



President visits village of Major Hamza Israr Shaheed

President Asif Ali Zardari Saturday visited native village of Major Hamza Israr Shaheed. He offered fateha at the grave of Major Hamza Israr who embraced martyrdom during operation against terrorists in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. He laid a wreath at the grave of the martyred officer and paid him tribute.



Fiyadeal launches flight operations to Pakistan

The airline's inaugural flight, F3-661, arrived at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport from Riyadh. Fiyadeal would operate two weekly flights to Karachi—one from Riyadh every Thursday and another from Jeddah every Saturday. Speaking about the expansion, Fiyadeal CEO Con Korfiatis emphasized the airline's commitment to international growth, with potential plans to introduce more routes to Pakistan in the future.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Briefing on security situation

QUETTA: General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and other senior security and intelligence officials attended comprehensive brief on the prevailing security situation in Balochistan during his visit of Balochistan.



Photo: ISPR

Our armed forces are fully capable of defending the mother land: General Asim, COAS

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited Balochistan where he was given a comprehensive brief on the prevailing security situation in Balochistan which was also attended by senior security and intelligence officials.

COAS, Governor and CM Balochistan offered funeral prayers of the Shaheeds and also visited the injured soldiers in the Combined Military Hospital Quetta and appreciated their unwavering commitment to defending the country at all costs.

COAS highlighted that those who are acting as terrorist proxies of their foreign masters who have mastered the art of manifesting double standards of hunting with the hound and running with the hare are well known to us. No matter what these so called "frenemies" may do, you will surely be defeated by the resilience of our proud nation and its Armed Forces Inshallah. For the defence of our motherland and its people, we will definitely retaliate and 'hunt you down', whenever required and wherever you may be.

COAS also appreciated the efforts of the valiant officers and soldiers of Army, Frontier Corps and Law Enforcement Agencies for their courage and determination towards fighting terrorism. He reassured Army's resolve to ensuring the security and well-being of the people of Balochistan, while also reaffirming commitment to supporting the provincial government in its efforts to promote peace, stability, and development in the region.

18 Army soldiers martyred, 23 terrorists killed in Kalat, Harnai operations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Eighteen brave soldiers of Pakistan Army were martyred while 23 terrorists were also sent to hell during fierce clashes in Balochistan district of Kalat and Harnai.

The terrorists were trying to block the main roads in Mangocher area of Kalat between the night of January 31 and February 1. The security forces personnel challenged them which led to fierce exchange of fire which lasted for hours.

Resultantly, 18 brave sons of the soil who fought gallantly embraced martyrdom in the clashes while 12 terrorists were also killed.

According to the ISPR statement, the terrorists attempted to establish roadblocks in general area Mangocher, Kalat District of Balochistan.

On behest of inimical and hostile forces, this cowardly



act, will be brought to justice.

Later, in the backdrop of heinous act of terrorism in Kalat District, multiple sanitization operations were conducted by the security forces throughout the province.

On 1 February, 2025, in one of such operations conducted in Harnai District, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists as a result of which 11 terrorists were sent to hell. Multiple terrorist hideouts were also busted.

Thus far total of 23 terrorists have been sent to hell in different operations in Balochistan during the last 24 hours.

Security forces of Pakistan in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

act of terrorism was aimed at disrupting the peaceful environment of Balochistan by targeting mainly the innocent civilians.

Security Forces and law enforcement agencies were immediately mobilized, who

successfully thwarted the evil design of terrorists and sent 12 terrorists to hell, ensuring security and protection of the local populace.

However, during the conduct of operations, 18 brave sons of

soil, having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced shahadat.

Ensuing sanitization operations were being conducted and the perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of this heinous and

Pakistan overcoming economic crisis under PM's leadership: Rana Tanveer

Bureau Report

SHEIKHUPURA: Federal Minister for Industry, Production, and Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain has said that the government, led by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, has successfully steered Pakistan out of financial crises through its tireless efforts. He expressed confidence that inflation is gradually declining, the economy is stabilizing, and the Stock Exchange is reaching record highs.

Speaking at a mass wedding ceremony under the "Dhee Rani Program" in Sheikhupura on Saturday, he praised Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for her dedication to the welfare of Punjab's middle class. He described the "Dhee Rani Program" as a commendable initiative, aimed at assisting underprivileged families in arranging their children's marriages with dignity.

The federal minister highlighted several welfare initiatives introduced by Maryam Nawaz, including the distribu-



tion of laptops and scooters to students,

the launch of Kisan (Farmer) Cards for farmers, the issuance of Minority Cards for religious communities, and loan schemes for unemployed individuals. He emphasized that she is following in the footsteps of former Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who significantly contributed to Punjab's development.

Rana Tanveer Hussain urged the affluent class to support struggling families in arranging weddings for their children, ensuring that financial constraints do not become a hurdle to their happiness.

Ahsan Iqbal meets Kashmiri Community in the UK, discusses 'Uraan Pakistan' vision

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday held a special meeting with the Pakistani Kashmiri community in the United Kingdom, and explained the government's development agenda, 'Uraan Pakistan.'

He emphasized the need for Pakistan to reclaim its civilizational greatness through knowledge and technology,



underscoring the importance of policy

continuity, economic stability, and equipping the youth with modern skills, said a news release.

Highlighting the four fundamental principles of successful nations—law and order, policy consistency, economic stability, and continuous reforms—Professor Iqbal said that past initiatives such as 'Vision 2010' and 'Vision 2025' fell victim to instability.

However, the 'Uraan Pakistan' initiative is now adopting a long-term and

sustainable strategy to ensure progress. Citing China's example, he stressed that 40 years of stable policies have propelled it to economic success, and Pakistan must similarly safeguard its development plans from political disruptions.

Under 'Uraan Pakistan,' the government is actively working on a strategy to increase exports to \$100 billion by 2029 while prioritizing the promotion of advanced technology to combat climate change.

JCP approves appointment of 10 additional judges in PHC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), which met on Saturday with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi in the chair, approved the names of eight lawyers and two district and sessions judges for their appointment as additional judges in the Peshawar High Court (PHC).

In all, the names of four district and sessions judges

and 36 lawyers were considered for the purpose.

Those whose appointment was given a green signal were District and Sessions Judges Farah Jamshed and Inamullah, Advocate Qazi Jawad, Mudassar Ameer, Abdul Fayyaz, Salahuddin, Sadiq Ali, Tariq Afridi and Sabit Ali. Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Barrister Ali Zafar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) law minister opposed the appointment of additional judges.

Protest against decision to turn Sindh Textbook Board into a Company

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

JAMSHORO: Employees, both current and retired, of the Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro have become vocal in their protest against the decision to turn the board into a company. The employees have held the former secretary responsible for this move.

In this regard, workers of the board, along with retirees, staged a protest after completing their daily work hours. The protesters accused the former secretary, Hafeezullah Mehr, of masterminding the move to turn the board into a company and demanded action against him, as well as the return of the board's vehicle.

Retired employees, including Anis Memon, Saifullah Bilal, Shafiqat Qaboolyo, Nazir Sheikh, and others, expressed their strong opposition to the move, stating that they would not allow the Sindh Textbook Board, a legacy of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, to be turned into a company. They vowed to block every effort at every stage of this process.

The protesters claimed that Hafeezullah Mehr, the former secretary, had



contributed to the destruction of the board and was facing multiple corruption and NAB cases. They alleged that under his influence, Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah had proposed and approved the transformation of the board into a company. The protesters announced that they

would take out a rally on Sunday from the Old Campus to the Hyderabad Press Club and hold a sit-in. They also planned to organize similar protests in various cities across Sindh every Sunday. Furthermore, a petition would be filed in the Sindh High Court on Monday against the decision.

They called on President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to take notice of the conspiracy to shut down this national institution, a move initiated by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and to take action against the officials involved in this plot.

JI held a protest against expensive electricity



Correspondent

FAISALABAD: A protest rally was taken out by the Railway Prem Union and Jamaat-e-Islami Zone PP-112 in connection with the nationwide protest on the appeal of Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman against the government's failure to reduce electricity prices. The rally was led by Chief Organizer Prem Union and Secretary Jamaat-e-Islami Zone PP-112 Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry, Zonal Ameer Muhammad Asif Islam, Zonal President Zaheeruddin Babar, Basit Shafiq, Nooruddin, Sajid Imran, Babar Nawaz, Rai Shahbaz, Muhammad Akram Jatt, Abid Islam, Shakir Alvi and others. The speakers, while addressing the gathering, demanded that the government should give the benefit of savings from the IPP mafia to the people and reduce electricity rates. The rulers should end their luxuries and privileges. Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry said that no party except Jamaat-e-Islami has raised its voice against IPPs. Jamaat-e-Islami staged a 14-day sit-in in Rawalpindi against the cruel and anti-people agreements of the IPP mafia.

Currency smuggling attempt foiled at Multan Airport



Quratul Ain

MULTAN: The successful operation of the Multan Airport Customs has foiled an attempt to smuggle currency. The accused has been arrested and action has been initiated under the Customs Act. Muhammad Yar, a resident of Basti Rangpur Kheda Muzaffargarh, was caught smuggling currency from Multan to Dubai. Collector Airports Punjab Madam Tayyaba Kiani has congratulated Deputy Collector Multan Airport Ahmed Zaheer and the team on the successful operation. During the operation conducted under the Customs Act 1969, foreign currency was recovered. 18 thousand Saudi Riyals, 2915 UAE Dirhams, 2538 Omani Rials and 2840 Pakistani currency were recovered from the passenger Ahmed Yar. The total value of the currency recovered from the accused Ahmed Yar arrested under the Customs Act 1969 is equivalent to 19471 US dollars. An investigation has been initiated against the arrested accused. Collector Customs Punjab Madam Tayyaba Kayani has once again expressed her determination that under the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif, all resources and capabilities are being utilized to prevent smuggling and crack down on smugglers.

Haji Zahir Shah criticizes government policies and calls for economic reforms

Tariq Khan Yousafzai



TAKHT BHAI: Haji Zahir Shah Criticizes Government Policies and Calls for Economic Reforms. The Central Secretary General of Anjuman Tajiran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce, Haji Zahir Shah, has stated that the country is being economically paralyzed under the guise of taxes, forcing traders to abandon their businesses. He emphasized that the rising prices of petroleum products have severely impacted traders, while unannounced load shedding of electricity and gas, along with continuous price hikes, have made life miserable for them. He expressed these views while addressing a press conference at Takht Bhai Press Club. On this occasion, Central Anjuman Tajiran Takht Bhai Tehsil General Secretary Wahab Yousafi, President of Anjuman Sabzi Faroshan Sher Mama, President of Poultry Association Qazi Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Saddam Khan Khat-tak, Asghar Khan, Arif Khan, along with Fazal Haq, Sajjad Khan, and Fazal Haq Khan, were also present. Haji Zahir Shah criticized the central government for the continuous increase in the prices of essential commodities such as flour, electricity, gas, and other necessities. He pointed out that the business community was already facing multiple challenges, and the recent surge in petroleum prices has further aggravated their difficulties. He urged the government to provide immediate relief to traders, reduce taxes, and announce a special package to support them.

Justajou Foundation announces Health Conference on 12th February

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: In an effort to promote public health awareness, Justajou Foundation has officially announced the "Health Conference 2025," which will take place on February 12 at Hyderabad Club. A key meeting, chaired by Chairperson Sadaf Warriach, was held at Hyderabad Gymkhana Club, where final decisions were made regarding the conference's objectives, speakers, and arrangements.

This conference aims to raise public awareness about cancer, its causes, prevention, and modern treatment options. Leading medical experts, civil society representatives, legal professionals, and senior journalists will participate, discussing the root causes of cancer, treatment options, and collective social responsibility.

The meeting was attended by Chairperson Sadaf Warriach, Justajou Foundation CEO Behzad Bashir Memon, Board of Directors member Abdul Wahab Munshi, Head of the Medical Board Dr. Eshwar Kumar, President of Active Women Foundation Nazish Fatima, Legal Advisor Advocate Aneela Jeswani, and Justajou Foundation's Focal Person Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi. On this occasion Chairperson Sadaf Warriach stated "We are providing a strong platform to enhance public health awareness. Health Conference 2025 will be a collaboration of medical experts' insights, social responsibilities, and practical steps, where we will collectively devise an effective strategy for cancer prevention."

Study on Snow

LEEPA VALLEY: Students are attending class at openly sitting on snow without school furniture and facilities, which is the open sign of the negligence of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government.



Photo: Online

Isra University's 22nd Convocation: Degrees Awarded to 528 Students

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

Hyderabad Campus held its 22nd convocation, where degrees were awarded to 528 students. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ahmad Waliullah Qazi congratulated the graduates and emphasized the importance of honesty and hard work in their professional careers.

A total of 341 students received bachelor's degrees in MBBS, Dentistry, Physical Therapy, and Nursing, while 166 students graduated in Engineering, Computer Science, IT, Management



Sciences, Telecommunication, and Business Administration. Additionally, 21 students were awarded postgraduate degrees, including three PhDs.

In his address, Dr. Ahmad Waliullah Qazi highlighted that education is the

foundation of a nation's bright future, and Isra University continues to play a crucial role in student success through its high-quality academic programs.

Professor Dr. Hameedullah Qazi, President and Chief Executive of Isra Islamic Foundation, also addressed the ceremony, stating that the university's mission is to use education as a tool for both individual and societal progress.

Outstanding students were honored with medals for academic excellence. Gold medals were awarded to Noor Fatima, Anbar, Anjali, Anchal, Rose, Tania Devi, Taimoor, Baneesh, Huzaifa

Iqbal, and Mubashir Ali. Silver medals were presented to Haram Siddiqui, Irina, Aqsa, Soha Bachani, Hajra Javed, Amarta Devi, Muhammad Sohaib, Asnif Hussain, and Zain Ali Hasbani. Bronze medals were given to Aleem Talpur, Kiran Waris, Raheema Fatima, Wardah, Mehak Tariq, Arj Ali, Sandiya Maheshwari, Muhammad Sarkhail Haider, and Ameer Ali.

The ceremony concluded with faculty, graduates, and their families celebrating this significant milestone, marking a proud moment for both Isra University and its students.

Commissioner Multan Sets Ultimatum for Timely Completion of Development Projects

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Commissioner Amir Kareem Khan has issued a strict ultimatum to relevant departments for the timely completion of development projects, emphasizing that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is personally monitoring infrastructure improvements in the region. During a review meeting, he highlighted the prioritization of funds for upgrading the sewerage system and directed WASA to complete its projects urgently to address public grievances.

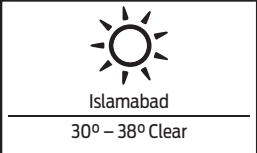


He also stressed accountability, warning that contractors failing to complete projects

would be blacklisted. The meeting revealed that 187 development schemes

are currently underway, including roads, health facilities, educational institutions,

and urban infrastructure projects. Notable initiatives include the 200-bed Mother and Child Care Hospital, which will be fully operational by 2026, and the upgradation of 208 Maryam Nawaz Health Clinics. Key infrastructure projects, such as the Shujabad Chak RS Flyover, Southern and Northern Bypass upgrades, and the construction of a cadet college, were also reviewed. The government has allocated substantial funds to ensure the successful execution of these projects, with deadlines set for completion by mid-2025.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:39 am
Zohr 12:21 pm
Asr 4:01 pm
Maghrib 5:39 pm
Isha 7:04 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249

Governor Sindh visits Ethiopian Embassy Tourism Pavilion at PTM 2025

Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: H. E. Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor of Sindh, on Saturday visited the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad's Tourism Pavilion which has been set up at the Pakistan Travel Mart 2025 to promote Ethiopian cultural diversity and multifaceted tourism.

H. E. Ibrahim Khalid Tawab, Honorary Consul of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Karachi, along with the Embassy staff received the Governor Sindh upon his arrival at the pavilion.

On the occasion, the Governor Sindh was briefed about Ethiopian tourism, cultural heritage and also about the development of its capital Addis Ababa on the modern lines.

The FDR Ethiopia and Pakistan enjoy strong bilateral relations, said the Governor Sindh while appreciating the role of the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad in promoting its tourism and culture in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Last year at the Karachi Feast, the



Governor Sindh inaugurated the Ethiopian Embassy Tourism Pavilion and this time, he has the honor to open the traditional Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony.

Previously, the Governor Sindh also hosted a grand ceremony at the Governor House to celebrate the Ethiopian New Year.

Fifth round of Pakistan-Serbia Bilateral Political Consultations were held in Islamabad



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Additional Secretary (Europe), Mr. Shafqat Ali Khan led the Pakistani delegation. The Serbian side was headed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Damjan Jovic.

Expressing satisfaction at the positive momentum in bilateral relations the two sides agreed to explore new avenues for collaboration.

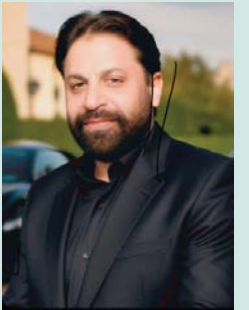
A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between the diplomatic academies of the two countries that would be instrumental in further strengthening diplomatic ties through trainings and courses.

State Secretary Damjan Jovic also met with the Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan and Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch

Imran Ali salutes the troops who fought against terrorists in KPK

City Desk

KARACHI: Prominent politician and President Pakistan Markazi Muslim League Gulshan-e-Iqbal Karachi, Imran Ali, paying rich tributes to the security forces, has said that the entire nation is with the security forces in their fight against the terrorists. Imran Ali said that the nation is proud of our soldiers and salute our troops who fought bravely against the enemies in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The action of our security forces against the terrorists is highly commendable, he added.



Lahore Shopping Festival attracts thousands on day first at Lahore Expo Center

City Desk

LAHORE: The Lahore Shopping Festival (LSF) has commenced at the Lahore Expo Center, drawing a massive gathering of business leaders, government representatives, domestic and foreign visitors. This three-day festival, running until February 2, has been designed to promote trade, celebrate Lahore's cultural heritage and provide a unique shopping experience.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad inaugurated the Festival while Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman, Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry, former LCCI President Muhammad Ali Mian, former Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar, former Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry and MPA Saadia Taimoor, Executive Committee Members, trade and industry leaders and thousands of attendees were also present.

The inauguration ceremony highlighted Lahore's economic potential and emphasized the importance of such events in driving commercial activity. The dignitaries expressed their confidence in the festival's ability to generate business opportunities, encourage investments and boost the local economy.

CDA partners with KPMG for financially sustainable development projects

ISLAMABAD, FEB 01 (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) has engaged KPMG, a global professional services firm, to provide consultancy aimed at ensuring the financial feasibility and sustainability of various development projects in Islamabad.

A KPMG delegation met with CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday, with CDA Board members and senior officials also in attendance.

The meeting focused on devising the best financial strategies to make CDA projects viable and investment-friendly. Several proposals were discussed to enhance their long-term sustainability.

Chairman Randhawa emphasized that the goal is to attract investment and drive Islamabad's development while ensuring that revenue generated from these projects is reinvested for the city's welfare.

The discussion also covered plans to organize conferences and seminars to engage potential investors.

KPMG will offer expert consultancy, technical assistance, and business models to optimize financial planning for CDA projects. Chairman Randhawa expressed confidence that KPMG's expertise will play a crucial role in making these initiatives financially robust and sustainable.

Automotive Show 2025

ISLAMABAD: Families are enjoying sports cars and bikes during "Centaurus Automotive Show 2025" in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Revenue Khuli Kechari held

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the direction of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sandhu, a Revenue khuli kechhari was held in the Municipal Committee Office, Kamalia. In which

Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Iqra Nasir heard problems from the relevant citizens of Revenue. In the Khuli Kechari, complaints based on the accuracy of the revenue record, the issuance of the individual, the registry applications, the transition registration, the income certificate, the record scrutiny and other miscellaneous cases were submitted.

The complaints were also resolved immediately after hearing Silen's problems.

Assistant Commissioner Iqra Nasir said that the Revenue khuli Kechari is being installed on the first two working days of each month to solve the problems of the citizens.

HER LEGACY organized 'SAB BAICH DE' Exhibition showcased opportunities for women's empowerment

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: "SUB BAICH DE" three days Exhibition 31st January to 2nd February features the remarkable talents of women organized by the Miss Nareen saeed founder of "Her LEGACY" at Bahira Town Rawalpindi.

Many local women entrepreneur brands displayed their outstanding and creative works in the exhibition.

This three days event is all about uplifting voices and celebrating artistic empowerment. Representing diverse back-



grounds from homemakers to professionals—these women share a common passion for artistic expression.

Through their experiences at "HER LEGACY", they have developed new skills and unlocked their creative potential.

The "SUB BAICH DE" Exhibition a Platform for Emerging Women Creativity and providing a dedicated platform for these incredibly talented female small business owners to showcase their work to a broader audience. This exhibition represents a significant opportunity for these women to share their creativity and craftsmanship with the world:

Governor Faisal Kundi inaugurates TMUC Peshawar Campus

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa His Excellency Faisal Karim Kundi inaugurates the iconic TMUC Transnational Education Wing in DHA Peshawar says a press release.

The momentous occasion was graced by distinguished dignitaries, including Dr. Faisal Mushtaq Founder & Chief Executive of TMUC Pakistan; Ambassador Masood Khan President TMUC Higher Education Group; Nasir Khan DG Higher Education Commission KPK, Abid Hussain Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Amna Salik Dean Academics and Internationalization; Ms. Shama Khan Head of Programmes TMUC Peshawar; along with esteemed guests, parents, students, and academic professionals.

The Chief Guest, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi unveiled the inaugural plaque, signifying TMUC's commitment to delivering world-class international education.

TMUC's Transnational Education Wing is a first-of-its-kind initiative in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The campus is designed as a center of excellence, incorporating 21st-century pedagogy and technology-driven learning to foster academic excellence and innovation. The state-of-the-art campus features a sustainable green café, art and design studio, language center, counseling and training facilities, a nursing and first aid room, and a rooftop garden aimed at providing a holistic educational experience.

His Excellency Faisal Karim Kundi, in his address, extended

heartfelt congratulations to the students, parents, and citizens of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasized that TMUC is not just an institution but a transformational platform bringing world-class education to Peshawar, bridging local talent with global academic and professional opportunities. He commended Dr. Faisal Mushtaq for his visionary leadership in bringing international education to the region.

Ambassador Masood Khan, President TMUC Higher Education Group, lauded TMUC's commitment to equipping students with globally recognized qualifications. He highlighted the critical role of transnational education in preparing students for the future workforce, urging them to harness their international connections for success in

an increasingly globalized world.

Dr. Faisal Mushtaq, Founder and Chief Executive TMUC Pakistan, expressed his gratitude to the esteemed guests and stakeholders. He reaffirmed TMUC's dedication to offering globally recognized undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional qualifications in disciplines such as business, media, fashion, design, psychology, and entrepreneurship. TMUC's international academic partnerships include the University of London, the University of Hertfordshire UK, the University for the Creative Arts UK, Pearson UK, and NCC UK—providing students with access to premier education and skills training.

The launch ceremony featured inspiring speeches from students, who shared their experiences and aspirations as part of TMUC's



global academic community.

With its expansive transnational education network, TMUC continues to revolutionize higher

education in Pakistan, empowering students to excel on a global stage. The launch of TMUC Peshawar further strengthens

its mission of providing quality education, innovation, and global connectivity, setting new benchmarks in academic excellence.

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A Fight to Protect Pakistan’s Children from Big Tobacco

According to the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, tobacco use kills over 163,000 Pakistanis every year. Tobacco use—perpetuated by addition to the nicotine found in cigarettes and other tobacco and nicotine products like heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes—has proven links to conditions like heart disease, lung disease and cancer.

The global statistics are far more alarming as WHO estimates suggest more than 8 million deaths each year due to tobacco consumption while 1.2 million of these are a result of second-hand smoke exposure. The data reflects that 24 million adults use tobacco products in Pakistan while 15.6 million smoke tobacco and 7.6 million use smokeless products. This is a very alarming situation which needs immediate interventions by the government to safeguard public health.

Around the world, efforts to reduce tobacco use are undermined by the aggressive opposition of the big tobacco industry, which puts profits over lives. The tobacco industry and its allies have a pattern of attacking and seeking to discredit organizations and advocates working to reduce tobacco use. Studies, including those from the WHO, have repeatedly debunked the industry claims, showing that effective tobacco

control policies reduce consumption without significantly increasing illicit trade. These claims have been disproven in country after country and it is also important to note that the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)—a global tobacco control treaty which Pakistan became a party to in 2005—obligates countries to protect their public health policies from the harmful influence of the tobacco industry.

Government of Pakistan has made significant progress towards adopting the policies relating to the effective control of tobacco use such as increased taxation, a ban on advertisement and larger graphical health warnings on cigarette packets. As outlined in the National Tobacco Control Strategy 2022-30, the government recognizes the important role of civil society groups, including both international and local organizations. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids through local civil society organizations, provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Health on policies and guidelines to ensure they are FCTC compliant along with being compliant with best health and safety practices. Strong support is offered for these

evidence-based efforts by the government to save lives from tobacco use through stronger policies, contributing to the betterment of public health worldwide, especially the health of kids.

CTFK is working in multiple countries to support efforts to reduce tobacco use and has been instrumental in supporting stronger tobacco control measures and supporting local civil society organizations in their efforts. In Pakistan, the group’s support for local organizations has been significant in increasing awareness about the harms of tobacco use, promoting graphic health warnings and supporting restrictions on tobacco advertising.

Recently, the tobacco industry has launched a misinformation campaign against CTFC aiming to discredit their efforts in Pakistan. Such misinformation not only undermines the efforts on the ground by health advocates, compromising the integrity of evidence-based policies designed to reduce tobacco use, but also poses a direct threat to advancing public health. These recent misinformation campaigns are baseless and have no connection to reality, their sole aim is to tarnish the reputation of those

working toward public health goals. They inaccurately report on CTFC, falsely claiming that the government should cease their operations. In reality, CTFC operates with the permission of the government, following legal guidelines. They are committed to working in a transparent and lawful manner to support local civil society organizations and the government of Pakistan in advancing efforts to reduce tobacco use.

As a public health advocate dedicated to safeguarding Pakistan’s children from tobacco use, I am deeply committed to exposing the recent spread of inaccurate media and social media content—part of a misinformation campaign that seeks to undermine efforts to reduce tobacco use. This is not the first time such tactics have been employed, as the tobacco industry has consistently resorted to similar strategies in the past to discredit efforts aimed at protecting public health. We stay committed to our mission, and the collective efforts of civil society organizations and public health advocates are crucial in this fight. Only through collaborative action can we ensure that Pakistan’s children and future generations are not subjected to the deadly consequences of tobacco addiction.

(The writer is a public health advocate and working as a Program Manager at Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)



Analysis
Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar

War-hit Gazans depend on UNRWA for ‘sheer survival’

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 for possible involvement.

Under the Knesset ban, UNRWA was ordered to vacate all premises in occupied East Jerusalem and cease operations in them by 30 January.

“Our teams continue to serve, even though they themselves in Gaza as an example, they themselves are impacted, they themselves have been forced to flee their homes,” Ms. Touma explained.

“They continue to serve and we are committed as UNRWA to stay and deliver across the

Occupied Palestinian Territory. That includes the Gaza Strip, it includes the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.”

She noted that no official communication has been received from the Israeli authorities on how the Knesset ban will be implemented across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

“In the absence of any durable solution, Palestine refugees will continue to depend on UNRWA for basic services including health and education; and in Gaza, in the aftermath of the devastation caused by the war, for their sheer survival,” Ms. Touma maintained.

She noted that UNRWA’s health centres continued to receive patients in East Jerusalem in the West Bank on Thursday, while schools were expecting to reopen on Sunday after a scheduled break.

“Our teams...will continue to provide learning for children. We have around 50,000 boys and girls across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who go to UNRWA’s schools,” Ms. Touma said.



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

Rising Fuel Costs Hit Pakistan Hard

Amjad Khan

Imagine you are heading out to get some petrol, right? You have got your usual budget in mind, but when you get to the pump, you see that the numbers are higher than last time. It is a familiar scene in Pakistan right now. Fuel prices have taken another jump, and it is becoming a real challenge for many people.

So, what exactly has gone up? Well, petrol, which is what most cars and motorbikes run on, has increased. It is now sitting at Rs. 257.13 per liter, a bit of an increase from before. But here is the really tough part, high-speed diesel, or HSD, has gone up even more. It is now a pretty steep Rs. 267.95 per liter. You see, diesel is crucial because it powers a lot of the vehicles that transport goods, as well as agricultural equipment. So, it is not just about cars, it affects the whole economy.

This is not something that is happened randomly. The government has a group called the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority, or OGRA, which is responsible for keeping an eye on these prices and making adjustments. They looked at the global market, saw prices going up, and then increased local rates to match. It is like they are reacting to the global marketplace.

Now, how does this impact all of us? It is not just about topping off your car. This price hike has far-reaching effects. Petrol is what we use to go to work, take kids to school, and handle daily tasks. When petrol gets more expensive, it means we are all spending more just to move around. It hits people right in their wallets. But that diesel increase? That is where it really gets concerning.

Diesel powers trucks, buses, and a lot of farm machinery. So, when its price goes up, it increases the cost of transporting goods. This means that the price of everything, from food to clothing, goes up too. It is like a chain

reaction, making the cost of living that much higher. This affects the middle class and low-income families the most, because they are already struggling to afford basic necessities.

Why is this happening, though? Well, it is mostly because of the global oil market. The world has a huge market for oil, and prices change constantly. Since we import most of our oil, if the price goes up internationally, it goes up for us too. Recently, the price of Brent crude, a type of oil, went up by about \$2 per barrel. It may not seem like much, but it adds up when you are buying massive amounts of it. Diesel prices went up because the global price of diesel increased by \$2.50 per barrel. And even petrol went up 50 cents per barrel internationally, which also impacts our prices here. On top of that, the fees we pay to import petrol have also gone up. Even though the value of our money has stayed somewhat stable, the international market has a big impact on the prices we pay for fuel.

And there is another piece of the puzzle, taxes. Even though the government has removed the general sales tax, or GST, on fuel, they still impose other taxes on these products. There is a petroleum levy (a kind of tax) of Rs. 60 per liter and about Rs. 16 per liter in customs duties. So, it is not just the global prices that are making fuel expensive, it is also these taxes. The government uses that money, but it also makes us pay more for every liter of fuel.

Pakistan’s economy is heavily reliant on imported oil. We don’t have enough of our own, which makes us vulnerable to global market shifts. If something happens there, it impacts us here. We have seen this happen many times, and it is causing a lot of issues.

When fuel prices go up, it does not just make it more expensive to drive, it affects industries and the prices of basic goods. This is a serious problem for our economy because people find it more difficult to pay for everything. It is especially hard for those who are already struggling

to support their families. These ongoing price increases will likely lead to higher inflation and more people finding it difficult to meet their financial burdens.

This is not a new issue either, it has been happening repeatedly. Just recently, in January 2025, there were two separate price increases. The first one was at the beginning of January, and then again a couple of weeks later. It is like being on a roller coaster, making it hard for people to plan and keep up with the fluctuating costs.

So what is the future looking like? Well, it is difficult to say. Pakistan is constantly dealing with the ups and downs of the global oil market. It is a challenge for the government to keep things balanced, and it is even more of a struggle for the common citizen, who has forced to pay more and more for everything.

The government needs to find a better approach to our energy situation, maybe find alternative ways to secure fuel or develop better policies to deal with these global price changes. Otherwise, we will just keep experiencing these same issues again and again.

As you can imagine, people are quite worried, and they have every right to be. Transporters are worried about the cost of their businesses, farmers are feeling the pressure since their machinery runs on diesel. Everyone is getting ready for another jump in prices for general goods. People are already noticing that their daily expenses are higher than before, and it is getting harder to make ends meet.

So, that is the situation. It is not just about filling up a car or bike, it is about the bigger picture. It is about the strain on everyone’s finances, the challenge of keeping our economy going, and the struggles faced by the average person daily. It is a tough time, and everyone is hoping things will get more stable in the future.

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Revolutionizing Higher Education in Pakistan: Bridging Global Trends with Local Needs

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

Higher education plays a crucial role in the development of any nation by shaping the future workforce, fostering innovation, and driving economic growth. In Pakistan, there is growing need to revolutionize higher education to align it with global trends while catering to local needs. The challenges faced by the Pakistani education system, the importance of integrating global best practices, and the strategies to bridge the gap between global trends and local requirements in higher education.

Pakistan faces various challenges in its higher education sector, including outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to quality education, and an emphasis on rote learning rather than critical thinking. To address these challenges, it is essential to incorporate global trends in higher education that focus on skills development, innovation, and technology. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, there is a need to shift from traditional teaching methods to more interactive and experiential learning approaches to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce HEC, 2021.

The country faces unique socio-economic issues, regional disparities, and cultural norms that taken into account when designing educational policies and programs. For instance, there is a need to address the lack of gender equality in higher education and promote inclusivity and diversity on campuses. Tailoring education initiatives to local contexts and involving relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process, Pakistani universities can ensure that their programs are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

Despite strides made over the years, disparities persist in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates between male and female students. This inequity not only undermines the principle of equal opportunity but also limits the potential contributions of diverse perspectives to academic discourse and innovation. Institutions must recognize that achieving gender parity is essential for fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

To promote inclusivity and diversity on campuses, universities should implement targeted policies that address systemic barriers faced by underrepresented genders. These may include mentorship programs, scholarships and workshops that raise awareness about unconscious biases among faculty and administration. Furthermore, creating safe spaces for dialogue can empower marginalized voices while encouraging a culture of respect and understanding among students. Higher education is not merely a moral imperative; it is crucial for cultivating an academic landscape that reflects the richness of human experience. A commitment to inclusivity will enhance learning outcomes and prepare graduates to thrive in an increasingly diverse global society.

Revolutionizing higher education in Pakistan requires a careful balance between embracing global trends and catering to local needs. Integrating interdisciplinary studies, technology-enabled learning, research collaborations, and inclusive practices, Pakistani universities can enhance the quality of education, produce skilled graduates, and contribute to national development. It is imperative for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to work together to create a modern and dynamic higher education system that prepares students for success in a rapidly changing world.

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq is Post-Doctorate (Peace Education), International Islamic University, Islamabad. He can be reached drmsashfaq@gmail.com

Azerbaijan envoy for further boosting business relations

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, has stated that it is essential to strengthen trade and investment cooperation to further enhance the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He emphasized that the leadership of both countries is committed to expanding trade partnerships, and efforts are being made to strengthen ties at various levels.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of United Business Group (UBG), at his office. On this occasion, former President of ICCL, Ahsan Bakhtawari, and Executive Member of FPCCI, Waqar Bakhtawari, were also present. The meeting focused on further enhancing trade relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Khazar Farhadov stressed the need to initiate joint ventures between the two countries in the fields of energy, textiles, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, IT, and construction. He further stated that Pakistan exports rice, textiles, sports goods, surgical instruments, pharmaceuticals, agricultural products, and IT services to Azerbaijan, while Azerbaijan offers investment opportunities in energy, petrochemicals, tourism, and construction sectors.



Pakistan's economy has immense potential, and Azerbaijani investors are keen to explore opportunities in various sectors, said Khazar Farhadov. He highlighted the importance of direct business-to-business (B2B) interactions between the business communities of both countries, stating that such engagements will further boost investment and trade activities.

The Azerbaijani Ambassador invited Pakistani traders and entrepreneurs

to invest in Azerbaijan, stating that Azerbaijan offers vast investment opportunities, and our government is providing all possible facilities to investors. Pakistani businesses can particularly explore investment opportunities in the construction industry, infrastructure development, food industry, and tourism.

During the meeting, Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized that Pakistani products are of high quality and are increasingly in demand in Azerbaijan. He stated that Pakistani rice, textiles,

surgical instruments, sports goods, and pharmaceutical products have great potential in Azerbaijan's market.

We must increase trade delegations and organize joint trade exhibitions to bring the business communities of both countries closer, he added.

He also proposed the formation of joint trade forums to facilitate direct communication between Pakistan and Azerbaijani business circles. Such forums will enable investors and entrepreneurs to better understand each other's markets and enhance trade collaboration, he said.

Ahsan Bakhtawari expressed the commitment of Pakistan's business community to further expanding trade relations with Azerbaijan.

Waqar Bakhtawari expressed optimism regarding the economic and trade relations between the two countries, stating that We are confident that economic and trade cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan will continue to grow, benefiting the business communities of both nations.

He emphasized that Pakistan-Azerbaijani friendship is not only exemplary at the diplomatic level but also in the business and trade sectors. He concluded by stating, We must take concrete steps to further strengthen these ties.

Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar meets Chaudhry Sajid Abbas Chadhar



Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar held an important meeting with London-based businessman and President of the Pakistan Overseas Forum UK, Chaudhry Sajid Chadhar, at his residence in Lahore.

During the meeting, key issues concerning overseas Pakistanis were discussed in detail. Topics included the challenges faced by overseas communities, illegal human trafficking, the right of overseas Pakistanis to vote, their representation in legislative assemblies, and measures to curb land mafia activities in Pakistan. The discussion also highlighted the need for special quotas for the children of overseas Pakistanis in educational institutions and government jobs within the country.

The Federal Law Minister commended the efforts of the Pakistan Overseas Forum both abroad and in Pakistan. He assured Mr. Chadhar of the government's unwavering support, stating, "Overseas Pakistanis are the true capital of our nation. We will not allow this invaluable asset to go to waste. Their contributions to Pakistan's economy are vital, and we are committed to enacting legislation that will make their lives easier. Our goal is to strengthen the bond between overseas Pakistanis, their children, and their homeland."

Addressing concerns over human trafficking, Minister Tarar emphasized the government's firm stance, stating that stringent measures are being implemented against those involved in such crimes. "The noose has been tightened around human traffickers. Anyone found guilty will face the harshest punishments, as we cannot allow criminals to tear families apart," he added.

The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their commitment to addressing the concerns of overseas Pakistanis and enhancing their role in Pakistan's development.

IMCG Tarlai bags seven academic excellence awards



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Model College for Girls, Tarlai achieved a proud feat by winning seven awards during the annual Educational Excellence Awards ceremony of Sector Nilore.

The award distribution ceremony was organized at Islamabad Model School for Boys, Jhang Saidan by Area Education Office Nilore. Deputy Director General Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Asif Iqbal Khan Niazi was the chief guest of the event.

Area Education Officer, Nilore Sector, Dr. Khalid Mehmood welcomed the guests and highlighted the aims and objectives of the event. Deputy AEO Nilore Mr. Rashid Khan was also present.

Chief guest Asif Iqbal Niazi in his speech urged the teachers to focus on education as well as character building of students. He said that our students are not less than anyone and they have immense talent but the problem is our inattention. If we guide the students properly and pay attention to their training, these children will prove to be useful citizens of the country in the future. He also congratulated the students, teachers and heads of institutions who received prizes in the ceremony.

Principal Islamabad Model College for Girls, Tarlai, Mrs. Saira Aftab congratulated the hardworking and dedicated teachers and talented students for winning laurels for the institution and thanked the management committee for organizing the event which acknowledged the efforts of both teachers and principals for bringing about reform in the education sector.

Ningbo University delegation visits Pakistan to strengthen Sino-Pak scientific ties



BEIJING:A high-level delegation from Ningbo University, led by Academician Zhao Yufen, Member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Director of the Institute of Discovery Technology (IDDT) at the university, visited Pakistan to enhance scientific and technological cooperation between universities and institutions of the two countries.

On January 22, the delegation's visit coincided with the COMSTech Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) annual meeting in Islamabad. On the occasion, Academician Zhao presented traditional medicine to leaders from the higher education sectors of OIC member countries, aiming to enhance global competitiveness in science, technology, health and higher education through cross-university cooperation, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Saturday.

The Ningbo University delegation also met with officials from Hamdard University, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), and the University of Lahore respectively, to discuss broader cooperation, particularly on the follow-up progress of a project involving seven traditional medicinal plants, including Withania somnifera, Tribulus terrestris, and Moringa oleifera, which were sent to China's space station. Discussions also covered research and development of traditional medicine, space breeding technology and the training of scientific research talents.

The visit marks a major step in Ningbo University's international scientific and technological cooperation initiative. In recent years, the university has made notable progress in traditional medicine, especially in space-based traditional Chinese medicine research and development, conducting multiple influential space-based experiments domestically and internationally.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Experienced aesthetic specialist and former member of Punjab Assembly, Ms. Mehnaz Saeed, along with expert dermatologist Dr. Anzla and PFUJ President Afzal Butt, inaugurating the new aesthetic clinic at Sector F-11.



Photo: APP

Passengers appeal to the relevant authorities to upgrade GT Road to motorway standards



Sarfraz Malik

JHELUM: Passengers and Pakistani citizens appeal to the relevant authorities and the federal government to upgrade G. T Road to motorway standards and international quality. This will create a positive impression of Pakistan on international tourists and visitors traveling on this route. Additionally, it will help reduce the frequent accidents that result in deaths and disabilities.

The toll plaza on GT Road has been increased three times in seven months, from 30 to 60 rupees, making it the highest increase in such a short period in Pakistan's history, a 100% rise to achieve the revenue target. On the other hand, the condition of the historic GT Road, which connects Pakistan to India, Afghanistan, and international routes, is heartbreaking.

The condition of GT Road is worse than even local rural roads, with potholes and broken sections everywhere. As a result, frequent accidents are causing the loss of precious lives.

Moreover, whenever a long march or protest occurs, the protective fences on the bridges are broken in multiple places, and it takes months to repair them. In the recent long march of November 2024, many protective fences on the bridges were damaged, and they have not yet been repaired.

Journalists' Union staged a protest against PECA in WANA

Umer Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN LOWER: The Journalists' Union staged a protest in Wana, South Waziristan, against the recent amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA). The protesters criticized the government for passing these amendments through Parliament, calling it an attempt to undermine press freedom and curtail independent journalism.

Speakers at the protest expressed concerns that the amendments would pave the way for authoritarianism by restricting freedom of expression. They argued that the legislation



was designed to suppress the media, which plays a crucial role in upholding democracy.

President of the Wana Press Club, Shahzada Wazir,

and senior journalist Nek Muhammad Wazir, while addressing the media, stated that the amendment to the 2016 PECA Act sends a concerning message to the

world. They claimed that after imposing restrictions on judicial independence, the government is now targeting press freedom.

They further stated that these amendments place severe limitations on journalism, undermining democratic principles and creating an environment that stifles dissent. The journalists condemned the move, stating that it effectively places the media under the control of powerful elites.

The protestors reaffirmed their support for the ongoing demonstrations against the amendments and vowed to continue their struggle until the changes to the PECA Act are reversed.

"Laughter Returns to Garho: Comedy Stage Drama Enthralls Audience"

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: After around two decades, the people of the coastal town Garho watched a comedy stage drama in their city, organized under the aegis of [organization's name]. People from different walks of life converged at a Marriage Hall to witness performances by eminent Sindhi stage actors showcasing their acting skills.

The story of the Sindhi stage play "Bhalla Tuhinja Baag" – "Your Good Fortunes" – revolves around a young boy who, despite all hardships, succeeds in getting quality education and later joins the Civil Services. The boy lives in a small, deprived village, yet thrives in the field of education. The play left a message of persistent struggle and dedication for the youth.

The play featured notable Sindhi



actors and actresses, including Urs Narejo, Nasreen Naz, Rasheed Raja,

Shakeel Babar, Nayab Saher, Akber Zangejo, Qadir Bux, and others. The

play was written by Yaqoob Kalhoro and directed by Urs Narejo.

Chief Guest of the event, Ramzan Panhwer, Chairman of the Town Committee, said in his speech that stage plays have always played a vital role in entertaining the masses. He further mentioned that NAPA has been taking commendable initiatives to revive the lost glory of stage dramas across the country.

Yaqoob Kalhoro, the playwright, stated that he wrote the story of the play to inspire the youth. "It is our responsibility to provide quality content to the audience to bring them to theaters," said Kalhoro. Urs Narejo, the director of the play, who also played a comic role, expressed his gratitude to NAPA and the provincial culture department for encouraging local talent.

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

Pakistan, Azerbaijan vow to strengthen bilateral relations

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan have reiterated their resolve to further enhance bilateral relations by extending cooperation in diverse sectors, including energy, investment, and tourism, as well as other areas of mutual interest between the two countries.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between the Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization, and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan, and the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, Ali Asadov, who called on him on Saturday in Baku.

Welcoming the Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and Pakistani delegation, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan H. E. Ali Asadov said that both the two countries are connected with each other through a strong bond of brotherhood which will further be strengthened in the coming days.

He appreciated recent developments in various sectors of Pakistan and assured his support for increasing investment and mutual cooperation by Azerbaijan for Pakistani people.

During the meeting, Aleem Khan shed light on the investment opportunities in Pakistan including in the privatization of State Owned



Entities (SOEs).

It was emphasized that following the state visit of the President of Azerbaijan to Pakistan last year, interstate relations have entered a qualitatively new stage. Both sides also

discussed the development prospects of Azerbaijan-Pakistan strategic partnership relations in economy, trade, investments and other areas of mutual interest.

Abdul Aleem Khan also held meetings with

Azerbaijan's Energy Minister Pervez Shahbazov, Transport Minister Rashad Nabiyev, Deputy Minister of Economy Samad Bashiri and President of the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan Rovshan Najaf.

Addressing

ISLAMABAD: Senior politician and MNA Hanif Abbasi is addressing during "Centaurus Automotive Show 2025" in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan Textile Council welcomed a delegation of International Cotton Advisory Council

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Textile Council (PTC) today welcomed a distinguished delegation from the International Cotton Advisory Council (ICAC), led by Executive Director Mr. Eric Trachtenberg and Director of Textiles Mr. Kanwar Usman. The delegation was accompanied by Dr. Yusuf Zafar, Vice President of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) under the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

During the meeting, PTC's CEO, Mr. Shafiqat, shared that Pakistan was the 4th largest cotton producing country in the world just 07 years ago. Pakistan produced 4.81 million cotton bales in the year 2011-12 and it has come down to less than 6.0 Million bales in 2024-25. He shared that the numbers are alarming and presented the recent Council's initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable cotton production in Pakistan. He highlighted the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), which aspires to ensure that 100% of cotton produced in Pakistan is traceable and sustainable.

Mr. Eric Trachtenberg shared insights into ICAC's global efforts and explored avenues for collaboration between ICAC



and PTC to enhance cotton production practices in Pakistan.

PTC Chairman, Mr. Fawad Anwar, emphasized the critical importance of cotton to the textile value chain, stating, "Cotton is the most important raw material for our industry, and PTC is committed to leveraging all available resources to make cotton production sustainable in Pakistan." Dr. Yusuf Zafar expressed optimism about the partnership, noting, "The collaboration between PTC and ICAC, supported by PCCC, will play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable practices and improving the quality of cotton production in Pakistan."

Mr. Eric Trachtenberg added, "ICAC is dedicated to supporting member countries

in adopting sustainable cotton practices. Our collaboration with PTC aims to bring global best practices to Pakistan, enhancing both production and export potential."

Mr. Kanwar Usman highlighted the technical aspects of the collaboration, stating, "By working together, we can implement advanced agricultural techniques and improve supply chain traceability, ensuring that Pakistani cotton meets international sustainability and quality standards."

This partnership is expected to bolster Pakistan's textile exports by aligning its cotton production with global sustainability benchmarks, thereby enhancing the country's competitiveness in international markets.

Continuous jump in oil prices to spur inflation: FRIA

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has asked the government to withdraw the decisions of continuous raises in oil products prices, warning the authorities that the decision could spur inflation, hurting the economic growth and only a prudent approach could keep it under the control.

FRIA chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that another hike in petrol prices would put an additional burden on the industries and general public at a time when they are already hard-pressed with huge power tariff jump.

Shahbaz Aslam, also the PIAF senior leader, said that recent increase in the petrol, diesel and other petroleum prices has shattered all segments of society including industrialists and traders.

He said that government did not bother to pass on the benefit of decrease of oil prices in international market and earned billion rupees,



which was a sheer injustice and now made a huge raise in the petroleum prices. He said that there is almost no production in the industrial sector due to massive load shedding while increase in petroleum and diesel prices would give a big blow, not only to the industry but also to the agriculture sector that is backbone of the economy.

He said that the industrialists, traders and common men are already annoyed due to load shedding while further increase in petroleum prices would add fuel to the fire. He said that government should cut down its luxurious expenditures and curtail taxes and duties on the petroleum prices.

26pc hike in gas tariff to put Rs850bn additional load on industry: APBF

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has strongly criticized the recent gas price hike approved by the federal cabinet by 26 percent to put additional burden of at least Rs850 billion on the industry, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and could further stifle economic growth due to increased production costs.

The APBF president Syed Maaz Mahmood has called for a review of the price adjustment mechanism to mitigate the impact on businesses, as he believed the gas price hike will disproportionately affect SMEs, leading to potential closures and job losses due to increased operational costs.

He said that the price



increase is seen as a major hurdle for industrial growth, further exacerbating existing economic challenges like inflation and low export volumes.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi urged the government to re-evaluate the gas pricing mechanism to ensure a more balanced approach that considers the needs of the industrial sector.

Ibrahim Qureshi said that the gas tariff hike has threatened the industrial sector, besides increasing unemployment.

FTO to visit Faisalabad on Feb 10

Commerce Desk

LAHORE:- Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr Asif Mahmood Jah will visit Faisalabad on February 10, and engage with key stakeholders from the business community.

Coordinator to FTO Muhammad Farhan Munir announced here Friday that during his visit, he will address the members of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), highlighting the role of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) in resolving tax-related grievances and

ensuring a fair taxation system.

FTO will hold meetings with various delegations of industrialists, officials of Small Chamber, and representatives of Women Chamber. These meetings aim to discuss tax-related challenges faced by businesses and explore ways to enhance cooperation between the business community and the FTO office. His visit will provide an opportunity to businessmen and industrialists to voice their concerns and seek solutions to their federal tax issues. The discussions will focus on improving tax administration,

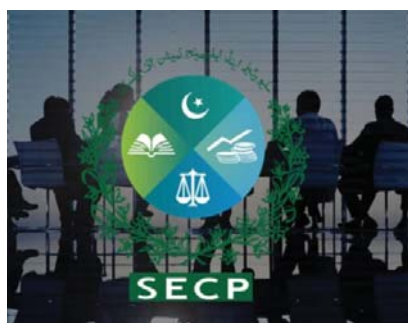
addressing complaints against tax authorities, and facilitating a business-friendly environment.

Farhan Munir said Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah has been actively working to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the tax system, and his visit to Faisalabad reflects his commitment to engaging with stakeholders to ensure fair tax practices across various sectors.

On way to Faisalabad, he will also have two hours brief stop over Hafizabad meeting the local business community.



SECP achieves highest number of Company Incorporation in a Single Month



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has achieved a historic milestone by incorporating the highest-ever number of companies i.e. 3,442 in a single month, reflecting a 39% increase compared to the monthly average of the previous year. This unprecedented achievement reflects SECP's commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment and promoting ease of doing business in Pakistan.

During the month of January, 2025, SECP registered companies across diverse sectors, with a significant concentration in key industries. The Information Technology (IT) and e-commerce sectors saw the largest growth, adding 652 new companies. The trading sector followed with 463 new companies, services with 411 new companies, Real Estate Development & Construction recorded 311 new companies. Tourism and Transport with 242, Food and Beverages with 158, Healthcare & Pharmaceutical with 233, Fuel & Energy with 81, Education with 124, Mining and Quarrying with 119, Marketing and Advertisement with 86, Textile with 79, Corporate Agricultural Farming with 73 new registrations. Other sectors contributing to this growth included Auto and Allied, Power Generation, Sports and Allied, Tobacco etc. with 650 new companies.

SECP remains committed to supporting business growth through ongoing reforms and digitization initiatives, ensuring seamless company incorporation and compliance processes.

ICC appoints Boon, Gough and Illingworth for Tri-Series One Day International Matches in Lahore and Karachi

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Australia's David Boon, who is a member of ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, will lead the playing control team for the tri-nation ODI series involving hosts Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa.

The single league tri-series is set to be played from 8-14 February in Lahore and Karachi as the newly upgraded Gaddafi Stadium and National Bank Stadium are set to welcome back international cricket.

As Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the much-anticipated opening match on Saturday, 8 February at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, England's Michael Gough, member of the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires, and Pakistan's Faisal Khan Aafreedi, an ICC International Panel Umpire, will be the on-field umpires.

ICC Elite Panel Umpire, Richard Illingworth will be the third umpire



and Rashid Riaz, member of the ICC International Panel of Umpires, will be the fourth umpire.

Gaddafi Stadium will also play host to the New Zealand vs South Africa contest on 10 February, where Richard Illing-

worth and Rashid Riaz will serve as the on-field umpires, while Michael Gough will be the third umpire. ICC's International Panel of Umpires' member Asif Yaqoob will be the fourth umpire for the fixture which is set to be played as a day game.

The action will move to Karachi's National Bank Stadium for the last league match and the final of the tri-series. Asif Yaqoob and Michael Gough will form the on-field umpires' duo, while Richard Illingworth and Faisal Khan Aafreedi will be the third and fourth umpires, respectively for the Pakistan vs South Africa fixture in Karachi.

In the final on Friday, 14 February, ICC Elite Panel Umpire, Ahsan Raza will officiate as an on-field umpire along with Richard Illingworth, while Michael Gough will be third umpire. Asif Yaqoob will perform duties as the fourth umpire in the final.

Medicam Group will always continue its cooperation with RCAF for the promotion of cricket: Zafar Riaz Bari



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Our organization Medicam Group of Companies has always continued its efforts for the promotion of cricket at the grassroots level and we will continue our efforts for the young players of Karachi. These views were expressed yesterday at the closing ceremony of the Woodward Trophy Under-17 Inter zonal Cricket Tournament, the second phase of RCAF talent hunt program organized by the Regional Cricket Association Karachi in collaboration with Medicam Group of Companies at the KCCA Stadium. Chief Guest Zafar Riaz Bari Director Administration and External Affairs Medicam Group of Companies said. He further said that the work that Regional Cricket Association Karachi is doing for the promotion of cricket under the leadership of Nadeem Umar is commendable. On this occasion, Tournament Secretary Mohammad Tauseef Siddiqui while presenting the report of the tournament said that Medicam Group has always encouraged the talent hunt program of the Regional Cricket Association for the young players of Karachi, for which Mr. Khalil Ahmed Nani-tawala, Junaid Khalil Nani-tawala and the name of his actor will be written in golden words. On this occasion, he thanked Azam Khan, Coordinator RCAF, Javed Akhtar Kiani and all officials of the zone for their cooperation in completing the second phase of the tournament on time. In the final match played earlier, Zone 6 Whites defeated Zone 3 Whites Whites by 66 runs and won the title of champion. Batting first, Zone 6 Whites scored 248 runs for the loss of 2 wickets. Hammad Alam and Muhammad Azan scored unbeaten centuries while batting brilliantly. Hamad Alam scored 104 with 11 fours and Mohammad Azan scored 103 with 4 fours and 7 sixes and Talal Mehmood scored 21 runs. In reply, Zone-III Whites bowled out for 182 runs 35.2 M. Hamza 46, Asadullah 37, Daniyal Ali 22, Abdul Hayee 3/39, Niqab Shafiq 2/24, Asad Omar 3/35, Hammad Alam 2/37, Muhammad Hamza scored 46, Asadullah 37, Daniyal Ali scored 22 runs.

It should be noted that earlier the Touch Me Trophy Under-15 Interzonal Cricket Tournament was also won by Zone 6. At the end of the game, Zafar Riaz Bari, Director Administration and External Affairs Medicam Group of Companies, distributed prizes among the players. Winner Trophy Zone-VI Whites Captain Asad Umar, Runner Trophy Zone-III Whites Captain Anas Baloch, Best Batsman Award Muhammad Azaan, Best Bowler Asad Umar, Best Fielder Hasan Yaqoob, Medicam Man of the Final Match Award Jointly awarded to Hamad Alam and Mohammad Azan while special award was given to Khayyam Mustafa and Dr. Arif Hafeez. The Chief Guest and Javed Akhtar Kiani were presented a shield by Azam Khan Coordinator. Head Coach Iqbal Imam, Zonal Presidents RCAF Ajmal Naseeb, Jameel Ahmed, Mohammed Raees, Zia Ahmed Siddiqui, Mazhar Ali Awan, Arif Waheed, Zafar Ahmed, Nusratullah, Naushad Ahmed Khan, Naveed Al Amin and other Zonal officials along with a large number of players present on the occasion.

International Musheer Rabbani Memorial Five-A-Side Hockey Tournament



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Four matches were decided on the first day of the International Musheer Rabbani Memorial Five-A-Side Hockey Tournament. Lions and Sultans won one each, while Spartans won both their matches, Bilawal and Ayan scored hat-tricks. The opening match of the tournament, which began yesterday at the Mini Astro Turf KHA Sports Complex, was played between Spartans and Gladiators, in which Spartans defeated Gladiators 1-0 goal scored by Ali Hasnain. In the second match, Lions defeated Dolphins 3-1, Bilawal scored all three goals for the winning team and scored a hat-trick. Umar scored the only goal for Dolphins. In the third match, Sultans defeated Gladiators 4-2 after a one-sided match. Ayan scored his second hat-trick of the tournament for the winning team, while Ali Ghauri, Sami and Ayesha scored three goals. Junior scored one goal each. In the fourth match, the Spartans defeated the Dolphins 1-0 thanks to a goal from Bari, securing their second win of the day.

Khilta Punjab Sports Festival

LAHORE: Players of Multan and Sargodha are competing each others during the basket ball match during "Khillta Punjab Sports Festival" in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Champions Trophy: Who will be Fakhar Zaman's opening partner?

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday revealed the much-awaited squad for the upcoming ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 and the tri-nation series, with sole specialist opening batter Fakhar Zaman.

Fakhar returned to Pakistan's ODI team after the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India and now he faces the void after his fellow opener Saim Ayub couldn't make it to the final picks due to an ankle injury.

Abdullah Shafique failed to make a cut, owing to his recent below-par performances for the national team.

Meanwhile, national selector Asad Shafiq, in a PCB-released statement, addressed the concern and revealed star batter Babar Azam and Saud Shakeel as Fakhar's potential opening partners for the eight-team tournament.

Qasim Ali Khan Lahore Gymkhana got the title Punjab Amateur Golf Championship, 2025

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Punjab Amateur Golf Championship 2025 conducted by Punjab Golf Association under the oversight of Tournament Director, Col Rustam Chatta was contested over three days at the par-72 Lahore Garrison Greens Golf Course. A title bearing event, it attracted notable and remarkable golf playing amateurs of the golf circuit of Pakistan. As expected participating golfers were dexterously proficient and the fight for the distinguished Punjab Amateur Champion Title turned out to be enormously animated. In the end the distinguished and celebrated one turned out to be Qasim Ali Khan of Lahore Gymkhana. A leader since the first day with a score of gross 68 and again a part of the leaderboard top slot alongwith Muhammed Shoaib after the second round on Friday, he continued his winning march by playing to perfection. Though the third days 18 holes round was reduced to nine holes because of a fog loaded morning, he surpassed his rivals effort through mastery and total control over his tee shots. His overall scores of 68 plus 74 plus a nine hole final days score of gross 34 fetched him a winning aggregate score of 176.



Muhammed Shoaib of Lahore Gymkhana may have ended up as the runners up but admirable was his effort and he remained in contention right till the very last hole. As compared to Qasim his scores for the championship were a gross 73 on the first day, a much improved gross 69 on the second day and a final days nine holes gross 35. The championship aggregate score added upto 177 and he conceded the title to Qasim Ali Khan by a margin of one stroke. Certainly a commendable effort and he persists putting up a forceful performance every time he competes.

Another performer worthy of mention is the young Saad Habib of DHA who secured the third gross with scores of 70,73 and 37 and a championship total of 180.

The performers in Amateur Net were Muhammed Jamshed of Dera Ismail Khan Golf Course who won the first net. Another wonderful performance came from Gp Capt Atif Hussain of PAF Skyview Golf Club who demonstrated outstanding playing ability and thereby managed to secure the second net slot. Ameer Haider Khawaja of Sialkot came third.

Results of other events ;Boys ;3rd

net Mashkoor Hussain ;2nd net Sultan Cheema ;1st net Qasim Ahmed;3rd gross ;Rayan Faraz;2nd gross Zayd Umer;1st gross Wahaj Amjad ;Veterans ;3rd net Gp Capt Asim Rashid ;2nd net Maj Nisar A. Khan;1st net Brig Ifikhar Ahmed;3rd gross Col Farhat Kayani;2nd gross Gp Capt Usman Ahmed;1st gross Javed A. Khan;Senior Amateurs;3rd net Abdul Rauf Ali;2nd net Brig Babar Farooqi;1st net Rashid Akbar;3rd gross Col Aurangzaib;2nd gross Umair Butt;1st gross Ahmed Zafar Hayat;

As for the Punjab Jinnah Development Tour Match the winner was Tahir Bashir of Pakistan Rangers. Second position holder was Muhammed Saeed, also of Pakistan Rangers. Third position winners were Rofin Shamim of Karachi and Muhammed Saeed of Peshawar.

At the conclusion of the championship the prizes were awarded to the top performers by Brig Ayaz Masood Khan, Secretary of Punjab Golf Association (PGA) and Treasurer of PGA, Col Rustam Chatta in the presence of Maj Amjad Ghafoor, Secretary of Lahore Garrison Greens, Muhammed Zakir, Manager of PGA, participating golfers and families.

Australia crush England in one-off women's Test for Ashes whitewash

AFP

Australia crushed a lamentable England by an innings and 122 runs in a one-off pink ball Test on Saturday to complete a historic women's Ashes whitewash.

In the first women's Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground since 1949, the hosts wrapped up victory within three days to culminate a horror tour by the visitors.

Australia were in a class of their own all series, reinforcing the chasm between the two sides.

They won all three ODIs, three T20s and the sole Test that comprised the multi-format Ashes, which has been points-based since

2013 — two for a white-ball win and four for a Test.

It was the first time either side has scored a whitewash, ensuring the Ashes stay firmly in the hands of Australia, which regained them on English soil in 2015 and has retained a tight grip ever since.

"It's amazing. I couldn't be more proud of the group that's standing there," said Australia skipper Alyssa Healy. "I think at every opportunity, when we thought England maybe were clawing their way back, somebody came out and shut the door on them.

"So I think full credit to the group of people standing there." Remarkable cricket'

England arrived in high spirits after winning six of seven matches on their all-format tour of South Africa last month.

But they were methodically worn down by an Australian side with far greater strength in depth. After being dismissed for 170 in their first innings, England dropped eight catches and missed a stumping on a shambolic day two.

It allowed the hosts to compile 440 on the back of Annabel Sutherland's majestic 163 and Beth Mooney's gritty 106.

Australia then bowled England out for 148 in the final session of day three to complete the rout in

a game celebrating the 90th anniversary of the first women's Test, played between Australia and England in Brisbane in 1934.

Australian spinner Alana King, who took 5-53, was named player of the series.

"I just want to say congratulations to Australia," said England captain Heather Knight.

"They made it really tough for us out here. They've really pressed home their advantage when they've been on top.

"Look, I think it's been a tough month, hasn't it," she said.

"Australia have played some remarkable cricket, and we've competed at times, I think, but



haven't been able to do it for long enough."

Former England men's captain Alastair Cook said the series had "shown the reality of where the two

sides are."

"The best thing about when you go down to 5-0 or a clean sweep, is that you're at the bottom and the only way is up," he told reporters

ahead of the Test.

"Ultimately, England are about 20 percent behind Australia at everything — batting, bowling, fielding, athleticism, the lot."

Fateha

President Asif Ali Zardari offering Fateha at the grave of Major Hamza Israr Shaheed, who embraced martyrdom in North Waziristan, in Rawalpindi, on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel PNS YAMAMA arrives Karachi

Khurram Jaffrani

KARACHI: Fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) PNS YAMAMA arrived in Karachi. Upon arrival, an impressive reception ceremony was held at PN Dockyard. Commander Pakistan Fleet, Rear Admiral Abdul Munib, was Chief Guest on the occasion.

While addressing the ceremony, Commander Pakistan Fleet highlighted that addition of PNS YAMAMA in PN fleet

will significantly enhance Pakistan Navy's capability of safeguarding Maritime frontiers of Pakistan. He also emphasized that induction of such multi-purpose state-of-the-art platforms will provide vital support to ongoing PN Maritime security patrol in Indian Ocean.

PNS YAMAMA is a multi-purpose and highly agile medium sized Offshore Patrol Vessel equipped with self-protection and terminal defence system, state-of-the-art elec-



tronic warfare, anti-ship and anti-air warfare capabilities.

Additionally, it is capable of embarking a multirole helicopter and can operate independently or as part of a task force for extended durations to execute a variety of missions. PNS YAMAMA is the fourth vessel of OPV Batch II constructed and commissioned at DAMEN Shipyards, Galati, Romania.

Reception ceremony of PNS YAMAMA was attended by large number of PN Officers and CPOs/ Sailors.

Mohsin Naqvi says PTI should not suspend talks with govt

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi said on Saturday that the PTI should not suspend talks with the government.

Talking to reporters at the inauguration of a passport office in Lahore, he said he was at a loss to understand what the party was up to.

Responding to another question, the interior minister said he wanted to say to the PTI not to hold protests on February 8.

Earlier, Interior Minister inaugurated new passport office at NADRA Center PECO Road in Lahore. Inte-



rior Minister also reviewed the process of passports making. On the occasion, Naqvi met the citizens who came to get their passports and sought their feedback.

The citizens lauded the services and thanked Naqvi for offering two services under one floor. The passport office will work in two shifts and now citizens will be able to visit office till 11pm.

Interior Minister was briefed about the working of Passport Office established at NADRA Center. DG Passport, DG NADRA Lahore and concerned officials were also present on the occasion.

91 Afghans freed from Pakistani prisons reach Kabul

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: About 91 Afghan nationals have been released from jails in Pakistan and return to their homeland.

Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) has confirmed on Saturday that the release and repatriation of 91 Afghan prisoners from Pakistani jails who were held in Pakistan for not keeping legal documents. These Afghan citizens have reached Afghanistan.

Highway police increases toll rates for vehicles without M-tag



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorways Police (NH&MP) have increased toll rates for vehicles operating without the mandatory M-Tag, effective from February 1.

Commuters were urged

to obtain the M-Tag free of charge by January 31 to avoid additional charges.

Authorities have warned that from Saturday, vehicles without the tag or with insufficient balance would be subject to a 25% surcharge on the standard toll fee, with a minimum charge of Rs50.

"In exercise of powers conferred under Section 10(2) vii of NHA Act 1991 as amended in 2001, National Highways Authority hereby notifies for the information of the General Public that in order to implement 100% M-Tag Regime on all Motorways in the country,

the vehicles without M-Tag or low balance/cash vehicles shall pay additional toll of 25% over and above the original toll rate with minimum capping of Rs.50 w.e.f 1st February 2025," the notification issued by the NHA Directorate of Revenue (Finance Wing) said.

Federal Minister for Commerce strongly condemns terrorist attacks in Balochistan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has strongly condemned the heinous terrorist attacks in Kalat and Harnai districts of Balochistan, which claimed the lives of 18 brave soldiers. Expressing profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of these national heroes, he extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

"This cowardly act of terrorism, carried out at the behest of hostile forces, is a despicable attempt to destabilize the peace and security of Balochistan. Such evil designs will never succeed," said Jam Kamal Khan.

He lauded the courage and valor of the security forces who responded swiftly and effectively, eliminating 23 terrorists in various operations

across Balochistan. "The bravery and selflessness displayed by our soldiers in the face of such adversity are a testament to their unwavering commitment to protecting Pakistan. Their sacrifices will forever be etched in the nation's memory," he added.

The Minister reaffirmed the government's resolve to eradicate terrorism from the country, stating, "The entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with our armed forces. We will continue to fight against terrorism with full force until every perpetrator and facilitator is brought to justice. The sacrifices of our martyrs will not go in vain."

Jam Kamal Khan emphasized that Pakistan's security forces remain the guardians of the country's peace and sovereignty, and their heroic efforts strengthen the resolve of the nation against all forms of terrorism.

CM Maryam launches Agriculture Tubewell Solarization project



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz launched the Agriculture Tubewell Solarization project through a balloting process in Lahore on Saturday.

Under the project, the Punjab Government will provide subsidy worth five lac rupees for installation of 10 kilowatts solar system, subsidy worth seven point five lac

rupees for 15 Kilowatts system and subsidy worth ten lac rupees for installation of 20 kilo watts solar system.

In the first phase, eight thousand tubewells will be selected from all over province through balloting, for conversion on solar energy.

On the occasion, Maryam Nawaz directed to complete the solarization process in the first phase by June this year.

FBR collects record revenue of Rs872b in January, but misses target



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has collected record tax revenue in last month, but it was still short of the target.

According to FBR, record revenue of 872 billion rupees was collected in January which is 29 percent more in the same month during the last year, but was far less for the fixed target for this month this year which Rs956 billion.

The volume of revenue collected in January last year was 677 billion rupees.

This revenue collection has been

registered despite a 10 percent reduction in interest rates and a 22 percent decline in inflation as compared to the previous year.

The FBR said income tax revenue has also witnessed an increase of 28 percent while sales tax revenue by 29 percent in the last month.

Moreover, the Federal Excise Duty collection witnessed an increase of 34 percent and Customs Duties by 30 percent in January.

The significant increase in Customs Duties collection for the first time this year reflects the revival of economic activities and growth in the country.