



CM Punjab Laptop Scheme 2025: Registration likely to begin from THIS date

The government plans to distribute 50,000 latest laptops among meritorious students as part of the programme. Additionally, the chief minister promised that 2000 minority students will also receive laptops while students holding matriculation and intermediate are also eligible for the scheme.



Sindh bans baby formula milk sale without prescription

The Sindh Assembly has enacted the Sindh Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition Act, prohibiting the sale of baby formula without a doctor's prescription across the province. The new law mandates that all medical stores in Sindh will be required to sell infant milk products only with a prescription from a doctor, and packaging will clearly label the product as artificial milk.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurating an International Hotel on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz assures ease of doing business, facilitation to businessmen, investors

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured extensive efforts of the incumbent government to ensure ease of doing business and trade facilitation to businessmen for reviving economic growth. The prime minister, addressing the inauguration of six-star Movenpick Hotel in the federal capital, expressed optimism about the country's economic revival and reiterated the government's commitment to fostering progress across various sectors.

"It is a proud moment for Pakistan that a state-of-the-art international hotel has been launched. I commend the Centaurus Group for their nation-building efforts and thank the Movenpick management for bringing world-class hospitality to our country," said the Prime Minister. He highlighted the government's efforts to stabilize the economy, noting that inflation has reduced below 5 per cent, and the banking policy rate was under 13 per cent. He revealed that further reductions are expected following the

State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) meeting. He emphasized the growth in exports, particularly in the IT sector, and outlined the government's vision for economic development in agriculture, industry, IT, mining, and minerals. PM Shehbaz reaffirmed the government's stance on downsizing and rightsizing public entities to reduce government expenses. Announcing a new initiative for the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), he invited Pakistani investors

to participate in a transparent bidding process. "Just as banks were successfully privatized during the 1990s under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and are now thriving, PIA too will be transformed into a world-class airline, just as it was in the 1960s," he stated. He assured the audience that Pakistan is on track to conclude its final IMF program. The prime minister highlighted ongoing efforts to remove obstacles to foreign investment, noting that initiatives to improve the ease of doing business will

soon be launched. "Pakistan will resurrect as a great nation through the collective efforts of stakeholders and nation-builders," he said. The prime minister lauded the Centaurus Group for its contribution to nation-building and expressed hope for more such investments in the future. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed his government's commitment to fostering economic stability, promoting commerce, and ensuring Pakistan's resurgence as a progressive and thriving nation.

State Bank slashes policy rate by 100bps to 12 percent

Khuram Jaffrani

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday slashed policy rate by 100 basis points in the first monetary policy of 2025, ARY News reported.



"At its meeting today, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to cut the policy rate by 100 bps to 12 percent, effective from December 17, 2024," the SBP said in a statement. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting was chaired by SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad. The announcement for the new policy rate was made by the SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed in a press conference after the MPC meeting. The SBP chief said inflation is decreasing in Pakistan gradually and added the inflation dropped to 4.1pc in December 2024. The inflation rate will remain between 5 to 7 per cent in FY2024-25, he added. Mr. Jameel further said economic activities are gaining momentum in the country and

the current account remained surplus with over \$580mln. The SBP governor said Pakistan is currently holding \$16.19bln in its foreign reserves. It is to be noted that the SBP has slashed the policy rate by 1000 basis points in the last eight monetary policy announcements. Monetary policy plays a crucial role in tackling inflation and stabilizing the economy. Strategies like adjusting interest rates help regulate money supply and demand, curbing inflationary pressures. If implemented effectively, these measures could bring down inflation, restore economic confidence, strengthen purchasing power, and foster a stable environment for sustainable growth and development.

FO spokesperson rejects "baseless" allegations to target Pakistan-China friendship

City Desk

Responding to media speculations, the spokesperson categorically rejected baseless and unfounded allegations to target Pakistan-China friendship. He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the foundational principle of the One-China Policy which is a consistent cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and remains unchanged. The Spokesperson empha-



sized that China was Pakistan's all-weather strategic partner. This relationship is characterized by mutual trust, shared values, support on issues of core concern and a commitment to regional and global stability.

PM, ambassador of Morocco discuss bilateral ties



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House on Monday and discussed matters of bilateral interest. During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's deep appreciation to the King of Morocco, His Majesty King Muhammad VI and the government of Morocco for the support extended in rescuing stranded Pakistanis who survived the recent boat capsizing off the coast of Dakhla. He thanked the local Moroccan authorities

for extending their full cooperation to the Pakistani officials involved in repatriation of the survivors as well as the remains of those deceased. The ambassador of Morocco reaffirmed his country's commitment to further strengthen cooperation with Pakistan across all areas of shared interest. He assured the Prime Minister that he would continue to work closely with Pakistan side to explore new avenues of mutually beneficial collaboration. The two sides are working closely to convene meetings of the institutional consultative mechanisms, including Bilateral Political Consultations at an early date.

Imran Khan, Bushra challenge their conviction in Al-Qadir Trust case in IHC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi on Monday filed appeals in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against their conviction in the 190 million Pound case (Al-Qadir Trust case). In their appeals, Imran and Bushra said that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) misused its powers, and the trial court handed them prison terms in a rush, on the basis of an incomplete investigation. They said the fact that neither the text of the agreement signed with the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) was obtained nor the Agency officials were asked to cooperate with the investigators proved their point that the probe was incomplete. "The prosecution also failed to present proof against both of us," Imran and Bushra said. The couple prayed to the court to declare the trial court's verdict dated January 17, 2025 null and void and order their acquittal.



"We have filed appeals today and in the next few days it will go through clerical processes and then it will be fixed for a hearing," Imran Khan's lawyer Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry told AFP outside Islamabad High Court. Imran Khan has been convicted four times since his arrest, with two convictions overturned and the sentences in the other two cases suspended.

PTI protests, journalist's walkout against PECA law tweaks mar Senate session

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's protest and journalists' walkout against the amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act marred the Senate session on Monday. Senate Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasir presided over the session. When it began, PTI senators stood up in protest at their seats, chanting slogans against the PECA. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that it was a day for private members' bills and emphasised that the amendment bill related to the PECA was not on the agenda. Discussions will take place when the bill is presented in the House, he added. Last week, the National Assembly passed contentious amendments to PECA, which were introduced as a supplementary agenda just one day prior. The assembly suspended its rules to fast-track the bill's consideration and passage, raising concerns about the urgency behind such actions. Omar Ayub Khan, the Leader of the

Opposition in the NA, criticised the bill, alleging it was designed to further curtail freedom of speech. He expressed concern that the legislation could establish a framework for silencing those advocating for constitutional rights. The law minister added that the four provinces of Pakistan are like "four brothers" and that they must come together to resolve issues collaboratively. At one point, Deputy Chairman Nasir instructed JUI-F Senator Kamran Murtaza to address the issues raised by the journalists. He added that any national matter would be resolved through consensus and the law minister has made a commitment to the assembly. PPP Senator Shahadat Awan inquired about the scheduling of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting. In response, the law minister said that the CII Secretariat would convene the meeting. He added that if he were the chairman, he would have already called for a session.

Three major projects in Mirpur will now be my top priority: President AJK

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that three major projects in Mirpur will now be my top priority: construction of an international airport in Mirpur, construction of Mirpur-Muzaffarabad, Mansehra Motorway and establishment of CPEC Business Center in Mirpur. I will pay full attention to these three major projects.

Insha Allah, these projects will be completed soon and all resources will be utilized in this regard. Elections are being held next year. I will tell my workers that you should neither look right nor left, nor look up nor look down, nor look at anyone's shoulders. You should only look at me. Insha Allah, I will issue tickets for 13 constituencies of Mirpur division with my own hands in the upcoming elections. Insha Allah, my ticket holders from Mirpur division will be able to vote with public



power in the upcoming elections. The unsung heroes will achieve success. I have formally launched a public relations campaign by inaugurating my secretariat today and soon the scope of this relations campaign will spread to the ends of the state. Workers should now line up in the field of action.

I had made 3 big promises during my election campaign in the recent elections, including the completion of Rathua Haryam Bridge, the solution to the issue of sub-families and the construction of a parking plaza. Work has been started on the project to complete Rathua Haryam Bridge. Regarding additional families, PC-1

has been approved in the 20th Board of Governors meeting of the Mangla Dam Housing Authority, while the parking plaza project is in its final stages and its formal tender has been published. Now I will sit here myself and play my role in solving the problems of the people.

These views were expressed by the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Barrister Sultan Secretariat at OPF Chatrapati, Mirpur.

On this occasion, Minister for Power Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Minister for Physical Planning and Housing Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Minister for Public Works Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Minister for Finance Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Minister for Government Sabiha Siddique, Presidential Advisor Sardar Imtiaz Khan, Presidential Advisor Chaudhry Mehboob and Chairman OF Syed Qamar Raza were also present.

Corruption of more than one billion rupees in registry branch

Bureau report



FAISALABAD: Anti-Corruption Faisalabad has arrested former municipal officer Finance Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami on charges of corruption of more than one billion rupees. The accused will be produced in court and physical remand will be obtained. According to anti-corruption sources, in a case of corruption of more than one billion rupees in the registry branch of the Municipal Corporation Faisalabad, the anti-corruption team raided Lahore and arrested former municipal officer Finance Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami and transferred him to Faisalabad. The investigation officer will present the accused in court and request for physical remand. In the case registered in August 2024 on the complaint of the contractor of the Municipal Corporation Asad Babar, the registry muharrar city and president, head clerk Ghulam Yasin, Aamir Zia, Hafiz Imran are also named as accused. The accused committed corruption worth billions of rupees in the form of registry fees between 2018 and 2023. The two named accused, Ghulam Yasin and Hafiz Imran, have already been suspended.

Bhutta Stud Farm Kamalia Horse Placed First in Race

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A horde race was held at Lahore Club on January 5, 2025. Horses from all over Pakistan participated in this race. Apart from this, The brilliant horse HIGH VOLT bred by Bhutta Stud Farm Kamalia won the new year cup at Lahore race club and he won Rs and 3 million by beating all horses from Pakistan. Bhutta stud farm and racing incorporation owned by Chaudhry Aftab Hussain Bhutta is leading thoroughbred horse breeding and racing facility in Pakistan and Canada who imported horses from Europe and North America. Bhutta stud Farm located in 54/2 Tukra Kamalia district Toba Tek Singh is producing high quality race horses internationally.



Crackdown against Encroachments

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH, KAMALIA: Assistant Commissioner and Administrator Municipal Committee Kamalia Iqra Nasir and Chief Officer Ali Raza led the encroachment operation to remove the encroachments. An operation has been conducted in which illegal encroachments have been carried out in other areas including Iqbal Bazar and seized several items were taken. On this occasion, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Kamalia Ali Raza said that encroachment in Kamalia will not be tolerated under any circumstances, so shopkeepers should keep their goods within the limits of their shops, otherwise the goods will be confiscated and along with FIR will also be registered.



Plastic-Free Punjab: Environmental Protection Agency conducted operations in various markets

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: In line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for a plastic-free Punjab, the District Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, has directed the Environmental Protection Agency Attock to take active measures to eliminate substandard plastic from the district. During the current month, the department conducted operations in various markets of Attock, confiscating approximately 1,000 kilograms of prohibited shopping bags for the state. Additionally, two shops were sealed. The Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Agency Attock stated that no one would be allowed to engage in single-use plastic business without proper registration. All major users, wholesalers, retailers, and even recyclers in the district must register and obtain licenses from the Punjab Environmental Protection Department. To facilitate the registration process, a help desk has been established at the district office of the department. Furthermore, there is a complete ban on disposable polystyrene containers, cups, spoons, plates, and other single-use plastics. Regarding shopping bags, the Deputy Director emphasized that bags with a thickness of less than 75 microns or dimensions smaller than 12x16 inches are strictly prohibited. If found in possession of such items, the goods will be confiscated, fines of up to Rs. 50,000 may be imposed, and the shop may be sealed. The Deputy Director expressed hope that the public would cooperate in ensuring compliance with this ban to help protect the environment.

Dr. Shahid Siddiqui's book "Aasman Dar Aasman" launched at AIOU

ISLAMABAD: A launching ceremony of a book titled "Aasman Dar Aasman" by former Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Professor Dr. Shahid Siddiqui was held at the University, the other day.

The book narrates the stories of those artists from the subcontinent who were carried across borders by the waves of partition. It features the moments and events from the lives of 45 renowned personalities, vividly portrayed by the author. The event was graced by the Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood; Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, Dr. Najiba Arif; Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir; poet and columnist Haris Khaliq; and writer and journalist Rauf Klasra, who shared their thoughts about the book.

The speakers highlighted that the book was a profound collection of the region's social history and is adorned with the finest elements of art, poetry, and literature. They emphasized that the pain of migration deeply impacted human lives, often leaving scars that last for generations. This anguish is profoundly reflected on every page of the book. They noted that the partition was a political act, the love for one's homeland endures, transcending distances and maintaining ties of affection between the two nations, they said.

The speakers expressed the hope that this book would play a significant role in society by becoming a milestone in instilling a deep love for one's roots in future generations. The desire for the publication of a second volume of the book was also voiced during the event, which would feature personalities who migrated to India post-Partition. The sketches by artist Ahmad Habib, included in the book, were appreciated.

Pak - Azerbaijan Relations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Azerbaijan's Ambassador Khazar Farhadov hold a crucial meeting to strengthen Pakistan-Azerbaijan economic ties. Focus on Trade House, Joint Chamber, and B2B Forums.



Photo: PID

PTI's government strives to address public issues at their doorstep for the welfare of the people

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and Member of the Provincial Assembly Iftikhar Mashwani stated that PTI's government strives to address public issues at their doorstep for the welfare of the people. The PTI government has arranged consistent funding for journalists and lawyers and has established a formal mechanism to provide annual grants to press clubs. This arrangement ensures that registered press clubs receive annual financial aid.

He expressed these views while congratulating the newly elected officials of the Takht Bhai Press Club for 2025. Mashwani congratulated the new cabinet, including President Muslim Khan Sabir, Vice President Haji Hidayatullah Mohmand, General



Secretary Akbar Khan Yousafzai, Joint Secretary Javed Alam Mohmand, and Finance Secretary Muhammad Shahid Khan. He assured complete cooperation on behalf of himself and the provincial government.

Muslim Conference is the founding party of martyrs, ghazis and the freedom movement: Sardar Attique

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD/RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that the Muslim Conference is the founding party of martyrs, ghazis and the freedom movement, this party is also the guarantor of the identity of Kashmir. The Kashmir movement is going through critical stages, India could not suppress the movement despite using all its strength. In such circumstances, a heavy responsibility falls on the people and political parties of Azad Kashmir. The



people here have to remain associated with the freedom movement and the Muslim Conference is an important front of the movement. Sardar Attique

expressed while talking to the central leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Azad Kashmir Ch Tariq Farooq met him T Mujahid Manzil yesterday

and inquired about his wife health and offered Fateha Sardar Attique causing late Tehmoor Abbasi death. Quetta, Chaudhry Naeem Karim, Sardar Shaukat Afzal Abbasi, Sardar Daulat Nazir Abbasi and Syed Ajmal Hussain Naqvi, the central leaders of Pakistan Muslim. They said that India is being humiliated in Kashmir, India is having to bear the shame at the global level. Modi has disgraced India in the world by proving its claim of secularism and democracy false. Now the United Nations and international organizations should prepare a clear plan of action to resolve the Kashmir issue and implement it.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings
Fajr 5:42 am
Zohr 12:20 pm
Asr 3:56 pm
Maghrib 5:34 pm
Isha 7:00 pm

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

Women Police Stations
Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

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

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

DEPARTMENTS
CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04

PM's aide proposes adoption of African crop strategies to combat food insecurity in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: UNICEF Representative in Pakistan Abdullah A. Fadil met with Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam here on Monday. They discussed critical issues related to climate change, food security, and the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly children. The meeting underscored the importance of joint efforts between the government and international organizations to combat the impacts of climate-related disasters, including droughts and extreme weather events.

Ms. Alam emphasized the importance of empowering young girls with climate-resilient skills. Referring to her recent meeting with Dr. Haddy, the head of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), Ms. Alam underscored the need for green-skilled education programs for girls. These programs, she noted, would equip young women with the tools to navigate the challenges of a changing climate and become leaders in climate action.

Ms. Alam also discussed the disproportionate impact of climate change on children, who are particularly vulnerable due to their limited capacity to adapt to environmental stresses. "What we have learned from floods in 2022, climate change-caused disasters in Pakistan is that the country, already one of the most climate-affected in the world, is experiencing intensified impacts, including extreme heatwaves, flooding, and shifting weather patterns," she stated. "These disruptions are having a devastating effect on children, especially those living in poverty."

Abdullah A. Fadil highlighted the UNICEF's ongoing commitment to supporting the country's most vulnerable populations, especially children, by providing aid in health, education, water, and sanitation sectors. Both parties agreed that targeted interventions are crucial to mitigating the climate-related vulnerabilities faced by children and ensuring their future well-being.

They emphasized the need for enhanced collaboration to develop sustainable and inclusive solutions to



climate-related challenges and expressed their commitment to integrating chil-

dren's needs into climate policies and actions, ensuring that the most vulner-

able populations are not left behind in the fight against climate change.

Chaudhry Inam says millions children deprived of education is matter of concern

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Awam Pakistan Party central leader Chaudhry Inam Zafar said that more than 25 million children are deprived of education is a matter of concern. It is the responsibility of the state to provide free and compulsory education to children. Access to education, health, and basic resources for the common citizen is among the top priorities of the Awam Pakistan Party.

He said this during an important meeting. On this occasion, they were accompanied by Samina Shoaib, organizer of the Awam Pakistan Party Metropolitan Women's Section Rawalpindi, Islamabad organizer Zunira Malik and Male Wing Metropolitan Rawalpindi organizer Nazir Ahmed Kashmiri were present with him. Central leader of the Awam Pakistan Party, Chaudhry Inam Zafar, emphasized the education of children and said that Pakistan's development is not possible without basic and higher education. The fact that more than 25 million children are deprived of education proves that education was not a priority in previous governments. He further said that facilitating the common man's access to education and health is the completion of a stable society. Samina Shoaib and Zunaira Malik said that the education of girls along with boys should never be ignored.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Fiction Writer Mazharul Islam presenting a shield to the British High Commissioner Ms Jane Marriott during an award-giving ceremony in honor of the British author and broadcaster Mishal Husain at the Islamabad Club. Mishal Husain, Chairperson of the Perveen Qadir Trust Mrs Parveen Qadir Agha and Secretary General, Raana Seerat are also present on the occasion.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

National Dialogue on ASP Focuses on Building Resilience against Climate Change and Disasters

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA) and GIZ hosted the National Dialogue on Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) in Islamabad with the support of the German Development Cooperation. The event brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, experts, and development practitioners, to discuss integrated solutions for addressing the challenges of climate change, disaster management, and social protection.

In her opening address, Vice Chairperson Punjab Social Protection Authority, Jahaan Ara Manzoor Wattoo, the



visionary leader and driving force behind the event, emphasized the critical importance of resilience, inclusion, and dignity in the face of climate challenges. She highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable popula-

tions, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Senator Sherry Rehman, Chairperson / Convener of the Senate standing Committee on Climate Change and Environment Coordinator, as the

keynote speaker, said, "It's important to continue to invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, to invest in alternative livelihoods, to empower women as the front line of defense in creating resilience."

Ms. Johanna Knoess, Head of Social Protection GIZ, speaking at the National Dialogue, highlighted that adaptive social protection bridges the gap between social safety protection nets, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management. "This concept goes beyond individual risks, addressing collective challenges such as climate-induced disasters, nutrition and health outcomes, and regional disparities," she stated.

Book "Aasman Dar Aasman" launches at AIOU



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A book launch ceremony for "Aasman Dar Aasman" by former Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Shahid Siddiqui, was held yesterday at the university. The book narrates the stories of those artists from the subcontinent who were carried across borders by the waves of Partition. It features the moments and events from the lives of 45 renowned personalities, vividly portrayed by the author.

The event was graced by the Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood; Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, Dr. Najiba Arif; Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir; poet and columnist Haris Khalique; and writer and journalist Rauf Klasra, who shared their thoughts about the book.

The speakers highlighted that the book is a profound collection of the region's social history and is adorned with the finest elements of art, poetry, and literature. They emphasized that the pain of migration deeply impacts human lives, often leaving scars that last for generations.

The ceremony was organized by the Department of Urdu and the Directorate of Regional Services. The event was moderated by Dr. Arshad Mahmood Nashad, Chairman of the Department of Urdu. A large number of university faculty members, senior officers, and students attended the event.

UBG leadership offered condolences for businessman Jamaluddin

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD:

The high leadership of the United Business Group (UBG) visited the residence of the late prominent businessman Jamaluddin from Balochistan, who tragically passed away in a traffic accident, to offer condolences and pray for the eternal peace of his soul. UBG's Chief Patron SM Tanveer, Secretary-General Zafar Bakhtawari, Hanif Goher, Ahmad Channay, Ahsen Zafar Bakhtawari, and Furqan Abdul Qadir specially traveled from Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad to Quetta. The UBG leadership expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of Jamaluddin, conveying condolences to his brothers, Dr. Kamaluddin, Haji Salahuddin, Haji Alawaluddin, Haji Sirajuddin, and his sons Mir Wais Khan, Idris Khan, Waris Khan, Mohammad Humayun Khan Advocate, and Mohammad Yousaf Khan Advocate.

The UBG leaders praised the business and social services of the late Jamaluddin, stating that his death has created a void in the business world. They expressed their commitment to always remembering his services and supporting his family.

SM Tanveer said, "Jamaluddin was an unparalleled businessman and an active member of the community. His passing is a great loss not only to his family but also to the entire business community. We stand in solidarity with his family and pray for the eternal peace of his soul."

Zafar Bakhtawari added, "Jamaluddin's character and his services will always be remembered. His loss is deeply felt by all of us. We pray that Allah grants him forgiveness and provides patience to his family."

Hanif Goher, Ahmad Channay, Ahsen Zafar Bakhtawari, Furqan Abdul Qadir stated, "Jamaluddin's passing is a shock to all of us. He held an important position in the business community, and his absence has left a gap. We pray that Allah grants him forgiveness and provides patience to his family."

In addition to the UBG leaders, former President of FPCCI Daru Khan, Ghulam Farooq, Jumma Khan, Wali Khan, Asfandyar Mandokhel, Taro Khan, Haji Khojan, Alawaluddin Mari, and other members of the business community were also present for the prayer.

Dr. Kamaluddin and Mohammad Idris Khan thanked the UBG leadership, saying that their visit brought some comfort to their grief. "The arrival of UBG's leadership for condolences has eased our sorrow," they said.

Urology department inaugurated in Benazir Bhutto Hospital Rawalpindi

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: With the collaboration of Savour Foods, an operation theater was inaugurated in the urology department of Benazir Bhutto Hospital Rawalpindi. The operation theater was inaugurated by the founder of Savour Foods Chaudhry Muhammad Amin, the CEO of Savour Foods Chaudhry Muhammad Naem and the Amin family. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Umar VC Rawalpindi Medical University specially participated in the opening ceremony of the operation theater. Dr. Tahir Rizvi MS Benazir Bhutto Hospital and Dr. Zain Amer Head of Urology Department were also present. Prof Arshad Ahmad, Mirza Mansoor Baig, Chaudhry Muhammad Mubeen, Chaudhry



Khalid, Chaudhry Zahid Mehmood, Shakir Sharif and Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood also specially participated.

On this occasion Chaudhry Muhammad Naem said that the purpose of setting up the operation theater is to

create convenience for people, trying to make as many people as possible benefit.

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Setbacks Encountered in Trump's Immigration Crackdown

Recent developments have posed challenges to the U.S. deportation policy under President Trump's administration. On January 24, 2025, Mexico denied permission for a U.S. military aircraft, specifically a C-17 transport plane, carrying approximately 80 deported migrants to land in the country, citing concerns over sovereignty and the treatment of deportees. Similarly, Colombia has rejected U.S. military flights carrying deported Colombian migrants, with President Gustavo Petro emphasizing the need for dignified and respectful treatment of migrants while rejecting their criminalization.

Unauthorized immigration remains a complex and multifaceted issue in the United States. As of 2022, the United States is home to approximately 12 million unauthorized immigrants. Among them, Mexico has the largest share, with an estimated 4.81 million unauthorized immigrants. Guatemala follows with 750,000, while El Salvador and Honduras account for 710,000 and 560,000, respectively. Beyond Central America, the Philippines contributes 350,000 unauthorized immigrants, Venezuela 320,000, Colombia 240,000, and Brazil 230,000. Additionally, India and China have significant unauthorized populations, with 220,000 and 210,000 individuals, respectively. Many individuals from these countries initially arrive through legal channels, such as student or tourist visas, and subsequently overstay their permitted duration, thereby becoming unauthorized residents.

Additionally, illegal migrants were involved in drug cartels and human trafficking, including fentanyl, illegal firearms, and large sums of cash that

continue to flow across the southern border due to inadequate enforcement measures.

The Trump administration presented a robust strategy to counter illegal immigration, focusing on stronger enforcement, judicial reforms, and national security enhancements. The plan prioritizes securing the border, deporting criminal migrants, dismantling human trafficking networks, and improving transparency between federal and state agencies.

The administration is also committed to addressing the growing backlog of cases to clear the pending immigration cases, from 1.4 million to 3.5 million between 2021 and 2024, with over 340,000 asylum claims, and to investigating the status of missing migrant children and strengthening enforcement against traffickers who prey on vulnerable individuals.

Since President Trump's inauguration, his administration has aggressively pursued its illegal immigration deportation policy. Within the first few days, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducted raids in multiple cities, resulting in the arrest of 538 undocumented immigrants, including individuals identified as gang members and those convicted of sex crimes against minors. Additionally, the administration's plan to deport migrants with temporary residence permits granted during the previous administration has sparked legal and ethical debates.

However, refusals of Mexico and Colombia to reject deportation flights

have given a first setback to the speed and efficiency of deportation efforts. This situation poses a challenge to Trump's policy, forcing the U.S. to engage in diplomatic negotiations, establish clear deportation mechanisms and methodologies, and adhere to both local and international laws and protocols before implementing a unilateral deportation strategy.

The Trump administration's policy of deporting illegal immigrants is based on both common sense and legality. While there may be justifications and counterarguments to this approach, on the touchstone of legal principles and rational policymaking, the deportation of individuals who have entered the country through illegal or shortcut means must be handled strictly in accordance with the law.

Immigration laws exist to ensure national security, economic stability, and public order, and failing to enforce them undermines the legitimacy of the legal immigration system, encourages further illegal migration, and places undue pressure on public resources.

The responsibility lies with the countries of origin to take back their citizens with dignity and respect, establish rehabilitation centers, and provide them with the necessary support to reintegrate into their societies or apply legally for migration in the future. Ironically, many of these nations refuse to accept their own deported citizens while expecting the United States to grant them legal residency or citizenship, an approach that lacks both logical and legal justification. While the USA has the full legal right

and authority to deport these individuals, it may consider demonstrating magnanimity and compassion by ensuring that illegal immigrants are treated with dignity and respect.

Additionally, it should exercise extreme restraint in addressing this critical issue with wisdom and diplomacy, seeking appropriate diplomatic solutions rather than resorting to coercion, pressure tactics, or the use of military force to enforce its immigration policies. A measured and strategic approach would uphold international norms, strengthen bilateral relations, and promote cooperation, ensuring that the issue is resolved in a manner that aligns with both legal principles and humanitarian values.

Moreover, the USA, as a champion and advocate of human rights and decency, bears an additional moral responsibility beyond common sense and legality toward illegal immigrants who have arrived in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families after enduring immense hardships and suffering.

Furthermore, those who are genuinely hardworking, law-abiding, and contributing to the U.S. economy and growth should be given a pathway to remain in the country, provided they meet the bare minimum legal requirements. Such an approach would not only uphold the nation's humanitarian values but also recognize the contributions of immigrants, who play a vital role in various sectors of the economy.

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.



Qamar Bashir

UNSC action to end crisis in DR Congo

Pakistan has urged the UN Security Council to address the root cause of the conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) — the illegal exploitation of its natural resources — as the 15-member body met in an emergency session triggered by spiraling violence and killings in that region, while underscoring the need for an effective action to end the crisis.

"This requires greater oversight and traceability mechanisms, working in coordination with the DRC government and regional and international partners," Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said.

Since the renewed offensives by Rwandan-backed rebels — M23 — near Goma on Jan. 23, hundreds of thousands of people have once again been forced to flee multiple active conflict zones, with reception and assistance capacities already overstretched.

Speaking in the debate, Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, called on the DRC and Rwanda to urgently resume their dialogue under the Luanda process mediated by President Lourenco of Angola to resolve the crisis.

Earlier this week, Ambassador Akram discussed the escalating fighting in that region with the foreign ministers of DRC and Rwanda.

Pakistan, he said, supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC in accordance, and deplored any foreign intervention in its internal affairs.

"We call for the withdrawal of Rwandan forces from the territory of the DRC," the Pakistani envoy said.

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy condemned the attacks in North and now South Kivu by M23 fighters, noting that they captured Sake and encircled Goma, causing sizeable civilian casualties as well as attacking UN and African peacekeepers, several of whom have been killed or injured.

"These attacks on civilians and UN peacekeepers, deployed under the mandate of the Security Council, constitute war crimes and those responsible for perpetrating, supporting or sponsoring these attacks must be held accountable," he said.

"We demand that the M23 halt its attacks immediately — including spoofing and jamming, withdraw from the areas it has occupied and observe the ceasefire agreement of 31 July 2024."

Admiring the courage of Blue Helmets, Ambassador Akram urged MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping force in DRC, and the UN to take immediate measures to ensure the safety and security of the UN civilians and that of the UN and other peacekeeping units in Eastern DRC.

"We are particularly concerned for the Pakistani Artillery Battery located in Sake and adjacent parts," he said, pointing out that it is highly exposed without supporting forces to defend itself against the attacking M23 forces.



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

The Growing Threat of Cyber Attacks: Protecting Your Digital Life

The internet and digital technologies have transformed how we live, work, and communicate. However, this growing reliance on technology has also made us more vulnerable to cyber threats. Cyber attacks, targeting individuals, businesses, and governments, are becoming increasingly frequent and sophisticated. These attacks often result in data breaches, financial losses, and the misuse of personal accounts, making it essential to understand the risks and adopt preventive measures.

One of the most severe consequences of cyber attacks is data leakage. Hackers infiltrate systems to steal sensitive information, including passwords, credit card details, and personal records. Stolen data is often sold on the dark web or exploited for identity theft and fraud. Businesses face significant losses due to data breaches, including hefty fines, reputational damage, and the erosion of customer trust. For individuals, the exposure of personal information can have long-term effects, including financial instability and emotional distress. High-profile cases involving massive data leaks from social media platforms and major corporations emphasize the urgency of strengthening cyber security measures.

Financial losses are another critical outcome of cyber attacks. Criminals employ phishing scams, malware, and ransomware to gain unauthorized access to financial accounts. For businesses, ransomware attacks can halt operations, leading to significant revenue losses. For individuals, the impact is equally devastating, with unauthorized transactions,

drained bank accounts, and credit card fraud being common occurrences. The rise of digital payment systems has made consumers more vulnerable, highlighting the importance of vigilance and proactive security measures to protect financial assets.

Personal accounts, including social media and messaging platforms, are also frequent targets for cybercriminals. Once hacked, these accounts are often used to spread misinformation, scam contacts, or post offensive content, causing reputational damage and emotional distress for the victims. The misuse of personal identities underscores the importance of securing accounts with strong passwords and multi-factor authentication.

Websites, whether personal or business-oriented, are not immune to cyber threats. Hackers often deface websites, inject malicious code, or post harmful content, leading to a loss of trust among visitors. For businesses, a compromised website can result in financial losses and reputational harm, as customers may avoid engaging with a company they perceive as insecure. In addition, search engines may blacklist hacked websites, further reducing their visibility and credibility.

Financial account hacking is another alarming consequence of cybercrime. Cybercriminals often exploit online banking systems, payment platforms, or digital wallets to execute fraudulent transactions. Victims of such attacks face lengthy processes to recover their financial stability. As digital payments become more prevalent, the need for robust security measures becomes even more critical

to protect consumers and businesses from such vulnerabilities.

While technological vulnerabilities are a key factor in cyber attacks, human error remains a significant contributor. Social engineering tactics, such as phishing emails, fraudulent phone calls, and fake text messages, manipulate individuals into revealing sensitive information. Even the most advanced security systems can fail if individuals fall victim to these tactics, highlighting the need for awareness and education in combating cyber threats.

Adopting proactive measures is essential to minimize the risks associated with cyber attacks. This includes using strong and unique passwords, enabling two-factor authentication for added security, and staying vigilant against phishing attempts by verifying the authenticity of messages and emails. Keeping software and antivirus programs updated is crucial to addressing vulnerabilities, while regular monitoring of financial accounts and setting transaction alerts can help detect suspicious activities early. Additionally, backing up important data ensures that individuals and businesses can recover quickly in case of ransomware attacks or system failures.

Cyber threats are an unavoidable reality in the digital age, with far-reaching consequences ranging from data breaches and financial losses to the misuse of personal accounts. As technology evolves, so do the tactics employed by cybercriminals. By prioritizing cyber security, staying informed, and adopting preventative measures, individuals and organizations can significantly reduce their exposure to these risks. In an era where data is the new currency, protecting it is not just an option but a necessity



Ahsan Ansari

Addressing Linguistic and Cultural Divides in Pakistan

The ongoing tension surrounding the World Punjabi International Conference has highlighted deep-rooted societal challenges in Pakistan. This issue, centered on the organization and venue of the conference, has sparked outrage in the Seraiki region, where people consider it an affront to their cultural identity. Protests led by members of Baba Farid's family, a revered figure and symbol of the Seraiki identity, have been held in multiple areas, with warnings of more severe reactions if their concerns remain unaddressed. Simultaneously, proponents of the Punjabi language have taken to social media with harsh and often provocative rhetoric, escalating tensions further. This intensifying divide raises serious concerns about Pakistan's unity and identity.

Such conflicts are not new in Pakistani society. They emerge repeatedly, often shaking the foundation of national solidarity and providing opportunities for anti-state elements to exploit these divides. A society that transforms into a state inherently requires a framework of inclusivity, where all religions, cultures, and ethnicities coexist harmoniously. However, the problem arises when individuals or groups prioritize their ethnic or linguistic identity over collective unity, fostering feelings of superiority and alienation. This dynamic not only weakens the social fabric but also jeopardizes the nation's progress.

The current debate between Punjabi and Seraiki language proponents is emblematic of this broader challenge. Languages are, at their core, human creations. They evolve naturally over time, influenced by regional and historical contexts, giving rise to unique cultures and identities. While these differences are valuable and worth preserving, making them a basis for

division is deeply counterproductive. By amplifying such conflicts, we risk not only fueling animosities between communities but also undermining Pakistan's federal structure and shared identity.

The solution to these issues lies in creating a truly inclusive society where every individual, regardless of their linguistic, ethnic, or cultural background, feels a sense of belonging. Pakistan is a country blessed with rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and this diversity should be celebrated as a strength rather than a weakness. The focus should be on fostering mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation between different groups.

To achieve this, the state and society must prioritize inclusivity in policymaking, education, and representation. Efforts should be made to highlight commonalities rather than differences, promoting shared values and collective goals. Additionally, platforms for dialogue must be established to address grievances and resolve conflicts amicably. Encouraging cultural exchanges, preserving regional languages, and celebrating diversity can help bridge divides and foster unity.

In today's interconnected world, no country can afford internal divisions. For Pakistan to progress, it must ensure that every citizen feels valued and empowered, irrespective of their linguistic or cultural affiliations. A nation that embraces its diversity while ensuring equal opportunities for all is not only stronger but also more resilient to internal and external challenges. Thus, inclusivity is not just a need but a necessity for Pakistan's unity, stability, and future growth.

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M Azam Tariq

Turkmenistan considers 2025 as Year of Peace, trust: Envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Turkmenistan considers the decision to declare 2025 as the 'International Year of Peace and Trust' as a global-scale event and a genuine opportunity for a qualitative transition to a new stage in international relations, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, Atadjan Movlamov said in a media briefing to local journalists.

He said that based on this, during the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Turkmenistan initiated the General Assembly resolution "International Year of Peace and Trust, 2025", which was adopted unanimously with the co-sponsorship of 86 states including Pakistan.

It reflects the fundamental purposes and principles of the UN Charter, in particular the commitments to settle disputes by peaceful means and methods, he said.

The envoy said that the resolution "International Year of Peace and Trust, 2025" represents the practical embodiment of the philosophy of new international relations "Dialogue is a guarantee of peace", announced by the National Leader of the

Turkmen people, Chairman of the Hawk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

He said the International Year of Peace and Trust logically coincides with the 30th anniversary



sary of the universal recognition of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan, in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution 50/80 "Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan", unanimously adopted on 12 December 1995, he said.

Atadjan Movlamov said the neutral status of our country was reaffirmed by General Assembly resolution 69/285 of 3 June 2015 and Over the years, the evolution of our neutrality has proven its compliance with the basic values and goals of the UN, and has been recognized as a common asset of the world community.

He said this was further affirmed by the proclamation of December 12 as the Inter-

national Day of Neutrality by the General Assembly, at the initiative of Turkmenistan.

Pakistani cuisine recipes He said that based on this neutrality, its principles and practical tools should be used much more widely by the international community.

Essentially, Turkmenistan's initiative is an invitation and call to all states to embark on joint efforts encompassing the political, ideological, and practical aspects of implementing the idea of peace and trust as a fundamental principle of the world order, he said.

The Ambassador said that acting in this logic, in 2023, the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov put forward an initiative to develop a Global Security Strategy from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly.

"We see it as a system of views and principles for the organization of interstate and international relations in the 21st century. The strategy entails a comprehensive approach to addressing global challenges, based on the interconnection of all aspects of security - military-political, economic, energy, environmental, biological, man-made, informational. Based on this, the Global Security Strategy is intended to serve as an updated international legal framework for inter-state relations, reflecting the existing objective realities and needs of global development."

Turkman Ambassador said that Embassy of Turkmenistan in the Pakistan all this repre-



sents a very complex situation, to an era of bloc and civilizational confrontation, significantly complicating multilateral cooperation in addressing new challenges and threats, achieving sustainable development goals, ensuring equitable distribution of resources, guaranteeing food security, overcoming poverty

and inequality, responding to climate change and tackling a wide range of

other pressing issues of global significance.

He said that Turkmenistan will make every effort to achieve this and in the International Year of Peace and Trust, Turkmenistan proposes to intensify a comprehensive strategy of cooperation for promoting the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is a firm conviction that the time has come to launch an inclusive, full-scale, multi-level and systemic dialogue between Central Asia and the UN. This direction will become one of the priorities of Turkmenistan's activities during the International Year of Peace and Trust.

The envoy said that Turkmenistan's steps are also aimed at joint work in the area of Sustainable Development Goals, to create viable and long-term models of geoeconomics.

The International Year of Peace and Trust, 2025 is considered by Turkmenistan in the context of the practical implementation of the "Pact for the Future", adopted in September 2024 at the "Summit of the Future" convened at the initiative of the UN Secretary-General, he said.

He said that the approaches and views outlined are a common political platform for the implementation of the specific measures and events proposed by Turkmenistan in the International Year of Peace and Trust.

HFP envisions empowering the youth of the country by making them skilled and self-reliant: Sadia Rashid

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Hamdard Foundation Pakistan (HFP) partnered with Team Karachi Welfare Society in their welfare initiatives and participated as the main sponsor in Team Karachi's grand ceremony held on January 26 at the local hall of Korangi District, titled "Self-Reliance Employment Project." The event celebrated the graduation of 155 individuals, including 71 men and 84 women, from the Team Karachi Sewing Center. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of HFP, graced the occasion as the chief guest and distributed certificates and sewing machines to the graduates who completed the skill course. The ceremony also provided 10 transport rickshaws and five loader rickshaws to needy individuals with the support of HFP. Faisal Nadeem, Chief Operating Officer of Hamdard Pakistan, Abu Talib Bhutto, Group Director, and Syed Muhammad Arsalan, Director of HFP, also attended the event.

In a keynote address, Ms. Sadia



Rashid said: "The determination of the city's youth to improve the lives of their fellow citizens through their own efforts, coupled with their sense of responsibility, sincerity, and passion for serving humanity, is truly admirable and worth emulating. HFP envisions

empowering the nation's youth by making them skilled and self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency, achieved through skill and hard work, is a blessing from Allah, enabling individuals to rely on Allah alone and free themselves from dependency on others."

She also said: "To fulfill this vision, HFP provides vocational training alongside education to children from 28 villages surrounding Madinat-ul-Hikmah through the Hamdard Village School. Vocational training not only fosters creativity and imagination but

also brings blessings to one's efforts. While life may bring challenges, a skilled, talented, and trained individual can face difficulties with courage and emerge stronger."

Faisal Nadeem said: "Aligned with Ms. Sadia Rashid's vision of a 'Healthy Skilled Pakistan,' HFP is actively engaged in public service with sincere intentions. Founded by Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, Hamdard is committed to serving humanity by producing and selling high-quality, affordable medicines and herbal products to generate resources for helping humanity. This visionary approach of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said has elevated Hamdard Pakistan into a leading herbal products manufacturer, making Pakistan one of the few countries with a comprehensive alternative healthcare system."

He also said: "The dedication and sincerity demonstrated by the organizers of Team Karachi in serving fellow desperate Karachiites are truly commendable and a source of pride

for all of us. I pray for the continued success of Team Karachi in achieving its noble goals."

Syed Muhammad Arsalan highlighted the numerous initiatives undertaken by HFP and informed the participants about its various education and skill development programs, which they can also benefit from. He emphasized a recently launched program in collaboration with the Berlitz Institute, where students not only receive professional training but are also provided with suitable employment opportunities after completing the course.

Team Karachi President, Saqib Zeeshan said: "The training and certificates obtained by the students from the sewing center will aid them in securing employment. He further stated that the provision of sewing machines to the graduates aims to inspire them to create dignified employment opportunities for themselves and to motivate them toward self-reliance. Several students undergoing training demonstrated exceptional performance."

ISSI hosts launch of HDF-HSF book on Post-Taliban Afghanistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) hosted the launch of the book 'Navigating Uncertainty: Perspectives on Post-Taliban Afghanistan and Geopolitical Footsteps,' edited by Mr. Sheharyar Khan and jointly published by the Hans Seidel Foundation (HSF) and the National Dialogue Forum (NDF). The speakers at the book launch included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG, ISSI; Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA, ISSI; Mr. Sheharyar Khan, Executive Director NDF; Ambassador Mansoor Ahmed Khan, Pakistan's former Ambassador to Afghanistan; Dr. Hassan Abbas, Distinguished Professor Near East South Asia Strategic Studies Centre (NESAS), National Defense University in Washington D. C.; and Mr. Arno Kirchhof, Deputy Head of Mission,

German Embassy, Islamabad. Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, former Foreign Minister was the Keynote speaker and Chief Guest.

Ms. Amina Khan, in her opening remarks, stated that the book represents a significant intellectual contribution providing nuanced and wide ranging perspectives on a subject of profound importance as reflected in the title. She further said that at a time when the discourse on Afghanistan often seems dominated by narratives from outside the region, it is encouraging to see such a compelling body of work emerge from within our own part of the world, not only adding to the academic discourse but more so providing authenticity often missing in external narratives.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, speaking on the occasion, stated that for more than four decades now, Afghanistan has figured prominently in the news. This includes: The Soviet invasion in 1979, the massive outflow of refugees, the gun-running and narcotics trafficking,

the concertation of fighters from different parts of the world to partake in the Afghan Jihad, the protracted UN-facilitated Geneva Accords and the Soviet withdrawal, the end of the Cold War, the country's lapse into a fratricidal civil war, the growing profile of Al-Qaeda, the rise and rule of the Taliban (1.0), the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent U. S.-led military operation, the 20-year long ISAF presence, the incompetence and corruption of successive Kabul regimes during this period, and finally the dramatic events of August 2021.

Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, while giving his keynote address stated that the book is a reminder that Afghanistan is a reality and has to be dealt with. The post-withdrawal Afghanistan for the first time in many decades is territorially united. There is a tremendous decline in narcotics, increase in primary school enrolment, and a lot of attention is being paid to rural Afghanistan. Mr. Sheharyar Khan, while

introducing the book, said that Afghanistan — often regarded as the heart of Asia — has long been at the crossroads of cultures, conflicts, and aspirations. Following the seismic shift marked by the Taliban's return to power, it became evident that we needed to look beyond the prevailing narratives of war and chaos.

Dr. Hassan Abbas highlighted key issues surrounding Taliban governance, security, and regional dynamics. He emphasized that the Taliban have demonstrated remarkable adaptability, retaining much of the existing infrastructure, with power centralized in Kandahar, where all major decisions are made.

Ambassador Mansoor Khan highlighted that while the Doha Peace Agreement ended the war in Afghanistan, it failed to resolve internal conflicts, which remain influenced by great power dynamics.

Mr. Arno Kirchhof underscored the importance of reflecting on the lessons learned from the



Taliban's governance between 2001 and 2021, acknowledging Afghanistan's pivotal role on the global stage and Germany's continued support in its development. Highlighting a noticeable decline in narcotics production,

he emphasized the critical need to address humanitarian challenges, safeguard human rights, and prioritize the education of women and girls, recognizing it as fundamental to any nation's progress.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, in his concluding remarks, emphasized the uncertainty in Afghanistan, stressing the need for a cautious and strategic approach to address its challenges.

IIUI'S Rising Global Presence: Key Disciplines Show Improved Qs Rankings

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Five disciplines of The International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), have shown an improved QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) ranking in 2024-2025, according to the latest information released in the QS Subject Rankings for 2024-2025.

These disciplines include Computer Science (501-600), Physical Sciences (501-600), Business and Economics (601-800), Engineering (601-800), and Social Science (801-

1000). Notably, IIUI had previously been ranked in Theology, Divinity, and Religious Studies (51-100), Mathematics (351-400), and Physics & Astronomy (601-640) within the QS subject ranking system.

While IIUI has sustained its 2024 ranking in these domains, additional fields have also made their debut in the 2025 rankings. This growing presence of IIUI's disciplines in the QS rankings reflects the dedication of the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Development (QAD), led by Professor Dr.

Rahmat Ellahi, as well as the strategic vision and timely initiatives spearheaded by the Vice President of Research and Enterprise, Engr. Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed. As a consequence, IIUI achieved a QS regional ranking of 51 in South Asia and 243 in Asia.

The QS rankings serve as a global metric that determines the standing of universities worldwide based on diverse criteria. These rankings assess academic reputation (40%), employer reputation (10%), faculty/student

ratio (20%), citations per faculty (20%), international student ratio (5%), and international student ratio (5%), thereby reflecting a university's academic excellence, research impact, teaching capacity, and global diversity. The primary goal behind these rankings is to promote transparency, facilitate informed decision-making for students and faculty, and encourage universities to engage in healthy global competition by adhering to international standards in various domains of knowledge production.

Commerce Desk

JANUARY: IBA proudly hosted Prof. Dr. Mohammad Kabir Hassan, Hamid D. Habib Chair in Finance, Department of Finance, School of Business Studies (IBA-SBS), and Professor of Finance, Department of Economics and Finance, University of New Orleans, for a series of engaging lectures and discussions.

On January 24, 2025, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Kabir Hassan delivered a highly engaging guest lecture to over 120 undergrad-

uate students at the IBA Main Campus on "Islamic Finance in the USA: Concepts, Institutions, and Prospects." He highlighted the evolution and growth of Islamic finance in the U. S., its unique opportunities, and its potential for fostering financial inclusion. The session offered students valuable insights into the practical application of Islamic finance principles.

Later that day, Prof. Dr. Hassan addressed senior officials and industry experts at the State Bank

of Pakistan, delivering an insightful talk on, "The Development of Government Sukuk Market." He explained the technicalities of various sukuk models, shedding light on their structure and operational challenges. The discussion emphasized the need for innovation and strategic reforms to strengthen the sukuk market and drive financial stability. He also met Mr. Saleem Ullah, Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, to discuss the Islamization of Pakistan's financial sector.

On January 25, 2025, Prof. Dr. Hassan delivered a talk to Shariah scholars on "Fiqh, Maqasid, and Economic Dimensions of Shariah Decision Making," focusing on Shariah governance standards issued by AAOIFI.

On January 27, he met with the IBA-SBS faculty to provide insights on publishing in high-impact journals, sharing strategies to enhance the quality and impact of research while addressing common challenges in the publication process.

IBA hosted Prof. Dr. Mohammad Kabir Hassan, Hamid D. Habib Chair in Finance

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
113,520.32	114,880.48
Day's High	Day's Low
115,596.87	113,482.22
Index Value	Change
17,241,128,642	-1360.16
Percentage	Time
-1.18%	27 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,506.98	+4.38
Percentage	Time
+0.052%	27 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
44,379.30	-44.95
Percentage	Time
-0.10%	27 Jan, 11:10 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,565.80	-366.18
Percentage	Time
-0.92%	27 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	176.25	178.50
Bahrain Dinar	738.10	746.10
Canadian Dollar	194.60	197.00
China Yuan	37.59	37.99
Danish Krone	38.48	38.88
Euro	291.75	294.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.43	35.78
Indian Rupee	3.14	3.23
Japanese Yen	1.80	1.86
Kuwaiti Dinar	895.70	905.20
Malaysian Ringgit	62.14	62.74
New Zealand \$	155.78	157.78
Norwegians Krone	24.41	24.71
Omani Riyal	722.40	730.90
Qatari Riyal	75.78	76.48
Saudi Riyal	74.25	74.80
Singapore Dollar	206.5	208.50
Swedish Korona	25.01	25.31
Swiss Franc	303.71	306.51
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.20
U.A.E Dirham	75.90	76.55
UK Pound Sterling	347.50	351
US Dollar	277.90	281.30

PTCL introduces Industry-First WhatsApp-Based Bill Payment Solution in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the country's largest ICF services provider, has partnered with PayFast, a State Bank of Pakistan-licensed Payment Service Provider (PSP), to launch for the first time an innovative bill payment solution via WhatsApp. This cutting-edge service enables PTCL customers to view and pay their bills directly through WhatsApp, representing a major step forward in digital customer service for Pakistan's telecom industry.

The official signing ceremony for the launch was held at PTCL Headquarters in Islamabad, with senior leaders from PTCL, Ocean, and PayFast in attendance. This collaboration allows customers to choose from a variety of payment methods, including major banks and popular mobile wallets. The seamless integration of this service is powered by eOcean, a leading cloud communication service provider.

Syed Atif Raza, Group Chief Commercial Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, stated, "The WhatsApp-based bill payment solution aligns



with our digital transformation strategy, aimed at enhancing customer convenience and delivering top-notch services.

PayFast's CBO - Mahwish Saad Khan states, "Our partnership with PTCL is a pivotal milestone in redefining digital payment experiences in Pakistan. By integrating PayFast's reliable and user-friendly payment solutions with PTCL's WhatsApp bot, we are making transactions easier and more secure than ever.

Adding to the conversation, Altaf Siddiqui, Director of Products, eOcean, commented, "WhatsApp chatbots offer transformative potential for telecommunication providers by enabling instant top-ups and personalized customer support at scale.

The launch of WhatsApp bill payments marks another significant step in PTCL, eOcean and PayFast joint commitment to transforming customer interactions and advancing digital innovation in the telecom sector, playing a pivotal role in building a digitally empowered Pakistan.

foodpanda partners with PakWheels

KARACHI: foodpanda has partnered with PakWheels to enhance rider recruitment and engagement while promoting safety awareness. This collaboration includes digital promotions across both platforms, featuring bike product campaigns tailored for riders, push notifications, and safety tips to ensure the well-being of foodpanda riders.



Nestlé inaugurates biomass boiler as part of its PKR 2 billion renewable energy investment in Pakistan



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Nestlé, as part of its commitment to Pakistan's vision for renewable energy, inaugurated a biomass boiler at its Kabirwala Factory, under its PKR 2 billion umbrella investment in renewable power and sustainability initiatives. It is part of Nestlé's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in line with its 2050 Net Zero commitments, as well as the Pakistan government's UN climate change pledge.

Jason Avanceña, Chief Executive Officer, Nestlé Pakistan, said "We are

committed to be a force for good throughout our value chain for the future of the country, by boosting investment in renewable energy and sustainability initiatives."

Highlighting Nestlé Pakistan's commitment to this transition, he added, "We have already accelerated the use of renewable energy after having inaugurated two 2.5MW and 2.6MW solar power plants at Kabirwala and Sheikhpura in 2023 and 2024 respectively. This inauguration here today is another step towards our larger renewable energy strategy."

PCDMA Chief Rejects 1% Minor Reduction in Interest Rate



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Salim Valimuhammad, Chairman of the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA), has rejected the State Bank of Pakistan's 1% reduction in the interest rate, calling it insufficient. He raised the question that despite the ongoing decrease in inflation, the failure to bring the interest rate to single digits is creating serious concerns.

In a statement, he said, "When inflation is coming down, why isn't the central bank making a significant reduction in the interest rate? Only 1% reduction will not provide any significant benefit to the economy. Until the policy rate comes to single digits, it will be difficult for economic activities to recover."

Salim Valimuhammad added that while Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has repeatedly expressed a desire for a significant reduction in the interest rate, the State Bank continues to refrain from making such a reduction, which is not conducive for the economy. The country will only stay on the path of progress if proper economic recovery measures are taken.

PCDMA president called on the State Bank of Pakistan's Monetary Policy Committee to consider the ground realities of decreasing inflation and bring the interest rate to single digits in the next monetary policy so that the country can benefit from it.

Atif Ikram Sheikh disappointed with the monetary policy

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the business, industry and trade community of Pakistan is disappointed with the monetary policy as it continues to be based on a heavy premium vis-à-vis core inflation as the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) announced a grossly-insufficient reduction of 100 bps only on Monday. Currently, inflation as per government's own statistics, stood at 4.1 percent in December 2024; but, the policy rate is 12.0 percent as of today - which reflects a premium of 790 basis points vis-à-vis core inflation, he added.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh continued that, after deliberations across all industries and sectors, FPCCI demanded an immediate and single-stroke rate cut of 500 basis points, in the Monday's monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting, to rationalize the monetary policy; and, align it to the vision of special investment facilitation council (SIFC) and the Prime Minister's



vision for economic growth and exports' growth. It is pertinent to note that the core inflation is expected to be in the range of 3 - 4 percent for the month of January 2025, he added.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI,

proposed that the interest rate should come down to single digits immediately to enable Pakistani exporters to some extent to compete in the regional and international export markets through reducing the cost of capital in a meaningful way.

SAI President expresses disappointment over 1% reduction in interest rate

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Despite Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's assurances, the failure to implement a significant reduction in the interest rate is a matter of concern, says Ahmed Azeem Alvi. He added that high-interest loans are hindering economic recovery and discouraging investment.

Ahmed Azeem Alvi, President of SITE Association of Industry Karachi, expressed deep disappointment over the mere 1% reduction in the interest rate, calling this decision a major obstacle to the economic recovery.

In a statement issued on Monday, SAI president stated that despite a continuous decrease in inflation and the gradual improvement of the country, the failure to significantly reduce the interest rate has caused concern within the busi-



ness community. Although inflation has decreased, it was expected that the State Bank of Pakistan would implement a substantial reduction in the interest rate, but this did not happen. As a result, investor confidence will undoubtedly be discouraged, and the prospects for accelerating business activities have diminished.

Mr. Alvi further added that the business community has been demanding that the interest rate be brought to single digits, and the central bank should have at least reduced it by 1.5%, which would bring the rate to 10% after further cuts in the next monetary policy. Although Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has repeatedly spoken about lowering the interest rate, it seems that the bureaucracy is not giving due attention to the Prime Minister's interest in economic recovery, which should be noticed by the Prime Minister.

SECP seeks feedback on Research Analyst Regulations, 2015



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has released a Consultation Paper to elicit public feedback on potential areas of improvement in the Research Analyst Regulations, 2015 (Research Analyst Regulations). The paper has been prepared to enhance the quality of research available to investors in the Pakistani capital market, aligning with recent local and international developments.

Research Analysts serve a crucial role in guiding investment decisions by providing valuable insights into publicly traded companies and highlighting capital market investment opportunities to investors. High quality research fosters a virtuous cycle, contributing to more accurate valuations and consequently enhancing the

overall attractiveness of the capital market as an investment avenue.

Some of the proposed improvements in the Research Analyst Regulations include registration requirements for research analysts, extending the blackout period, designating PSX as the front-line regulator of research analysts, and introducing a code of communication for research analysts. Further, the establishment of a Research Platform has been proposed to promote research for under-covered companies in line with international best practices.

The consultation paper is available on SECP's website. Interested persons and stakeholders can submit their feedback and comments within 15 days of publication of the concept paper at research_analyst@secp.gov.pk.

West Indies Cricket Team historic victory against Pakistan after 35 Years

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: After 35 years, the West Indies cricket team achieved a remarkable victory on Pakistani soil, defeating Pakistan by 120 runs. This victory leveled the series 1-1. Pakistan's position on the WTC table ended on a disappointing note, finishing in the 9th and final position. The trophy for the current series was shared between the two teams. Following the loss, captain Shan Masood became visibly frustrated when questioned about his captaincy. The player of the series award was claimed by the West Indian spinner, Jomel Warrican, who excelled despite playing on a pitch known for its spin. Pakistan's second innings crumbled as the entire team was dismissed for just 133 runs in 44 overs, with the last six wickets falling for just 55 runs. Babar Azam was the top scorer with 31, followed by Mohammad Rizwan with 25, and Kamran Ghulam with 19. For West Indies, Keon Sinclair took 3 wickets, while Warrican claimed 5, and Gudakesh Motie took 2 wickets. Pakistan's chase started poorly, losing

their first two wickets for just 5 runs. Captain Shan Masood and Mohammad Harris were dismissed cheaply for 2 runs each, falling to Sinclair and Motie, respectively. Babar Azam and Kamran Ghulam then steadied the ship, but Babar was given a reprieve at 13 runs when Motie dropped an easy catch off his bowling.

However, Kamran Ghulam failed to play a significant innings and was dismissed for 19 runs, caught by Ameer Jangoo off Warrican's bowling. Babar Azam, with 31 runs, also fell to Sinclair, caught by Athanaze.

On the third day of the match, Pakistan began their batting with hopes pinned on Saud Shakil, but he was dismissed on the third ball of the first over by Sinclair. A 38-run partnership between Salman Ali Agha and Mohammad Rizwan followed, but Salman Ali Agha was LBW for 15, with Warrican claiming another wicket. After adding just 7 more runs to the team score, Mohammad Rizwan was bowled out by Warrican for 25 runs.

Sajid Khan scored 7 runs, while Nauman Ali managed only 6 runs

before being caught off Motie's delivery. Abrar Ahmed remained not out at 0.

For the visiting team, Warrican took 5 wickets, Sinclair claimed 3, and Gudakesh Motie dismissed 2 Pakistani batsmen. Warrican, with 9 wickets in the match, was named Player of the Match, and with 19 wickets in the series, he was also named Player of the Series.

On the second day of the match, the visiting team was bowled out for 244 runs in 66 overs in their second innings, setting Pakistan a target of 254. In their first innings, the West Indies scored 163, while Pakistan had scored 154 runs.

Pakistan's performance in the World Test Championship from 2019 to 2025 has been marked by decline, failure, and disappointment. The latest news from the ICC World Test Championship 2023-2025 shows that Pakistan finished in 9th and last position. Looking back at the beginning of the WTC, in the 2019-2021 season, Pakistan finished in 5th position after playing 12 matches, winning 4, losing 5, and drawing 3.



Pakistan's Decline in the ICC Test Championship

In the second ICC Test Championship from 2021 to 2023, Pakistan finished in 7th position, winning 4 out of 14 matches, losing 6, and drawing 4.

In the third ICC Test Championship cycle from 2023 to 2025, Pakistan played 14 matches, winning 5, losing 9, and drawing none, finishing in 9th place.

Pakistan's performance in the third cycle of the ICC World Test Championship has been dismal. In the final Test of the two-match series in Multan, Pakistan lost to the West Indies, which caused them to drop to 9th place on the table, while the West Indies moved up to 8th. This is a deeply shameful and alarming position for Pakistan cricket. It raises a question for the new management, especially for Aqib Javed, as this is his third series in charge. He arrived during the England series, where they won, but then lost the series against South Africa. The series against the West Indies, which should have been a victory, ended in failure. Pakistan's points percentage was just over 27%, at 27.98, while the West Indies had a slightly higher percentage of 28.21.

The West Indies have played 23 Test matches on Pakistani soil, winning 5, losing 10, and drawing 8. They have only won one Test series in Pakistan, which was in 1980. Pakistan, on the other hand, has won 3 home series and drawn 4. The West Indies last toured Pakistan in 2006, where



they lost the three-match Test series 0-2.

West Indies' Historic Win in Pakistan After 35 Years

After 35 years, West Indies triumphed in a Test match on Pakistani soil. The last time they won in Pakistan was in 1990, when they defeated Pakistan by 8 wickets in Faisalabad. In that match, Pakistan batted first and managed just 170 runs. West Indies scored 195 runs, taking a 25-run lead. In their second innings, Pakistan was dismissed for 154 runs, leaving West Indies with a target of 130 runs. The visitors chased down the target, scoring 130/3, and won by 7 wickets. The captains at that time were Imran Khan for Pakistan and Desmond Haynes for the West Indies.

In the 35 years since that victory, West Indies played 9 Test matches on Pakistani soil, losing 6 and drawing 2. This recent win has marked their first victory in Pakistan in over three

decades. Following the loss in the Multan Test, Pakistan's captain Shan Masood appeared to have lost his composure and accused a journalist of disrespecting him, repeatedly insisting on his claims.

Reflecting on the loss to the West Indies, Shan Masood stated, "We had reduced West Indies to 54/8, but then they made a comeback. We need to learn that in such Test matches, we cannot afford to wait, because decisions are made on the first day itself." He further added, "Pakistan doesn't lose or win in isolation. It's not an accountability office where one person is blamed. We lost on the first day, but it's not just about that we began losing control of the match from that point onward. If we don't improve in key areas, like taking the first 10 wickets and posting a better score in the first innings, we will continue losing. Shan Masood also emphasized the importance of adapting to such conditions, saying, "We



need to introduce such pitches in domestic cricket and get our batsmen used to them. In the fourth innings, even scoring 150 becomes challenging. When asked about the overall team performance, he replied, "When we lose, it's easy to point fingers at one specific area. But we must remember that we have scored runs in several series, including against teams like Australia. We cannot place blame solely on one department."

Compromise of Authority and Decision-Making

Shan Masood was asked about the situation last year before the first Test against England, when he appeared confident, but unfortunately, Pakistan lost. The question raised was about the apparent compromise in his authority, noting that two of his foreign coaches resigned because of this. The interviewer then asked, "Today's result, is it a consequence of this compromise? Have you been unable to

make decisions, and was the title of 'decision-making' just a label?"

The question also touched on Pakistan's performance in the World Test Championship, where the team finished 6th in the first cycle, 7th in the second, and now 9th in the third. "Will you make your own decision, or will you wait for the Pakistan Cricket Board's decision?" the journalist asked.

Shan Masood Refuses to Answer and Responds Himself

When asked about his decision-making, Shan Masood initially refused to answer and then gave his own response. He said, "Next question," and then, with an undesirable expression on his face, added, "As you referred to past performances, I can't answer that. I've already given my response before. You should talk about the facts. Your information is completely incorrect. The announcement of a team or not has nothing to do with authority. We practiced



for two days. When the England series happened, we announced the team before the first Test. We had been in Multan for four days. We planned and made decisions. We had the information, and we selected the best XI."

Masood continued, "I respect your question and opinion, but you should also show respect to the players. The decisions are made by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Whenever the PCB has made a decision, I and the entire team have backed it. Your question carries disrespect. We are from this country and this organization. We are Pakistanis. It seems you are trying to undermine someone. Your question appears to have an intention to belittle us. We have won three matches and lost one, and if we are trying something new, we might have to make some compromises. I can open Google or Cricinfo, but first, let's do justice."

Shan Masood's attention

was repeatedly drawn to allow the questioner to speak, and he was signaled not to disrespect the players or the captain, but Shan Masood did not give the questioner an opportunity to continue.

The Real Facts About Shan Masood's Leadership

Shan Masood's leadership has not started well in the new year, as Pakistan faced its ninth defeat under his captaincy in the Multan Stadium. Shan Masood has led Pakistan in 12 Test matches so far, out of which the team has lost 9. Pakistan endured the embarrassment of being white-washed in three Test series. For the first time in history, Pakistan suffered a clean sweep in 3 Test matches, and in 2024, they were again swept 2-0 by South Africa. However, Pakistan won a home series against England 2-1 under Shan Masood's leadership.

Evolving Global Order

Pakistan needs to revisit policies to take advantage of globalized world: Ambassador Basit

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A seminar recently organized by the Research Circle of the Department of International Relations, MY University provided in-depth insights into the current geopolitical shifts at global level and particularly in Asia and its implications for Pakistan.

The event featured prominent speakers including Ambassador Abdul Basit (former amb. to Germany, India and Russia, an author of book Hostility: A Diplomat's Diary on Pakistan-India Relations and TV host on ABN news Decipher with Abdul Basit), Professor Dr. Nouman Sattar (former Director Area Study Centre, QAU, Islamabad) and the Vice Chancellor of MY, Professor Dr. Saeed ul Hassan Chishty in MY University, Islamabad.

Ambassador Abdul Basit delivered a keynote address at the event "The Evolving Global Order: Emerging Trends and the Rise of Multipolarity" emphasizing Pakistan's strategic significance in the evolving global landscape and the imperative for the country to harness diplomacy for long-term stability and prosperity. The Ambassador highlighted the significance of bilateral relationships that Pakistan needs to focus on it while focusing on the changing international order.

He discussed the significant



shift in global dynamics, where economic strength now determines a nation's success in this contemporary era. Ambassador Basit underscored the need for Pakistan to adapt to this reality by focusing on fostering economic relationships rather than relying solely on traditional political alliances.

The Ambassador also pointed that Pakistan's unique geographical location makes it as a gateway connecting to South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. He asserted that Pakistan needs to revisit its policies to take full advantage of its strategic position

in the age of globalization.

He further stated that the contemporary era is characterized by an anarchic situation and is in a state of disorder due to the ongoing worsening crises in the Middle East, the Ukraine war, and US-China competition.

He said the world order remains in a state of disorder. It is full of paradoxes encompassing integration and fragmentation, economic globalization and increased protectionism/nationalism.

He maintained that from a practitioner and diplomatic lens, the US is indeed the world leader

in economic, politico-diplomatic and military domains and emerging trends hinge upon the performance of UN and especially UNSC to ensure rule-based order for all the nation states. He also maintained that decisions of the Trump administration will affect the future global alignments and engagements in all domains.

While commenting on the implications for Pakistan, he argued that astute statesmanship will be required to cash on the opportunities and ward off the challenges, especially in diplomatic domain. He endorsed



that political stability in Pakistan will remain the key factor for its success or failure.

In response to a question regarding Afghanistan, he stated that Afghanistan is a reality that Pakistan as a neighboring state must understand. He called for the formulation of policies to address the security-related challenges.

Ambassador Basit stresses on maintaining long term foreign policy objectives in line with national interests to score strategic sweet spots in emerging geo-political arena.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Nouman Sattar reiterated that the trends will take start at the end of conflicts in Ukraine and Middle East and next four years of Trump administration will be crucial for emerging world order. He highlighted challenges for the United States

in the context of US-Alliances, rise of China, reemergence of Russia and global economic shift towards ASEAN region.

He concluded that evolving world order remains uncertain, complex and unstable. World order has always remained in a state of flux - changing as ever. It will be a test of global institutions like the UN as to how they respond to global challenges and preserve Westphalian rules of national independence, national interests of all states and principle of non-interference.

Meanwhile, Prof. Dr. Saeed ul Hassan Chishty, VC, MY University in his concluding remarks highlighted the significance of holding such academic undertaking for young scholars and their professional growth and progress. He praised IR Department under Prof. Dr. Muhammad Munir and Dr. Mujahid Hussain,

HoD IR Department for holding the event and acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Waseem Khokhar and his team for making the seminar a success. He announced to formulate a think tank in MY University.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Munir, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities also spoke on the occasion and expressed his satisfaction on holding the event on a very relevant and significant topic. He highlighted complexities and challenges of the emerging global order amid greater disorder.

Earlier, highlighting the importance of topic, Dr. Waseem Khokhar Assistant Professor of IR Department talked about the significant shifts in the global order, including: The Rise of New Powers, Geopolitical Shifts, Evolving Dynamics of the Middle East: Post-Assad Syria and the Impact of the Israel-Hamas War, Technological Advancements, Economic Globalization and its challenges and options for Pakistan.

He highlighted that global politics revolves around three words in cyclic order that is Power, Authority and Leadership. Dr. Khokhar maintained that future of global power, authority, and leadership will not be defined by one nation or region, but by a diverse array of actors working together, often with conflicting interests, but ultimately seeking a common path forward.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with a high-level delegation from the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) led by Chairman Mr. Shabbir Diwan who called on the Minister at the Finance Division on Monday.



Photo: PID

UNDP Resident Rep Calls on Finance Minister

Commerce Desk

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today met with Dr. Samuel Rizk, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan, at the Finance Division. The meeting focused on the UNDP's ongoing initiatives and collaborations with both the public and private sectors in Pakistan.

During the meeting, Dr. Rizk provided an overview

of UNDP's diverse initiatives across multiple sectors, including social development, climate resiliency, energy transition, digital transformation, and improving efficiency within the public sector. These efforts are aimed at driving sustainable development, enhancing Pakistan's resilience to climate change, and fostering long-term social and economic progress.

Senator Aurangzeb acknowledged the importance of these initiatives and emphasized the need for well-structured,

investable, and bankable projects that are monitored and reported according to international standards. He underlined that the success of such projects depends on proper planning, transparent reporting, and alignment with the country's overarching development goals.

The Finance Minister also expressed his appreciation for the technical and financial support being provided by UNDP in priority sectors. He reiterated the government's commitment to fostering inclusive and sustainable

growth, with a particular focus on addressing key challenges such as population growth, stunting, and climate change. He emphasized that these areas are central to the government's broader strategy for socio-economic development.

Senator Aurangzeb further highlighted the recently signed 10-year country partnership programme between Pakistan and the World Bank, which aims to promote inclusive and sustainable growth by building human capital, fostering durable private

sector growth, and enhancing the country's economic, social, and environmental resilience. He stressed that these initiatives will complement UNDP's work in Pakistan and aligns with the government's long-term objectives.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to continued collaboration and partnership to address the critical development challenges facing Pakistan, particularly in the areas of climate change, social development, and public sector efficiency.

Commerce Minister Meets Pakistan Business Council Delegation



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), led by its Chairman Shabbir Diwan, met with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday to discuss pressing issues and concerns of the business sector.

The delegation emphasized the importance of the cost of doing business in Pakistan and maintaining a tariff structure that avoids distortions in the industry and supports its growth. They argued that there were concerns on energy prices for industry including gas and elec-

tricity while removing protection from industries was affecting their competitiveness. They also suggested that the National Tariff Commission (NTC) could perform a crucial role in ensuring against dumping from other countries. In response, the minister urged the PBC to submit written proposals, assuring them that their recommendations would be carefully considered during the tariff rationalization process and that the operation of NTC would also be strengthened. The Minister further assured the PBC that the issues regarding energy prices had already been raised with relevant quarters.

Pakistani Embassy in Brussels Hosts Week-Long Photo Exhibition



Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: In commemoration of Kashmir Solidarity Day on 5 February, the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels has organized a week-long photo exhibition, highlighting the resilience and struggles of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

The exhibition presents a profound visual narrative of the ongoing hardships faced by the Kashmiri people under occupation. Through a powerful collection of images, it aims to raise global awareness of human rights violations in the region and calls for urgent international attention to

ensure justice, dignity, and peace for the people of IIOJK.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Chargé d'Affaires Syed Faraz Hussain Zaidi. In his address at the opening ceremony, he reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for self-determination, as enshrined in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. "This exhibition is a reflection of Pakistan's commitment to amplifying the voices of the Kashmiri people. It is essential for the world to not only recognize but act decisively to end the injustices in IIOJK. Solidarity and action are crucial in the face of such oppression," he emphasized.

Fed govt announces hundreds of jobs, how to apply

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has announced hundreds of teaching jobs in school education departments.

The provincial government has given advertisements in newspapers inviting applications for the posts of Elementary School Teacher in BPS-14.

The last date for submission of applications is February 10, 2025

A total number of 257 vacancies are up for recruitment which includes 212 vacancies for Males and 45 jobs for Females.

The ad reads that "Applications are invited from Pakistani Nationals who possess requisite educational qualification, quota and age to fill the following posts on a permanent basis in Federal Government Educational Institutions (Cantonments/ Garrisons)"

Naqvi strengthens Pak-US ties in key meeting with congressman Alexander Green

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi held an important meeting with US congressman Alexander Green, a prominent member of the Congressional Finance Committee, to discuss mutual interests and strengthen Pakistan-U.S. relations.

During the meeting, Naqvi highlighted the challenges Pakistan faces, including incidents of terrorism and cross-border infiltration from Afghanistan. He also expressed his appreciation for Congressman Green's consistent support for Pakistan, particularly his assistance to earthquake and flood victims.

The minister commended Green's principled stance on the Palestine issue, acknowledging his vocal support for the cause as "commendable and widely appreciated."

"Pakistan-U.S. relations are experiencing a positive shift," said Naqvi, expressing optimism about further strengthening ties between the two



nations in the coming days.

Congressman Green reaffirmed his commitment to fostering goodwill, announcing plans to visit Pakistan again soon. "I have visited Pakistan four times to support its people during natural disasters, and I will continue to stand in solidarity with them," he said.

The meeting was attended by Pakistan's Consul General in Houston,

Muhammad Aftab Chaudhry, and prominent Pakistani-American businessman Tahir Javed, who lauded the growing cooperation between the two countries.

This high-level engagement underscores the mutual commitment to enhancing diplomatic and humanitarian collaboration between Pakistan and the United States.

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Pakistan Railways has sacked 18% of 'unnecessary staff', PM Shehbaz told



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was briefed on Monday that Pakistan Railways has sacked 18% of its "unnecessary staff" in a bid to improve its performance.

The development came as Pakistan is trying to implement the reforms mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a financial bailout.

According to a statement issued by the prime minister's office, Sharif chaired a meeting to review the railway sector's performance on Monday which was attended by

senior cabinet ministers and officials.

"As part of the Pakistan Railways rightsizing process, 18% of unnecessary staff has been laid off," Sharif was briefed during the meeting, according to the PMO.

Sharif issued instructions to Pakistan Railways to attract passengers in a competitive manner, calling on the organization to provide better travel services to passengers through public-private partnerships.

He also instructed railways to hire professional and capable manpower, and replace its old system with modern technology that is more in line with today's age, the PMO said.

A Gas-filled Bowser Explodes near Multan's Industrial Estate



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A gas-filled bowser explodes in Multan's industrial estate, 5 people killed and 31 injured in the accident.

According to rescue officials, the LPG bowser caught fire due to the explosion and the pieces of the bowser fell on the nearby population.

Rescue officials said that after several hours of struggle, the fire was extinguished, more than 10 vehicles participated in extinguishing the fire and foam was also used.

CPO Multan Sadiq Ali says that several houses were destroyed in the gas bowser explosion and animals were burnt to death.

He said that gas is still leaking from the LPG bowser, the area has been evacuated, 5 people were killed and 31 injured in the bowser explosion, the condition of 13 injured is critical. There is a fear that the death toll will increase further.

On the other hand, the District Emergency Officer says that an emergency has been imposed in Nishtar Hospital, and a search operation is underway in the adjacent settlements.

According to the District Emergency Officer, electricity and gas supply has been stopped at the accident site and in the surrounding areas, while the Multan-Muzaffargarh Road has now been opened for traffic.

President, PM condole as LPG bowser explosion kills five in Multan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday condoled over the death of five people as an LPG bowser exploded in Multan which also left several others injured.

In their separately issued statements, the president and the prime minister conveyed their condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families.

They prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls,



strength for the grieved families to bear the loss, and for the recovery of those injured in the incident.

Prime Minister Shehbaz directed the authorities concerned to identify the reasons behind the explosion and take measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Pakistan condemns the attack on Saudi Hospital in Al-Fareesh, Sudan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The attack leading to unfortunate deaths reportedly of seventy people clearly violates international law and puts innocent civilians at grave risk. Pakistan extends its deepest sympathies to the victims and their families.

This attack underscores the urgent need for upholding the sanctity of healthcare facilities and adherence to the principles of international human-



itarian law. Pakistan believes that the conflict can only be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

We express our full support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sudan.