Pakistan is criticized for its alleged failures in protection of minorities' rights. He was of the view that if the Pakistani government, in collaboration with civil society and the media, regularly issues comprehensive reports on the subject of religious freedom within constitutional limits, then the real situation of our beloved homeland could be presented before the international community in a true sense. "Unfortunately, due to lack of authentic information, the international organizations have to rely on anti-Pakistan propaganda and fake news operated from abroad

regretted that every year in the

Religious Freedom Report

issued by the United States,

Pakistan rejects reports of annexation of Wakhan Corridor

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday strongly rejected reports suggesting the annexation of the Wakhan Corridor, reaffirming that it is part of neighbouring Afghanistan. Newly appointed Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan, in his first weekly press briefing, emphasized that Wakhan is Afghan territory and Pakistan recognizes Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He dismissed the reports as speculative and erroneous, stressing that Pakistan has no intentions regarding its neighbor.

Khan noted that while both counissue remains the presence of terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil. He highaddress this concern through multi- with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. lavered engagement.

Regarding international affairs. the spokesperson welcomed the Gaza ceasefire reached on Wednesday, calling for its immediate and full implementation. He expressed hope that the truce would lead to a permanent ceasefire and improve humanitarian aid efforts. Khan also condemned Israel's actions, stating that Israel's expansionist policies have destabilized the region and caused immense loss of life and displacement among innocent Palestinians.

Global trend and NPPs as sustainable energy solution for Pakistan

Pakistan reaffirmed its stance on the tries value their relations, the main Palestinian issue, supporting a just and lasting solution, including the establishment of a sovereign State of Paleslighted ongoing diplomatic efforts to tine based on pre-June 1967 borders,

The spokesperson also voiced concern over rising Islamophobic and racist sentiments in the UK, particu-

larly the wrongful association of the actions of a few individuals with the broader British Pakistani community. He rejected baseless accusations from India's Defence Minister and Chief of Army Staff, asserting that Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally recognized disputed territory, with its final status to be determined according to UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

In domestic news, Khan referred to the international conference on girls' education held in Islamabad, which was attended by prominent dignitaries, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Islamabad Decla-



girls' education as a fundamental right and global advancements. and called for aligning education with

Israel airstrikes kill 77 Gazans since

announcement of cease-fire deal Additionally, Pakistan and China's

bilateral political consultations were noted for their positive trajectory, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to deepen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. They also agreed to strengthen mutual coordination in multilateral forums, including the United Nations Security

On humanitarian efforts, Khan mentioned Pakistan's intention to send more convoys to Gaza once relief operations begin following the ceasefire. He also addressed the participation of Pakistan's ambassador at the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump, confirming that an invitation to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto was not routed through the Foreign Ministry.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share

Index Fluctuation			
Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index			
Current	Prev. Close		
113,836.74	114,495.70		
Day's High	Day's Low		
114,884.63	113,630.45		
Index Value	Change		
14,966,430,289	-658.96		
Percentage	Time		
-0.58%	16 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm		
Europe: FTS	E 100 Index		
Index Value	Change		
8,391.90	+90.77		
Percentage	Time		
+1.09%	16 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT		
USA: Dow Jones I	ndustrial Average		
Index Value	Change		
43,235.98	+14.43		
Percentage	Time		
+0.033%	16 Jan, 12:35 pm GMT-5		

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average			
Index Value	Change		
38,572.60	+128.02		
Percentage	Time		
+0.33%	16 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9		

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	173.75	176.00
Bahrain Dinar	739.10	747.10
Canadian Dollar	195.60	198.00
China Yuan	37.59	37.99
Danish Krone	37.97	38.37
Euro	287.75	290.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.41	35.76
Indian Rupee	3.13	3.22
Japanese Yen	1.78	1.84
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.30	905.80
Malaysian Ringgit	61.29	61.89
NewZealand \$	154.23	156.23
Norwegians Krone	24.25	24.55
Omani Riyal	723.00	731.50
Qatari Riyal	75.9	76.60
Saudi Riyal	74.20	74.75
Singapore Dollar	204.5	206.50
Swedish Korona	24.64	24.94
Swiss Franc	303.71	306.51
Thai Bhat	7.86	8.01
U.A.E Dirham	75.85	76.50
UK Pound Sterling	342.00	345.5
US Dollar	279.50	281.00

EFP urges action on Decent Working Conditions to Preserve GSP-Plus Status for Pakistan



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP), with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the Rise for Impact (Cotton INDITEX Project), organized the awareness-raising sessions in its series to promote Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the cotton supply chain, held in the districts of Sukkur and Khair-

Gulfam Nabi, Consultant, gave a detailed presentation on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, covering all five key areas of FPRW. These include: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, which ensures that workers and employers have the right to freely form and join organizations, trade unions, and employers' associations without fear of retaliation or interference; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, which aims to eradicate any work or service performed under coercion, threats, or lack of free will, including practices like debt bondage, human trafficking, and slavery; the principle of the effective abolition of child labour, which aims to ensure that children are protected from work that deprives them of education, health, and development; the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation, ensuring that all individuals have equal access to employment opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace, regardless of characteristics such as race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or disability; and a safe and healthy working environment, which ensures that workers are protected from hazards and risks that could harm their physical and mental well-being.

Japanese Ambassador calls on Minister for Finance and Revenue

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi who called on the Minister at Finance Division today.

The meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to discuss ongoing economic reforms, bilateral relations, and opportunities for deeper economic cooperation.

Minister Aurangzeb welcomed Mr. Akamatsu on assuming his diplomatic responsibilities in Islamabad, commending Japan's longstanding partnership with Pakistan. The Minister highlighted the positive momentum in Pakistan's macroeconomic stability, which he attributed to key reforms and structural adjustments across various sectors, including fiscal framework, taxation, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), energy, rightsizing of the federal government, and privatization efforts.

The Minister emphasized that the government remains committed to continuing its reform agenda, focusing on critical issues such as population growth and climate change vulnerability. He noted the importance of



work signed with the World Bank, aimed at sustainable, inclusive economic growth. the 10-year Country Partnership Frame- addressing these challenges and fostering

credibility of its bilateral and multilateral development partners, including Japan.

He expressed appreciation for Japan's diplomatic, economic, and technical support and urged Japanese investors to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan, particularly in manufacturing and production, which would contribute to the country's exportable surplus.

Ambassador Akamatsu expressed his appreciation for the progress made in Pakistan's macroeconomic stability and the government's reform efforts. He provided an update on the scope of ongoing Japanese investment in Pakistan, noting that around 80 Japanese companies currently operate in the country, employing over 65,000 local workers, and significantly contributing to the Pakistani economy.

Minister Aurangzeb acknowledged Japan's valuable contributions and assured the Ambassador of Pakistan's continued engagement with Japanese investors to incorporate their input in the upcoming federal budget's policy framework.

Both sides expressed a strong desire to further strengthen bilateral economic ties Minister Aurangzeb reaffirmed Pakistan's and explore new avenues for collaboration.

Called on

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari was called on by French Ambassador Nicolas Galey on Thursday.



LCCI Shopping Festival from January 31st to Feb 2nd

LAHORE: Mega Event"Lahore Shopping Festival 2025" is set to take place from January 31st to February 2nd at the Lahore Expo Centre being organized by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce.

"The event has been designed to promote trade, cultural heritage and community engagement and it would set the stage for economic growth and celebration in the city of Lahore", said LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry while addressing a Press Conference on Lahore Shopping Festival at LCCI. Renowned businessmen Sohail Zia Butt and former Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry also spoke on

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad said that the Lahore Shopping Festival is a unique opportunity to stimulate economic and trade activities in the city. It will bring together businesses, investors and the general public and would create a vibrant environment to break the stagnation in the market."

 $He \ said \ that \ the \ Lahore \ Shopping \ Festival$ 2025 has been carefully designed to combine business with entertainment, offering a platform for local and international businesses to showcase their products. It also seeks to expressed gratitude to the Vice President



spotlight Lahore's rich culture, heritage and historical significance, portraying the city as a hub of opportunities and traditions.

Mian Abuzar Shad said that LCCI has extended invitations to prominent figures including Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider, provincial ministers and other dignitaries, to grace the event. Their presence will underscore the significance of the festival and its contribution to the local

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad

Shahid Nazir Chaudhry who has been instrumental in organizing the festival. He said that Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry has shown remarkable dedication and effort in ensuring the success of this festival. His commitment has been pivotal

in bringing this vision to life. "The Lahore Shopping Festival 2025 is not just an event; it is a movement to boost economic growth, promote culture, and bring the community together. Let's join hands to make it a resounding success," said Mian Abuzar Shad and Shahid Nazir

Ijara Capital and Noventa Pharma **Secure Majority Stake** in Searle Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval for the acquisition of a 90.61 Percent shareholding in Searle Pakistan Limited (SPL) by Ijara Capital Partners Limited (ICPL) and Noventa Pharma (Private) Limited (NPL).

The CCP conducted a comprehensive competition assessment, identifying the relevant product market as 'pharmaceutical products', further segmented into therapeutic classes (e.g. cardiovascular drugs, antibiotics) pharmaceuticals. The assesswould not create a domi- The approval undernant market position for the scores CCP's commitment to acquirers. As the transaction is conglomerate in nature, dynamics while ensuring no significant vertical integration concerns were iden-

sector in Pakistan operates within a regulated framework, characterized by moderate barriers to entry, including stringent regulatory approvals and substantial capital requirements. CCP's evaluation concluded that the transac-

tion is unlikely to heighten

these barriers or adversely

impact consumers.

SPL, a public unlisted company incorporated under the laws of Pakistan, specializes in the import, manufacture and sale of pharmaceutical products. ICPL, also a public unlisted company, is engaged in and branded versus generic private equity and venture capital fund management ment determined that SPL's services. NPL is a private relatively low market share limited company established indicates the transaction as a Special Purpose Vehicle.

> fostering competitive market transactions align with the Competition Act, 2010, and the Competition (Merger pharmaceutical Control) Regulations 2016.

Shandong Kerui Group delegation visits ICCI

S Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has highlighted the growing economic ties between Pakistan and China during a meeting with a high-level visiting delegation from Shandong Kerui Group.

The delegation was led by Wu Xiaogui, Vice President of Shandong Kerui Group, and Hatim Yaqoob Tabani, Executive Director of Tabani Group.

Qureshi expressed that China's firm commitment and trust to Pakistan's development have Pakistan.

always been a key source of progress and prosperity for the country.

Wu Xiaogui, Vice President of Shandong Kerui Group, informed that his company was keen to establish offices in several cities across Pakistan and that it would also impart training to the Pakistani workforce to ensure that local talent is equipped with the necessary skills to support its operations.

He also requested ICCI's $\,$ assistance in facilitating processes such as obtaining visas, arranging meetings with relevant authorities, and ensuring security for their teams working in

inDrive celebrates Excellence at the Inner Driver Awards in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: inDrive, the globprestigious Inner Driver Awards in Pakistan to honor the exceptional contributions of its employees. The ceremony held in Islamabad, celebrated dedication, innovation, and outstanding performance, showcas-

driving the company's success.

The event brought together a distinguished jury panel featuring al ride-hailing platform, hosted the esteemed professionals from local and international backgrounds. Among them were Sidra Kiran, Communications Manager for inDrive Pakistan and a Global SInet Hero Awards winner, and Tanvir M Saeed Chaudhary, Netsuite Global ing the pivotal role employees play in Manager and a recipient of the 2023

awards. Sidra Kiran, who has served as a jury member for the past two years, expressed her pride in being part of this inspiring initiative.

Speaking about the event, Sidra Kiran said, "Being a part of the Inner Driver Awards is an incredible honor. This event not only recognizes the exceptional talent within our team but also reinforces our commitment to fostering a culture of excellence and



innovation. The winners exemplify individual contributions can drive the spirit of inDrive, showcasing how collective success."

Pakistan aim to finish ICC Test Cricket Championship 2023-25

Pakistan vs West Indies Play First Test Cricket Match today at Multan Cricket Stadium

S Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan will aim to finish the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 on a winning note when they face West Indies in the two-match Test series commencing at the Multan Cricket Stadium from 17 January. The second Test will also be played at the same venue from 25 January.

West Indies, who will play a Test match in Pakistan for the first time since December 2006, are currently positioned at the bottom of the ICC World Test Championship table. In the last Test series between the two sides on Pakistan soil, PCB Hall of Famer Inzamam-ul-Haq led the home side to a 2-0 win in threematch Test series.

Pakistan and West Indies last faced each other in the red-ball format in 2021 in West Indies, where the two-match series was levelled 1-1.

 $Pakistan\,under\,the\,leadership\,of\,Shan$ Masood will be looking to win their second consecutive home series after they defeated England 2-1 in October last year.

Pakistan's 15-member squad has undergone three days of extensive training, while Kraigg Brathwaite-led side practiced for two days at the picturesque Multan Cricket Stadium. The touring side also featured in a three-day warm-up game against Pakistan Shaheens at the Islamabad Club in Islamabad last week.

The home side squad comprises of



(right-arm fast bowler), Mohammad Huraira (right-handed batter) and Rohail Nazir (wicketkeeper-batter), while Abrar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Ali and Sajid Khan have been recalled to the

Abrar and Sajid require 11 and six wickets, respectively to complete their 50 Test wickets each.

Shan Masood, Pakistan's Test captain:

"This is our last Test series in the current ICC World Test Championship cycle, and we would like to finish it on a winning note. Every match in this format holds great importance, and we are committed to giving it our all to end the three uncapped players - Kashif Ali campaign with a memorable series win.

"West Indies are a decent side with a lot of talented players. They bring a unique style to the game, and we know they will push us hard. Test cricket is about adapting to challenges, and as a team, we are prepared to respond to whatever comes our way.

'The series win against England at home has given us a lot of confidence and momentum. We are fully focused on putting in strong performances and carrying forward that winning attitude." Kraigg Brathwaite, West Indies' Test

"We are very excited to be here in ered for selection in the first Test: Pakistan, I personally had never come to Pakistan before and probably majority

of players are also touring for the first time and we are really looking forward to doing well in the series. Pakistan are a strong side at home, so we look forward to doing well in these conditions.

"Our team's performance will be quite crucial here, and obviously putting runs on the board is important but taking 20 wickets will be the key to win the Test

"Our preparations are going well, we had few days in Islamabad where we played a practice game which went quite good for us as a group and we had our sessions here in Multan which were helpful as well."

Pakistan squad:

Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Kashif Ali, Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Huraira, Mohammad Rizwan (wicketkeeper/ batter), Noman Ali, Rohail Nazir (wicketkeeper/batter), Sajid Khan, and Salman Ali Agha.

West Indies 12 for the 1st Test:

Kraigg Brathwaite (captain), Alick Athanaze, Amir Jangoo (wicket-keeper), Gudakesh Motie, Javden Seales, Jomel Warrican, Justin Greaves, Kavem Hodge Keacy Carty, Kevin Sinclair, Mikyle Louis and Tevin Imlach

Also, part of the squad but not consid-

Anderson Phillip, Joshua Da Silva (vice-captain) and Kemar Roach

Pakistan Hopefully Win The Cricket Test Match Series Against West Indies

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Cricket Team Captain Shan Masood Said Hopefully Win The Cricket Test Match Series Against West Indies.

Pakistan cricket team captain Shan Masood has claimed that the first Test of the last Test series we won at our home ground was played here. We will continue this series and by winning this series we will end this World Test Championship cycle on a winning note.

West Indies cricket captain Kraigg Brathwaite spoke to the media and said that our preparation is good. The conditions are similar to team has new players but I am tions are very important for us those in Multan and Pindi. We know this Test circle. It is a new



very confident.

year and we have come thinking captain Shan Masood has said on our home ground, everyone about it, it is important, my that Mr. Home ground conditries to perform well individ-

as a team, we try to maintain Pakistan Test cricket team the momentum of playing well

ually and for the team. Many times: We have been in a position to win many Test matches and have also lost, this is a lesson for us that how can we improve the matches that we lost with good positions now. We have to make decisions according to the situation of the match and the opposition. We want to play more Test cricket. The ICC and the boards have talked about bringing Test cricket into a two-tier system. I will not say anything on this but our job is have to look at the Test cricket for 10 months then this is wicket seems to be helpful for what happens. In Test cricket, spinners and its preparation you have to maintain conti- has also been done. Hopefully, nuity. Batting has to support we will win this series. Abrar is

take 20 wickets. You also have to score runs accordingly. The challenge for batting is that we are in some positions and the batting unit cannot extend the innings.

Pakistan vs West Indies, 19th Test Series Trophy Unveiling, All

Details Together He answered several questions at the press conference at Multan Cricket Stadium. He shed light on the defeat in South Africa. He also talked a lot about Multan's performance to perform better, for this we and Pakistan's performance. He said that I want Pakistan schedule and matches to see to win and improve my form how to do it. We are working, and performance. About Pakinow if there is no Test cricket stan's bowling, he said that the the bowlers. Here you have to also back, so let's go with a pacer,

Mohammad Huraira to make test debut in first test against West Indies

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has unveiled its playing XI for the opening Test against the West Indies, with an exciting debut for young batter Mohammad Huraira.

strong note.

The inclusion of Huraira, a promising talent from domestic cricket, has generated significant buzz. The right-handed batter has consistently impressed with his performances in domestic competitions, earning him The match was set to commence on a spot in the national side. His inclu-Friday, marking a key moment in the sion reflects the team management's series as Pakistan aims to start on a focus on nurturing new talent while



enced players.

Skipper Shan Masood will lead the side, supported by seasoned players Salman Ali Agha, Sajid Khan, Noman Huraira fares in his maiden Test.

maintaining a balance with experi- Ali, Khurram Shahzad and Abrar Ahmd. The playing XI indicates a mix of experience and youth, showcasing Pakistan's depth in talent. The match like Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, promises to be a thrilling contest, with Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, fans eager to see how Mohammad

Second Chief of Army Staff National Interclub Hockey Championship tournament will be played today



Majid Majid

FAISALABAD: Chief Coordinator Regional Faisalabad of Pakistan Hockey Federation Farooq Shaheed is holding a press conference. According to him, the matches of the second Chief of Army Staff National Interclub Hockey Championship tournament organized by Pakistan Hockey Federation will be played at Madina Town Hockey Stadium from January 17 to January 19. These competitions to be played at Madina Town Hockey Stadium will be patronized by Executive Engineer FESCO Chairman Region Hockey Faisalabad Sheikh Waqas Rashid. On this occasion, District Hockey Association President Shahid Tanveer Gul, International Umpire Rana Khalid Iqbal, Media Coordinator Championship Mujahid Hussain Shah are also present with him.

Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Three More Matches were decided in the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at various Grounds of the City. The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricant.

Taiser Town Tiger CC moved into Pre Quarter Final after beating Mujahid Gymkhana by 63 runs at Abbasi Gymkhana Ground. Taiser Town Tiger CC 273/8 in stipulated 40 overs. Naveed Balouch 85 5x4 8x6, Saeed Hassan 47 5x4 2x6, Muhammad Ahsan 45 6x4, Shah Muhammad 27, Kareem Khan 27. Wali Khan 3/33.

Mujahid Gymkhana 210 all out in 31 overs. Burhan Mehmood 70 12x4, Sikandar Hassan 48 7x4 1x7, Jansher 21, Nisat Bukhari 21. Jumma Khan 4_34, Khan 3/40, Saeed Hassan 2/25. In the 2nd Match Sindh Rana Cricket Club beat Landhi Tiger

CC by 118 runs at Pak Star Ground. Sindh Rana CC 216/9 in 40 overs. Tahir Pathan 67 7x4, Hafeez ullah 52 4x4, Shahryar Khan 35. Aftab Alan 4/41, Sajid Ahmed

Landhi Tiger CC 97 all out in 24.2 overs. Imran Khan 27 not out, Sajid Ahmed 21. Atif Afridi (sla) 4/7, Shaharyar Khan

In the 3rd Match Northern Gymkhana beat Steel Town Gymkhana by 10 Wickets at Young Fighter Ground. Steel Town Gymkhana 59 all out in 17.4 Overs. Ali Hamza 17. Inam ul Wazir (rlb) 4/17, Nadir Shah 3/12, Rayyan Afridi 3/21.

Northern Gymkhana 60/0 in 4.3vovers. Abdullah Alam 28 5x4 1x6, Haider Abbas 27 6x4 not out.

Shahid Afridi provides update on Saim Ayub's participation in Champions Trophy

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi on Thursday provided an update regarding the participation of young batter Saim Ayub in the upcoming ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025.

Saim sustained a fractured ankle on the opening day of the Cape Town Test against South Africa, ruling him out for an initial six weeks. He is currently in London for treatment and a thorough evaluation of his injury.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has not yet announced the squad for the Champions Trophy 2025, as they are carefully monitoring Saim's recovery before making a final decision about his participation.

Shahid Afridi recently revealed in an interview that Saim will miss the upcoming tournament. He mentioned that he advised Saim not to rush his return, as doing so could prolong his injury. "I talked to Saim Avub last night. He told me that he needs

three weeks, and only after that will his rehab begin," Afridi said. 'I advised him not to rush the process. Even the slightest injury, if not allowed to heal properly, can turn into a prolonged issue. "You're young and have a lot of cricket ahead of you, so take

your time recovering." It's worth noting that Mohsin Naqvi, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), has previously ensured that Saim Ayub will get the best treatment and expressed hope that the young star

will get fit in time for the Champions Trophy. 'Saim Ayub is a valuable asset for Pakistan cricket," Naqvi stated. "We will provide every possible resource for his treat-

ment and recovery. I am praying for his complete health and will continue to monitor his condition closely.

"We hope that he will make a full recovery before the ICC Champions Trophy."

Pakistan, West Indies seek to improve from Test Championship lows

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and West Indies vowed a strong finish when they meet in the first Test in Multan on Friday despite dragging up the rear of the World Test Championship.

Pakistan are currently eighth month. in the 2023-25 cycle of the WTC, with their rivals in last place far behind finalists Australia and South Africa.

Skipper Shan Masood said the two-test series was significant for Pakistan, who finished sixth and seventh in the first two

WTC cycles. series is significant for us as we want to become a better team year strong and that is our focus," by being unbeaten in home Brathwaite said.

conditions," he told reporters on

Pakistan ended a winless stretch of 11 home Tests by beating England 2-1 in October and Masood wants his team to keep winning at home despite a 2-0 defeat in South Africa this

"We won against England so it will be important we keep that momentum against the West

Indies," Masood said. West Indies finished eighth in both previous WTCs and skipper Kraigg Brathwaite wants to end

on a positive note this time. "I think this series is very "This cycle is finishing so this important with two Tests left in this cycle... so we want to start the

for Pakistan's spin assault led by Noman Ali and Sajid Khan, who took 39 wickets between them against England.

"We have played in spin conditions in Bangladesh and these conditions are similar, so you have to be disciplined and be brave against any bowler," Brathwaite said.

Pakistan deployed industrial fans and patio heaters to dry out the Multan pitch and secure their series win against England after

heavy rain. They are ready to use the same tactic again if needed, with the second Test also to be played in Multan from January 25.

The tourists had a taste of

South Africa will play the cham-

dwellers such as Pakistan and West Indies will be wary of reports that leading nations such as India, Australia and England those conditions in their drawn favour a two-tier system of

He said his players are ready three-day practice game in Islamabad, where Alick Athanaze hit half centuries in both innings and newcomer Amir Jangoo scored an unbeaten 63.

West Indies used a three-prong spin attack of Kevin Sinclair, Jomel Warrican and Gudakesh Motie in that match but will be without pace spearhead Kemar Roach, who is unwell.

Wicketkeeper-batter Joshua Da Silva was overlooked. Title-holders Australia and

pionship final at Lord's in June. However, WTC bottom-

> That plan could mean lowerranked teams won't get to play Tests against top-tier nations. "If there is a two-tier system



promotion and relegation.

then it has to be exciting," said Masood. "There should be relegation and promotion of teams and every team should get more Tests.

"We want more and more Test this is hurting."

The setback for most of the countries is that they are playing just four to five Tests a year and

The Spokesman

Meeting on NEV policy 2025 ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a high-level meeting on the New Energy Vehicle (NEV) Policy 2025 at the Finance Division on Thursday.

Finance Minister chairs a Meeting on New Energy Vehicle Policy 2025

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a meeting on the New Energy Vehicle (NEV) State Bank of Pakistan, vehicle industry. The presen-Policy 2025 at the Finance Secretary Finance, Secretary tation emphasized policy inter-Division today. The policy aims to address key challenges in the adoption and production of electric vehicles (EVs)

in the transport sector.

The meeting was attended Policy, Additional Secretary national priorities. Trade Policy (Ministry of

and divisions.

Secretary Industries and by Federal Minister for Indus- Production delivered a detailed tries and Production Rana presentation outlining the Tanveer Hussain, Governor current state of the electric Commerce, Secretary Climate ventions to ensure smooth investment. Change, Member Custom adoption of NEVs in line with

transitioning to clean energy cers from relevant ministries tric vehicle production and Policy 2025-30. The Minister adoption, improving manufacturing processes, addressing infrastructure needs, necessary policy corrections to streamline EV production, addressing supply chain issues, and encouraging private sector $\,$

The Finance Minister stressed the importance of Discussions focused on the timely development and and sets ambitious targets for Commerce), and senior offi- overcoming barriers to elec- implementation of the NEV future for Pakistan.

stressed the importance of coordinated efforts to achieve policy targets and align them with Pakistan's environmental and economic priorities.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to expedite efforts for the successful implementation of the NEV Policy, paving the way for a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable

Romina Khurshid calls for national climate risk management strategy to tackle disasters

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the urgent need for robust climate risk management strategies at national, provincial, and district levels to enhance preparedness for natural disasters and reduce their economic, social, and environmental impacts.

Speaking at the "Humanitarian Futures," event organized by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) on Thursday, Ms. Romina emphasized the vital necessity of protecting vulnerable communities and maintaining the sustainability of lives and livelihoods amid climate-related challenges.

The event was attended by



sentatives of local and interna- and meteorological organizational humanitarian agencies, tions.

government officials, repre- academics, climate scientists,

Ms. Alam outlined the escalating severity of climate impacts that Pakistan is experi-

encing, citing vulnerabilities to extreme weather events such as devastating floods, heatwaves, droughts, desertification, and erratic rainfall patterns.

"These challenges have lead to significant economic, social, and environmental repercussions, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations, Ms. Romina stated. She added that despite Pakistan's ongoing struggles with these severe conditions, the government is making every effort within its capacity to mitigate

the impacts of climate change". "Following a similar catastrophe in 2010, Pakistan faced one of the worst flood disasters in its history in 2022 forcing displacement of millions people, destroyed crops, and damaged critical infrastructure," said Romina Khurshid Alam.

\$2b deposit to Pakistan for another



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The United Arab Emirates has extended the duration of its \$2 billion deposit for Pakistan by one year, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The deposit, which was set to mature today, has been renewed to help Pakistan manage financial pressures and strengthen its

economic position. The extension will support the country's foreign exchange reserves and contribute to economic

UAE extends | Pakistan's Mining Sector Lauded by \$2b deposit | Pakistan's Mining Sector Lauded by Minister Dr. Musadik Malik

Commerce Desk

RIYADH, JANUARY 16, 2025: The Future Minerals Forum (FMF) entered its second day, attracting over 20,000 registered visitors, including ministers, mining professionals, service providers, investors, and academics. The event continues to be a key gathering for stakeholders in the global mining industry.

The Pakistan Pavilion stood out as a highlight of the forum, drawing substantial attention from attendees. One visitor remarked, "If awards were given for best-designed pavilion, the Pakistan Pavilion would surely win." Dr. Musadik Malik, Minister of Petroleum and Water Resources for Pakistan, visited the pavilion to review its exhibits. He praised Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) for its efforts in organizing the pavilion, alongside the support from other partici-

pating companies.



Earlier in the day, Minister Malik participated in a panel discussion focused on fostering meet global mineral demand. His speech highlighted pragmatic approaches for enhancing potential investments. cooperation between public and private sectors, empha-

Investors from countries such as Turkey, China, and international collaboration to Chile expressed interest in Pakistan's growing mining opportunities, seeking insights into

The Pakistan delegation hosted a 90-minute session

to bolstering its mining sector. 11:00 AM. Speakers, including Minister Dr. Musadik Malik, Managing Director of Pakistan Petroleum Limited Mr. Imran Abbasy, and Project Director for Reko Diq, presented Pakistan's mining investment climate and the government's strategic vision for the sector's

sizing Pakistan's commitment on January 16, from 9:30 to growth. Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

Ishaq Dar chairs meeting to review proposals for reduction of electricity tariff for industry



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting to review proposals for reduction of electricity tariff for industry.

Meeting was attended by the Ministers of Finance, Power, EAD, Minister of State of Power & IT, Federal Secretaries of Ministries of

Finance, Power, Chairman FBR and other officials of relevant departments.

Ishaq Dar reviewed the existing policies and reiterated government's resolve to extend support to the industrial sector.

Ishaq Dar directed the concerned Ministries to make all efforts to provide relief to the consumers of electricity in industrial sector.

PM Shehbaz constitutes committee to review **Opposition's demands:** Rana Sana



跨 City Desk

day (today) and during the meeting be taken back. Opposition presented their charter

along with Irfan Siddiqui, Rana government's committee. Sana said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has constituted a PTI demands and prepare a compre-

hensive reply. Rana Sana said earlier PTI was it.

putting up two demands one was the return of stolen election mandate ISLAMABAD: PM Adviser on Politiand the second demand was that all cal Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan said of the cases registered against PTI that PTI and Government's nego-founder, party leaders and workers tiation committees met on Thurs- were of political nature which should

He said PTI has backed out of their of demands before the government. earlier demands and has not shared Talking to media in Islamabad any name and no of fake FIR with the

He said the government's reply will be final. Rana Sana also claimed that body comprising members of allies Opposition firsts shared its charter of the government which will review of demand with media and later presented it to the government and the govt body will give answer about

CM Maryam Launches 'CM Punjab Asaan Karobar Finance Scheme & Asaan Karobar Card'



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government has taken a mega step to promote business activities in the province. "CM Punjab Asaan Karobar Finance" and "Asaan Karobar Card" schemes have been launched. Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif officially inaugurated both the schemes. She while addressing the inauguration ceremony of Asaan Karobar Finance Scheme said, "Under the Asaan Karobar Finance Scheme, interest-free loans up to Rs. 10 lac to Rs. 3 crore will be provided. Payments will also be made in the mode of easiest installments. Loans worth Rs. 5 lac to Rs. 10 lac will be given through the Asaan Karobar Card. Those who wish to benefit from these schemes rates to start a small business."

can apply online today. Further information about the schemes can be obtained through helpline 1786." She added, "The Punjab govern-

ment has launched revolutionary schemes to promote small and medium enterprise businesses in the province.

These schemes hold the potential to change the destiny of Punjab province and Pakistan. Small and medium enterprise businesses are the mainstay of the economy. CM Punjab Asaan Karobar Finance and Asaan Karobar Card are the first and unique schemes of the Punjab government. Earlier, it was not easy to launch a business, now have made it easier through these schemes. Land will also be provided at very subsidized