

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
 نبی کریم ﷺ کے پاس ایک خاتون آئی اور
 کسی معاملہ میں آپ سے گفتگو کی، پھر نبی کریم
 ﷺ نے ان سے کہا کہ وہ وہ آپ کے
 پاس آئیں۔ انہوں نے عرض کیا: یا رسول
 اللہ! اگر میں آؤں اور آپ کو نہ پاؤں تو پھر
 آپ کیا فرماتے ہیں؟ جیسے ان کا اشارہ وہاں
 کی طرف ہو۔ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے
 فرمایا کہ اگر مجھے نہ پاؤں تو ابھر کر کے پاس آئیں۔
 (بخاری، حدیث نمبر 7220)
**Barkat Rice Mills
 (Pvt) Limited**

RAWALPINDI



High Speed Diesel price increased by Rs 7.00 per liter

As of February 1, 2025, the price of petrol in Pakistan increased by Rs 1.00 per liter to Rs 257.13. High Speed Diesel (HSD) increased by Rs 7.00 per liter to Rs:267.95. The federal government is charging Rs 60 per litre petroleum levy on petrol and HSD whereas these are exempted from general sale tax (GST).



OGRA notifies increase in LPG prices

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has announced a price increase for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in Pakistan, effective February 1. The new price reflects a Rs3.68 increase per kilogram, translating to a Rs43.52 increase per 11.8 kg cylinder.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Sha'aban 2, Saturday, February 1, 2025

www.dailyspokesman.net

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 18, Issue: 291 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Visit

RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari being briefed about the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP), during his visit to NASTP on Friday.



Photo: Online

President Asif Ali Zardari visits National Aerospace Science and Technology Park

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari visited the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park (NASTP), a flagship project spearheaded by Pakistan Air Force.

During the visit, the President was briefed in detail regarding various set-ups established at NASTP. Declaring NASTP a major landmark in PAF's journey towards progress, the Chief of the Air Staff was also present on

the occasion. He emphasized that the project is of national importance, poised to form basis of knowledge and technology-based economy in Pakistan. NASTP aims to bridge the gap by seamlessly fusing private and public sector enterprises in Space, Cyber, IT, Artificial Intelligence & Aerospace domains.

It was emphasized that the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park is all set to become one of the best Aerospace, Cyber & IT clusters in

the world and will transform the national landscape with design, R&D and innovation centres for emerging and disruptive technologies to foster research, innovation and development in related technologies. This endeavour will for sure maximise social, economic, security and scientific dividends for the country.

The President lauded PAF, and its skilled personnel and conveyed his admiration for the state-of-the-art technological

ecosystem witnessed during his visit to the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park which will serve as a beacon of innovation to promote futuristic aerospace and aviation capabilities. He also commended Pakistan Air Force's leadership for the vision and proactive approach towards addressing modern warfare challenges and completing this project of national strategic importance in an unprecedented time frame.

The National Aerospace

Science and Technology Park will play a pivotal role in shaping the country's aerospace industry, fostering strategic partnerships and contributing to the economic growth of Pakistan. The visit of the President of Pakistan to the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park is a testament to the success of this mega project and highlights the unwavering dedication of the Pakistan Air Force in promoting an environment of research and development in the country.

Ordinary civilians do not fall under Army Act, Supreme Court told

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench hearing the appeals against the trial of civilians in military courts was told that the ordinary civilians do not fall under the Army Act.

During proceedings on Friday, the Constitutional Bench Justice Musarrat Hilali questioned the comparison between the 2014 APS attack and the May 9 protests.

Led by Justice Aminuddin Khan, the seven-judge bench heard arguments from Khawaja Ahmad Hussain, the lawyer representing Justice (ret'd) Jawad S Khawaja, who maintained "Ordinary civilians do not fall under the Army Act, which applies to Pakistan's military personnel and civilian employees of the Armed Forces."

Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi inquired whether the Army Act applies to attacks on airbases. Justice Hilali added, "The APS attack was an act of terrorism, whereas May 9 was a protest. What differentiates the civilians involved?"

Khawaja Hussain explained that the APS attack led to the 21st Constitutional Amendment, enabling military trials of those responsible for terrorism. "May 9 protesters should be tried, but not in military courts," Khawaja Hussain argued.

Justice Aminuddin Khan acknowledged that the court has the authority to review any legislation contradicting the Constitution.

Justice Musarrat Hilali remarked, "All the children killed in the APS attack were civilians."

During the proceedings, Khawaja Hussain referred to the May 9 statement issued by the ISPR. He stated, "ISPR released a statement on May 15 regarding the May 9 events. Do you have objections to the statement?"

The lawyer responded, "I have no objection to the first part of the statement. However, the statement asserts that there is irrefutable evidence of the May 9 incidents. How can a military trial be fair after such a statement? If the military is a party in the case, how can it ensure justice?"

Justice Musarrat Hilali remarked that the lawyer's arguments pertain to the merits of the case, while Justice Aminuddin Khan advised the lawyer to confine his arguments to legal matters. The lawyer maintained, "A victim cannot conduct an impartial trial."

Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi inquired, "If a foreign spy is captured in the future, where should their trial be conducted?"

The lawyer responded, "Such cases should be handled by anti-terrorism courts."

Justice Rizvi smiled and remarked, "Oh really?"

Justice Aminuddin Khan pointed out an inconsistency in the arguments, stating, "It is strange to declare a law null and void while also saying that special remedies should still be available."

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked, "Can Pakistan's armed forces use Section 2(1)(d)(2) of the Army Act in the future?"

The lawyer replied, "The reality is that in the future, this section cannot be applied. I would like to continue with my arguments."

The argument also touched Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav's case, with Justice Ali Mazhar questioning how striking down Section 2(1)(d)(ii) of the Army Act could impact future espionage cases. "If we invalidate this provision, where would trials for foreign spies be conducted?" Justice Rizvi asked. Khawaja Hussain responded that such cases could be tried in anti-terrorism courts. Justice Rizvi, smiling, replied: "Alright then."

Justice Aminuddin found it contradictory that the petitioners sought to strike down the Army Act provision while also advocating for special exemptions. The court later adjourned the hearing until Monday, February 3.

Lawmakers' monthly salaries increased by 200pc

City Desk



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: After the approval by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, salary of the parliamentarians have been hiked 200 percent effective January 1, 2025 and approximately Rs 519,000 salary has been transferred in the account of each lawmaker.

However, the Speaker of the National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq, will continue to receive around Rs 218,000, with no increase. Similarly, the Deputy Speaker's salary remains unchanged. The Finance Committee, authorised to make changes to the parliamentarians' salaries, has implemented the salary hike.

The sources revealed that the Finance Committee does not have the authority to increase the salaries of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The salary hike is expected to benefit all parliament members, with the exception of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Earlier, the Punjab Assembly approved the increase in the monthly salaries of MPAs, provincial ministers, speaker, deputy speaker, parliamentary secretaries and other officials.

10 terrorists killed during intelligence-based operations in KP: ISPR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed at least ten terrorists during an intelligence-based operations in various areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

According to an official statement released by ISPR, on reported presence of Khwarij, an intelligence-based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in general area Khulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District.

During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and resultantly, four khwarij were sent to hell.

In four separate encounters in North Waziristan District, fire exchange took place between the Security Forces and khwarij in general area Datta Khel, Hassan Khel, Ghulam Khan and Mir Ali. Resultantly, six khwarij were



successfully neutralized by own troops.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in these areas against the security forces as well as killing of innocent civilians.

ISPR said sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Kharij found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

President, PM pay tribute to security forces for killing 10 terrorists KP operations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for their bravery on eliminating 10 Khawarij terrorists during successful operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

In separate messages, the president and prime minister reiterated their resolve to completely eradicate Fitna-ul-Khawarij (terrorism) from the country.

The President said that the security forces were taking action to eradicate the menace of terrorism, whereas the entire nation was united against terrorism.

"Operations against Fitna-



ul-Khawarij will continue until terrorism is completely eradicated," President Zardari said.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also appreciated the security forces for various successful operations against Fitna-ul-Khawarij terrorists in Kolachi, Dera Ismail Khan and Waziristan districts.

"The entire nation stands with security forces in the fight against terrorists and are resolute to eradicate all forms of terrorism from the country," the prime minister said.

Tarar pledges to further strengthen Pak-China friendship for future generations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar stated on Friday that Pakistan and China are the guardians and protectors of their bilateral friendship, reaffirming their unwavering commitment to strengthen and preserve this bond and ensure it endures for future generations.

"We are the guardians and protectors of Pak-China friendship. It is our national duty to strengthen this bond and pass it on to future generations," Attaullah Tarar said while addressing the Chinese New Lunar Year and Spring Festival ceremony.

He said the Pakistan-China friendship represents a timeless and profound bond between the governments and people of both nations. This cherished relationship holds a special place in our hearts and stands as a shining example for the entire world.

He stated that Pakistan and



China share borders, mountains, and highways, emphasizing that the Pakistan-China friendship is "higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the oceans, and sweeter than honey."

He shared that he has participated in China's exchange programs six times.

In various cities across China, he never felt like he was in a foreign country. Every visit to China brings a deep sense of belonging and warmth.

The minister expressed his happiness and pride in the mutual respect between the people of both countries. The everlasting journey of Pak-China friendship continues. One Belt, One Road is a remarkable initiative by President Xi Jinping.

IS PODA Amplifies Rural Women's Voices

PODA expressed appreciation for CM Punjab's efforts to protect women's rights

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Emphasizing the importance of amplifying rural women's voices through the platform of the Annual Rural Women Conference, the Executive Director of PODA expressed appreciation for Punjab Chief Minister Mariam Nawaz's efforts to protect women's and girls' rights. She was speaking at the launching meeting of the report of the 17th Annual Rural Women Conference organized by PODA from 22-24 October 2024 in Islamabad.

Highlighting the conference proceedings, she said that the event brought together a remarkable gathering of over 2376 mainly rural women from 130 districts across Pakistan, highlighting the critical issues faced by rural women who are not recognized as 'farmers', thereby denying them access



to government schemes and services intended for farmers.

The launch event was attended by a diverse group of prominent journalists, social and human rights activists,

climate advocates, lawyers, academics, and experts from various fields.

The ED-PODA stated that this platform uniquely reflects Pakistan's diversity as a federation, bringing together

representatives from all regions and walks of life concerning women's issues. It bridges the gap between women and stakeholders, including the government, international donor organizations, politicians, and government departments, and ensures insight to policymakers gauging the niche from the grassroots, she added.

"The pioneering women who first attended this conference are now leading initiatives across Pakistan, driving transformative change in their communities through organizations and businesses. Their powerful impact is inspiring, and it's highly encouraging for everyone connected to this platform—from participants to supporting organizations—who have contributed to its success, which is safeguarding human rights of all, specifically women and girls, enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan", said Sameena Nazir.

RPO Multan's Initiative to Address Police Misconduct and Promote Accountability



Zain Khan

MULTAN: RPO Multan, Captain (R) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry's commendable initiative. Met with the citizen, Ghulam Akbar, who was subjected to violence. Apologized for the police's behavior and provided financial assistance. It is observed that the police have become accustomed to using force without thinking. This must be controlled. It was simply a habit of this uniformed officer—otherwise, he could have stopped the citizen and moved him aside. Police officers are often seen misusing their authority, both inside and outside the station. Slapping civilians has become a routine practice for them, and this habit must end. Police personnel must understand that not every citizen or passerby is a criminal. Therefore, police personnel should avoid actions that damage the department's reputation and force senior officers to issue apologies. The violent behavior of the Sub-Inspector SHO towards Multan citizen Akbar is unacceptable in any civilized society. There is a need for changes in police training so that officers emerging from training institutions are respected and appreciated in society.

A case, number 276/25, has been registered at BZ Police Station against the police officer who subjected the citizen Akbar to violence. The police have arrested the accused and confined him in the lock-up.

A four-week training program concluded at Women University Multan

Quratul Ain

MULTAN: A four-week training program titled as "National Outreach Program of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in collaboration with Women University Multan and National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) has concluded at Women University Multan. According to the spokesperson, this program was funded by the National Academy of Higher Education, a subsidiary of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The aim of this program is to promote training of teachers on modern lines and raise the standard of education so that they can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. The chief guest of the closing ceremony was Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kalsoom Pracha, while the special guest was Managing Director National Academy of Higher Education Dr. Noor Amna Malik. The Vice Chancellor, while addressing the gathering, said that such policies and measures of HEC are commendable which are contributing to various sustainable development goals. Managing Director, NAHE Dr. Amna Noor Malik, while addressing the gathering, said that HEC's focus is on universities that have been established in the last 20 years. The focal person, Registrar Prof. Dr. Mamoon Khan, said that this initiative of HEC is commendable and will yield far-reaching results.

Sardar Attique expressed grief over the martyrdom of security forces

Abdul Majeed tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan expressed grief over the martyrdom of two soldiers including a Pak Army Major in an operation by security forces in North Waziristan and said that the security forces are determined to eradicate terrorism from the country, the sacrifices of brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve. Terrorists are enemies of the country and nation and are making a heinous attempt to spread unrest to fulfill their nefarious objectives.



Polio Eradication Committee was held

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEKSINGH: A meeting of the Polio Eradication Committee was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu to review the preparations and arrangements for the upcoming polio vaccination campaign starting from February 3. The meeting was attended by officials from relevant departments, including health authorities. During the briefing, it was revealed that 1,916 mobile teams, 106 fixed teams, and 49 transit teams will be deployed across the district to ensure the vaccination of 4,33,838 children under the age of five. DC Naeem Sindhu directed that polio teams be stationed at bus stands, railway stations, and other key locations to maximize coverage.

Honest and Brilliant Officers are National Assets. Rana Rahat Hassan

Zafar Chishti

GHOTKI: The President, union of journalists, District Ghotki, Rana Rahat Hassan arranged a farewell banquet in honour of Admin Officer Ghotki Motorway, Inspector Muhammad Usman Shabbir. Senior journalists including President Sarhad Press Club Hakim Khan, General Secretary Sarhad Union of Journalists Rana Iqbal and Director Shah Latif School Atta Hussain Soomro, Dr. Sajid Mehmood, civil society organizers Faqir Kamil Lakhani, Sanaullah Soomro attended the ceremony. The journalist community paid tribute to the services of the motorway police officer. Specifically, the historic action against the illegal business of inflammable material in the service area on the CPEC m5 was praised. President of the Sarhad Union of Journalists Ghotki Rana Rahat Hassan said that honest and brilliant police officers are a national asset. Inspector Usman Shabbir, as an admin officer, was a competent administrator as well as a remarkable expert in Road Safety Education in the area. During his deployment, the media has promoted a positive image about Ghotki because of his professionalism. On this Occasion, Inspector Muhammad Usman Shabbir thanked the organizers of the ceremony.



Protest

ISLAMABAD: Members of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists holds protest against the alleged PECA Act, outside National Press Club in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

A Three-Day Free Eye Surgery and Screening Camp at Multan Railway Hospital

Quratul Ain

MULTAN: A three-day free eye surgery and screening camp for people suffering from cataracts has started at Multan Railway Hospital under the auspices of Multan Crescent Lions Club, which was inaugurated by DS Railway Multan Zulfikar Ali Sheikh. On this occasion, he said that eyes are a great gift of nature.

We should promote awareness among the society about eye diseases so that blindness can be eradicated. The free surgery camp by Multan Crescent Lions Club is a good initiative.

The poor and deserving people will be able to benefit from it. While the



chairman of the eye surgery camp project, Muhammad Azam Chaudhry,

said that the aim of this camp is to treat eye diseases and create aware-

ness among the public about the importance of vision.

A team of expert doctors will examine various eye diseases in the camp. Eye surgery, eye examination and free glasses will be distributed to the deserving people who come to the surgery camp.

The opening ceremony was attended by former head of Lions Clubs Pakistan Muhammad Afzal Supra, MS Railway Hospital Dr. Mah Munir, DMO Railway Hospital Dr. Abdul Sami, Fahim Sattar Sheikh, Professor Azam Hussain, Ahmed Chughtai, Professor Amjad Ramey, Muhammad Usman Khan, Ghulam Abbas, Mian Imtiaz, and members of the Lions Club.

ISSI Signs MoU with Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC)

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has formalized a partnership with the Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU aims to enhance collaboration in research and policy dialogue, with a special focus on intra-regional trade, economic integration and connectivity. The MOU was signed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, and Dr. Safdar Sohail, Executive Director SPRC.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored ISSI's commitment to foster collaboration with think-tanks and research



institutions with niche area special-

ization like the SPRC. He underlined

that such partnerships are mutually-advantageous, enabling both the sides to bring together their strengths, and produce fruitful inputs for relevant stakeholders. He proposed a joint study focused on regional trade frameworks, particularly keeping in view the importance of economic integration.

Dr. Safdar Sohail welcomed the formalization of the ISSI-SPRC relationship. He echoed Ambassador Sohail Mahmood's recommendations and proposed organizing a conference centered on the two sides' areas of study.

Earlier in the event, Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director of the Centre for Strategic Perspectives at ISSI, provided an overview of ISSI and its five Centres.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:40 am
Zohr 12:21 pm
Asr 4:00 pm
Maghrib 5:38 pm
Isha 7:03 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886

Sindh Tourism Minister inaugurates Ethiopian Embassy Pavilion at Pakistan Travel Mart

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Minister of Sindh for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives H. E. Syed Zulfiqar Shah on Friday inaugurated the exclusive Tourism Pavilion of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PTM) at the Pakistan Travel Mart 2025 (PTM) in Karachi.

H. E. Ibrahim Khalid Tawab, Honorary Consul of the FDR Ethiopia in Karachi, along with the Embassy's staff received the Minister upon his arrival at the pavilion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister praised the thriving tourism industry of Ethiopia under the leadership of H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the FDR Ethiopia.

The establishment of the Ethiopian

Pavilion at the Pakistan Travel Mart is a reflection of flourishing bilateral relations between the two countries, the Minister remarked.

Honorary Consul Ibrahim Khalid said the FDR Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan enjoyed strong bilateral relations based on mutual respect and shared values.

The Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad has established its pavilion at the PTM for up to February 2nd to represent its diverse culture, centuries old traditions and thriving tourism industry completely transformed on modern lines by H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

The PTM is an annual tourism event in Pakistan where multiple countries and organizations participate to promote themselves and their products.



Bilateral Meeting

ISLAMABAD: High level Parliamentary Delegation from Pakistan led by Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in a bilateral meeting with Walter Rosenkranz, President of the National Council of Austria on Friday.



CBD Punjab and TDCP Join Hands for 20th Int'l Cholistan Jeep Rally

City Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), has entered a strategic partnership with the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) as the title sponsor for the 20th International Cholistan Jeep Rally. This collaboration aims to showcase Punjab's investment potential and promote tourism on a global scale.

An agreement signing ceremony was held at the CBD Punjab Complex in Lahore, where the agreement was formally signed by COO CBD Punjab, Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua and MD TDCP Dr. Nasir Mahmood Bashir. The event was attended by Director Marketing CBD Punjab, Waseem Siddiq, along with Wahid Arjmand Zia General Manager-Operations TDCP, Nouman Khan Director Race TDCP, Fawad Akbar Avian Head of Marketing TDCP and other senior officials from both organizations.

While talking on the occasion COO CBD Punjab Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua said, "CBD Punjab is committed to fostering economic growth and investment in Punjab. By joining hands with TDCP for the 20th International Cholistan Jeep Rally, we aim to highlight the vast investment opportunities Punjab offers."

Dr. Nasir Mahmood Bashir, Managing Director of TDCP, also emphasized the significance of this partnership, saying, "The International Cholistan Jeep Rally is one of the most anticipated motor-sports events in the region, drawing national and international participants.

Riphah Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts Shines at Pakistan Int'l Culinary Championship

City Desk

LAHORE: The students of Riphah Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts (RIHCA) have achieved remarkable success at the Pakistan International Culinary Championship, where top chefs from five-star hotels, leading restaurants, and culinary institutions from across the country showcased their expertise.

RIHCA students demonstrated exceptional culinary talent, securing Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in multiple categories. This outstanding achievement is even more significant as RIHCA was the newest institute among all participating institutions.

"This victory is a testament to the skill, passion, and hard work of our students and faculty. Competing against some of the finest culinary professionals in the industry



and emerging victorious speaks volumes about our commitment to nurturing top-tier talent in Pakistan's culinary landscape," said a representative from RIHCA.

The impact of this achievement has resonated across the hospitality and culinary industry, strengthening RIHCA's position as a leading institution in culinary education.

This milestone marks the beginning of a promising journey, further elevating the RIHCA Lahore project and setting new benchmarks for future culinary aspirants.

Dr. Syeda Rashida Batool appointed DHO Islamabad

Dr. Syeda Rashida Batool appointed as District Health Officer Islamabad, she is the "most senior, competent and deserving candidate" to be promoted to the position.

Abdul Kareem Syed Ehsan Shah Ats Rehan Rasool and other staff members congratulated him on becoming DHO.

In a message Dr. Syeda Rashida Batool, District Health Officer Islamabad, said "we will be improving the healthcare services and ensuring a healthier future for all."



DG PAA Air Vice Marshal Zeeshan visits Multan International Airport



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Air Vice Marshal Zeeshan Saeed, Director General of the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA), visited Multan International Airport (MIAP) to inspect the ongoing expansion project.

During the visit, the DG was briefed by the Airport Manager, sectional heads, and Joint Director Services (Planning & Development) on the existing facilities and future upgradation plans. He appreciated the efforts of the airport team in enhancing commercial activities and improving passenger facilitation.

The DG PAA emphasized the importance of ensuring maximum passenger comfort and safety in line with international aviation standards. Key improvements at MIAP include:

Expansion of airport access lanes from 2 to 4 for smoother traffic flow. Installation of a third scanner at the International Briefing area to reduce congestion.

Relocation of the Joint Search area for improved passenger movement. Addition of more check-in counters to manage long queues efficiently.

With MIAP handling over 1.4 million passengers annually surpassing its current terminal capacity—DG PAA stressed the need for expansion and modernization. Future upgradation plans include:

Increasing aircraft parking bays from 4 to 6, including two wide-body aircraft stands.

Remodeling and expanding the passenger terminal to accommodate the growing influx of international travelers.

Multan International Airport, the fourth largest in Pakistan, serves South Punjab, parts of Central Punjab, and Sindh. The Pakistan Airports Authority remains committed to enhancing infrastructure and passenger services in line with the country's aviation growth.

Lok Virsa is an important institution as the custodian of Pakistan's cultural heritage: Bakhtawari

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Cultural Forum and Secretary General of UBG (FPCCI), Zafar Bakhtawari, stated that Pakistan's cultural heritage is our identity, and all sectors must work together for its promotion. Lok Virsa is an important institution as the custodian of Pakistan's cultural heritage, which needs to be better utilized to introduce Pakistan's culture, civilization, and traditions to the world.

He expressed these views during his visit to the Lok Virsa headquarters yesterday, where he held discussions with Executive Director Muzaffar Ali Barki. Upon his arrival at Lok Virsa, Zafar Bakhtawari was welcomed by Executive Director Muzaffar Ali Barki, Director of Research Dr. Waqas, Director of Lok Virsa Anwar-ul-Haq, Deputy Secretary of National Heritage Rana Yasir Arafat, and Deputy Director of Media Hira Anwar, who briefed him about the institution's activities.

During the meeting, various proposals were discussed to highlight Pakistan's identity through Lok Virsa. Zafar Bakhtawari also reviewed different open-air theaters and other sites at Lok Virsa and explored possibilities of collaboration with the institution.

On this occasion, Executive Director of Lok Virsa Muzaffar Ali Barki presented multiple proposals regarding Lok Virsa and stated that they highly appreciate the interest of Pakistan's business community and are willing

to work on several projects together.

Director of Research, Dr. Waqas, highlighted that significant steps are being taken in cultural research at Lok Virsa, and their effort is to comprehensively preserve all aspects of Pakistani culture.

Director of Lok Virsa, Anwar-ul-Haq, stated that various measures are being taken to integrate different regional cultures within the institution, including cultural festivals and exhibitions.



Deputy Secretary of National Heritage, Rana Yasir Arafat, noted that with government support and collaboration from the private sector, Lok Virsa can develop further and better project Pakistan's culture on a global scale.

Deputy Director of Media, Hira Anwar, stated that more efforts will be made to highlight Lok Virsa's initiatives and activities through media so that the public can be better informed about the institution's significance and work.

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Building Peaceful Seas: The AMAN Dialogue's Role in Regional Stability and Growth

Elmaan Intikhab Qureshi

The AMAN Exercise, initiated in 2007 by the Pakistan Navy, is a flagship maritime event whose purpose is to foster international cooperation for maritime security. This forum is hosted every two years by the Pakistan Navy and addresses key safety issues in the Indian Ocean Region while promoting measures for peace which in turn promotes trade and resource conservation. This initiative aims to enhance regional cooperation and stability by bringing together the navies of different countries. It has expanded significantly by including a prominent component of Pakistan's International Maritime Conference (IMC). Over the years, the IMC evolved into the Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC) broadening the platform to include discussions on trade, technology, and the blue economy alongside maritime security.

Retaining its original spirit of peace and collaboration, it has now been remodeled as the AMAN Dialogue, while enhancing the scope to encompass global maritime challenges and cooperation among allied navies and international stakeholders. The AMAN Dialogue, aptly described as a beacon of international maritime unity, is instrumental in covering naval capabilities and intellectual communities from every corner of

the globe to tackle common challenges facing the world's oceans.

The Pakistan Navy plays a crucial role in realizing the vision. Recently, the Pakistan Navy rescued 23 Iranian fishermen stranded at sea, demonstrating its commitment to humanitarian values and regional solidarity. Situated strategically along the Arabian Sea, Pakistan's coastal regions and waters are essential to the vitality of international trade and communication. Through conduct of efforts, Pakistan promotes a safe maritime environment for all, viewing peace at sea as a foundation for sustainable development and shared prosperity across the region.

The Indian Ocean is a region ridden by complex geopolitical dynamics, which makes initiatives like the AMAN Dialogue increasingly significant. As a key maritime corridor, the Indian Ocean Region is vital for global trade, energy supplies and economic connectivity, making its stability crucial. However, the region faces various non-traditional security threats, including piracy, illegal fishing, smuggling and environmental changes. These issues, coupled with the strategic ambitions of major powers, underscore the need for cooperative frameworks that prioritize open, secure, and peaceful seas, reinforcing the IOR's role as a zone for collaborative security rather than rivalry. The AMAN Dialogue aims to address all these issues while providing a platform to bring together experts from around the world.

The AMAN Dialogue reflects this commitment to peaceful and secure seas. What began as a modest initiative to foster regional cooperation on maritime issues has evolved into a global platform, now attracting more than 50 nations to collaboratively address maritime challenges. The dialogue's objectives have expanded to encompass new areas, including environmental conservation, responses to climate change, and the development of a sustainable blue economy. In February 2025, the AMAN Dialogue will host its largest gathering yet, providing an invaluable opportunity for countries to build partnership and share knowledge for the benefit of the world's oceans.

The theme of "Secure Seas: Prosperous Future" lies at the heart of the dialogue's mission. The AMAN Dialogue aims to create a resilient network of maritime stakeholders dedicated to fostering peace and shared prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region. Central goals include promoting stability, safeguarding SLOCs, and supporting cooperative relationships among navies and civilian agencies. Through this cooperative framework, the AMAN Dialogue empowers countries to work together on humanitarian missions, environmental protection, and sustainable economic development, transforming the Indian Ocean into a region of shared resources and opportunities.

Pakistan's leadership in the AMAN Dialogue reflects its commitment to

regional solidarity and peaceful maritime engagement. The AMAN Dialogue's emphasis on building strong, peaceful relationships among stakeholders has fostered greater understanding and reinforced the idea that the seas are a shared resource. By encouraging dialogue, joint training exercises, and the exchange of best practices, the forum enables nations to work together on solutions that benefit all, transcending borders and building trust across the Indian Ocean Region.

This vision ensures that the region's waters remain open, inclusive, and supportive of a thriving blue economy that benefits coastal communities, regional trade, and the global economy. The AMAN Dialogue encourages partnerships to address key policies such as combating maritime piracy, eliminating illegal fishing, and providing humanitarian services, all of which strengthen diplomatic relations and help achieve the vision of peaceful and secure oceans. By aligning efforts to foster a culture of peaceful seas, the AMAN Dialogue brings hope and sets a course for a more stable and prosperous Indian Ocean Region. Its continued focus on sustainable practices and international partnerships reflects a commitment to shared progress, demonstrating that secure, peaceful seas are the foundation of a prosperous future. Organized by the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMAO), Pakistan's leading maritime institute focused on maritime research and policy, the AMAN Dialogue 2025 embodies these values and goals.

Israel's new laws banning Palestinians' relief agency

Israeli legislation banning the UN agency for Palestine refugees, UNRWA, is due to enter into force in the coming hours, bringing fundamental changes to its operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, according to the agency and Palestinians they serve in Gaza.

If implemented, the two new laws passed in October will simultaneously prohibit Israeli authorities from contacting UNRWA and ban the agency from operating in war-ravaged Gaza and East Jerusalem and the West Bank, according to UNRWA spokesperson Jonathan Fowler, who spoke to UN News, a media website.

Israel as the occupying power is responsible for issuing visas to international staff from humanitarian organizations like UNRWA, whose headquarters in occupied East Jerusalem comprise a compound protected by the 1946 Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

UNRWA has been called the backbone of humanitarian assistance in war-ravaged Gaza.

The Knesset legislation has yet to come into force but is already impacting UN operations in the region.

Israel has shortened all visas for UNRWA's international staff to expire on Wednesday, which "is tantamount to being evicted" or declared persona non grata, Fowler said.

As such, UNRWA's international staff at the East Jerusalem office had to evacuate and relocate to Amman, Jordan earlier in the day. Office equipment and vehicles have been moved out, and efforts are continuing to digitise its archives.

National staff will remain in East Jerusalem, but they face risks, including upcoming demonstrations by Israeli protests, Mr. Fowler said. During the Gaza war, the compound had faced security issues, including arson attacks and violent protests.

UNRWA had to comply with Israeli orders due to visa requirements despite East Jerusalem being recognised as occupied territory under international law, he added.

UNRWA's mandate has remained the same for decades and it will not be ceasing all operations, said Fowler. It is unique as a working model that has provided core services such as healthcare and education to refugees and their descendants in line with its General Assembly-approved mandate.

The agency also provides services to Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

"UNRWA remains absolutely committed to stay and deliver," Fowler said.

"We will not stop. We're not bowing down to this. But, we do know that the practical impacts, the uncertainty mean that our operations could be substantially affected."

UNRWA and partners begin the second round of the polio vaccination campaign in Gaza in 2024. (file)

Up to the current fragile ceasefire, Israeli forces killed more than 47,000 Palestinians – according to local health authorities – and 270 UNRWA staff members in Gaza. Yet, despite challenges, agency staff in Gaza continue to operate, providing essential humanitarian aid, Fowler said.



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

Pillars of Journalism: The Roles of Reporter, Desk Journalist, and Editor

Journalism is the voice and vision of society, ensuring that the public stays informed about the world around them. It is responsible not only for delivering news but also for upholding truth, neutrality, and quality reporting. Within this framework, the reporter, desk journalist, and editor serve as the three foundational pillars, each playing a crucial role in gathering, verifying, refining, and presenting news.

In today's fast-paced and digitalized world, where fake news and propaganda have become rampant, the credibility of journalism depends entirely on the professionalism and integrity of these three roles. Let's explore their responsibilities and significance in detail.

The Reporter: The Frontline Truth-Seeker
 The reporter is the backbone of journalism, tasked with investigating and gathering information firsthand. They visit locations, interact with sources, and ensure that the public receives authentic news.

- Key Responsibilities of a Reporter:**
- Research and Verification:** A reporter's primary duty is to investigate the facts, verify their authenticity, and ensure accuracy before reporting.
 - On-Ground Coverage:** Whether covering natural disasters, political events, legal cases, or conflicts, reporters are the first to reach the scene.
 - Neutrality and Objectivity:** An ethical reporter separates personal biases from professional reporting and delivers factual news.
 - Facing Risks:** Many reporters work in war zones, crime-ridden areas, or politically sensitive environments, often risking their lives for the truth.

Importance of a Reporter:
 Reporters are the first line of defense against

misinformation. If they fail to verify facts or report irresponsibly, the consequences can be far-reaching, damaging the credibility of journalism and misleading the public.

The Desk Journalist: The Silent Architect of News

Desk journalists work behind the scenes, refining raw reports into polished news pieces. Their role is crucial in maintaining journalistic integrity and quality.

- Responsibilities of a Desk Journalist:**
- Editing and Proofreading:** Ensuring grammatical accuracy, clarity, and readability of reports.
 - Fact-Checking:** Re-verifying information before publication to prevent errors.
 - Creating Headlines:** Crafting compelling and accurate headlines that capture the essence of the news.
 - News Organization:** Structuring stories based on importance, relevance, and audience engagement.
 - Maintaining Objectivity:** Ensuring that all reports remain neutral, unbiased, and fact-based.

Significance of Desk Journalists:

Reporters provide raw information, but without desk journalists, news could be inaccurate, biased, or poorly structured, damaging the publication's credibility.

The Editor: The Guardian of Journalistic Standards
 The editor is the final decision-maker in a newsroom, shaping a media house's policies and ensuring that the published news aligns with ethical and professional standards.

- Key Responsibilities of an Editor:**
- Defining Editorial Policies:** Setting the tone and direction of the media organization's reporting.
 - Approving Final Reports:** Selecting which stories will be published and determining their presentation style.
 - Supervising Journalistic Teams:** Overseeing reporters, desk journalists, and newsroom staff to maintain quality.
 - Upholding Ethical Standards:** Ensuring that no story violates journalistic integrity, spreads misinformation, or harms individuals or communities.
 - Encouraging Investigative Journalism:** Promoting deep, fact-based reporting that exposes hidden truths.

Why Editors Matter:
 The reputation of any news platform depends on its editorial leadership. If an editor compromises on ethics or quality, journalism loses its credibility, allowing misinformation to spread unchecked.

What Happens When These Roles Fail?
 If reporters neglect fact-checking, desk journalists overlook mistakes, or editors fail to uphold integrity, the entire journalistic process collapses.

Potential Consequences:
 Decline in journalistic credibility
 Spread of fake news and propaganda
 Public misinformation leading to social unrest
 Loss of trust in media institutions

Conclusion:
 The reporter, desk journalist, and editor are the three essential pillars of journalism. Each plays a distinct yet interconnected role in ensuring that news is accurate, objective, and impactful.

In an era dominated by digital media, social platforms, and misinformation, the responsibilities of these professionals have never been more crucial. If journalism is to remain a beacon of truth, these three roles must be performed with unwavering integrity, dedication, and professionalism. Only then can journalism fulfill its duty as the guardian of truth and accountability.

Water Crisis in AJK: A Wake-Up Call for Action amid Climatic Changes - I

The scenic and mountainous region of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), long known for its lush green landscapes and abundant water resources, is now facing an increasingly dire water crisis. Over the past six months, the region has witnessed a significant drop in rainfall, contributing to the drying up of vital water sources, including streams, springs, and wells. This persistent lack of water has sparked widespread concerns about the sustainability of water access, impacting local communities' daily lives, health, and overall well-being.

The Growing Crisis

The absence of clean drinking water has emerged as one of the most immediate and alarming challenges faced by the residents of AJK. Pipelines that once supplied fresh, potable water are now dry, leaving communities scrambling to meet even the most basic water needs. The problem is further compounded by the rapid depletion of the region's groundwater table, with deep wells that were once reliable now running dry. This issue has not only caused inconvenience but has also triggered serious public health concerns. As access to clean water becomes increasingly limited, hygiene levels are dropping, heightening the risk of waterborne diseases that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including children and the elderly.

The shortage of water is also severely impacting agriculture and livestock, both of which are the lifeblood of the local economy. Fields once rich in crops have turned barren, with farmers struggling to irrigate their crops due to the lack of water. The arid conditions

have stunted crop growth, leading to lower yields and economic losses for rural communities that depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Moreover, the depletion of pastures has made it difficult for livestock to survive, further exacerbating the economic strain on the population.

The Impact on Ecosystems and Wildlife

The water crisis is not confined to human settlements alone; the entire ecosystem is feeling the effects. Local wildlife and forests are facing significant stress as the region's streams and rivers run dry, leaving animals without natural water sources. The drying up of water bodies has led to a decline in biodiversity, with many species at risk of losing their habitats. Similarly, the scarcity of water has affected the region's forests, which rely on regular rainfall to thrive. The long-term implications of this disruption to the natural balance could be disastrous for AJK's unique biodiversity and the environment at large.

The Root Causes

The underlying causes of the water crisis are multi-faceted, combining natural climatic changes with human-induced factors. Experts point to a combination of environmental degradation, rapid urbanization, and climate change as key drivers of the region's water woes. One of the primary contributors is the increase in the number of motor vehicles in urban areas, which has led to rising temperatures and altered local weather patterns. With fewer people relying on mass transit, the resultant air pollution has aggravated the situation, contributing to more extreme and unpredictable weather events, including prolonged dry spells.

To be continued



Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi



Syed Ilyas Gardezi

Four British MPs of Pakistani & Kashmiri Origin appointed as UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoys

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: In a significant step to strengthen the United Kingdom's trade ties with key global markets, four British Members of Parliament of Pakistani and Kashmiri origin have been appointed as Prime Minister's Trade Envoys. These appointments highlight the UK government's commitment to fostering economic partnerships with emerging economies while building on historic and cultural ties.

Afzal Khan MP has been appointed Trade Envoy to Türkiye, one of the UK's most important trade partners due to its strategic location and dynamic economy. His appointment aims to enhance collaboration in key sectors, including defense, infrastructure, and technology.

Mohammad Yasin MP has been named Trade Envoy to Pakistan, a nation with longstanding ties to the UK. Yasin will focus on boosting trade opportunities, fostering invest-



ments, and strengthening the existing \$4 billion annual trade relationship between the two countries. Naz Shah MP has been designated

as Trade Envoy to Indonesia and the ASEAN region, one of the most dynamic markets for UK exports. Shah will work on promoting collaboration in areas such as digital technology, education, and sustainable energy.

Yasmin Qureshi MP will serve as Trade Envoy to Egypt, a growing economic hub in Africa and the Middle East. Her efforts will concentrate on advancing trade in renewable energy, agriculture, and manufacturing, further solidifying UK-Egypt economic ties.

These appointments not only reflect the UK's strategic focus on expanding its global economic footprint but also underscore the importance of diverse leadership in strengthening international partnerships. The newly appointed Trade Envoys have expressed their determination to enhance trade and investment relationships, contributing to the UK's economic growth and its global influence.

Overseas Pakistanis Turn to AI for Transparent Giving

In a groundbreaking step towards revolutionizing philanthropy, Donate Directly, a platform founded by renowned journalist and ARY News anchor Iqar Ul Hassan, is setting new standards for charitable giving. Designed to ensure 100% of donations reach recipients, the platform has restored faith in philanthropy by eliminating inefficiencies and sustaining itself solely through optional tips from donors.

"This isn't just another charity—it's a movement to rebuild faith and redefine philanthropy," Iqar shared passionately.

The platform's rise coincides with Iqar's global outreach efforts. From struggling communities in the Bronx, USA, to high-profile discussions with Pakistani billionaires in the UK, Iqar's work has highlighted a shared yearning among overseas Pakistanis to give back to their homeland. "Even those with little to spare want to contribute. The transparency of this platform has inspired donors at all levels," he added.

Having dedicated over 15 years to exposing corruption through his investigative program, Sar-e-Aam, Iqar is bringing the same relentless pursuit of justice to the charity sector. By leveraging technology and

transparency, DonateDirectly.com ensures that every rupee donated goes directly to those in need.

The platform also emphasizes the human element of giving, sharing heartfelt stories of recipients. One such tale, of a young bride who stood by her disabled fiancé despite immense struggles, captured the hearts of donors worldwide, showcasing the transformative power of direct support.

For decades, overseas Pakistanis have been among the world's most generous diaspora communities, but concerns over misuse of funds have often eroded trust. DonateDirectly.com addresses this challenge by integrating AI-verification of recipients and real-time updates, giving donors unprecedented clarity and confidence.

Looking ahead, Iqar envisions a global transformation in charitable practices. "This is the future of charity—transparent, impactful, and transformative," he remarked, outlining ambitious plans to expand the platform's reach.

With Donate Directly, overseas Pakistanis are not just giving; they are reshaping philanthropy, proving that trust and technology can redefine how we help those in need.



Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

War-hit Gazans depend on UNRWA for 'sheer survival': Agency official



UNITED NATIONS: The largest UN agency in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, UNRWA, said Friday that its staff are still providing aid to the people of Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem who depend on them "for their sheer survival", a day after the Israeli parliament ban on its activities entered into force.

The development came as more than 462,000 people are estimated to have crossed from south Gaza to the north since the opening of the Salah ad Din and Al Rashid roads on Monday.

The UN and humanitarian partners said they are assisting those on the move by providing water, high-energy biscuits and medical care along these two routes.

Once back in the north, UN aid workers have reported seeing Gazans using shovels to remove rubble and setting up makeshift

shelters or tents where their homes used to be.

Any disruption to UNRWA's work will have "catastrophic consequences on the lives and futures of Palestine refugees", insisted Juliette Touma, Director of Communications for the UN Relief and Works Agency, pointing to the agency's massive reach into the communities where it has provided free healthcare and education for decades.

Last October, the Israeli parliament – the Knesset – passed two laws that called for ending UNRWA's operations in its territory and prohibiting Israeli authorities from having any contact with the agency. That developed followed Israeli accusations that UNRWA workers were involved in the 7 October attacks inside Israel. Nine staff were sacked after an internal UN investigation found possible involvement.

Saudi Arabia Remains One of the Top Choices for Pakistani Travelers

News Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Wego, the number 1 travel app and the largest online travel marketplace in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and a trusted platform for millions of travellers worldwide, is excited to announce the expansion of its OTA platform now enabling Pakistani's to 'Book on Wego'. The company also revealed that Saudi Arabia remains top choice for Pakistani travelers with over 100% YoY growth.

Ubaidullah Sarwar, Director of Wego Pakistan, added: "The expansion of Wego's platform in Pakistan reflects our commitment to delivering a world-class travel booking experience to Pakistani users. With our advanced technology and localised approach, we aim to make travel more accessible, affordable, and enjoyable. PTM 2025 provides the perfect platform for us to engage with the local travel community and drive the growth of Pakistan's tourism sector."

Sardar Iqbal Yousaf elected GS Pakistan Kashmir Committee

Spokesman Report

JEDDAH: Sardar Muhammad Iqbal Yousaf, a member of Pakistan Kashmir Committee, Jeddah, on being elected as the General Secretary of Kashmir Committee Jeddah. Sardar Muhammad Iqbal Yousaf is a famous social, business and well-loved personality of the Kashmir community in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He is from Kotli, Azad Kashmir. The election of Sardar Muhammad Iqbal Yousaf to this position is a matter of great honor for the Kashmir community. It should be noted that the Pakistan Kashmir Committee Jeddah is playing an active role in the Kashmir freedom movement in Saudi Arabia. In particular, by celebrating October 27 as Kashmir Black Day or February 5 as Kashmir Solidarity Day, it highlights the Kashmir issue on Saudi Arabia's social media and print media. In addition, it is also playing a role in the OIC headquarters in Jeddah. The Pakistan Kashmir Committee is under the patronage of the Pakistan Consulate and is playing its role within the local laws here. The former members also congratulated the newly elected office bearers of the Pakistan Kashmir Committee Jeddah from the bottom of their hearts. It should be noted that Sardar Muhammad Arif, Ghulam Nabi Butt and Raja Muhammad Zarin Khan had been members of this committee before coming to Pakistan to congratulate Sardar Muhammad Iqbal Yousaf.



WASHINGTON: The present Pakistan government is committed to strengthening the country's democratic institutions and stabilizing its economy, Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh told a gathering in Washington on Thursday. Highlighting Pakistan's economic recovery and the lucrative investment climate, the Pakistani envoy pointed to some key indicators including a significant reduction in inflation – from 38% in May 2023 to 4.1% in December 2024 – saying the result was a testament to the government's effective economic policies.

Pakistan committed to strengthening its democratic institutions, economy: Ambassador Sheikh

He was speaking at the "Ambassador Insider Series", a programme that allows people to meet with ambassadors and learn about the countries they represent. The series is hosted by The Washington Diplomat, a monthly newspaper.

Attending the event were members of US think-tank community, staffers at Capitol Hill, academicians, civil society and media representatives. Emphasizing Pakistan's growing tech sector, the Ambassador said the country was the second-largest contributor to IT freelancing worldwide – only behind the United States – and underscored Pakistan's cost and quality competitiveness that makes it an ideal partner for IT outsourcing.

The US-Pak trade ties remain strong, Ambassador Sheikh said, noting that the United States remains Pakistan's largest trading partner. "Trade has been the most stable facet of our bilateral relationship; My foremost priority as Ambassador is to expand economic diplomacy and strengthen commercial linkages."



Employee-Friendly Initiatives of Allama Iqbal Open University

Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood's Name Will Be Written in Golden Letters in History



Report by: Aziz-ur-Rehman

Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice-Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University is among Pakistan's leading educationists. He is an institution in himself—determined, reserved, action-oriented, and a towering personality with vast intellectual and administrative capabilities. His contributions to the university are well known, and his dedication to sincere work defines his reputation. Under his leadership, the university has achieved new milestones in discipline, merit, educational standards, academic and research activities, and a positive learning environment.

He is always concerned about the welfare of employees and students, striving to implement reforms that enhance their well-being. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has an exceptional ability to empathize with employees and understand their concerns deeply. Due

to his visionary leadership and proactive approach, the overall atmosphere of the university has transformed significantly. The university has become a hub of academic and research activities, with frequent seminars, conferences, and cultural events enriching its academic environment.

Just as he focuses on the university's progress and student facilities, Dr. Nasir Mahmood also takes significant steps to improve employees' health and welfare. Great personalities like him are rare, and they deserve recognition for their selfless service to humanity. The country needs such dedicated individuals. According to Dr. Nasir Mahmood, employees can only deliver their best performance when they are provided with a sense of security and well-being. To achieve the university's developmental goals, he has prioritized the welfare of employees.

Employees health facilities
Through the efforts of the Employees Welfare Association, the university has signed an agreement with Premium Diagnostic Center, Islamabad (PDC) to offer employees and their families medical tests at discounted rates—50% off on medical tests and 35% off on radiology services. Special discounts are also available for doctor consul-

tations. Additionally, free home sample collection, X-rays, ultrasounds, and other healthcare services have been made available at employees' doorsteps.

Moreover, university employees now have access to medical facilities in government hospitals across Pakistan, including RMI, NESCOM, CMH, and PAEC hospitals in Islamabad. Employees requiring medical treatment based on doctors' recommendations are even provided advance payments for their treatments.

The medical center within the university campus has been upgraded with modern equipment, offering treatment, laboratory services, and pharmacy facilities all in one place.

Employee Promotions and Benefits
Following the Prime Minister's Assistant Package 2006 and 2015, which mandated the immediate regularization of contract employees, Dr. Nasir Mahmood regularized 45 contract employees of the university. Similarly, adhering to the government's employee promotion policy, the Vice-Chancellor promoted 1,230 employees to higher grades. Two meetings of the Departmental Promotion Committee were held to ensure that deserving employees—including superintendents, assistants, UDCs, and technical



Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice-Chancellor

cadre staff—were promoted per the official rules.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, the university provides employees with a soft loan known as "Bakra Allowance." This year, on the recommendation of the Employees Welfare Association (EWA), Dr. Nasir Mahmood increased the amount from PKR 30,000 to PKR 45,000.

New Initiatives for employees welfare
While writing this report, the

author received two more pieces of great news regarding employee welfare. On the request of EVA President Yasir Mahmood and resident employees, Dr. Nasir Mahmood approved the establishment of a Community Center within the residential colony and issued a tender notice for its construction. Additionally, he also approved the installation of a solar power system in the colony. These projects are expected to have commenced by the time of this article's publication.

When this matter was brought to the Vice-Chancellor's attention, he immediately ordered the construction of a special wheelchair-accessible entrance for the mosque. Thanks to his directive, this elderly man can now enter

the mosque and pray inside. This initiative stands as an act of continuous charity (Sadaqah Jariyah). Seeing him pray inside the mosque now brings joy to everyone, and whether or not he raises his hands in prayer, his very presence in the mosque is a prayer for Dr. Nasir Mahmood.

Employee Recognition and Motivation
The success of any institution is driven by the hard work, dedication, and sincerity of its employees. It is the administration's duty to ensure their well-being, provide a safe and comfortable working environment, offer career growth opportunities, and recognize their efforts.

The author personally witnessed the practical application of these principles at Allama Iqbal Open University. The Vice-Chancellor not only takes initiatives for employee welfare but also appreciates the outstanding performance of officers and staff. This motivates individuals and inspires others to improve their performance.

In this regard, at the Regional Directors' Conference held on December 26-27, 2024, the Vice-Chancellor awarded cash prizes and certificates of appreciation to 23 employees and officers for their outstanding services. Similarly, on January 30, 2025, a grand awards cere-

mony was held at the university's main campus, where 119 faculty members, officers, and staff were honored with cash rewards and certificates.

These awards have boosted employee morale, and the author is confident that, under Dr. Nasir Mahmood's leadership, university employees will continue to excel in the fields of education and research, winning every challenge ahead.

A Visionary Leader
Allama Iqbal Open University is like a garden of knowledge and research, and Dr. Nasir Mahmood is its dedicated gardener, nurturing and caring for it with devotion. He ensures that students and employees receive the best possible support, just as a gardener meticulously tends to every plant in their garden.

Based on the author's observations, Dr. Nasir Mahmood is fulfilling his responsibilities exceptionally well. His efforts in ensuring employee welfare, recognizing hard work, and rewarding excellence guarantee that this institution will continue to flourish.

The employees deeply appreciate his kindness and leadership, and in return, they stand beside him, ready to contribute wholeheartedly to the university's success.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
114,255.72	113,206.40
Day's High	Day's Low
115,106.99	113,692.87
Index Value	Change
18,777,403,886	+ 1049.32
Percentage	Time
+0.93%	31 Jan, 2025 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,673.96	+27.08
Percentage	Time
+0.31%	31 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
44,865.63	-16.50
Percentage	Time
+0.037%	31 Jan, 11:48 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,572.49	+58.52
Percentage	Time
+0.15%	31 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	174.75	177.00
Bahrain Dinar	738.60	746.60
Canadian Dollar	193.60	196.00
China Yuan	37.59	37.99
Danish Krone	38.48	38.88
Euro	289.75	292.50
Hong Kong Dollar	35.41	35.76
Indian Rupee	3.14	3.23
Japanese Yen	1.82	1.88
Kuwaiti Dinar	898.60	908.10
Malaysian Ringgit	63.04	63.64
New Zealand \$	156.31	158.31
Norwegians Krone	24.46	24.76
Omani Riyal	722.90	731.40
Qatari Riyal	75.84	76.54
Saudi Riyal	74.20	74.75
Singapore Dollar	207.5	209.50
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	346.50	350
US Dollar	279.50	281.00

Finance Minister congratulates easypaisa on becoming Pakistan's First Digital Bank

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Finance Minister of Pakistan, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, congratulated easypaisa digital bank on its successful transformation as Pakistan's first digital bank, after receiving the coveted digital banking license from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The celebration took place at a dinner hosted by Mr. Irfan Wahab Khan, Chairman of the Board, easypaisa digital bank, and Jahanzeb Khan, President & CEO, easypaisa digital bank. Speaking at the occasion, which was attended by government officials, including Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, and Khurram Schehzad, Advisor to the finance minister, as well as foreign ambassadors, dignitaries, and business leaders, the finance minister highlighted this achievement as a significant milestone in Pakistan's digitalization journey. easypaisa digital bank reached a historic milestone by becoming Pakistan's first Digital Retail Bank to receive commercial approval



from the SBP under its Licensing and Regulatory Framework for Digital Banks.

Addressing the audience, the Finance Minister congratulated the easypaisa digital bank leadership, stating: "This is a feather in the cap for Pakistan's digitalization. Where you are today is truly a milestone to cherish. This transformation will help us shift from traditional cash-based transactions, and it is merely the beginning of the journey—not the finishing line. With Raast and Nadra being centers of digital excellence, it is integral to connect and align these verticals to empower Pakistanis and enhance financial inclusion across the country." Chairman of the Board, easypaisa digital bank, Irfan Wahab Khan commented, "The journey from being Pakistan's first mobile money service to the country's first digital bank is nothing short of remarkable. This digital banking license empowers us to broaden access to financial services and enhance the lives of millions. As a digital bank with over 50 million registered users, easypaisa digital bank will play a crucial role in delivering innovative and convenient digital financial services to users across Pakistan."

A delegation from FPCCI

A delegation from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), comprising Tariq Jadoon Vice President, Karim Aziz Malik Chairman FPCCI, Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI and Mr. Najeem Chaudhary FPCCI Ambassador at Large Washington DC USA met with Mr. Jawad Paul Khawaja, Secretary Commerce. During the meeting, they were briefed on trade, commerce, and business opportunities for the Pakistani diaspora in Washington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland, USA. Additionally, Mr. Malik Sohail and Mr. Karim Aziz also discussed the upcoming FPCCI Prime Minister's Awards, which are tentatively scheduled for the last week of February 2025.



CCP and SECP hold joint meeting to strengthen regulatory cooperation



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) held a productive meeting at the SECP headquarters, aimed at enhancing mutual cooperation and fostering a more conducive regulatory environment for businesses in Pakistan.

The meeting was jointly chaired by Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Chairman CCP, and

Akif Saeed, Chairman SECP, and was attended by all SECP Commissioners, Members of CCP, and senior management from both organizations.

During the meeting, both sides shared updates on their respective organizations' progress and deliberated on ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation. A key discussion point was the need for enhanced regulatory oversight.

Both organizations agreed on the importance of ongoing collaboration and decided to hold regular quarterly meetings to review the progress of mutual initiatives and share insights for further strengthening the regulatory framework in Pakistan.

FPCCI & Islamic Chamber Organize Tourism Forum

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the governor of Razavi Khorasan province of Iran has invited the Pakistani business community to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two countries in general and Razavi Khorasan province in particular.

It is pertinent to note that FPCCI and Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) have collaboratively organized the Sustainable Tourism Forum (STF) in Karachi in collaboration with the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC).

Prime Minister, Mr. Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, sent a special message for the occasion; and, commended ICCD's dedicated efforts to foster sustainable tourism – underscoring the significance of the Sustainable Tourism Forum as a pivotal international platform set to transform the global tourism landscape, reaffirming the government's steadfast commitment to supporting entrepreneurial ventures in this sector.

Gholam Hossein Mozaffari, Governor of Razavi Khorasan, Iran, was the guest of honor; and, he invited the business commu-



nity and people of Pakistan to enhance business, trade, economic, religious and cultural exchanges.

Mr. Yousef Khalawi, Secretary General of ICCD, highlighted the significance of the Sustainable Tourism Forum as a key international platform by ICCD to support and develop sustainable tourism practices across the Islamic world. Tourism is always an important attraction for the foreign direct investment, he added.

Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary

General, said that we must focus on developing sustainable tourism practices; leveraging digital technology and promoting inclusive growth.

Ms. Zehra Zümrit Selçuk, former Turkish Minister of Family & Social Services and Director General, Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), elaborated the crucial role of the private-sector in fostering sustainable tourism across OIC member countries.

Bayer to insure 10 million smallholder farmers in South Asia and Africa in partnership with Pula Foundation

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Bayer Foundation and the Pula Foundation announced last week at the 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, Bang-

ladesh, 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.

"Smallholder farmers in Pakistan face tremendous economic challenges in the face of climate disasters such as the 2022 monsoon

floods that caused devastating crop and infrastructure losses," added Ahmed Ali, Managing Director and CEO Bayer Pakistan, "We therefore appreciate and welcome this timely and relevant initiative by Bayer Foundation in collaboration with the Pula Foundation, to enable greater resilience for our smallholder farmers."

Local Tyre Manufacturers not consulted for ITP Valuation



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Local tyre industry expressed its deep concern for not being consulted on recently issued ITP valuations VR-1958 & VR-1959 dated 17-1-2025.

"As a local tyre producer and one of the major stakeholders in the industry, we wish to highlight that in light of the recent ITP valuation, we were unfortunately not consulted.

"This lack of consultation is concerning and undermines the contributions of local manufacturers," stated Hussain Kuli Khan, Chief Executive Officer/MD of GTR, in a letter to the Director General of Customs Valuation.

He mentioned that the local tyre industry has a capability to fulfill the country's tyre demand as we produce 80% of the sizes that are in demand, meeting the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) strict quality requirement and supplying tyres to the replacement market.

"This contributes significantly to saving foreign exchange, creating employment, and increasing tax revenue for the government exchequer," reasoned Hussain.

He added that as a local tyre manufacturer our input is also vital in setting up ITP values and your good office [Customs Valuation] used to invite GTR along with different stakeholders.

Naqvi commends workers for completing Gaddafi Stadium work in record time

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi visited Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Friday morning to review latest and state-of-the-art facilities as part of the expansion plan of the stadium, reported 24News-HDTV channel.

During his visit, the PCB chairman visited all floors of the newly-constructed stadium dressing room and other departments and hospitality boxes. He also examined newly-installed chairs in the stadium.

He lauded the workers for completing all the construction and renovation work in record time of four months. He himself sit on a chair to view the stadium.

He invited all workers to watch tri-



tion series match with him which will be played on February 8, 2025. He told the

workers that he himself will watch the match with them.

It is necessary to mention here that newly-constructed Qaddafi Stadium will be inaugurated in the first week of February.

Talking on the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi said that Qaddafi Stadium will become first stadium of Pakistan which was constructed as per international standards. All players and fans will be definitely enjoy watching cricket matches there.

Mohsin Naqvi said that entire team of workers worked hard to complete the task after working day and night.

He hoped that holding of Champions Trophy cricket matches in Pakistan will strengthen Pakistan's reputation worldwide.

PM Shehbaz to inaugurate new-look Gaddafi Stadium on February 7



LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will inaugurate the revamped Gaddafi Stadium on Friday, February 7, as all three stadia in Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi are ready for action of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025.

Addressing a press conference at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Friday, he said President Asif Ali Zardari would inaugurate the upgraded National Stadium Karachi on Tuesday, February 11. The PCB will hold a ceremony at the Hazori Bagh (Lahore Fort) on February 16 to mark the start of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, which will be attended by cricketers, dignitaries and the ICC representatives. Mohsin Naqvi thanked the critics for their valuable opinion, but he felt sorry for shattering dreams of his detractors across the border, who wanted the stadiums to remain incomplete so that the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 could be relocated to some other country.

"I feel sorry for shattering the dreams of journalists across the border," Naqvi said in a lighter vein. Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi, who is also interior minister of Pakistan, said the PCB was fully prepared to welcome the teams, the dignitaries and journalists to Pakistan, adding that fool-proof security would be ensured for the visiting teams and guests, which included sports ministers of some countries.

"The PCB has a long list of the guests including the ICC chairman, who have been invited to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy 25," Naqvi said, adding that guests would arrive on different days during the event.

On captains' photo-shoot, the PCB chairman said ceremonial event would not be possible due to scheduling problems as the CT 25 was to be played under a hybrid model in Pakistan and Dubai and the teams could not assemble at one place for the captains' photo-shoot. "There will be no captains' photo-shoot or we may hold it some other time, but there will be other better events," he added.

"The PCB will hold a ceremony at the Hazori Bagh (Lahore Fort) on February 16 to mark the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, which will be attended by cricketers, dignitaries and the ICC representatives," he responded to a query.

The PCB chairman, to another query, said if the gigantic task of rebuilding a stadium could be completed in a short three months' time, the embellishment work outside the stadium would be finalised by February 7 by all means. He said more work would be undertaken at the National Stadium Karachi beyond the ICC Champions Trophy while the PCB was mulling over building a new stadium in Rawalpindi or Islamabad after some infrastructural problems were pointed out at the Rawalpindi Stadium and it could not be upgraded as desired. He said the PCB had a site in sight. He said the PCB had purchased a building next to the National Cricket Academy (NCA), Gaddafi Stadium and it would be converted into a PCB hotel after the CT 25, adding a similar hotel space is being searched in the vicinity of National Stadium in Karachi.

To a query, he said a state-of-the-art shopping mall outside newly-constructed Gaddafi Stadium was on the cards. On re-naming of Gaddafi Stadium, the PCB chairman said tenders would be invited and process for re-naming of Gaddafi Stadium would be initiated at some later stage.

To a query, he said two separate teams would be selected for the red-ball and white-ball cricket by 2026, adding that the selection committee would do the needful.

The PCB chief parried a question on Saim Ayub's selection in the CT 25 squad; however, he said plaster on Saim's ankle had been removed and he was starting his rehabilitation, adding Saim would be back soon.

Pakistan Cricket Board announces names for ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Squad, PCB Official says

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khushdil Join Pakistan Cricket Team.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced a 15-player squad for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, scheduled to take place in Pakistan from 19 February to 9 March. The PCB has until 11 February to make any changes to the squad; thereafter, replacements will only be permitted on medical grounds, subject to approval by the ICC Event Technical Committee.

The same squad will also feature in the tri-nation ODI series, featuring New Zealand and South Africa in Lahore and Karachi, in the lead up to the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

There are four changes in the 15-player squad that last played an ODI series in South Africa late last year. Abdullah Shafique, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Saim Ayub and Sufyan Moqim have been replaced by Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khushdil Shah and Saud Shakeel.

The squad, to be captained by Mohammad Rizwan with Salman Ali Agha as vice-captain, includes three members from the 2017 title-winning side—Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf and Fakhar Zaman. Babar and Fakhar, along with Haris Rauf, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Saud Shakeel had also featured in the last 50-over ICC event—the ICC Men's 50-over Cricket World Cup 2023.

Following the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, Pakistan has played three ODI series, defeating 50-over world cham-

pions Australia 2-1, Zimbabwe 2-1 and South Africa 3-0.

Pakistan's 15-player squad:

Batters: Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir

All-rounders: Faheem Ashraf, Khushdil Shah, Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain)

Wicketkeeper-batters: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Usman Khan

Spinner: Abrar Ahmed

Fast bowlers: Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi

The selectors have continued to adopt a horses for courses approach in assembling this squad for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Our focus has been on selecting players who have consistently excelled in domestic competitions under similar conditions, demonstrating their readiness to perform in a global event.

One of the standout qualities of this side is its flexibility—an essential trait in today's modern-day cricket. We are confident that this squad strikes the right balance between youth and experience, and has all bases covered. Each player has been chosen with a clear role in mind, ensuring the captain has versatile options at his disposal.

The inclusion of emerging players like mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed and middle-order batters Kamran Ghulam and Tayyab Tahir reflects our confidence in their ability to translate domestic success into international impact. These players have shown the temperament and skill to thrive in challenging envi-

ronments and have a deep understanding of home conditions.

Abrar Ahmed will lead the spin attack, supported by Khushdil Shah and Salman Ali Agha, who offer reliable slow-bowling options, while Faheem Ashraf's experience and presence gives us a fast-bowling all-rounder's option.

Fakhar Zaman's return is a significant boost for our top-order. His aggressive approach and match-winning capabilities are vital to our plans.

Likewise, Saud Shakeel has been drafted to further bolster the batting and capitalise on his rich vein of form in Test cricket, particularly in home conditions. Moreover, he is an experienced, intelligent and calculated batter who constructs his innings thoughtfully and excels at building partnerships.

Fakhar's opening partner could be either Babar Azam or Saud Shakeel, depending on various factors such as conditions, opposition and match strategy. Both players are highly capable at the top of the order, with Babar being particularly seasoned in the role, regularly opening in T20Is and also excelling in the Cape Town Test by scoring two half-centuries in Saim Ayub's absence.

Saim Ayub has not been included in the squad due to an ankle injury, but we remain optimistic about his recovery. We understand how much he was looking forward to the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and recognise how devastating it must be for him to miss a global event, especially when he is in such exceptional batting form. However, as a valuable asset to our team, we are committed to prior-

itising his long-term health over making any rushed decisions.

The tri-nation ODI series against New Zealand and South Africa in the lead up to the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 will not only serve as preparation but also as a platform to refine our strategies under competitive conditions. It's an excellent opportunity to give the players final touch-ups before defending the Champions Trophy at home.

The Pakistan ODI squad will assemble in Lahore on Monday, 3 February.

Player support personnel for tri-nation ODI series and ICC Champions Trophy 2025: Naveed Akram Cheema (team manager), Hina Munawar (team operations manager), Aqib Javed (interim head coach), Azhar Mahmood (assistant coach), Shahid Aslam (batting coach), Mohammad Masroor (fielding coach), Abdul Rehman (spin bowling coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Drikus Saiman (strength and conditioning coach), Talha Butt (analyst), Irtiza Komail (security manager), Dr Wajid Ali Rafai (team doctor), Syed Naem Ahmad (media and digital manager) and Sergio Basil Mullins (masseur).

Upcoming ODIs:

8 Feb – vs New Zealand, Lahore (tri-nation ODI series)

12 Feb – vs South Africa, Karachi (tri-nation ODI series)

19 Feb – vs New Zealand, Karachi (ICC Champions Trophy 2025)

23 Feb – vs India, Dubai (ICC Champions Trophy 2025)

27 Feb – vs Bangladesh, Rawalpindi (ICC Champions Trophy 2025)

Multan Sultans Owner Ali Khan Tareen and Kieron Pollard Invest in Cricket Footwear Brand

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Ali Khan Tareen, owner of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) team Multan Sultans and a passionate advocate for grassroots and women's cricket in Pakistan, has announced a strategic investment in ME+U, a UK-based cricket footwear brand. Joining Tareen in this venture is international cricketer Kieron Pollard, adding strength to the brand's global mission. As stakeholder board members, both are committed to bringing inclusive, high-performance cricket footwear to players at all levels.

Tareen will also join the ME+U board of directors, bringing his extensive business acumen and growth-oriented mindset to the company. His leadership in the Multan Sultans, the Tareen Cricket Academy, and his upcoming sports investments will help integrate ME+U's innovative cricket footwear into both elite and grassroots programs worldwide.

The investment prioritizes increasing access to advanced cricket footwear that enhances stability, performance, and injury prevention—key aspects that are often overlooked for cricketers at all skill

levels in Pakistan.

"Cricket has evolved into a precise science, demanding exceptional technique, physical endurance, and, most importantly, the right gear to maximize performance," said Tareen. "As a cricket enthusiast (and injury-prone fast bowler), I know the crucial role proper footwear plays in supporting a player's body during competition. ME+U's cricket shoes are designed to meet these demands, and I'm confident they will make a significant impact on the performance and safety of players, regardless of gender."

Tareen emphasized the need for better equipment for women cricketers. "Women cricketers often lack access to the same high-end gear as their male counterparts. This partnership ensures female players in Pakistan will now have access to world-class cricket footwear, contributing to their success and safety on the field."

Founded in 2023 by Matt Carter, Richard Woodhouse, and a passionate team of cricket and footwear experts, ME+U was created to revolutionize the cricket footwear market. With a focus on performance, inclusivity, and

comfort, the company addresses a critical gap by providing cricket shoes specifically designed for both male and female players. Traditional footwear often fails to meet the unique anatomical needs of women, and ME+U is dedicated to bridging this gap through high-quality design and technology.

The debut product line from ME+U includes all-rounder cricket shoes for women, all-rounder cricket shoes for men, and bowling shoes for men. Each pair is engineered using cutting-edge materials to enhance performance and stability on the field. In 2025, ME+U



plans to launch a new range of cricket footwear, incorporating valuable feedback from professional players and the latest advancements in sportswear technology.

Inter-Division phase of Khelta Punjab Games

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The exciting 2nd day competitions of Inter-Division phase of Khelta Punjab Games 2024-25 were held at different venues of Nishtar Park Sports Complex on Friday.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal visited different sports venues of Nishtar Park Sports Complex to inspect the game proceedings of third and last phase of Khelta Punjab Games. He also watched exciting matches of third phase of Khelta Punjab Games. Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum and other officials were also with DG Sports Punjab during his visit.

Director General Sports Punjab Khizar Afzaal while talking on this occasion said that thrilling competi-

tions are being organized at multiple venues of Nishtar Park Sports Complex. "We are pretty upbeat that the top position holders will represent the country in international sports competitions in future".

More than 2,000 male and female athletes from nine divisions are participating in 12 sports disciplines including badminton (girls & boys), table tennis (girls & boys), archery (girls & boys), basketball (girls & boys), athletics (girls & boys), hockey (girls & boys), taekwondo (girls & boys), football, mat wrestling, volleyball, kabaddi and cricket (tape ball) during the 5-day mega event.

As per results, Bahawalpur's Uzair won the boys 100m race in which M Pervez of Lahore took second position while M Sajid of Multan finished third.

M Raza of Sahiwal Division won the boys 800m race. Arsalan Ahmed of Sargodha and M Zubair of Gujranwala finished second and third respectively.

In girls 100m race, Khaula (Rawalpindi), Khadija (Lahore) and Malaika (Gujranwala) got top three positions respectively.

Bushra Farman of DG Khan Division won the girls 800m race. Sahiwal's Mubeen Yasin took second while Nazia Ehsan of Sargodha Division grabbed third position in this race.

In Men's 200m race, Faisal (Fsb), Sharjeel (Lhr) and Mujahid (Mult) excelled and got top three positions respectively.

In girls' Javelin Throw, Khadija of Faisalabad took first position, Lahore's Yusra Ayub second, the third position went to Gujranwala's Samia.



In boys' Javelin Throw, Arham (Fsb), Arslan Ahmed (DG Khan) and Kashif Ali (Gujranwala) grabbed top three positions respectively.

In Khelta Punjab boys' basketball event, Multan beat DG Khan by 43-16, Lahore beat Bahawalpur by 48-30, Faisalabad beat Sahiwal by 57-17 and Sargodha beat Rawalpindi by a big margin

of 77-15. On girls side, Multan beat DG Khan by 23-4 while Lahore topped Bahawalpur by 58-14.

As many as four matches were played in Khelta Punjab Games Volleyball event at NPSC Gymnasium Hall. Sahiwal defeated Bahawalpur by 2-0 in the first match, Faisalabad thrashed Rawalpindi by 2-0, Gujranwala beat Multan by 2-0 and Lahore topped

Sargodha by the same margin in the fourth match of the day. In Boys' Badminton event, Bahawalpur defeated Rawalpindi division by 2-0, Lahore defeated Gujranwala Division by 2-1, Multan Division emerged winners against DG Khan by 2-0 while Bahawalpur defeated Sargodha Division by a margin of 2-1.

In Girls' Badminton event, Bahawalpur Division defeated Rawalpindi by 2-1, Gujranwala stunned Lahore Division by a margin of 2-0, Multan defeated DG Khan Division by 2-0 while Rawalpindi defeated Sargodha Division 2-0.

In Girls' Hockey event, Faisalabad defeated Gujranwala by a huge margin of 9-0 and Sargodha Division defeated DG Khan 6-2 while in Boys' Hockey event, Faisalabad Division defeated Gujranwala 5-3.

In Boys' Table Tennis event, Sargodha defeated Rawalpindi Division by 3-1, Faisalabad Division defeated DG Khan 3-0, Gujranwala defeated Sahiwal 3-2 and Lahore Division defeated Sargodha 3-0.

In Girls' Table Tennis event, Sargodha defeated Rawalpindi 3-0, Faisalabad Division defeated DG Khan 3-0, Gujranwala defeated Sahiwal 3-2, Multan Division defeated Bahawalpur 3-0 while Sargodha shocked strong team of Lahore Division by a big margin of 3-0.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Ambassador Jiang Zaidong calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan has great potential for investment, says Khurram Schehzad

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad said that the visit of US investors' delegation to Pakistan and their interest for investment in key sectors including mining and minerals, renewable energy, infrastructure development, and technology has great importance for Pakistan.

Talking to a private TV channel, he said that Pakistan and US trade relations have significant value, as Pakistan's trade to US market is surplus. He said this US investors delegation



visit to Pakistan will further improve ties between the two countries. Pakistan is in dire need of investment, and

Pakistan has less investment to GDP ratio which we can raise 5-8 percent. He said that government wanted export led growth. Economic indicators are positive presently and we want to reduce cost of doing business, he said, adding that interest rate saw decline, inflation comes down, currency stabilises, and foreign reserves reach at the level of past two and half years.

Khurram Schehzad went on to say that steps for right sizing of Federal government and regarding privatization are underway.

He said that investors are

seeing structural reforms in Pakistan, adding that US investors delegation timely came in Pakistan, as smart and sharp investors go where they see changes so that they could get better return.

Advisor to Finance Minister said that Pakistan has great potential for investment and its all sectors are open for investment. He said we prioritize agriculture sector as investment can be made in all its value chain. We have to overcome challenges and bring improvements at all level for attracting foreign investment in the country, he maintained.

Chairperson BISP Visits Government Technical and Vocational Center Gulbahar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Rubina Khalid Highlights the Vision behind the Benazir Hunar Mand Program: Empowering individuals through skill development and innovation for a brighter future; A step towards a self-reliant and skilled Pakistan," says Senator Rubina Khalid in conversation with media representatives

Senator Rubina Khalid visits BISP Tehsil Office Town 3 Pushkhara: Listened to the problems of deserving women and reviewed the arrangements. Emphasized awareness to prevent fraud and fraudulent activities in the name of BISP. There is no fee for the BISP survey. Any message from a number other than 8171 is



fraudulent—report it immediately
Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina

Khalid, visited the Government Technical and Vocational Center Gulbahar and the Government Gems and Jewelry Training Center

Hayatabad in Peshawar today. Principal Saeed Ahmed welcomed her upon arrival. During the visit, Senator Rubina Khalid inspected

various training sessions and stalls set up by the trainees and encouraged them.

While speaking to the officials of the institutions, Chairperson Rubina Khalid emphasized the importance of training students in digital marketing. She stated that digital marketing enables youth to start businesses from home, allowing them to become financially independent rather than relying on others. Through digital platforms, they can expand their reach and sell their products online.

Senator Rubina Khalid also provided valuable advice to fashion designing students, guiding them on market-preferred color combinations that can attract consumers.

5th round of Pak-Serbia bilateral political consultations held in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Fifth round of Pakistan-Serbia Bilateral Political Consultations were held in Islamabad today. Additional Secretary (Europe), Mr. Shafiqat Ali Khan led the Pakistani delegation. The Serbian side was headed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Damjan Jovic. The two sides discussed important issues on the bilateral agenda including political relations, trade and economic cooperation and people to people contacts. Views were also exchanged on important regional and international issues. Expressing satisfaction at the positive momentum in bilateral relations the two sides agreed to explore new avenues for collaboration.

National Prevention of Violent Extremism (NPVE) Policy approved

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government has approved "National Prevention of Violent Extremism (NPVE) Policy", devised by the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). It was apprised by the Member Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) and Director General (R&D) NACTA, Dr. Khalid Chauhan to the participants of a National Dialogue on Prevention of Violent Extremism, held by NACTA in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Islamic Research Institute (IRI), here in Islamabad.

The event brought together stakeholders from Federal Ministries / departments and civil society organizations to deliberate on strategies and collaborative efforts to prevent violent extremism



in Pakistan.

Chairman Higher Education Commission Professor Dr Mukhtar Ahmed in his remarks said the youth of Pakistan stands at the heart of this effort, and

through education and empowerment, we can shape a future free from violence and division.

While addressing to the audience Member PVE, NACTA Dr. Khalid Chauhan emphasized that whole-of-society approach, is required to address the root causes of extremism and build a resilient society. He shared that on December, 2024 Federal government has approved National Prevention of Violent Extremism Policy which shows will and resolve as well as policy ownership to address the challenge of violent extremism. Success of the policy would require passion and dedication so that future generations live in peaceful and prosperous Pakistan. He also argued that policy aligns with the broader development framework of the federal government of Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz, Chinese envoy discuss bilateral economic, security cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Islamabad Jiang Zaidong on Friday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here wherein they discussed the matters related to economic and security cooperation between the two countries.

The prime minister greeted the ambassador and conveyed his good wishes to the Chinese leadership and the people of China, including all Chinese nationals residing in Paki-

stan, as they celebrated the Chinese New Year, according to a PM Office press release.

He expressed the hope that this new year would further strengthen the bonds of friendship between Pakistan and China and bring prosperity to the peoples of both countries.

Ambassador Jiang Zaidong thanked the prime minister and the people of Pakistan for extending their warm wishes to the Chinese government and its people on this joyous occasion.

New details of IHC judges' letter to president, chief justice of Pakistan surface



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Five judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has written a letter to the president of Pakistan, chief justice of Pakistan and chief justices of the Sindh High Court (SHC), Lahore High Court (LHC) and IHC.

The judges who have written the letter are Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Arbab Muhammad Tahir.

They have written in the letter

that a judge transferred to the IHC from LHC cannot become chief justice of the IHC according to the constitution.

The letter says that a judge takes the oath for the court he works at. If a judge is transferred to the IHC, the letter says, he will have to take a fresh oath under Article 194 of the Constitution before resuming his duties. It says that seniority of the transferred judge will be decided on the basis of his fresh oath. It says the Supreme Court has already ruled that seniority of a judge will be determined from the day of his oath.

Kashmir Solidarity Day will be celebrated with full enthusiasm: Chaudhry Riaz

Bureau Report

LONDON/MUZAFFARABAD: Senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party Chaudhry Riaz has said that the unprecedented unity and solidarity of the Pakistani Kashmiri people on February 5, Kashmir Solidarity Day, will be a huge breakthrough in exposing Indian terrorism, extremism, lawlessness, implementation of black laws and false claims of democracy and secularism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir at the global level. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will perform the sacred duty of interpretation under the leadership of Chairperson of Political Affairs Ms. Faryal Talpur. President of Pakistan



Asif Ali Zardari has personally paid personal attention to the Kashmiri people. India was slapped in the face by giving a bailout package of Rs 23 billion for subsidy on electricity and flour at the cost of production on public demands. Chaudhry Riaz, in response to a question, said that the Pakistani army continued to support the Kashmir freedom movement and fought three wars against India.

2.9 million Afghan nationals currently residing in Pakistan: Senate body told

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees apprised the Standing Committee on States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) of the Senate that approximately 2.9 million Afghan nationals were currently residing in Pakistan, of which 1.4 million were registered while 0.7 million were unregistered.

The Chief Commissioner presented the empirical data on Afghan refugees under the SAFRON Committee meeting on Friday, chaired by Senator Jan Muhammad Buledi at the Parliament House.

The commissioner gave a compre-

hensive briefing on the current humanitarian assistance being provided to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, covering areas such as shelter, food, water, sanitation, education, and healthcare.

The Committee members were further briefed on the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas Programme (RAHA). They were informed that development projects under RAHA were halted in 2024 due to a lack of funding.

Senators Saadia Abbasi and Syed Masroor Ahsan stressed over mobilizing international support in funding the projects for Afghan refugees and proper utilization of funds.