



**Sanullah dismisses speculation surrounding dialogue between PTI, establishment**

Prime Minister's aide on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanullah has rejected speculations of "ongoing backdoor talks" involving the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying that the establishment would not have any dialogue with the former ruling party.



**Rakhi Sawant reveals plans to tie knot with Pakistani man**

Indian actor Rakhi Sawant has unveiled her plans to get married to a Pakistani man, saying she is getting a lot of proposals from the neighbouring country. In her recent interaction with The Times of India, Rakhi said, "I have been getting many proposals. When I visited Pakistan, they saw how I was harassed in my previous marriages. I will definitely select one prospect."

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Launching ceremony**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif officially launches the magazine of the Prime Minister's Youth Program, titled 'SPARK' on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

**2 jawans martyred, 5 terrorists killed as Khawarij ram explosive laden vehicle into checkpost: ISPR**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have foiled terrorists bid to enter Pakistan from Pak-Afghan border in Qila Abdullah District of Balochistan. After facing resistance, terrorists rammed an explosive laden vehicle into the checkpost resulting two army men embraced martyrdom while all of five khawarij were sent to hell.



According to ISPR press release, the incident took place on night 27/28 January 2024 when Khawarij attempted to attack a security forces' post in general area Gulistan in Qila Abdullah District of Balochistan.

The terrorists attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted by troops, which forced the khawarij to ram an explosive laden vehicle into the perimeter wall of the post. Own troops fought bravely and in ensuing fire exchange, all five khawarij including two suicide bombers were sent to hell.

However, during the intense fire exchange two brave sons of soil, Naik Tahir Khan (Age 39 years; resident of Tank District) and Lance Naik Tahir Iqbal (Age 26 years; resident of Karak District), having fought gallantly, paid the ultimate sacrifice and embraced shahadat. Sanitization operation was being conducted in the area and the perpetrators of this heinous act will be brought to justice.

**President, PM pay tribute to forces on successful operation against terrorists**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday paid tribute to the security forces for successful operation against Khawarij in Bannu district.



In separate statements issued here, the president and prime minister praised the bravery of the security forces for killing three Khawarij terrorists and injuring nine during the anti-terrorism operation.

President Zardari said, "Pakistan's brave forces are determined to protect the country's borders at all times. Operations against terrorists will continue until the complete elimination of the menace of terrorism."

He underlined that the entire nation stood with its security forces in the war against terrorism.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif commended the officers and personnel of the security forces for the successful operation against the Khawarij in Jani Khel area of Bannu district.

The prime minister praised the professional skills of the officers and personnel of the security forces for killing three terrorists and arresting nine during the operation.

"We salute the unwavering resolve of the Pakistani Armed Forces to completely eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country. The entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistani Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism until it is eradicated," the prime minister said.

**Hosting ICC Champions Trophy an honor for Pakistan: Tarar**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that it was an honor for Pakistan that mega event of International Cricket Council's, Champions Trophy was being played in Pakistan.

He said that it was good omen that after several years, mega events were being held in Pakistan.

A mega sports event will be played in Pakistan after the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit that held last year.



**Partnerships, skill development vital to empower youth for a peaceful, prosperous future: PM**

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reiterating his government's strong commitment to youth empowerment, called for fostering partnership, supporting entrepreneurship and prioritizing youth's education and skill development to pave the way to a resilient Commonwealth and a prosperous future.

By ensuring that youth remain central to governance and decision-making processes, we can lead the way in fostering partnerships, supporting entrepreneurship, and prioritizing education and skills development. This will ensure that our future is in the hands of an empowered young generation," the prime minister said addressing the inaugural session of the Commonwealth Asia Youth Alliance summit here.

The prime minister welcomed the participating delegates from several nations and said that as a founding member, Pakistan attached great importance to the Commonwealth and its institutions which served as an important platform for consensus-building and fostering partnerships.

The opening session of the international summit was attended by the delegates from 12 countries, federal ministers, diplomats, 113 new members

of National Youth Council, students and academicians from across the country.

With over 60% of the Commonwealth population under the age of 30, the future rests in the hands of the youth. These hands must be empowered and equipped through vigorous training and access to modern technology. This will enable them to carve out a peaceful, progressive, and prosperous future."

He said Pakistan with a youth bulge of around 70% of the population under the age of 30, fully understood the potential as the challenge could easily be transformed into great opportunities.

Emphasising the undeniable role of youth in development, he told the international gathering that he always prioritized the productive employment of youth as a key focus area and devoted significant efforts to this goal.

**Govt to challenge SCP order for Full Court**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has withdrawn orders of its two-member bench, headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, regarding interpretation of the Article 191 A of the Constitution and has directed to attach the Contempt of Court notice with the Custom Duty case for further proceedings.

headed by Justice Mansoor, regarding convening of a Full Court and interpretation of 191A about the jurisdictions of the regular and the constitutional Benches. In that judgment, the Court has asked the Chief Justice of Pakistan to convene a full court for an authoritative judgment in this regard.

The seven-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan issued the orders of withdrawal during hearing the Custom Duty case here Tuesday.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar inquired if the court can go ahead in the Custom Duty case when Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has ordered to fix the case before him?

Justice Jamal Mandokhail observed that independence of judiciary is not the concern of only a few. Everyone wants the judiciary to be independent. Nobody should worry about the independence of judiciary. Nothing bad is going to happen. He further remarked that one judge recused from the three-member bench. In such a situation how the bench can continue to order fixing of a particular case before a particular bench?

Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan informed the court that the Federal Government has decided to challenge the court order of the two-member bench

**US investor's delegation inks several investment accords during Pakistan visit**



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation of US investors has arrived in Pakistan on a two-day visit. The delegation is led by Gentry Beach, a Texas hedge fund manager and close business partner of the Trump family.

According to sources, several investment agreements were signed between Pakistan and the United States.

The arrival of the investment delegation right after the new US

Administration took office is of great importance. The visit of the US delegation to Pakistan will open new avenues for investment, economic, and bilateral relations between the two countries.

Gentry Beach had paid tribute to Pakistan during a ceremony after the presidential election in US and said "People of Pakistan have sacrificed a lot in the war against terrorism, thousands of people have fallen victim to terrorism."

He said Pakistan was an amazing country, the environment here is

favorable for US President Trump.

Gentry Beach had said people of Pakistan want to work with the US on equal terms as a positive partnership and good friend. Gentry Beach emphasized in his address to President Donald Trump that, "Make the relationship between Pakistan and America stronger than before and based on mutual cooperation."

The visit of US investment delegation will prove to be very favorable for investment in various sectors between Pakistan and the United States.

# Decisions made in Islamabad without consulting us, and we suffer the consequences: Bilawal

**Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that decisions are made in Islamabad without consulting Sindh, and the province bears the consequences. He criticized the federal government for not granting Sindh its constitutional rights, stating that if the federation continues to ignore Sindh's concerns, the party reserves the right to approach the courts.

Speaking to the business community at a luncheon hosted by the Sindh government in Karachi, Bilawal highlighted the success of the provincial government in eliminating extortion and crime from the city. He noted that traders are no longer threatened or forced into strikes and that this achievement is credited to the



Sindh government and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

He urged traders to communicate their grievances directly with the PPP rather than approaching others.

While acknowledging the existence of unresolved issues in Sindh, Bilawal assured the business community that the government is committed to addressing their concerns.

Bilawal emphasized that Sindh is the only province successfully running public-private partnership projects, which have been recognized globally. He said these initiatives are profitable and have the potential to drive Sindh's progress further.

Commenting on the shortage of water and gas, Bilawal criticized the federal government for failing to provide Sindh its rightful share under the 1991 Water Accord.

He warned that the federation's plan to build six new canals from the Indus River would exacerbate the water crisis in Sindh, especially for Karachi.

The PPP Chairman assured the business community that their issues will be resolved promptly and reiterated the party's commitment to safeguarding Sindh's resources and rights.

## A delegation led by Sardar Javed Sharif Advocate met Sardar Attique



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

RAWALPINDI: A delegation led by Sardar Javed Sharif Advocate, Head of the Coordination Committee for Local Government Institutions and Representatives, met with former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan. Focal person, Javed Arif Abbasi, Chief Organizer, and members, Sardar Iftikhar Advocate, Sardar Shaukat Afzal, Qazi Nisar Awan, Zia-ur-Rehman were present. President of the Muslim Conference Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan said that Mujahid I gave the flag and powers to the district chairman. I am a supporter of the local government system. On this occasion, he announced full support for the movement of the members and the Coordination Committee for the restoration of the powers of the local council. He said that the Muslim Conference will play its full role for the restoration of the powers of the local council in Azad Kashmir.

President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of Munshi Abdul Qadir Khan from Ghaziabad (Thandi Kasi) and expressed his condolences to the bereaved family. He said that Munshi Abdul Qadir Khan was a valuable asset of the Muslim Conference and the deceased's valuable services to the region cannot be forgotten under any circumstances. Today we pay tribute to the services of the deceased. May Allah forgive the deceased completely and grant patience to the bereaved family.

## I will fulfill the trust placed in me by the party leadership, Maryam Idrees

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The newly elected central vice president of the Muslim League-N Azad Jammu and Kashmir Women's Sector, Maryam Idrees, said that I will fulfill the trust placed in me by the party leadership, I will play my full role in delivering the party manifesto and the message of the leadership to every household and individual in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and further strengthening the women's sector. The spokesperson of the Muslim League-N people always talked about solutions to public problems and rights. During the Muslim League-N era, the country always moved towards construction and development. The scholarship programs for education, health, agriculture, IT and other sectors, especially the youth, are commendable. I am grateful to all the senior leadership including Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, President PML-N Azad Jammu and Kashmir Shah Ghulam Qadir, Vice President Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, General Secretary Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, Senior Vice President Raja Mushtaq Minhas, President Women's Department Maryam Kashmiri, General Secretary Nasira Khan, who not only appreciated my abilities and work in the political and social sectors, but also provided me with an opportunity to further improve my abilities by giving me important responsibilities.



## Ensuring Prisoners' Welfare: IG Prisons visits Nara Jail Hyderabad

**Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: Inspector General of Prisons Qazi Nazir Ahmed, along with Deputy Inspector General of Prisons Hyderabad Region Syed Manzoor Ali Shah, visited Nara Jail Hyderabad. During the visit, they inspected the jail hospital, met with inmates, and inquired about their well-being.



As part of the visit, the officials reviewed the newly installed modern RO (Reverse Osmosis) plant, which was set up through the efforts of Superintendent Hashim Hyderi. This state-of-the-art facility ensures the provision of clean and safe drinking water to prisoners. IG Prisons Qazi Nazir Ahmed praised the quality of the plant and commended the superintendent's dedication to improving jail facilities.

On this occasion, Superintendent of Central Jail Hyderabad, Naim Ali Bhanbhro, was also present. The administrative affairs of the jail were reviewed, and discussions focused on measures to further enhance facilities for the inmates.

IG Prisons directed jail staff to work more effectively and emphasized ensuring the prisoners' health, hygiene, and the quality of food. He reiterated the importance of creating a better and humane environment for those in custody.

## Protest

FAISALABAD: Journalists are shouting slogans during a protest against amendments in the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) outside press club in City.



Photo: Online

# Fabricated FIR on the incident that took place in Constituency Four should be dropped: Muslim Conference

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Muslim Conference leaders, District President Yasir Naqvi Advocate, former Assembly candidate Sardar Sajjad Anwar Abbasi, Sheikh Maqsood Ahmed, Syed Tsavur Moosavi, Chaudhry Basit Advocate have said that the fabricated FIR on the incident that took place in Constituency Four should be dropped.

Conspiracies are being made against the Muslim Conference. The opponents are fuming over the popularity of Raja Saqib Majeed. Ideologies and differences have their place, but a conspiracy is being made to destroy



the peaceful environment of Azad Kashmir. In Constituency Four, those who divide communities, regions and families for political purposes can

never succeed in their nefarious goals. Neither has there been any firing on the Speaker's convoy nor has anyone been injured.

The Speaker of the Assembly should not use the personal dispute between father and son for political purposes.

# Justuju Foundation and Active Women Foundation agree on a joint project for social welfare

**Bureau Report**

HYDERABAD: Justuju Foundation and Active Women Foundation held a joint meeting at Munshi House, where they agreed on a collaborative project aimed at social welfare.

The meeting was presided over by Justuju Foundation's Chairperson Sadaf Warraich and Active Women Foundation's Chairperson Nazish Fatima. Legal advisor Anceela Jesani, Raza Warraich, senior lawyer of Sindh High Court Bar Abdul Wahab Munshi, and senior journalist Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi were also present.

Sadaf Warraich emphasized that the goal of Justuju Foundation is to find solutions to social issues and provide opportunities for a better life, while Nazish Fatima highlighted that real change is only possible with the inclusion of women and youth. Anceela



Jesani and Raza Warraich presented their suggestions on the legal and administrative aspects of the project. Abdul Wahab Munshi and Abdul

Ghafoor Sarohi termed the joint project significant for society, stating that such initiatives bring positive changes in people's lives.

It was decided during the meeting that the project will be implemented soon, and the public will be informed about its details.

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:41 am  
Zohr ..... 12:21 pm  
Asr ..... 3:57 pm  
Maghrib ..... 5:35 pm  
Isha ..... 7:01 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

**HEC hosts dinner to honour CAYA Youth Summit 2025 delegates**

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan hosted a dinner in honour of the foreign delegates attending the Commonwealth Asia Youth Alliance (CAYA) Summit 2025 on Tuesday.

The event, held here, brought together educational professionals, media representatives, and youth leaders from across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, expressed gratitude to both CAYA and non-CAYA delegates for their participation.

He highlighted the PMYP's collaborative efforts with the HEC to implement various capacity-building projects for the youth, stating, "Our future leaders will be ready to take the reins of the country in the near future."

Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the commission's role in shaping future generations through education.

He highlighted HEC's initiatives to equip Pakistani youth with essential skills, stating that around six million students are currently pursuing education in 269 public and private sector universities across the country.

# Nepal as a prime tourist destination and encouraged Pakistanis to visit: Envoy

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Nepal's Ambassador to Pakistan, Madam Rita Dital, has expressed a desire to establish the Pakistan-Nepal Business Forum to explore trade opportunities between the two countries, which could significantly increase trade volume. She highlighted Nepal as a prime tourist destination and encouraged Pakistanis to visit, adding that direct air connectivity would promote tourism. She also suggested including Nepali players in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Additionally, she mentioned that artificial limbs are being imported from Nepal to Pakistan, while eye lenses are being exported from Pakistan to Nepal.

She shared these views during a meeting with Chairman Pakistan Cultural Forum, Zafar Bakhtawari, at the Nepalese Embassy yesterday. Executive Member FPCCI, Waqar Bakhtawari, also accompanied him. The meeting included detailed discussions on enhancing trade and cultural relations between the two

countries.

Speaking on trade, Madam Dital highlighted that tea and cardamom could be imported from Nepal to Pakistan, while medicines could be exported from Pakistan to Nepal.

Zafar Bakhtawari appreciated the Nepalese Ambassador's suggestions, emphasizing that there are immense opportunities to enhance trade relations between Pakistan and Nepal, which both nations should capitalize on through mutual cooperation. He suggested combining Nepal's natural resources with Pakistan's industrial and trade expertise to launch joint ventures that could benefit both economies.

Furthermore, Zafar Bakhtawari invited the Ambassador to visit the FPCCI Lahore office to interact with the business community.

Executive Member FPCCI, Waqar Bakhtawari, stressed the importance of direct air connectivity between the two countries, calling it a need of the hour. He stated that this connection should be restored. In response, the Nepalese



Ambassador informed that there was direct air connectivity between Pakistan and Nepal until 2014, which was discontinued. She agreed that restoring direct flights would play a vital role in strengthening trade relations.

Waqar Bakhtawari assured the Nepalese Ambassador that Paki-

stan's business community is serious about promoting trade with Nepal. He mentioned that Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry is fully capable of meeting Nepal's needs, while Nepali tea and cardamom could become popular in the Pakistani market.

Referring to a former Nepalese Ambassador, Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari shared that he was an exceptional individual who attended an oath-taking ceremony in Chakwal and participated in an event promoting tourism in the area. He added that the Hindu sacred site of Katas Raj is located in Chakwal and should be visited to further explore tourism opportunities.

## Royal Thai Armed Forces Day

ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Shakil Ghazanfar, along with Ambassador-designate of Thailand to Pakistan Rongvudhi Virabutr and others cut the cake on the occasion of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Day, at Royal Thai Embassy in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## FAPUASA announced a Black Day on different crucial challenges

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Associations (FAPUASA Pakistan) announced a Black Day on different crucial challenges being faced by the higher education sector i.e abolition of 25% tax rebate for teachers, government interference in the autonomy of universities, change in the criteria of appointment of vice-chancellors in universities of Sindh, changes in pension rules in

Punjab and non-payment of salaries in universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

An emergency press conference was held by FAPUASA Pakistan at Islamabad Press Club in which FAPUASA Central President Dr Amjad Abbas Magsi, Central Vice President, Dr Mazhar Iqbal, Central General Secretary Dr Muhammad Uzair, Central Information Secretary Dr Ahtisham Ali, President of FAPUASA Islamabad Chapter, Dr Iqbal Jatoi, Dr Muhammad

Jadoon Khan from Comsats University and other officials attended.

FAPUASA President Dr Amjad Magsi termed the abolition of the 25% tax exemption given by FBR to teachers and researchers as a violation of the sanctity of the Parliament. Keeping in view that the retaining of the 25% tax rebate which was earlier 75%, was officially announced during the budget speech by the federal finance minister on June 28, 2024, and was included in the proceedings

of the At the end of the press conference, the FAPUASA leadership demanded the President of Pakistan, the Prime Minister, the Federal Finance Minister and the Chief Ministers of the four provinces to immediately play their pivotal role in solving the financial and administrative problems faced by the universities across the country. So that the anxiety spread among the teachers of the universities has ended and they can perform their duties effectively.

## We are providing best education to students: Zafar Hussain

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to details, Rana Zafar Hussain, Principal of Government MC High School Kamalia, Talking to Our Correspondent daily The Spokesman in his office said that we are providing best education to the students in the school so that the children can read their future. He further said that we have 1125 Students, 21 EST and 10 SST teachers who play a role in providing best education to Students. Rana Zafar Hussain said that the result of our school is the best results every year. This is the result of the hard work of teachers and students. "We are trying to provide the students with best education so that they can read and make their place," he said that Getting education creates consciousness in human beings. If parents are also educated, they also educate their children so that our child can do something for himself by writing. He said that our school was also many student who holds high positions nowadays. This is the result of his hard work. In the End, Rana Zafar Hussain said, "We will work hard day and night to provide best education to our students." On this occasion, Teachers Chaudhry Tariq Jutt, Muhammad Ramzan, Yaseen, Muhammad Amir, Mohsin Zubair, Muhammad Nadeem, Tariq Habib and Muhammad Shahid were also present.



## Lahore Gymkhana Club Annual Elections set for February 15

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: The annual elections of the Lahore Gymkhana Club are scheduled to take place on February 15, with a fierce contest expected between two prominent groups. Qamar Khan Bobby, a candidate participating in the Lahore Gymkhana elections, expressed confidence in breaking the status quo and winning the election this time. He stated that their goal is to transform the club into a model family-friendly institution.



Qamar Khan Bobby emphasized that this time, they are contesting under the leadership of Dr. Ali Razaq and have received full support from the newly appointed officials of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Additionally, he claimed that several voters within the bureaucracy are also backing their group.

Bobby further mentioned that he has previously contested the Gymkhana elections independently multiple times and has achieved success. However, this time, he believes that the Dr. Ali Razaq group will secure a clear majority. He reiterated his long-standing opposition to the status quo and expressed a desire to bring young members to the forefront in the Gymkhana Club's leadership.

The upcoming elections are anticipated to be a significant event, with both groups vying for control and aiming to shape the future direction of the prestigious Lahore Gymkhana Club.

## FDA Grants Authorization to ZYN Nicotine Pouches Making it First-ever in the U.S.

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last week authorized ZYN nicotine pouches making ZYN the first and only authorized nicotine pouch in the United States. The FDA's authorization of all ZYN nicotine pouches currently marketed by Swedish Match in the U. S. is an important step to protect public health by providing better alternatives to smoking and other traditional tobacco products for adults.

"The FDA's decision recognizes the role that ZYN can play in the benefit of public health by helping adult users switch from smoking and other traditional tobacco products. An estimated 25.4 million people consume tobacco products in Pakistan, with smoking being the most harmful form of nicotine consumption due to combustion, of tobacco" said Ali Takesh, Managing Director Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited. FDA's decision is an example that countries like Pakistan with high prevalence of smoking and tobacco use can also responsibly market smoke-free products to lessen the health burden on the economy" he added.

## CBD Punjab and STZA Forge Strategic Partnership to Propel Technological Innovation in Punjab

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), and the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) have entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on advancing the technological landscape in Punjab.

The MoU was signed by CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin and Chairman STZA, Azfar Manzoor. The signing ceremony was attended by key officials from both authorities, including Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Chairman PCBDDA, Barrister Bilal Afzal Khokhar, Executive Director Legal CBD Punjab, Ali Waqar Shah, Director Business Development CBD Punjab, Waseem Siddiq, Director Marketing CBD Punjab, Aamir Saleemi, Member Zones & Zone Developer STZA, Javaid Iqbal, Member Tech, ZEs, and Licensing Operations STZA, Lubna Said, Member Licensing Monitoring & Evaluation STZA, Hamza Saeed



Orakzai, Chief Market Development Officer STZA and Milad Khattak, Head of Government Relations STZA.

Chairman of PCBDDA Shahid Ashraf Tarar, emphasized the strategic importance of the collaboration, stating, "This partnership is a crucial step in transforming Punjab into a leading technology hub. By working together, CBD Punjab and STZA will foster innovation, attract investments,

and create new opportunities that will drive economic growth and technological advancement in the province."

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin, highlighted the significance of the collaboration, stating, "This partnership with STZA marks a pivotal moment for advancing technological innovation in Punjab. Together, we aim to create a world-class technology ecosystem that will set new

benchmarks in sustainability and innovation."

Azfar Manzoor, Chairman of STZA, echoed this sentiment, stating, "STZA is committed to leveraging its global network to support NST's emergence as a global technology hub. This MoU with CBD Punjab underscores our shared vision to promote technological excellence and foster economic growth in Punjab."

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# Trump's \$8 Trillion Deportation Dilemma

Colombia collapsed under the wrath of the U. S. President after facing intense pressure. Initially refusing to accept deported illegal immigrants, Colombia reversed its stance when President Trump threatened a 25% tariff increase on Colombian exports. Although the Colombian President initially retaliated with threats of similar countermeasures, he ultimately relented, conceding not only to accept deportees but also to shoulder the transportation costs. In a further display of submission, Colombia went beyond mere compliance, sending its presidential plane to fetch its deported citizens, thereby relieving the U. S. of the financial burden of their repatriation.

Trump celebrated his first victory following his aggressive posture by issuing an official statement through the President's Press Secretary. The bold and assertive message, reproduced below, underscores the might of the United States and the vulnerability of other nations:

"The Government of Colombia has agreed to all of President Trump's terms, including the unrestricted acceptance of all illegal aliens from Colombia returned from the United States, including on U. S. military aircraft, without limitation or delay. Based on this agreement, the fully drafted IEEPA tariffs and sanctions will be held in reserve and not signed unless Colombia fails to honor this agreement. Today's events make it clear to the world that America is respected again. President Trump will continue to fiercely protect our nation's sovereignty, and he expects all other nations of the world to fully cooperate in accepting the deportation of their citizens illegally present in the United States."

This declaration had a transforma-

tive effect, leading all other nations, who had initially reacted fiercely, to eventually comply. Mexico, following Colombia's lead, not only agreed to take back its own citizens but also accepted deportees from other countries. As of January 27, 2025, Mexico has received over 4,000 deportees, primarily Mexican nationals but also some non-Mexican migrants, marking a significant shift in its immigration stance.

India fell in line even before Colombia and Mexico. It announced its full agreement with Trump's immigration policy but with a logical condition—it demanded a verified list of illegal immigrants to confirm their citizenship status before repatriation.

Despite this development, the scale of deportation remains immense. This monumental operation demands extensive planning, international cooperation, and sustained execution, highlighting the complexity of large-scale immigration enforcement and the enormous challenges that lie ahead.

The cost of executing the deportation of over 12 million undocumented immigrants from the United States would be exorbitant, with an estimated price tag of \$3 trillion. This expense includes law enforcement deployment, detention facility expansion, legal processing, transportation via chartered flights and buses, and diplomatic coordination with receiving countries. Given the sheer scale, the operation would require around 12 years to complete, necessitating massive logistical efforts, increased immigration court capacities, and international agreements.

Deporting 12 million undocumented

immigrants over 12 years would have a devastating economic impact on the United States, costing the economy trillions of dollars in lost productivity, tax revenue, and workforce contributions. According to the Center for Migration Studies, mass deportation could shrink U. S. GDP by 1.4% in the first year alone, resulting in a cumulative loss of \$4.7 trillion over a decade. Undocumented immigrants make up 5% of the U. S. labor force, with critical roles in agriculture, construction, and hospitality; their removal would trigger severe labor shortages, pushing wages higher and raising production costs, ultimately driving up consumer prices.

Additionally, many undocumented workers contribute to Social Security and Medicare without receiving benefits; their deportation would reduce these contributions, further straining these social programs.

The housing market would also face instability, as 1.2 million mortgages are held by households with undocumented immigrants, potentially leading to a surge in foreclosures and declining property values. Overall, the cost of deportation extends far beyond the estimated \$3 trillion in direct expenses, as the long-term economic repercussions would disrupt key industries, destabilize financial markets, and hinder overall economic growth.

It would be naive to assume that the Trump administration had not carefully considered both the direct costs of mass deportation and its broader economic impact. However, these concerns appeared to be secondary to larger objectives such as enforcing immigration laws,

addressing national security risks, and responding to societal anxieties. One key rationale behind the administration's aggressive deportation policy was the belief that certain undocumented populations posed security threats, particularly in light of global extremism. With U. S. foreign policies deeply entangled in regions like the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China, fears arose that individuals from these areas might be susceptible to radicalization. Mass deportation was thus framed as a preventive measure to mitigate potential threats before they materialized. Beyond security concerns, the policy also seemed to target public perceptions of safety in American neighborhoods. Many communities, particularly those with predominantly white populations, expressed unease over demographic shifts and rising crime rates, often linking undocumented immigrants to social instability. This sentiment was echoed by the Vice President in a recent interview, where he highlighted how many Americans felt increasingly unsafe in their own neighborhoods due to unchecked immigration. The reason could be job losses for the USA citizens, wage suppression, and the strain on social services.

Ultimately, the Trump administration's approach was likely shaped by a combination of national security concerns, societal anxieties, efforts to preserve American culture and norms, and political strategy, with economic considerations playing a lesser role, making it a deeply complex and multifaceted initiative.

*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

## UN Security Council calls for M23 to stop offensive in eastern DR Congo, 'external forces' withdraw

The United Nations Security Council on Sunday demanded that Rwanda-backed M23 rebels stop their ongoing offensive and advance towards Goma, the largest city in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and that "external forces" in the region immediately withdraw.

"The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms ongoing advances by the M23 in North-Kivu, including the control of Masisi centre on 4 January 2025 and of Sake on 23 January 2025, and expressed serious concerns regarding imminent threats against Goma, which are putting hundreds of thousands of civilians at heightened risk," a press statement issued by the 1-member body said.

The council called for M23 to halt its offensive came just hours after the rebels said they had taken Goma following a lightning advance that has forced thousands of people to flee and fuelled concerns of a regional war. No official confirmation was immediately available here.

Earlier at the Security Council meeting, Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, said that Pakistan supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DR Congo and deplored any foreign intervention in its internal affairs.

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

The Council's statement urged Rwanda and the DRC to return to the dialogue process to achieve peace and address issues related to the presence of Rwanda Defence Forces in the eastern Congo and Congolese support for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

In its statement, the Security Council "condemned the ongoing flagrant disregard for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC, including the unauthorized presence in the Eastern DRC of external forces".

It did not explicitly name the external forces but demanded that they "withdraw immediately."

The Council further reiterated their condemnation of the systematic illicit exploitation of the natural resources in eastern DRC, noting that these actions fuel the conflict.



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

## Shrinking Enrollments: Economic Strain Is Steering Students Away From Universities

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

Higher education as a gateway to better career prospects and economic opportunities. However, in recent years, a concerning trend has emerged: the rising costs of attending universities are deterring students from pursuing higher education. Coupled with the economic strain facing many families, this trend has led to a decrease in university enrollments across the Pakistan. The reasons behind this phenomenon and its implications for students and society as a whole.

One of the primary factors contributing to the decline in university enrollments is the skyrocketing costs of higher education. The average tuition and fees at public four-year institutions have more than doubled in the past two decades, far outpacing inflation. The burden of these costs falls disproportionately on low and middle-income families, many of whom struggle to afford the steep price tag of a university education.

As a result, students are increasingly opting for alternative paths, such as vocational training or entering the workforce directly after high school. The economic strain caused by escalating tuition fees is further mounting student loan debt crisis. As students borrow more to finance their education, they are substantial debt upon graduation, making it difficult to achieve financial stability. Many young graduates forced to delay important milestones such as homeownership, marriage, and starting a family due to their debt burden. This financial burden not only affects students individually but also has broader societal implications, as it can hinder economic growth and social mobility.

The increasing costs associated with attending

universities have become a significant barrier for many prospective students, particularly in the context of ongoing economic strain. Tuition fees have escalated dramatically over the past few decades, often outpacing inflation and wage growth. This financial burden compels students to reconsider their educational aspirations, leading to an alarming trend where higher education is becoming less accessible to those from lower and middle-income backgrounds.

Additionally, the economic challenges aggravated by factors such as rising living expenses and student debt further deter individuals from pursuing university degrees. Many potential students faced the daunting prospect of incurring substantial debt that may take years, if not decades, to repay.

Consequently, this financial anxiety leads some to opt for immediate employment opportunities rather than investing in a degree that may not guarantee a profitable return on investment. The convergence of escalating university costs and economic pressures has fostered an environment where higher education is viewed as unattainable or impractical. As a result, society risks losing out on a wealth of talent and innovation that could be cultivated through accessible educational opportunities.

When barriers to education persist whether due to socioeconomic status, geographic location, or systemic discrimination individuals often deprived of the chance to develop their skills and contribute meaningfully to society. This exclusion not only smothers personal growth but also limits the collective potential of communities and nations.

The implications of such inequity are profound. A diverse range of perspectives drives creativity and problem solving; thus, when segments of the population remain underrepresented in educational settings, society risks missing transformative ideas that could address

pressing global challenges. This is particularly evident in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, where diverse voices can lead to groundbreaking innovations.

Ultimately, investing in accessible educational initiatives is not merely a moral imperative but an economic one. Cultivating a more inclusive environment for learning, societies can harness a wealth of untapped talent that is essential for sustainable progress and prosperity. In an increasingly interconnected world, cultivating a more inclusive environment for learning is not merely a moral imperative; it is essential for sustainable progress and prosperity. Embracing diversity, societies can tap into a wealth of untapped talent that enriches educational experiences and fosters innovation. Society leads consistently demonstrates that diverse teams outperform homogenous ones, as varied perspectives lead to more creative solutions to complex problems.

Besides, inclusivity in education breaks down systemic barriers that have historically marginalized certain groups. Economic power providing equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background, societies can ensure that the brightest minds are cultivated. This not only enhances individual potential but also contributes to economic growth by expanding the workforce with skilled professionals who bring unique insights and capabilities.

Investing in inclusive educational practices is crucial for addressing pressing global challenges. As we strive for a sustainable future, harnessing the full spectrum of human talent will be indispensable in driving innovation and achieving collective goals. Therefore, prioritizing inclusivity must be at the forefront of educational policies aimed at fostering societal advancement.

Writer is Post-Doctorate (Peace Education), International Islamic University Islamabad

## 'Islam: A Misunderstood Religion - A Review of Muhammad Qutb's Book'

Muhammad Qutb's book "Islam: The Misunderstood Religion" (1964, translated 1990) addresses Islamic concepts. It highlights European influences that misled Muslims into believing Islam is outdated. Qutb expresses concern that modern Muslims are turning away from Islam. Many modern individuals question whether religion remains relevant in the scientific age.

Islam encompasses a comprehensive system. It includes a just economic framework and a balanced social structure. In fact, many are unaware that religion and science are not mutually exclusive. The book aims to educate modern individuals about Islamic principles and concepts. Furthermore, it corrects misconceptions and discusses feudalism, capitalism, and class systems.

Islam promotes kindness and respect for all individuals, including slaves, as part of its unique perspective. Islam opposes serfdom. Instead, it promotes mutual conscience and fair compensation for labor. Islamic feudalism advocates for equal profit division between workers and employers. Islam views capitalism critically, opposing its negative aspects.

Before Islam, the feudal era was marked by a rigid class system in many societies. This led to poverty, slavery, and humiliation. In contrast, Islamic society is classless, promoting equality and fairness. Islamic society differs from communist countries, which often have significant salary disparities.

Some people mistakenly believe that receiving Az-Zakat (charity) in Islam is humiliating. In

contrast, Az-Zakat is a mandatory tax to support the poor and it helps to eradicate poverty. Misconceptions claim that Islam oppresses women, but ignores the harsh pre-Islamic reality.

In contrast, Islam upholds women's rights. It acknowledges equality with men and grants rights to life, honor, property, and independence.

To eliminate the root causes of crimes, Islam prioritizes prevention over punishment. Punishments are only inflicted in cases of clear guilt. Islam promotes fair wealth distribution, education, and personal growth.

Some argue that Islam is outdated, citing usury and zakat as examples. In contrast, Islam prohibits usury as exploitation. It aims to protect humanity and promote a harmonious society.

The consequences of Western societies' values highlight the importance of Islamic principles. Islam prioritizes self-discipline, family values, and a higher purpose, promoting a balanced lifestyle.

Meanwhile, some individuals mistakenly believe that Islam restricts freedom of thought. In contrast, Islam promotes critical thinking and intellectual exploration within a moral framework. Communist propagandists claim that religion is the opium of the people. In fact, Islam promotes kindness, fairness, and social harmony.

Critics argue that Islam's ideals are unrealistic. However, this criticism is misplaced. Islam is a practical system, backed by historical evidence. Islamic law is based on reason and evidence, aiming to promote inner civilization. Islam offers a peaceful, dignified, and balanced lifestyle. It balances material and spiritual needs, providing a unique approach to achieving personal and societal well-being.



Khalil Rehman Gharshin

Protests across Pakistan on January 31

# Hafiz Naeem urges govt to lower electricity costs

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, announced that protests and sit-ins would be held across the country on January 31. Speaking at a press conference in Multan, he warned that if the government attempts to suppress the demonstrations, peaceful resistance will be carried out. He emphasized that the government has been given ample time and must now reduce electricity costs for the public.

Rejecting the PECA law, Hafiz Naeem called it an attack on freedom of expression and a tactic to silence the voice of the people. He assured journalists that Jamaat-e-Islami stands with them against this legislation. The press conference was attended by Secretary General Ameer-ul-Azheem, Vice Ameer Dr. Osama Razi, and Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami South Punjab, Sohaib Ammar Siddiqui. Earlier, Hafiz Naeem presided over an organizational meeting of Jamaat-e-Islami South Punjab, which was attended by the leadership of South Punjab and district representatives.

The Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami



hailed the return of hundreds of thousands of Gaza residents to their homes as a historic milestone. He condemned former U.S. President Trump's plan to evacuate Gaza as a conspiracy, which the people of Palestine thwarted through their timely resistance. He stated that Palestinians have made history through their steadfastness, proving that wars are won not by weapons but by the strength of faith.

He emphasized that the resilience of the Palestinian people serves as a lesson for rulers who, God forbid, consider the U.S. as a supreme power. He further remarked that Israel's defeat in Gaza, following its failure in Afghanistan, is essentially a defeat for the U.S. as well.

The Ameer urged Islamabad to formulate independent national policies instead of following Washington's directives. He also highlighted

a conspiracy to drag Pakistan into conflict with Afghanistan, pointing out that all focus on the western border has left the Kashmiris abandoned.

The Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami said that if the government has saved 1,000 billion rupees through agreements with IPPs, then why is the public not being given relief in electricity bills? He announced the relaunch of the protest movement, vowing to compel the government to bow to the people's demands. He further stated that salaried individuals paid 243 billion rupees in taxes over the past six months and are expected to pay 500 billion rupees in taxes annually, while landlords contribute only 4 to 5 billion rupees. Even the IMF talks about taxing landlords, but there is collusion among the ruling classes on this matter.

He criticized the fact that members of PML-N, PPP, and PTI collectively increased their salaries by 150%, showing unity when it comes to their own interests. He pointed out that no political party is addressing the public's concerns. Jamaat-e-Islami demands tax relief for salaried individuals and an immediate reduction in electricity prices.

## Punjab Provincial Minister Health visits Burn Unit Multan



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Acting under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, along with Health Secretary Azmat Mahmood, conducted a visit to the Burn Unit, met with victims of the Fahad Town container explosion and received a comprehensive briefing.

Khawaja Salman Rafique announced that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has pledged financial assistance of PKR 2 million for the families of those who lost their lives and PKR 500,000 rupees for the injured. While acknowledging that no monetary value can compensate for the loss of life, he underscored that the assistance is a small yet meaningful effort toward the victims' recovery.

The Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow over the incident, reaffirming the Punjab government's solidarity with the affected. An official inquiry into the explosion has been launched under CM Punjab's orders, with a firm commitment to holding those involved in illegal LPG refilling accountable. The tragic incident resulted in six fatalities and injuries to over 30 individuals.

Khawaja Salman Rafique assured that exemplary medical care is being provided to patients under treatment at the Burn Unit. He also met with the families of the injured, offering condolences and assurance on behalf of the Punjab government. Immediate rehabilitation measures for the victims have been ordered, with district administration directed to ensure full support.

Health Secretary Azmat Mahmood highlighted that the Health Department has prioritized comprehensive care for the injured, declaring an emergency across hospitals and ensuring the availability of all medical facilities. Commissioner Multan Division, Amir Kareem Khan, briefed on rescue operations and treatment efforts, stating that emergency aid was promptly delivered, and shelter, food, and medical care are being provided to all victims.

Following his visit, Khawaja Salman Rafique addressed the media at the Burn Unit, reaffirming the government's commitment to aiding those affected and preventing such tragedies in the future.

## ICT admin conducts surprise inspection of guest houses

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Tuesday conducted a surprise inspection of various guest houses in Sector G-14/4 for ensuring compliance with regulations and maintain law and order.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Saddar zone, Maheen Hassan accompanied by the district administration teams conducted the inspection, visiting multiple guest houses in the sector.

The team verified the information of guests and managers, ensuring that all necessary documentation and procedures were in place.

The inspection aimed to monitor the guest houses' operations, ensuring they adhere to relevant laws and regulations.

# Additional Chief Secretary and Additional IG Police visited the Site Area

Quratul Ain

MULTAN: Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Fuad Hashim Rabbani, and Additional IG Police, Muhammad Kamran Khan, visited the site of the LPG tanker explosion and met with the victims.

Speaking to the media, the Additional Chief Secretary announced a crackdown on illegal oil and gas agencies across South Punjab. He emphasized that strict action has been ordered against those endangering human lives. He further warned that any government official or employee found supporting such illegal activities would face termination. He directed the Assistant Commissioner on site to ensure the immediate removal of debris from the incident site.

Fuad Hashim Rabbani expressed



anger over delays in treating livestock injured in the explosion and instructed the Livestock Department officers to expedite medical treatment for the affected animals. While talking to the victims, he said that the Chief Minister

of Punjab was deeply saddened by the tragic incident and added that a report on the loss of lives and property was being sent to her. A report on the condition of burn victims admitted in the burn unit is expected to be available

within 24 hours. The district administration has intimated that temporary shelter and food for those left homeless by the explosion has been arranged, he added.

Additional IGP South Punjab, Muhammad Kamran Khan, informed the media that the police have identified those responsible for the LPG tanker explosion and arrested two individuals. He assured that those playing with people's lives and property would not escape punishment.

He further stated that the police are also against the legal LPG and oil agencies operating in populated areas and terms of reference (ToRs) for granting permissions to such agencies is also part of the inquiry committee. Joint teams of the police and administration will carry out operations against the mafia involved in illegal oil and gas businesses.

# Government Communication Center Reviews Key Government Relief Interventions in Gaza

Spokesman Report

GAZA: Ramallah, Government Communication Center - Following the establishment of the Government Operations Room for Emergency Interventions in the Gaza Strip, designed to coordinate and oversee the efforts of government field teams, the Palestinian Government continues to intensify its efforts to sustain emergency interventions in the Strip, based on its Relief, Early Recovery and Emergency Response Plan for Gaza.

On Sunday morning, Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa visited the Government Operations Room for Emergency Interventions in Gaza, which comprises representatives from over 20 official institutions, with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. It operates through task forces from various ministries and agencies in both the West Bank and Gaza, supported by other institutions as needed, and remains in continuous session.

During the visit, the Prime Minister reviewed the progress and implementation of the Government's emergency response plan, and field coordination of humanitarian and relief interventions, with the participation of field teams operating in Gaza via video conferencing.

The Prime Minister also reviewed the key achievements and initial outcomes of the operations room's efforts, which included identifying preliminary sites for sheltering displaced people. This process involved GIS surveying to locate safe and suitable areas for shelter establishment, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the Land Authority, the Ministry of Local Government, and partners.

Dr. Mustafa emphasized that the severity of suffering among

our people in Gaza requires collective support for the Government in implementing its interventions and response plan in the Strip. This support is needed from civil society, the private sector, and international partners.

Additionally, the Government Operations Room has formed a task force of various government institutions to put in place the implementation plans for debris removal, in collaboration with international partners, primarily the UNDP.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society presented an overview of ongoing efforts to restore health services in the northern governorates of the Gaza Strip, in partnership with the Ministry of Health. These efforts include activating 26 medical points across the Strip, relocating a field hospital to the northern Gaza Strip, and continuing coordination with the Egyptian Red Crescent and the International Red Cross to facilitate the entry of aid into Gaza through all border crossings, as well as deploying additional field hospitals.

Moreover, the UNDP representative affirmed commitment to providing all possible support to the Government's efforts. This includes backing the implementation of the emergency response plan for rubble removal and providing logistical assistance to the field teams working on the ground.

### Summary of Recent Government Interventions:

The Government Communication Center released a report highlighting key emergency interventions carried out by the Palestinian Government in Gaza over the past week. These efforts included the work of field teams on the ground, in cooperation and coordination with relevant institutions. The report highlights several key achievements, including:

1. Damage Assessment and Reconstruction: Under the directives of Prime Minister

Dr. Mohammad Mustafa and the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, in partnership with UNDP and reconstruction bodies, the Government has launched a damage assessment program in Gaza. The program will see the deployment of 700 engineers, who will be tasked with conducting thorough damage assessments across Gaza, paving the way for the recovery and reconstruction phase, based on a comprehensive plan that includes rubble removal and temporary shelter.

2. International Engagements: Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa met with Sigrid Kaag, the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza, to discuss the coordination of joint efforts and practical steps in implementing the Government's plan for relief, early recovery, and emergency response in the Gaza Strip. Also, the Prime Minister emphasized, during his meeting with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the importance of focusing on restoring basic services in Gaza alongside relief efforts.

3. Humanitarian Aid Provision: The Ministry of Social Development continues its efforts, in cooperation with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and relief organizations, to deliver more emergency aid to our people in the Gaza Strip. This includes 200 pallets of winter clothing to meet the dire needs of displaced Palestinians amidst the cold weather, ensuring fair aid distribution to those who are most in need.

4. Emergency Water Supply: The Palestinian Water Authority, in cooperation with UNICEF, provided 10,000 liters of emergency fuel to operate 13 water wells and wastewater pumps across Gaza. Efforts included installing a new water supply line in Khan Younis to provide 1,500 cubic meters of potable water daily to 37,000 Palestinian



citizens and 143,000 displaced people. Work is also underway to supply the necessary fuel to water and sanitation facilities in northern Wadi Gaza, aiming to secure the water needs of residents and displaced persons as a first step, in addition to pumping stagnant water from rainwater collection pools and sewage systems.

5. Debris Removal: As part of the ongoing project to remove rubble and open main roads in the northern Gaza Strip, the Arab International Reconstruction Agency in Palestine, in partnership with the Palestinian Government, resumed debris removal and reopened major roads, facilitating the return of displaced Palestinians from southern Gaza.

6. Telecommunications Services: The Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy announced the resumption of operations by telecom companies in Rafah and northern Gaza, with tech-

nical teams working to repair damage promptly to ensure the restoration of communication and internet services.

7. Education Support: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education developed supplementary learning materials and diagnostic assessment tests for grades 1-4 and worksheets for grades 1-11 for students in the Gaza Strip. The Ministry also held orientation sessions for teachers participating in programs to reduce educational loss. Agreements were also signed with associations and banks to support supplementary education centers in Gaza following the cessation of aggression.

8. Electricity Restoration: The Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority initiated preparations to restore electricity in Gaza. Immediate relief measures include solar energy systems, generators, and fuel supplies. The estimated cost of damages to the electricity sector

in Gaza exceeds \$600 million, and the reconstruction process will span four phases. The first will focus on restoring electricity to vital sectors such as health, education, water, and shelters, while the second will focus on evaluating the infrastructure and rebuilding main power lines. During the third phase, efforts will be made to expand the capacity of the electricity sector in Gaza, while the fourth one will be dedicated to rebuilding the electricity sector in a more resilient and sustainable manner.

9. Employment Programs: The Ministry of Labour launched a temporary employment program to provide job opportunities in Gaza. It also continues to empower youth and graduates through training programs, including the "My First Job" initiative, which has provided hundreds of job opportunities.

10. Health Sector Coordination: The Ministry of Health

held a meeting with the participation of representatives from UN agencies and international organizations to coordinate, unify and enhance relief efforts in the Gaza Strip to meet the dire needs in the health sector.

11. Solid Waste Management: The Ministry of Local Government began preparations in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for Japan's Grant Aid project to support the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in the field of solid waste management. Additionally, the Ministry referred infrastructure project tenders to local councils in preparation for the start of implementation.

12. International Development Cooperation: The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation discussed with international partners and the British Consulate ways to enhance support for the Gaza Strip. Efforts focused on coordinating relief, reconstruction, and early recovery, in addition to 2025 projects related to renewable energy, digital economy, health, and governance, with an emphasis on the effective and sustainable implementation of interventions and development projects.

13. Cultural Heritage Preservation: The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities implemented an emergency project to rescue and restore the Qaisariya Market, in cooperation with the Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation and Gaza Municipality. The project included documenting damages, removing 240 tons of rubble, and establishing a system to monitor potential structural changes, while providing job opportunities for 11 workers and engineers.

14. Cultural Support Initiatives: The Ministry of Culture launched an extraordinary funding cycle through the Palestinian Cultural Fund to support individual initiatives in the Gaza Strip.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
112,030.36	113,520.32
Day's High	Day's Low
113,644.71	111,434.95
Index Value	Change
18,508,644,071	-1489.96
Percentage	Time
-1.31%	28 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,533.87	+30.16
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	28 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
44,818.95	+105.37
Percentage	Time
+0.24%	28 Jan, 12:06 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,016.87	-548.93
Percentage	Time
-1.39%	28 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	175.25	177.50
Bahrain Dinar	738.60	746.60
Canadian Dollar	194.10	196.50
China Yuan	37.59	37.99
Danish Krone	38.48	38.88
Euro	291.25	294.00
Hong Kong Dollar	35.41	35.76
Indian Rupee	3.14	3.23
Japanese Yen	1.81	1.87
Kuwaiti Dinar	896.30	905.80
Malaysian Ringgit	63.04	63.64
New Zealand \$	156.31	158.31
Norwegians Krone	24.46	24.76
Omani Riyal	723.79	731.79
Qatari Riyal	75.84	76.54
Saudi Riyal	74.20	74.55
Singapore Dollar	207.25	209.25
Swedish Korona	25.01	25.31
Swiss Franc	303.71	306.51
Thai Bhat	8.09	8.24
U.A.E Dirham	75.85	76.50
UK Pound Sterling	347.50	351
US Dollar	279.50	281.00

# Direct Flights between Pakistan and Bangladesh Set to Launch Soon: Bangladesh High Commission

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal Hussain Khan has announced that direct flights between Pakistan and Bangladesh are expected to begin within the next few months. This significant development is set to enhance connectivity and foster stronger economic and cultural ties between the two countries. The High Commissioner highlighted Bangladesh's commitment to strengthening business partnerships with Pakistan, emphasizing the ease of obtaining Bangladeshi visas online for Pakistani citizens. He also encouraged both countries to explore joint ventures and industrial collaborations to maximize bilateral benefits. He pointed out that there are ample opportunities for the businessmen of both countries to ink joint ventures for mutual prosperity, underscoring the vast potential for trade and investment. On his part, ICCI President Nasir Mansoor



Qureshi stressed that the business, industry, and trade communities of both countries could achieve significant milestones through economic diplomacy. He expressed his inten-

tion to visit Bangladesh with a delegation of potential investors at the earliest opportunity, with the goal of inking memoranda of understanding with the Dhaka Chamber

of Commerce and Industry and other relevant bodies.

Former ICCI Presidents Zubair Ahmed Shaikh, Mian Akram Farid, and Mian Shaukat Masood further emphasized that Bangladesh presents a unique opportunity for quickly enhancing bilateral trade, given the complementary nature of the two countries' economies.

The meeting was attended by several ICCI members, including Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, former Presidents Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Shaikh Aamir Waheed, and executive members Ishaq Sial, Chaudhry Mohammad Irfan, Imran Minhas, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Rohail Anwar Butt, Mohammad Waseem Chaudhry, and Shumila Siddiqui. All participants expressed strong optimism about the future of Pakistan-Bangladesh trade and the significant role direct flights will play in advancing this partnership.

## Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan presents a souvenir to EU Special Representative for Human Rights Ambassador Olaf Skoog during a meeting to discuss strengthening Pakistan-EU partnership through trade, economic cooperation.



Photo: PID

## Data Privacy Day: AI and Predictive Analytics Increase Privacy Risks

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: On Data Privacy Day, Kaspersky shines a light on the often-overlooked privacy trade-offs involved with using popular, everyday apps. These include social media apps, but also others such as e-commerce apps, fitness and health tracking apps. While these apps offer convenience, they also collect and share vast amounts of personal data, exposing users to invasive profiling and potential security risks.

In 2024 alone, Kaspersky detected over 49 billion instances of web trackers collecting user behavior data globally. With the rise of AI-driven data tracking and predictive analytics, the privacy risks associated with these apps are more significant than ever.

Many of the apps we use daily, often without a second thought, are quietly harvesting sensitive information. Some of the most concerning categories include social media apps such as TikTok, Instagram and

Threads, which are constantly collecting data on a user's location, browsing habits and even voice data. Social video or photo apps such as these may be using AI to access camera rolls to analyze images and embedded metadata, potentially revealing your geographical location.

Kaspersky shares five steps to commemorate Data Privacy Day, starting with always disabling unnecessary app permissions to limit exposure of your personal data. Kaspersky also recommends employing a VPN to mask your IP address and change your virtual location, while also using anonymized payment methods and privacy-focused browsers for sensitive transactions. Enabling "Do Not Track" settings on your device and within individual apps adds another layer of privacy protection. Using a security solution with "Do Not Track" functionality can further reduce tracking, and it's essential to avoid public Wi-Fi networks, as these can expose your data.

## A Historic Move—From Fintech to Bank

**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: In a landmark development for the financial services sector, ABHI & TPL have officially completed the acquisition of FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited. The final signing ceremony took place in the presence of prominent leaders from both organisations and key stakeholders, including Omair Ansari, CEO of ABHI, Ali Jameel, CEO of TPL Corp Limited, and Jeffery Smith, Vice President—Chief Administrative Officer of FINCA. The event marked the formal conclusion of this strategic partnership, which aims to expand access to innovative financial solutions and accelerate financial inclusion across Pakistan.

Four years ago, two individuals dared to dream of a Pakistan where financial access wasn't a privilege but a right.

This vision gave rise to ABHI, a fintech born in 2021 to transform financial wellness for millions. Founded in response to a pressing need for financial accessibility, ABHI initially addressed the gap through Earned Wage Access (EWA), empowering employees with real-time access to their earned salaries.

Since then, the company has expanded



its offerings to include a comprehensive suite of financial solutions, such as payroll services and SME financing, addressing broader economic challenges for individuals and businesses alike.

"At Abhi, our mission has always been to create accessible financial solutions for everyone," said Omair Ansari, CEO and Co-Founder of ABHI. "This acquisition represents a significant leap forward, allowing us to reach communities that have historically been excluded from the financial system. Together with TPL and

FINCA, we are determined to transform financial access across Pakistan."

Ali Jameel, CEO of TPL Corp Limited commented, "At TPL, our commitment to innovation and impact drives everything we do. Joining forces with ABHI and FINCA enables us to redefine financial access, combining our technological prowess with their deep-rooted expertise. This milestone is a step toward building a more inclusive financial ecosystem that empowers millions across Pakistan and beyond."

## Bayer to insure 10 million smallholder farmers in South Asia and Africa

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Bayer Foundation and the Pula Foundation announced last week at World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that they are planning to provide insurance coverage for 10 million smallholder farmers working with national governments in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Mali, by 2030.

The collaboration aims to enhance climate resilience among smallholder farmers in these countries, protecting them against the growing impacts of droughts and floods, which threaten harvests, livelihoods, and

global food security. It will help build private-public collaborations and shape the insurance market for agriculture in Africa and Asia.

By the end of 2030, Bayer Foundation's grant for insurance premium support in the amount of 10 million euros—supported by a donation from Bayer's Crop Science Division—will unlock a potential insurance coverage of 127 million U. S. dollars for 10 million farmers in the targeted countries. The grant originates from Bayer Foundation's Social Innovation Ecosystem Fund which targets mature and high-impact solutions for underserved communities.

## Lowering the interest rate to a single digit is essential for reviving Pakistan's economy: Iftikhar Malik



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Former President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Iftikhar Ali Malik, Tuesday emphasized that lowering the interest rate to a single digit is essential for reviving Pakistan's economy.

In a statement, he highlighted that high interest rates have stifled economic growth with increasing the cost of doing business and due to absence of investors interest. He argued that a lower interest rate would encourage businesses to

borrow, invest, and expand their operations, ultimately leading to job creation and economic development.

He said that businesses in Pakistan are struggling due to rising production costs, limited access to affordable financing, and an bleak economic environment.

A single-digit interest rate, according to Malik, would ease the financial burden on the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the economy.

He urged the government

and central bank to adopt a pro-growth monetary policy and create a conducive environment for investment instead of lowering rate by one percent.

Iftikhar Malik also stressed the importance of reducing reliance on foreign loans and enhancing domestic revenue generation to ensure long-term economic stability. He called for bold reforms and effective policymaking to restore investor confidence, stimulate economic activity, and place Pakistan on a sustainable path of growth and prosperity.

## Dr. Asif Mahmood Fah FTO will visit Multan

**Commerce Desk**



LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr. Asif Mahmood Fah will visit Multan next month to engage with the business community of South Punjab.

Speaking here Tuesday to an awareness session with business community, Coordinator to FTO for South Punjab Saif Ur Rehman said the visit aims to address the genuine tax-related grievances faced by businesses in the region and promote a collaborative environment between taxpayers and tax authorities.

He said during his visit, Dr. Asif Mahmood Fah will meet representatives of various chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and stakeholders to gain insights into the challenges they encounter in dealing with tax matters. This initiative underscores the commitment of the Federal Tax Ombudsman to provide timely and effective resolution of complaints related to taxation, ensuring transparency and fairness in the system.

Saif Ur Rehman said the business community of South Punjab has expressed hope that the visit will lead to constructive discussions and practical solutions for issues such as delays in tax refunds, cumbersome procedures, and discrepancies in tax assessments. The FTO's proactive approach is expected to strengthen confidence among taxpayers and foster an environment conducive to economic growth.

Dr. Asif Mahmood Fah's visit is part of his broader agenda to make the office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman more accessible to the public, ensuring justice and accountability in tax-related matters across the country, he concluded.

# PCB, USA Cricket mulls cricket series in near future

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday met United States of America (USA) Cricket's Chief Executive Officer Johnathan Atkeison in Washington.

Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Super League (PSL), Salman Naseer was also present in the meeting.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi and CEO USA Cricket discussed possibilities of a tri-series between Pakistan, Canada and the USA.

Discussions regarding arrangement of bilateral series between Pakistan and USA men's and women's cricket teams also took place.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi assured the USA Cricket CEO of all possible support on the players development front. The PCB Chairman said that PCB was ready to provide full support for the promotion of cricket in the USA.

Mohsin Naqvi offered to train USA cricket coaches in Pakistan. He also invited Johnathan Atkeison to visit



Pakistan during the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said

that there were immense opportunities for the promotion of cricket between Pakistan and the USA.

The CEO USA Cricket thanked the PCB Chairman for invitation to the Champions Trophy.

# Khelta Punjab Games are being organized under the slogan of 'Khelay ga Punjab, Jeetay ga Punjab'

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar has presided over an important meeting to review the preparations of upcoming Inter-Division phase competitions of Khelta Punjab Games at the National Hockey Stadium on Tuesday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry, Chairman Lahore Waste Management Bilal Zulfikar Khokhar, Sports Coordinator Malik Anooosh Khokhar, Manzoor Khokhar, Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum and Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed attended the meeting.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry



presented a detailed briefing about the preparations of mega event.

Addressing the meeting, Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs

Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will inaugurate the final phase competitions of Khelta Punjab Games at a colourful opening ceremony at the Punjab Stadium on January 30.

Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that the Khelta Punjab Games are being organized under the slogan of 'Khelay ga Punjab, Jeetay ga Punjab'. "The true promotion of sports culture and healthy activities among the younger generation across the province is the vision of Punjab Chief Minister".

Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar further said that more than 2,000 players including 1,300 male and 700 female athletes and officials from all the divisions of Punjab will attend the inaugural ceremony. "Khelta Punjab Games is a suitable platform for emerging athletes to demonstrate their sports skills".

# Zone-VI Whites to face Zone-III Whites in Woodward Trophy U-17 final

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: The final of the Woodward Trophy Under-17 inter-zonal cricket tournament will take place on Thursday, at the KCCA Stadium, with Zone-VI Whites set to compete against Zone-III Whites.

Zafar Riaz Bari, Director of Admin and External Affairs at Medicam Group of Companies, will be the chief guest at the event and will distribute the prizes after the match. Nadeem Omar, President of the Regional Cricket Association Karachi, will preside over the ceremony.

The tournament is organized by the Regional Cricket Association Karachi, in collaboration with Medicam Group of Companies.

Both teams will finalize their playing squads from the following players before



the match begins:

**Zone-VI Whites:**  
Asad Omar (Captain), Soman Kabir, Talal Mehmood, Hamad Alam, Malik Ashtar, M. Azaan, Ariyan Khan, Muhammad Hasnain, Abdul Hayee, Murtaza Taqi, Niqab Shafiq, Faizan Khan, Abdullah Ahmed Butt, Yasir Hameed, M. Afhan, Noor Zaman.

Management: Naveed Al Amin (Manager), Adnan Kaleem (Coach).

**Zone-III Whites:**  
Anas Balouch (Captain), Hamza OOn Wala, Haider Ali, Daniyal Ali, Muhammad Waseem, Bilal Aqeel, Aman Ahmed, Asad Ullah Khan, Ahsan Yaqoob, Nizam Uddin, Maaz Maqbool, Taimoor Rehman, Muhammad Ali Malik, Hayyan Raja, Muhammad Sunny.

Management: Mir Abdul Rehman (Manager), Syed Imran Azam (Coach).

## 26th HEC All Pakistan Inter-University Men's Boxing Championship

**Sports Desk**

FAISALABAD: The 26th HEC All Pakistan Inter-University Men's Boxing Championship has begun at The University of Faisalabad. Teams from more than 20 universities from across the country are participating in the boxing championship. The boxing competitions will continue from January 28 to 31. The special guest of the event was Rector The University of Faisalabad Professor Dr. Amanullah Malik, while international boxer Shaukat Ali Chatha and national cricket team player Irfan Khan Niazi were the guests of honor. The boxing championship was inaugurated by Rector The University of Faisalabad Professor Dr. Amanullah Malik by cutting the ribbon. Divisional Sports Director Tariq Niazi also attended the opening ceremony. Rector University of Faisalabad Professor Dr. Amanullah Malik, while addressing the ceremony, said that along with education, extra-curricular activities are also very important for the mental development of students. Assistant Director Sports of the Higher Education Commission Muhammad Asif, while addressing the ceremony, said that HEC is taking steps to expand the scope of sports and other extracurricular activities in universities across the country. Muhammad Altaf, Sports Director of the University of Faisalabad, introduced the players of all the teams to the guests. More than 45 matches were played on the first day of the 4-day competition.

## ICC CEO Geoff Allardice resigns



**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) Tuesday confirmed that Geoff Allardice has decided to step down as ICC Chief Executive.

Mr Allardice joined the ICC in 2012 as ICC General Manager of Cricket, joining from Cricket Australia where he held the role of Cricket Operations Manager. He was appointed as the ICC's CEO in November 2021, having previously served as the acting CEO for eight months.

ICC Chair Mr Jay Shah said: "On behalf of the ICC Board, I want to sincerely thank Geoff for his leadership and commitment during his tenure as Chief Executive. His efforts have played a key role in advancing cricket globally. We are truly grateful for his service and wish him all the very best in his future endeavors."

Mr Allardice said: "It has been a privilege to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the International Cricket Council and I am incredibly proud of the results we have achieved, from enhancing the global reach of cricket to the commercial foundation put in place for ICC Members."

"I'd like to thank the ICC Chair, the board of directors, and the entire cricket community for their support and collaboration over the past 13 years. I believe this is the right time for me to step down and pursue new challenges. I am confident that cricket has exciting times ahead, and I wish the ICC and the global cricket community every success in the future."

The ICC Board will initiate the next steps to identify a replacement.

## Boxer Hussain Shah's plot grabbed by land mafia in Karachi



**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Land mafia has grabbed a plot owned by former Olympic boxer Hussain Shah in Karachi.

In this regard, Hussain Shah said that the government gave him a plot in Gulistan-e-Jauhar Block-10 after he won a gold medal in 1988 for which he has all the documents.

Olympian Hussain Shah has appealed the Sindh governor to vacate the plot from the land mafia and hand it over to him.

Hussain Shah said that he wanted to return to Pakistan and serve the country.

Former Olympian further said he wanted to build his own house and boxing gym on the plot.

He said he has been coaching in Japan for the last 20 years and he had fought fights in many countries including the US.

## Champions Trophy: Fans face difficulty in booking tickets amid overwhelming response

LAHORE: Cricket fans faced trouble while purchasing tickets for the much-awaited event of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 as official website went down due to high traffic. The ticket sale for the Pakistan-hosted matches of the eight-team tournament went live at 2pm Pakistan Standard Time (PST) and drew unusual interest from the fans.

As buyers flocked to the website, it consequently resulted in the failure of its servers, causing difficulties for the fans in securing a seat for themselves to watch the matches of the mega event live at Pakistan's newly-renovated venues.

After drawing more users than expected, the online ticketing website has started to increase the number of its servers.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday, shared the information related to the ticketing of the eight-team tournament with prices ranging from PKR 1,000 to 25,000, depending on the venues, seating category and also on matches.

Tickets will be available in multiple categories, including General Enclosure, First Class, Premium, VIP, VVIP and Gallery, ensuring that spectators can choose an option that suits their preferences.

# PCB's Champions U19 at Muridke starts today

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has called the country's top under-19 cricketers to gather at the Lahore Country Club in Muridke on Tuesday for a two-week Champions U19 Camp under the supervision of five mentors: Misbah-ul-Haq, Saqlain Mushtaq, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shoaib Malik and Waqar Younis.

These players, identified during the last held divisional and national events, will have the opportunity to refine their skills in preparation for the upcoming season, which is closely aligned with the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026 in Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Separately, the third phase of the Engro Cricket Coaching Project is already underway at the Hanif Mohammad High-Performance Centre in Karachi. This phase is being conducted by five elite foreign coaches, supported by local coaches.

During the Muridke camp, the players will not only participate in training and fitness sessions but will also attend educational lectures and take part in practice



matches. The camp will conclude on 16 February.

The following players have been invited:

Batters - Abdul Saboor (Quetta), Afkar Durrani (Peshawar), Adnan Saeed

(Abbottabad), Asim Arif (Lahore), Gohar Khan (DM Jamali), Haroon Arshad (Karachi), Haroon Rashid (Peshawar), Hasnain Nadeem (AJK), Ijaz-ul-Haq (Quetta), Mohammad Zain Khan (FATA), Mohammad Ali (DM Jamali),

Mohammad Bin Nisar (Multan), Muhammad Riazullah (Abbottabad), Muhammad Usman (Faisalabad), Nahid Ali (FATA), Nauman Ali (Sialkot), Sameer Akhtar (Bahawalpur), Shahzaib Ali (Larkana), Sheraz (Quetta), Uzair Ali (Abbottabad) and Zulkifal Khan (Fata)

Fast bowlers - Aftab Hussain (Larkana), Daud Abbas (Hyderabad), Hassan Sajjad (Sialkot), Mohammad Abdullah (Sialkot), Mohammad Ahmed (Lahore), Mohammad Zohaib (Bahawalpur), Mohammad Aayas Kiyani (Lahore), Naseer Khan (Bahawalpur), Rehan Shah (Karachi), Salman Ahmed (Bahawalpur), Shoaib Khan Afridi (Peshawar) and Wasimullah Khan (Fata)

Spinners - Abdul Moez (Karachi), Adil (Quetta), Mohammad Ameer Sultan (Sialkot), Mohammad Huzafa (Bahawalpur), Mohammad Musa (Sialkot), Mohammad Salman Ahmed (Hyderabad), Rana Abdul Wahab (Multan), Waqas Khan (Abbottabad) and Zahid Bin Sharif (Hyderabad)

Wicket-keepers: Hafiz Faizan Shah Mohammad (Sargodha), Mohammad Rizwan (Bhakkar) and Shahzaib Khan (Karachi)

# Aurangzeb for climate financing to combat vulnerabilities posed by climate change

Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday highlighted the critical need for climate financing to combat the vulnerabilities posed by climate change.

Virtually addressing the 3rd Pakistan Climate Conference (PCC) organized by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), he commended Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industries for organizing this vital conference to confront the urgent climate challenges Pakistan faces. Ranked among the top 10 most climate-vulnerable countries globally, and



with damages from the devastating 2022 floods exceeding \$30 billion, the urgency for sustainable solutions and financing has never been crucial, he added.

Highlighting the role of innovative financial tools in addressing the climate crisis, the Minister noted the importance of tapping into international funding mechanisms

and fostering private-sector participation. He said, "Mobilizing sufficient climate finance demands enhanced access to international funding sources like the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund."

He continued, "the success of Pakistan's first green Eurobond in 2021, which raised \$500 million, illustrates our capacity to attract sustain-

able investments. Expanding such initiatives, alongside tools like green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and carbon credits, will empower the private sector to play a leading role in climate action."

Muhammad Aurangzeb also pointed out two major challenges facing Pakistan amid ongoing economic reforms: population growth

and climate change. He reiterated the government's resolve to integrate climate considerations into national economic planning. "The Ministries of Finance, Climate, and Planning will work together to bring Pakistan onto a sustainable pathway of growth and resilience," he stated.

Concluding his address, he reassured stakeholders of the Ministry of Finance's dedication to creating an enabling environment for green investments and said, "our commitment is unwavering. Through fiscal reforms, regulatory support, and capacity building, we aim to attract both international and domestic investments in green projects to secure a sustainable future for Pakistan."

# Pakistan, China reiterate commitment to elevating bilateral ties to new heights



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China in Islamabad Jiang Zaidong on Tuesday met with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar wherein both sides expressed their commitment to elevating bilateral ties to new heights and further solidifying their strategic partnership.

In the meeting, they reaffirmed the Pak-China All-Weather Strategic Partnership, which was a cornerstone of bilateral relations between the two states, according to a Foreign Office press release.

They reviewed the progress

of CPEC 2.0, calling it a significant economic project aimed at enhancing economic cooperation and regional connectivity.

On behalf of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Ambassador Jiang extended an invitation to DPM Dar to attend the High-Level UN Security Council Event "Practicing Multilateralism, Reforming and Improving Global Governance", hosted by China under its Presidency of the UNSC, on February 18, 2025 in New York.

The deputy prime minister accepted the invitation, underscoring Pakistan's commitment to multilateral cooperation.

## PNS YAMAMA visits Jeddah

JEDDAH: Royal Saudi Naval Forces Officials being briefed onboard PNS YAMAMA during ship's visit to Jeddah.



## PNS YAMAMA visits Jeddah and Participates In Bilateral Exercise

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The newly commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship YAMAMA visited Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, during its maiden voyage from Romania to Pakistan and participated in a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF).

Upon arrival at Jeddah port, the ship was warmly welcomed by senior officials of RSNF and representatives from Pakistan Embassy. During its stay, the ship's crew engaged in professional activities, including cross-ship visits, table-top discussions on maritime issues, and meetings with the RSNF leadership.

Following the port visit, PNS YAMAMA conducted a PASSEX with HMS Makkah. The exercise was designed to strengthen naval

cooperation and enhance interoperability between the two navies. Both forces reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring maritime security and promoting regional stability.

The visit of PNS YAMAMA to Saudi Arabia and its participation in the bilateral exercise further reinforced the strong brotherly relations and defence collaboration between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

PNS YAMAMA is the fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) built for Pakistan Navy by DAMEN Shipyards, Galati, Romania. These versatile and state-of-the-art platforms are equipped with advanced technologies and designed to operate in contested maritime environments. They aim to maintain peace in the prevailing challenging times and project deterrence across all domains of warfare.

## Ahsan Iqbal visits Pakistan High Commission in London

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Pakistan's Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, visited the Pakistan High Commission in London during his official visit to the United Kingdom. He was warmly received at the airport by the High Commissioner, Dr. Muhammad Faisal.

During his visit to the High Commission, the Minister was briefed on its operations and met with officers at the Chancery. Mr. Iqbal also took the opportunity to record his thoughts and impressions in the visitor's book.

The visit marks the beginning of a series of engagements for the Minister in the UK. Over the coming days, Mr.



Iqbal is scheduled to meet with UK parliamentarians, senior government officials, busi-

ness leaders, academics, and members of the British-Pakistani community.

Key highlights of his agenda include discussions on fostering partnerships in critical sectors such as climate change mitigation, academic collaboration, financial development, and launching "URAAAN PAKISTAN" overseas—an initiative focused on Pakistan's global engagement strategy and a youth internship programme. As part of his itinerary, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal will also address the prestigious Oxford Union debate, further strengthening academic ties between Pakistan and the UK. His visit is expected to bolster bilateral relations and open new avenues for collaboration in various fields.

## AIOU creates enabling environment for int'l students, VC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Vice-Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has reiterated that we are committed to create an enabling environment for enrollment of international students. He noted that by expanding its educational outreach, Allama Iqbal Open University is bringing honor to Pakistan on a global scale. To date, 1,007 students from 37 countries have enrolled, and the aim is to increase this number to 5,000 in the next five years.

To facilitate international students, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood has empowered and activated the International Collaboration and Exchange Office, which remains in contact with international students and provides comprehensive guidance to them. AIOU has introduced over 80

educational programs for overseas Pakistanis and international students worldwide for the Spring 2025 semester.

The last date for admission to these programs is February 10. These programs include Matriculation, FA, I. Com, Associate Degrees in Arts, Commerce, and Education.



BS Programs, 1.5-year, 2.5-year, and 4-year B. Ed. programs, as well as diploma programs in 12 disciplines.

For monitoring online examinations, MS Teams or other approved monitoring applications will be used. Admissions can be applied for online via the link <http://fnbp.aiou.edu.pk>.

## Romina Khurshid highlights impact of youth in driving climate change solutions

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has lauded the instrumental role of youth in shaping both global and national climate action narratives.

Speaking at the National Youth Climate Summit here on Tuesday, Ms. Romina highlighted the significant contributions of young leaders who are not only raising awareness but also proposing actionable solutions to combat climate change.

"It is both inspiring and encouraging to see the commitment of our young leaders, who are raising awareness to protect our planet from climate change impacts," said Ms.



Romina. She emphasized the crucial need to bridge the communication gap among provinces and stakeholders

in addressing the urgent issue of climate change and highlighted the significant role of the media in raising awareness, stressing that all segments of society must be engaged in promoting climate change solutions. She called for a collaborative approach, encouraging learning from best practices across different regions and sectors.

She proposed the establishment of green clubs and green societies as part of the broader effort to foster sustainable solutions. Ms. Romina also advocated for the inclusion of climate change education within school curricula, emphasizing the vital role academia plays in shaping future leaders who are equipped to tackle environmental challenges.