

AJK Premier Rathore Marks 30 Days: Focus Remains on Transparency, Reform, and Development

ISLAMABAD: Marking thirty days in office, the AJK premier Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has reiterated his government's commitment to transparency, merit and public service.

Speaking to various delegations here on Tuesday, the Prime Minister said that soon after assuming office, the government put in place a clear policy framework for health, education, energy, road infrastructure, employment generation and administrative reforms.

During the past thirty days, he noted that effective mechanisms have been introduced to improve discipline

within government departments, make public offices more responsive and ensure the timely redressal of public grievances.

Ministers and officers, he said, have also been directed to remain accessible to the public and address issues forthwith. Highlighting key priority areas of his government, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said the health and education sectors are receiving focused attention, with steps underway to improve facilities at basic health centres, hospitals and educational institutions.

He further said that special schemes



are being planned to create employment and skill-building opportuni-

ties for youth. He said the government would announce additional public welfare initiatives in the coming days and reaffirmed its resolve to steer Azad Kashmir towards development, prosperity and stability.

Referring to the Kashmir issue, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said the PPP government would actively promote the Kashmir cause at international forums. He stated that raising concern over Indian brutalities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir remains a constitutional, moral and political obligation of the base camp government.

Fateha

MIRPUR: Chief Justice of AJK Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan and Judge Supreme Court Justice Raza Ali Khan visited the residence of former Chief Justice of Azad Kashmir Justice Azam Khan and offerings Fateha his elder brother



Photo: Online

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Receives Prestigious Pak-China Friendship Award

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Another honor for the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. The Consul General of China awarded the Pak-China Friendship Award to Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali in recognition of his outstanding services, visionary leadership and prominent role in promoting strong and lasting friendship between Pakistan and China.

This award was presented to him by the Consul General of China, Zhao Shiren, at a ceremony held at the Governor House, Lahore. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali's services are not only seen with respect and admiration at the national but also international level.

In recognition of his academic excellence, the President of Pakistan awarded him the National Level



HEC Best University Teacher Award 2020. In 2025, he was awarded the Academic Excellence Award by the Association of Private Sector Univer-

Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali also served as Director of Programs and Projects at the OIC's subsidiary organization for food security, the Islamic Organization for Food Security, in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

The Confucius Institute established at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad has been recognized as a world-class exemplary institution, which has provided Chinese language education to more than 35,000 students so far.

Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali developed the durum wheat variety "Chenab Pasta 24" and the low-gluten wheat variety "Chenab LG". Under his leadership, the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad took revolutionary steps and continued to make effective progress to take the institution to new heights.

Sonraj Group Honors Its Legacy While Shaping the Future of Luxury in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Sonraj Group, Pakistan's leading luxury retail and horology house, hosted its 3rd annual year-end breakfast in Karachi, bringing together team members from across the country, former colleagues, senior professionals from the business community, members of the banking sector, industry partners, and distinguished guests.

The official event celebrating a year of transformation, revival, and renewed commitment to the values that define Sonraj, commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the national anthem. Renowned showbiz personality Mr. Behroze Sabzwari formally opened the proceedings by introducing Sonraj's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Rameez Sattar, and spoke about their decades-long association while commending Sonraj's remarkable journey. He highlighted the company's resilience, strong teamwork, and the respect it commands both locally and internationally. He also acknowledged Sonraj's role in bringing leading global watch brands to Pakistan while maintaining credibility, consistency, and ethical standards through challenging times. Mr. Sabzwari concluded his remarks by inviting Mr. Rameez Sattar to the stage, describing him as the driving force



behind Sonraj's journey and success, prompting a standing ovation from the audience.

He acknowledged the contributions of his brother Shakeeb Sattar, his sons Arbaaz and Maaz, and long-time associates including Umair Abbasi, Raman Sidhu, Tommy Lau, Mark Izatt, and Pir Ijlal.

Speaking on the occasion, Sonraj's Creative Director Mr. Hasnain Lehr

talked about Sonraj's global recognition and standing is the strength of its teams, and the company's commitment to inclusion, particularly the increasing participation of women across sales and creative roles. He credited the leadership's hands-on approach for fostering a culture that continues to nurture talent and ambition.

Sonraj Group recognized its star

team members and partners for their contributions and awarded them during the event for being an integral part of their journey. The event concluded with remarks from Chief Operating Officer Mr. Ali Naveed Akbar, who outlined Sonraj's future direction, emphasizing the responsibility of safeguarding the company's legacy while building careers, skills, and pride through ethical business practices.

PID Commends FESCO for Exemplary Timely Clearing of Advertising Dues

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, has lauded the Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) for the timely payment and clearance of advertising dues during the fiscal year 2024-25.

According to a special letter issued by PID, appreciation was expressed for FESCO's prompt settlement of advertising liabilities. The letter specifically acknowledged the leadership and efforts of FESCO Chief Executive Officer Engr. Muhammad Aamer, Director Public Relations Saeed Raza, and the Public Relations Directorate for ensuring compliance within the stipulated timelines.

Director General PID, Mr. Shafqat Abbas, highlighted that PID is continuously working in coordination with its subsidiary and counterpart government organizations to make the advertising billing and payment system more efficient, integrated, and transparent. He termed FESCO's timely response and settlement of advertising dues within the prescribed period as commendable. He further noted that this proactive approach has not only strengthened mutual cooperation with the print media industry but has also reinforced trust and professional relations between the media and the government.

The DG (PID) particularly appreciated the dedication, commitment, and professional competence of FESCO's Chief Executive Officer Engr. Muhammad Aamer, Director (Public Relations) Saeed Raza, and their team, stating that their efforts ensured the timely provision of requisite records in accordance with established procedures, thereby facilitating the smooth completion of advertising matters.

Kamalia Tاجر Ittehad Vows Continued Protection of Tajers Rights

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH:



Patron-in-Chief of Kamalia Tاجر ittehad Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat and President Chaudhary Tariq Hassan Rehmani stated that the Tاجر ittehad has always played a strong and effective role in representing the trader community and standing firmly with them for the protection of their rights. While addressing traders, Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat and Chaudhary Tariq Hassan Rehmani said that Kamalia Tاجر ittehad has consistently raised its voice on issues faced by businessmen and shopkeepers and has remained at the forefront in resolving their problems. They emphasized that unity among traders is the key to strength and progress. They further said that the core objective of Kamalia Tاجر ittehad is to bring the entire trader community onto one platform so that collective efforts can be made to resolve common issues. "Only through unity and mutual cooperation can we effectively address the challenges faced by traders and ensure a better business environment," they added. Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat and Chaudhary Tariq Hassan Rehmani assured the trader community that Kamalia Tاجر ittehad will continue to safeguard their interests, highlight their concerns before the relevant authorities and work tirelessly for the welfare, stability and prosperity of traders in Kamalia. They also urged all traders to remain united under the banner of Kamalia Tاجر ittehad, strengthen mutual coordination and play their role in promoting harmony and economic development in the city.

Annual sports gala arranged in Ambassador schools

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Motorway M-4 police sector Admin officer Rana Irfan Ahmed said that the development of Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Spiritual Quotient (SQ) and Physical Quotient (PQ) is essential for building a balanced and successful personality of children. Addressing annual sports gala function at Ambassador schools on Monday he said that all these skills together improve awareness, tolerance, character building, positive thinking and physical health in children. He emphasized on road safety and termed the use of helmets, motorcycle rearview mirrors and seat belts as very important to prevent accidents. At the ceremony, the Rescue 1122 team gave a training lecture on first aid, while female officers of Punjab Police highlighted legal aspects.

Director The Ambassador Schools Mian Waheed Anwar Kokab Advocate said that the talented students of the institution have always achieved great success at all levels. Alhamdulillah, it is the result of the hard work, dedication and hard work of the administration, teachers and students of our institutions that every year The Ambassador Schools show outstanding performance in curricular, co-curricular and all-level competitions.

He expressed happiness over the full participation of the distinguished guests, parents of the children and students. A large number of educational and social figures, journalists, teachers, students and parents attended the occasion. All the attendees appreciated the leadership of Mian Waheed Anwar Kokab and the overall performance of the school and said that The Ambassador Schools is performing brilliantly in every field including education, training and co-curricular activities. The parents welcomed the colorful sports gala and healthy activities and said that such events play an important role in the physical and mental development of children as well as in enhancing their hidden talents. Finally, prizes were distributed among the students who showed outstanding performance.

BZU students launch research based perfume

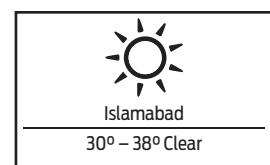
MULTAN: Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) students of Chemical Sciences department have successfully launched a research-based perfume product after months of sustained scientific work and experimentation.

The launch ceremony for the perfume, branded "Elaira," was held during a meeting of the Lions Club Multan Midtown. The project was developed under the supervision and mentorship of Associate Prof Dr. Suriya Manzoor by undergraduate students Muhammad Abdullah, Ameer Hamza, Ahmed Mustafa, and Faizan-ur-Rehman, who formulated the fragrance through continuous laboratory research and testing before giving it a commercial shape.

The product was formally inaugurated by Dr. M.A. Bilal, President of Lions Club Multan Midtown, along with senior Lion and prominent businessman Chaudhry Altaf Shahid. To encourage the young innovators, club members purchased the perfume at a discounted rate during the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Suriya Manzoor said that with proper guidance, mentorship, and sustained focus, students can be helped to achieve meaningful success. She added that BZU remains a leading institution in the region, providing quality education and opportunities for practical innovation.

Dr. M.A. Bilal and Chaudhry Altaf Shahid praised BZU's role in nurturing the intellectual potential of regional youth and urged students to move beyond the traditional pursuit of salaried jobs. They emphasized entrepreneurship and innovation as key pathways for creating self-employment and generating jobs for others. The ceremony was attended by Sheikh Faheem Sattar, Prof. Azam Hussain, Dr. Ayesha Abdullah, Zubaida Jalal, Mirza Shahid Hussain and others. The successful launch of Elaira highlights the growing trend of student-led research and commercialization initiatives within Pakistani's public universities, reflecting a shift toward innovation-driven education and entrepreneurship.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:40 am
Zohr	12:06 pm
Asr	3:26 pm
Maghrib	5:04 pm
Isha	6:33 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 16
& Rescue Services	445122
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	9218300-99
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	921234-43
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	92266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

Wildlife Department Cracks Down on Illegal Hunting in Attock
Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Under the supervision of Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger Attock, Shahzaib Khurshid, the Wildlife Department conducted successful operations against illegal hunting across various areas of Attock district, taking strict legal action against violators of wildlife laws.

According to official sources, hunters involved in the illegal hunting of partridges in village Bariar, Attock tehsil, were fined a total of Rs120,000. In a separate operation, individuals caught hunting rabbits illegally at night in village Ratwal were penalised Rs103,500.

Similarly, in Pindi Gheb tehsil, two separate groups were fined a combined Rs80,000 for the illegal possession of partridges. In Fateh Jang tehsil, violators involved in the illegal hunting of collared dove (Russian dove) were fined Rs66,000.

As a result of these enforcement actions, the Wildlife Department recovered total compensation amounting to Rs379,500, underscoring its strong commitment to wildlife conservation and the strict enforcement of wildlife protection laws throughout Attock district.

CM Maryam Nawaz takes major step to make forestry and environmental governance corruption-free

Bureau Report

LAHORE: In a landmark reform aimed at eliminating corruption and enhancing transparency, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved sweeping changes to the century-old Forest Act, replacing colonial-era procedures with a fully digitised system for forestry and environmental regulation.

Under the Chief Minister's vision, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has become Punjab's first government department to completely eliminate paperwork and operate through a modern, technology-driven framework. All processes will now be managed through the digital system E-FOAS.

According to an official notifica-

tion, the issuance of import licences, laboratory certifications, protection orders and official recommendations will be carried out exclusively through E-FOAS. Any order, approval or administrative decision issued outside this digital system will be deemed invalid, and strict disciplinary action will be taken against the officers and staff involved.

Each document generated through the system will carry a unique reference number and QR code, enabling instant verification within seconds. The system will maintain a complete digital record of all decisions, including their justifications, recommendations and approvals, ensuring accountability and traceability at every stage.



Director General EPA Dr Imran Hamid Sheikh has formally issued

the implementation orders, making it mandatory for all environment-related departments to refrain from issuing any directive or approval without using the E-FOAS platform. The notification also confirms that import licences will now be issued entirely through the digital system.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif lauded the EPA team for successfully eliminating human intervention, forgery and illegal permits. "We are ensuring environmental protection alongside the eradication of corruption," she said, terming the reform a decisive step towards transparent, efficient and accountable governance in Punjab's forestry and environmental sectors.

Happiness

ISLAMABAD: A painter is busy in making the painting of Santa Clause on wall of a house at Christen colony of Sector F-7 ahead of the celebrations of Christmas in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

WCLA and Dulux Paints celebrated completion of Fort Road Food Street revamp

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA), in collaboration with Dulux Paints, announced the successful completion of the revitalization and beautification of the historic Fort Road Food Street, marking a significant milestone in the restoration of one of Lahore's most iconic cultural and culinary landmarks.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Najmusaqib, Director General, WCLA, said "The newly renovated Fort Road Food Street beautifully represents the harmony between Lahore's rich history and its vibrant future. This project enhances not only the physical landscape of this historic site but also its cultural and tourism value."

Mr. Mubbasher Omar, CEO of Dulux Paints Pakistan, highlighted the purpose behind the collaboration, stating, "Through Dulux Paint's 'Let's Colour' initiative, we are



proud to contribute to the preservation of Lahore's heritage. Our partnership with WCLA reflects our commitment to combining modern aesthetics with cultural conservation for lasting community impact."

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Stetson Sanders, United States Consul General in Lahore, emphasized international cooperation in heritage preservation, noting, "Historic sites like Food

Street in Lahore are part of our shared global heritage. The United States remains committed to supporting cultural preservation efforts that protect these landmarks for future generations."

Zindgi Wins 'Best Digital Banking Experience (Pakistan) Award at FDI Insider Awards UK

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zindgi, powered by JS Bank, has been recognized with the Best Digital Banking Experience (Pakistan) award at the prestigious FDI Insider Awards, a global platform honoring organizations that drive innovation, sustainability, and long-term economic impact across industries.

The FDI Insider Awards celebrate institutions and individuals shaping the future of global investment and economic development, spanning key sectors including banking, financial services, and technology.

Since its launch in 2022, Zindgi has fundamentally reshaped Pakistan's digital banking landscape. Designed as a first-of-its-kind lifestyle banking platform for Gen Z and millennials, Zindgi brings payments, investments, digital account management, and everyday financial needs together into one seamless, intuitive app, setting new expectations for how banking should feel and function.

Commenting on the achievement, Noman Azhar, Chief Officer of Zindgi, said: "Global recognition is meaningful when it validates local impact. At Zindgi, our ambition has always been to build globally benchmarked financial experiences that are deeply rooted in Pakistan's realities empowering individuals, businesses, and the digital economy at scale."

SECP Notifies Key Amendments to Regulations on Shares with Differential Rights and Privileges

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has notified amendments to the Companies (Further Issue of Shares) Regulations, 2020 (the "Regulations") pertaining to the issuance of shares with different rights and privileges by listed companies. The amendments aim to safeguard the interests of minority shareholders and ensure robust corporate governance practices, transparency, and effective price discovery.

Major amendments include that ordinary shares carrying voting rights shall be entitled to receive the same percentage or ratio of dividend per share; the aggregate voting power of all ordinary shares, under the principle of 'one share, one vote,' shall not be less than 75% of the total voting power of all shares issued by a company; shares with varied voting rights shall carry a maximum of 5 voting rights per share; and ordinary shares with varied rights shall be issued as listed securities.

The amendments ensure the alignment of economic benefits, preserve the fundamental significance of ordinary shares, minimize potential conflicts of interest, safeguard against undue concentration of control, and promote equitable governance.

These amendments have been notified following an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders, including the PSX, CDC, NCCPL, listed companies, consultants, professional associations, and law firms. The feedback received was carefully reviewed and analyzed to identify key insights, and based on this input, the SECP has finalized and notified the amendments to the Regulations.

Green Crescent Trust hosts Gala for 2,150 orphaned students

City Desk

KARACHI: The unwavering, year-round generosity of committed donors and philanthropists—many of whom prefer to remain anonymous—was warmly acknowledged as their support continues to secure the education, dignity and well-being of 2,150 orphaned students enrolled in the charitable schools of the Green Crescent Trust (GCT) across Sindh's most remote and underserved areas.

To honour this collective compassion, the GCT organised a day-long fun gala for around 2,150 orphaned

students from its 112 schools in Karachi and 3 schools in Thatta off the M-9 Motorway. Similar recreational galas will be held later this month at Hyderabad's Rani Bagh and at Baynazeer Park (Lab-e-Mehran) in Sukkur, ensuring that all orphaned students enrolled in GCT schools share in the celebrations.

Welcoming guests and donors, Zahid Saeed, GCT Chief Executive Officer, said that the Trust's patrons consistently ensure the provision of special hygiene and education kits, along with annual food ration pack-



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Pakistan Envoy Meets Investment Counsellors to Boost China Ties

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's Ambassador to China today held individual meetings with Pakistan's Honorary Investment Counsellors (HICs) in China to take stock of their work, strengthen coordination, and set priorities for the year ahead. The meeting was attended by Ms. Ma Xiaoli, representing Mr. Yuan Jianming, Mr. Zhang Baozhong, Mr. Wang Zihai and Mr. Jian Peng. Besides individual meetings, the Ambassador also held a collective working luncheon with the HICs.

Ambassador Hashmi appreciated the HICs' sustained efforts across a wide geographic spread, ranging from Hong Kong-Macao-Greater Bay Area, the region known for innovation and science and technology, Xinjiang which is a gateway to Pakistan, Shandong a major industrial base and Henan as an emerging agriculture hub. He underscored the HICs' important role in advancing trade, investment and people-to-people linkages. He encouraged them to synergize their efforts with Pakistan's national development priorities and mobilize Chinese investments in export-oriented sectors of Pakistan.

Highlighting progress made in the past two years to mobilize investment in priority sectors, the Ambassador briefed them on the context of identifying 21 priority sectors, channelling investments in these sectors through joint ventures to boost productive capacities and integrating investments with human capital development. The Ambassador expressed satisfaction over the unprecedented results achieved from the two B2B Investment Conferences held in Shenzhen and Beijing and six sectoral investment roadshows held since last year which cumulatively have yielded signing of over 300 MoUs and 25 Joint Ventures worth \$11 billion so far. He shared with them the active follow up mechanism underway in Pakistan at high level to provide facilitation in implanting the MoUs. The Ambassador advised HICs to actively pursue implementation of MoUs falling within their respective jurisdictions to translate commitments into tangible outcomes.

Ambassador Hashmi also briefed the HICs on preparations made so far for the first sectoral, China focused Agriculture Investment Conference on 19 January 2026 in Islamabad and appreciated the role the HICs were playing to encourage participation by leading Chinese agricultural enterprises.

The HICs welcomed the initiative to convene focused annual review by the Ambassador, marking the beginning of an institutionalized engagement with the HICs. They shared their plans for 2026 and expressed resolve to lend their full support to the Embassy's economic diplomacy agenda, especially enhancement of Chinese investments in Pakistan and increase in Pakistani exports to China, while boosting bilateral cooperation in these mutually beneficial areas.

How 2025 Became a Turning Point in U.S. South Asia Policy

What is striking about the recent analysis published by The Washington Times is not merely the optimism it expresses about Pakistan–United States relations, but the speed and scale of the transformation it describes. If the account is even partially accurate, 2025 will stand out as a year in which Washington quietly but decisively rewrote its South Asia playbook, moving away from an almost reflexive India-first posture toward a more complex, Pakistan-inclusive strategic vision. Such reversals are rare in U.S. foreign policy, which tends to change incrementally, and rarer still when they involve countries long burdened by distrust and fatigue in Washington.

For much of the past decade, Pakistan occupied an uncomfortable space in American thinking: too important to ignore, too problematic to embrace. Engagement was largely transactional, limited to counterterrorism coordination or crisis management, and often framed by suspicion. India, by contrast, was elevated as the natural democratic counterpart to China, courted through multilateral forums and strategic symbolism. The assumption in many U.S. policy circles was that New Delhi would mature into a regional stabilizer while Islamabad would gradually fade into managed irrelevance.

Momentum accelerated in March 2025 when President Donald Trump, in a nationally televised address, offered unexpectedly warm remarks about Pakistan. The praise itself was brief, but its impact was magnified by context. Public approval from Trump, whose foreign

policy instincts lean heavily on personal judgment and perceived strength, sent a signal through the U.S. bureaucracy that old assumptions were no longer fixed. Islamabad, the article notes, moved quickly, converting limited cooperation into broader diplomatic capital. Engagement deepened, and what had once been narrowly transactional began to look, at least tentatively, strategic.

The real inflection point, however, is located in May 2025, during a short but intense military confrontation between Pakistan and India. The Washington Times portrays this episode as decisive, not because of its duration, but because of what it revealed to outside observers. Pakistan's military response is described as controlled, strategically focused, and asymmetrically effective, exceeding American expectations and challenging prevailing stereotypes. In Washington's strategic imagination, the article suggests, Pakistan re-emerged in that moment as a serious regional actor capable of shaping outcomes rather than merely reacting to them.

Following that crisis, U.S. strategic mapping of South Asia reportedly shifted. Pakistan began to be seen less as a problem to be managed and more as an asset that could anchor a recalibrated regional approach. This reassessment coincided with internal changes within Pakistan's military establishment, including modernization efforts, command restructuring, and the activation of a more integrated defense

leadership model. Such reforms, long discussed but unevenly implemented in the past, were now viewed as consequential rather than cosmetic.

At the center of this narrative stands Syed Asim Munir, whose role the article treats with unusual emphasis. He is portrayed as embodying a blend

of discipline, strategic restraint, and institutional control that reassured U.S. defense planners. The language attributed to American officials—calling him a "disciplined dark horse" and a "deliberate mystery"—is revealing. In Washington's security culture, predictability in behavior often matters more than transparency in intent, particularly in volatile regions. According to the article, Munir's leadership style fit that preference.

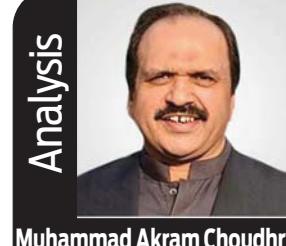
The symbolism that followed reinforced the perception of change. A White House luncheon, described as unprecedented for a Pakistani military chief, and a red-carpet reception at United States Central Command headquarters were read as signals of elevated trust and access. Equally important was Pakistan's diplomatic tone after the May ceasefire. While India reportedly responded coolly to U.S. mediation efforts, Islamabad's public acceptance and expressions of appreciation aligned neatly with Washington's desire to be seen as an effective power broker.

Beyond South Asia, the article hints at broader implications. Pakistan is depicted as a potentially discreet and

credible channel in dealings with Iran, and as a state whose regional reach could matter in calculations related to Gaza and the wider Middle East. Whether these expectations are realistic remains open to debate, but their mere articulation suggests a notable expansion of how Pakistan is being conceptualized in Washington.

To be clear, even The Washington Times acknowledges that this shift is not unconditional. Its durability will depend on the behavior of both Islamabad and New Delhi, as well as on the internal coherence of U.S. policy itself, which has a long history of oscillation in South Asia. Strategic favor in Washington is rarely permanent, and enthusiasm can fade as quickly as it forms. Yet the central claim remains striking: by the end of 2025, the era of reflexive India-first thinking had, at least temporarily, given way to a more balanced and pragmatic assessment of regional power.

If this account holds, Pakistan's journey from diplomatic afterthought to emerging strategic partner would represent one of the more remarkable image reversals in recent U.S. foreign policy. It would also underscore a recurring lesson of international politics: states that combine timing, discipline, and strategic clarity can still reshape how they are seen, even in capitals where narratives often harden into dogma. Whether Pakistan can sustain this moment, and whether Washington can translate reassessment into consistency, are questions that remain unanswered. But for now, 2025 stands as a reminder that in geopolitics, doors thought permanently closed can still, under the right conditions, open again.



Muhammad Akram Choudhry

Oil: Wealth, Curse—and the Price of Defiance

For nations blessed with oil, the central question is never geological. It is political. Oil can finance schools, hospitals, roads, dignity, and independence—or it can finance coups, client rulers, sanctions, wars, and broken states. The difference is not the size of the reserves under the sand. The difference is whether the owners of that oil are allowed to own it in practice.

Before 1953, Iran's petroleum was not simply an export commodity. It was an imperial system. Britain's Anglo-Iranian Oil Company dominated production and refining, and Iran's share of value was widely viewed inside Iran as humiliating—wealth extracted from Iranian soil, feeding foreign prosperity while ordinary Iranians remained poor. In 1951, Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh took the step that shook the entire post-war order: he pushed legislation to nationalize Iran's oil industry.

That single principle—"Iranian oil is for Iranian people"—was treated in London and Washington not as a commercial dispute but as a strategic revolt. In August 1953, Mosaddegh was removed in a coup funded by the United States and the United Kingdom, and the Shah's rule was restored. From the Iranian public's perspective, this was not merely regime change; it was a message to every oil-producing nation: ownership is tolerated only until it threatens the architecture of Western control.

This is how the "oil curse" is manufactured. The curse is not oil itself. The curse is what happens when a nation tries to convert oil into sovereignty.

Iraq's later destruction was sold to the public with dramatic claims. But the deeper strategic obsession was always the same: who commands

the oil state, and whose system the oil state finances.

And now, in December 2025, the pattern is unfolding—loudly—in Venezuela.

Reuters reports that on December 20, 2025, the United States intercepted an oil tanker near Venezuela. The vessel was reportedly carrying 1.8 million barrels of Venezuelan crude bound for China. Reuters also reports that

U.S. authorities are pursuing additional vessels, describing an expanding crackdown and blockade concept aimed at sanctioned flows.

This is not symbolic enforcement. It attacks the bloodstream of the Venezuelan economy, which relies heavily on oil revenue. Reuters notes exports falling sharply (from over 1 million bpd in September to an estimated 702,000 bpd in December), implying severe fiscal strangulation.

And notice the exception that exposes the logic: even as "dark fleet" shipping is disrupted, Chevron continues operating under a U.S. license structure. The Wall Street Journal describes Venezuelan shipping largely stalling "except Chevron," underscoring how sanctions enforcement can separate "illegal oil" from "licensed oil"—meaning the barrel is acceptable when it flows through approved channels. Reuters similarly describes Chevron's continued role under restricted authorization.

This is the modern oil empire: not necessarily ownership of the wells, but command over the rules of extraction, trade, and cashflow.

Across the region, Western majors remain embedded where states permit them—often through partnerships, service contracts, or joint ventures. Iraq, for instance, is again signing major deals with U.S. and European

firms; Reuters reports ExxonMobil's return via an agreement tied to the giant Majnoon field. Libya's National Oil Corporation is engaging BP and Shell to study major fields, a sign of how foreign expertise re-enters when political conditions allow. Qatar's North Field expansion, the backbone of future global gas supply, includes partnerships with ExxonMobil and other Western companies. Even in the Saudi-Kuwait "Neutral Zone," Chevron's legacy role appears in joint operations alongside state entities.

So when the West "benefits," it is not always by directly stealing national revenue in one crude transaction. It benefits by sitting at multiple toll booths: technology and services, project equity stakes, shipping and trading, refining margins, finance and insurance, and—most importantly—strategic power: the ability to punish a seller, freeze a buyer, choke a port, or seize a ship.

That is why oil becomes a curse precisely at the moment a nation tries to treat it as democratic wealth. The moment leaders say, "this belongs to our people," the system asks: will you still obey? If yes, you are protected. If not, your "resource blessing" is recast as a reason you must be disciplined.

This is the real warning to oil nations—whether in the Gulf, in Africa, or in Latin America. Oil is wealth only if you are allowed to keep it wealth. If you attempt to convert it into independence against the priorities of great powers, oil becomes the trigger for destabilization, sanctions, and war.

And that is why the same barrel can build prosperity in one country and produce ruin in another. The difference is not the oil. The difference is who is permitted to command the oil.

The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Michigan, USA

China's Lead in Nuclear Energy: Benefits, & Pakistan's Opportunities

Mahtab Abbasi

China's remarkable advancement in nuclear energy has become a global focal point, reshaping the world's strategic and political landscape. Having overtaken the United States in nuclear technology, China's progress is not just a scientific milestone but a declaration of technological and political ascendancy.

States that combine timing, discipline, and strategic clarity can still reshape how they are seen, even in capitals where narratives often harden into dogma. Whether Pakistan can sustain this moment, and whether Washington can translate reassessment into consistency, are questions that remain unanswered. But for now, 2025 stands as a reminder that in geopolitics, doors thought permanently closed can still, under the right conditions, open again.

operation of nuclear facilities.

Reliable and clean nuclear energy can power Pakistan's industries, attract foreign investment, and boost GDP growth. The expansion of nuclear power will not only meet domestic energy needs but also contribute to industrial modernization and job creation.

A stronger, energy-secure Pakistan would play a more active role in regional and international affairs. Through collaboration with China, Pakistan can maintain strategic balance in South Asia and enhance its position in platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

While these opportunities are promising, Pakistan must carefully manage potential risks. Increased dependence on China could limit Pakistan's economic independence and expose it to geopolitical pressures from Western powers. It is also essential for Pakistan to comply fully with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations to ensure transparency and international credibility.

China's dominance in nuclear energy marks a historic shift in global power dynamics. If guided by peaceful intentions and sustainable goals, this transformation could revolutionize the global energy landscape and help mitigate climate change. However, if driven by political or military motives, it could heighten tensions and jeopardize world peace.

For Pakistan, China's progress presents both a challenge and an opportunity. By learning from China's experience, enhancing domestic capacity, and maintaining international transparency, Pakistan can harness this partnership to achieve energy security, technological advancement, and economic independence. In this new age of nuclear transformation, Pakistan has the chance to turn collaboration into self-reliance—and self-reliance into progress.

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



Analysis



Qamar Bashir

Zardari visits Iraqi shrines, calls for Muslim unity

Four-day visit combines religious observances with diplomatic outreach to boost bilateral trade, security cooperation



Spokesman Report

BAGHDAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, who is on a four-day official visit to Iraq, visited on Monday prominent religious shrines in Baghdad and prayed for peace, unity and security of the Muslim Ummah, as Islamabad and Baghdad seek to deepen bilateral cooperation.

During the visit, the president paid respects at the shrines of Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Imam Musa al-Kazim and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi al-Jawad, where he offered nawafil, met the shrine administrators and recorded his remarks in the visitors' books. He also visited the shrine of Imam Abu Hanifa and offered prayers.

President Asif Ali Zardari visited the shrines of Imam Musa al-Kazim and Imam Muhammad al-Jawad in Baghdad, offered nawafil, met the administrators, and recorded his remarks in the visitors' book.

According to an official statement, President Zardari described the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt as an eternal source of knowledge, patience, wisdom and moral strength, and prayed for harmony and stability across the Muslim world.

The religious engagements came alongside high-level diplomatic meetings. Earlier, President Zardari met Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid at the Baghdad Palace, where he was accorded an official welcome and

guard of honour. The two leaders held one-on-one talks, followed by delegation-level discussions and a luncheon hosted by the Iraqi president.

President Zardari arrived in Baghdad earlier this week and was received by Iraq's Minister for Culture, Dr Ahmed Fakkak Al-Badrani. During the visit, meetings with senior Iraqi leadership are expected to advance cooperation and further strengthen Pakistan-Iraq relations.

During his meetings with the officials, President Zardari cleared that the existing levels of bilateral trade did not reflect the true potential of Pakistan-Iraq relations and called for expanded cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture and defence production, while also identifying opportunities in information technology, construction and pharmaceuticals.

He stressed the need for stronger business-to-business linkages, reciprocal business delegations and the establishment of direct banking channels to facilitate commercial activity. The president reiterated Pakistan's willingness to support Iraq's reconstruction through the provision of skilled and semi-skilled manpower under an existing MoU, and highlighted Pakistan's capacity in medical services, financial expertise and digital governance, including secure data management.

He also sought improved facil-



eration for Pakistani pilgrims and early finalisation of the MoU on Zaireen Management, while affirming Pakistan's resolve to curb illegal entry and overstaying. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation against extremism, terrorism and narcotics trafficking, and to deepen coordination at regional and multilateral forums.

Enroute from Islamabad, the president also conveyed a goodwill message to the Iranian leadership as his aircraft entered Iranian airspace, reaffirming solidarity with Iran and underscoring mutual respect and the importance of stronger regional relations.

Serena Hotel Spreads Festive Cheer with Exclusive Hi-Tea for Charity School Children

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In the true spirit of this Festive Season, Islamabad Serena Hotel demonstrated its commitment to community's well-being by hosting a Hi-tea for children from the three charity schools i.e. Holy Help School, Master Ayub School, and Mashal School. The initiative aimed to spread joy, inclusivity, and the magic of the season among young hearts.

The children got an opportunity to visit the Festive wonderland, be a part of the season's festivities. They were served a delightful hi-tea filled with delectable treats. Santa Claus made a surprise entry with the gifts for the children, which made the evening magical and unforgettable for them.

The management of Islamabad Serena Hotel places strong emphasis on making a positive impact on the local community through meaningful and



sustained efforts to promote and support education for children.

This heartwarming event stands as a testament to Islam-

abad Serena Hotel's dedication to fostering a culture of compassion, inclusivity, and social responsibility. Through such initiatives,

the hotel continues to strengthen its bond with the community while creating joyous experiences that leave a lasting impression.

Saghar concerned over deteriorating political and human rights situation in IIOJK

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Acting President of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, Mehmood Ahmad Saghar, has urged the international community to take immediate cognizance of the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued here today, Saghar said the people of the occupied territory have been facing severe Indian state repression for more than seven decades. He said India continues to deny the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination in gross violation of the UN Charter.

He said that instead of granting the Kashmiri people their inalienable right, Indian rulers have, over the past 75 years, attempted to crush their just freedom struggle through the use of military force.

Saghar deplored that nearly a million Indian troops deployed in the occupied territory are resorting to extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests,



targeted killings, enforced disappearances, and the molestation of women to intimidate Kashmiris into submission. He pointed out that India has turned IoK into a living hell for its inhabitants.

He said IoK has been stripped of basic human rights, adding that the entire Kashmiri leadership has been jailed under various pretexts to impose silence and project a so-called narrative of normalcy.

UK to Host 'Right to Self-Determination Week' Highlighting Kashmir Human Rights Abuses

Spokesman Report

OLDHAM, UNITED KINGDOM: The Jammu Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to continue its struggle at all levels until the completion of the mission of Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan (RA) and the achievement of the fundamental objectives of the Kashmir Freedom Movement. The leadership of the organ-

ization emphasized that, in line with the principled agenda of the Kashmir Freedom Movement and the Movement for the Completion of Pakistan, the Kashmir issue will continue to be presented to the international community from the genuine perspective of the Kashmiri people through diplomatic, political, and human rights forums.

In this context, on the occasion of the death anniversary of Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas

Khan (RA), senior officials of the Jammu Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International held a detailed meeting in Oldham with Debbie Abrahams, former Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Kashmir and current Chair of the Palestine Group. The meeting focused on future programs, diplomatic strategies, and effective ways to highlight the Kashmir issue at the global level.

The delegation, led by Raja Najabat Hussain, commended Ms. Abrahams

for her positive and effective role on the Kashmir issue in the past and urged her to continue raising the voice of the Kashmiri people in the British Parliament and at international forums.

The press release concluded with the hope that a fair resolution of the Kashmir issue would enable both countries of the subcontinent to better address their internal challenges, foster mutual trust and friendly relations, and open new pathways of



peace, development, and prosperity for the people of the region:

The Urs of Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA): A Message of Service to Humanity

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri (RA), known as Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA), was one of the greatest Sufi saints of the Subcontinent and the founder of the Chishti Order. He devoted his entire life to spreading divine love, tolerance, and service to humanity. Every year, his blessed Urs is observed with devotion and reverence, during which millions of devotees from around the world gather at Ajmer Sharif to pay homage.

The purpose of the Urs is not merely a ceremony; rather, it is a renewal of remembrance of the teachings of Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) and a commitment to practicing them. His message was: love for all, hatred for none. On the occasion of the Urs, arrangements are made for langar (free communal meals), remembrance

of Allah, gatherings of naat, and the recitation of durood and salaam—practical examples of equality and brotherhood.

The Urs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) teaches us that if we wish to establish peace, love, and mutual respect in society, we must adopt the teachings of the Sufi saints. This is the true spirit and the real message of the Urs.

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty says:

"Indeed, the friends of Allah—there will be no fear upon them, nor will they grieve."

This means that those special servants of Allah who are perfect in faith and piety neither fear this world nor grieve over the Hereafter. The friends of Allah remain content with His pleasure in every condition and make the service of Allah's creation their way of life. Among these great saints, the

name of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) stands out prominently.

The teachings of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) did not remain confined to Ajmer alone; through his spiritually blessed successors, they spread across the entire Subcontinent. His illustrious successor, Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA), laid strong foundations for the Chishti Order in Delhi, while his spiritual heir, Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar (RA), turned the land of Pakpattan into a center of divine knowledge and love.

Traditions narrate that Hazrat Baba Farid (RA) underwent prolonged spiritual discipline in the service of

Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (RA). In the gatherings of these elders, there was an atmosphere of few words, patience, and silent spiritual training that transformed hearts. This was the spiritual nurturing that made the Chishti Order not merely a monastic system, but the voice of the people's hearts.

The mutual companionship and spiritual bond of these pure souls further illuminated the lamp of the Chishti Order in the Subcontinent and passed it on from generation to generation.

After the passing of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar (RA), his successor

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya, Mahboob-e-Ilahi (RA), appeared in Delhi and carried this spiritual chain forward with complete grace and beauty.

The Urs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) teaches us that true sainthood lies in service to humanity, humility, and love. One who becomes a source of ease for the servants of Allah is truly called a friend of Allah. This is why, even today, the shrine of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) remains a symbol of hope, prayer, and peace for suffering humanity.

Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (RA) is that radiant lamp whose light still transforms the darkness of hearts into illumination. His noble being is not confined to one city, one nation, or one era; rather, he is an eternal symbol of love, patience, and service to humanity, whose fragrance draws every heart toward itself. The soil of

Ajmer embraced him, but his generosity embraced the entire world.

He spread religion not through words, but through character. He fed the hungry, supported the broken-hearted, and guided the lost to the right path. That is why he was called Gharib Nawaz—the benefactor of the poor—because no one ever returned empty-handed from his threshold. Whoever came found peace; whoever bowed found elevation.

Even today, at his Urs, this truth is renewed: love never dies. The message of Khwaja (RA) still calls out:

"Love humanity—this is the path that leads to God." This is the message that conquers hearts, and this is the true identity of Khwaja (RA). The lives of the friends of Allah teach us that true devotion alone is the path to peace of the heart and salvation.



Sufi Abid Chishti Nizami Nazi

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
171,204.17	171,404.48	
Day's High	Day's Low	
172,167.63	170,858.65	
Index Value	Change	
20,462,101,580	-200.31	
Percentage	Time	
-0.12%	22 Dec, 2025 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
9,865.97	-31.45	
Percentage	Time	
-0.32%	22 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
48,403.78	+268.89	
Percentage	Time	
+0.56%	22 Dec, 11:58 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
50,402.39	+895.18	
Percentage	Time	
+1.81%	22 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184	188
Bahrain Dinar	743.5	753.5
Canadian Dollar	202	205
China Yuan	39.39	39.79
Danish Krone	43.81	44.21
Euro	329.5	332.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.8	36.15
Indian Rupee	3.02	3.11
Japanese Yen	1.7877	1.8777
Kuwaiti Dinar	911.25	921.25
Malaysian Ringgit	67.75	68.35
New Zealand \$	161.43	163.43
Norwegian Krone	27.6	27.90
Omani Riyal	728.1	738.1
Qatari Riyal	76.47	77.17
Saudi Riyal	74.8	75.35
Singapore Dollar	216	221
Swedish Korona	30.11	30.41
Swiss Franc	351.34	354.09
Thai Bhat	8.73	8.88
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.4
UK Pound Sterling	376.1	379.6
US Dollar	281.1	283.2

BF Biosciences Limited Announces Leadership Transition

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: BF Biosciences Limited today announced a planned leadership transition, following a notice submitted to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

According to the notice, Mrs. Akhter Khalid Waheed, Founding Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of BF Biosciences Limited, has decided to step down from her role as Chief Executive Officer, effective December 31, 2025.

The Board of Directors, in its emergent meeting held on December 19, 2025, formally accepted her resignation and placed on record its deep appreciation for her visionary leadership and invaluable contributions to the establishment, growth, and long-term success of the Company.

Under her stewardship, BF Biosciences evolved into a recognized name in Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector, marked by sustained growth, operational excellence, and strategic expansion.

Following the recommendation of the HR & Remuneration Committee, the Board has approved the appointment of Mr. Muhammad Farhan Rafique as Chief Executive Officer, effective January 1, 2026.

Mr. Farhan Rafique has been associated with BF Biosciences Limited as Chief Operating Officer, where he played a pivotal role in executing key strategic initiatives under the leadership of Mrs. Akhter Khalid Waheed.

His contributions include leading the Company's brownfield expansion, supporting a successful Initial Public Offering (IPO), and driving digital transformation projects across operations.

The Board expressed confidence that Mr. Rafique's appointment will ensure continuity of leadership and further strengthen the Company's growth trajectory, while building on the strong foundation laid by its founding CEO.



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Magnum, the Netherlands-based global manufacturer of frozen desserts and ice cream, has begun operations in Pakistan as an independent company. The company has expressed its intention to invest in expanding manufacturing capacity, strengthening cold-chain infra-

structure, and enhancing digital capabilities in the near future.

Magnum Pakistan's Country General Manager, Kayhan Zenginoglu, said, "This moment is a milestone for Magnum Pakistan. We are here to lead the frozen desserts and ice cream sector through bold innovation, global standards, and a deep understanding of consumers."

The company currently produces millions of liters of ice cream annually and expects an increase in production in the coming months. Building on this strong foundation, Magnum Pakistan has developed comprehensive plans to accelerate growth by expanding its presence in the premium products market and enhancing consumer experiences.

Saudi Carrier Flyadeal opens new office in Islamabad

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Flyadeal, Saudi Arabia's fast-growing low-cost airline, has officially opened a dedicated new sales and marketing office in Islamabad marking its rapid expansion in Pakistan.

On a flying visit to Pakistan's capital city, Flyadeal Chief Executive Officer Steven Greenway affirmed the airline's commitment to being part of the country's dynamic air travel market.

Flyadeal launched non-stop scheduled flights from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan in February,

connecting Riyadh and Jeddah to the country's commercial hub of Karachi which signalled the airline's first move into South Asia.

Since then Flyadeal has significantly scaled up frequency, now operating 18 non-stop services each week between the two countries serving a total of five gateway cities in Pakistan - Karachi, Peshawar, Sialkot, Lahore and Islamabad.

"Our Pakistan flights have proved a great success since our entry bringing affordable low fares and reliable punctual services to this exciting market," said Greenway.

Farooq Ahmad, Flyadeal Head of Sales,



added: "Flyadeal has developed a great relationship with Pakistan's travel agency community, quickly building confidence within the trade of our value added product offering."

Smeda Introduces Free Registration Portal for SMEs

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has introduced the SME Registration Portal (SMERP) as a key initiative, aimed at strengthening transparency and enhancing convenience for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

SMERP facilitates online registration of SMEs and issuance of SMEDA SME Size Certificates through a fully digital process with minimal human interaction, ensuring transparency, efficiency, and ease of access for businesses across the country.

The portal has been designed to develop a comprehensive and reliable SME database, which will support research, evidence-based policy formulation, and effective alignment of government interventions with the needs of SMEs.



To further strengthen transparency and information verification, SMEDA has integrated Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) of NADRA, FBR and SECP into the portal.

Registration on SMERP and application for the SMEDA SME Size Certificate are voluntary, with no mandatory requirement for SMEs. However, eligible manufacturing SMEs with annual turnover of up to PKR 250 million can benefit from a tax rate reduction under the 14th Schedule of the Finance Bill 2021 upon obtaining the SME Size Certificate through SMERP.

Recently, SMEDA has also introduced grants under the SME Certification, International Accreditation, and Quality Improvement Program, which can be applied for online through SMERP for enhanced transparency and convenience for SMEs.

Brunch in the honor of Bashir Jan Mohammad

Former MNA Kunwar Qutubuddin Khan, Chairman of Lakeshore Towers, presenting a flower bouquet to Secretary General United Business Group, Zafar Bakhtawari, during a brunch hosted in honor of Bashir Jan Mohammad, Founder of the Westbury Group and Chairman of Dalda Foods, while Sheikh Abdul Razzaq, Chief Executive of Latif Group of Industries, is also seen in the picture.



Traders' Group Slams President Paracha for Unwise Appointments

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Office-bearers of the Anjuman-e-Tajran Commercial Market strongly criticized Malik Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, President of the Central Anjuman-e-Tajran Punjab and Rawalpindi, stating that appointing rejected and failed so-called trader leaders, who have already been disowned by their own markets to key positions such as General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary is an insult to the trader community.

President Malik Suhail Awan, General Secretary Raja Zafar Yousaf, Chairman Mushtaq Mughal, Group Leader Syed Naqi Shah, Vice President Raja Rashid Mahmood, and Mehfuz Khan said in a joint statement that these individuals had lost the trust of traders in the past. They further stated that after the arrival of the current elected leadership, the role of these elements came to an end, and concerned government officials themselves admitted that they had been relieved of them. The current leadership, they added, is actively and effectively fighting for the protection of traders' rights and against illegal taxation. In conclusion, they demanded that the central association review such decisions and grant representation only to genuine, elected, and honest trader leadership, so that the trust of the trader community can be restored.

TCL's Winter-Ready ACs: Premium Features at Every Budget

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's No. 1 LED TV brand, is bringing the same commitment to innovation and quality to its specially curated winter air conditioner range. Designed to keep homes warm, comfortable, and healthy, TCL's line-up offers everything from premium clean-air solutions to budget-friendly inverters, ensuring households enjoy the perfect balance of warmth, efficiency, and smart technology this winter.

TCL's FreshIN 3.0 series delivers next-level indoor comfort. Equipped with advanced air purification technology, it ensures fresh, hygienic air while maintaining optimal room temperature. With precise temperature control and superior filtration, FreshIN 3.0 creates a healthy and cozy environment for the entire family.

SECP Holds Consultative Session with Registered Intermediaries in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) held a consultative session with Registered Intermediaries (RIs) in Karachi to seek stakeholder feedback on the proposed Framework for Registered Intermediaries.

In parallel, it proposes the abolition of periodic renewal requirements, replacing them with a structured and continuous learning and evaluation mechanism. These measures are intended to improve the overall effectiveness of RIs, promote higher standards of service delivery, and strengthen corporate compliance.

The proposed framework introduces mandatory training requirements aimed at enhancing compliance standards and strengthening procedural capacity of Registered Intermediaries.

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Preparations

ISLAMABAD: A view of the greetings banners by CDA regarding the Christmas on green belt along the Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital.

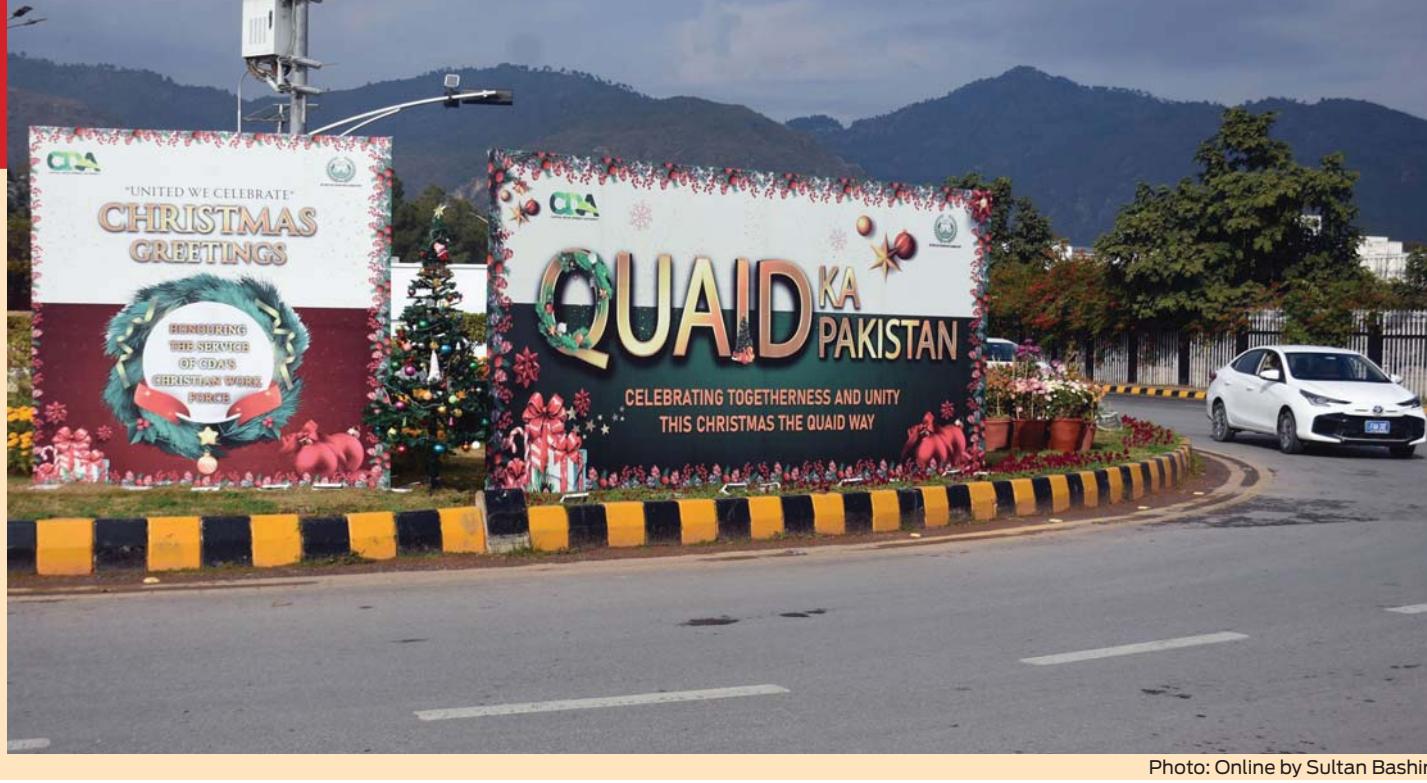


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Dar chairs Cabinet Committee meeting, reviews Wheat Stocks, Rabi sowing for 2025-26

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday chaired the 7th meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Essential/Cash Crops, where comprehensive discussions were held on improving per acre wheat yields and ensuring national food security.

A detailed review of the current wheat crop and existing stocks was also undertaken. The meeting observed that the country has ample stored wheat stocks to comfortably meet national requirements for the Food Year 2025-26, a DPM's Office news release said.

Provincial representatives shared data on wheat sowing for Rabi 2025-26, which was



found to be in line with the assigned targets. The participants noted that the timely introduction of the Interim National Wheat Policy 2025-26 has generated posi-

tive sentiment and renewed confidence among the farming community.

The deputy prime minister expressed satisfaction over the smooth availability of certified

seed and other key agricultural inputs. He also appreciated the collective efforts of federal and provincial stakeholders toward achieving wheat self-sufficiency.

He urged all relevant stakeholders to focus on promoting improved wheat varieties and emphasized the need for sustained coordination between the federation and provinces to ensure long-term national food security under the framework of the Government of Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by members of the cabinet committee and senior officials from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Planning and Special Initiatives, as well as provincial secretaries of agriculture from across the country. Participants deliberated on a range of measures aimed at enhancing productivity and strengthening the wheat value chain.

Pakistan launches comprehensive reforms to overhaul public sector accounting system

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has initiated comprehensive reforms to modernize its public sector accounting system, with the AGP commencing the process of developing new accounting standards on an accrual basis in line with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) said the initiative was aimed at strengthening transparency, fiscal discipline and public financial management across the country, a news release said.



said on Monday.

The AGP has exercised its constitutional mandate under Article 170 of the Constitution of Pakistan to undertake a review of the existing New Accounting Model (NAM), which was introduced in 2000 and is based on cash accounting principles.

In view of evolving global standards and best international practices, the existing framework was deemed in need of further strengthening and modernization.

"The transition to accrual-based accounting will significantly enhance

the quality, completeness and reliability of government financial reporting," the Auditor General's office said, adding that under the new system, assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures would be recorded in a more comprehensive and accurate manner.

The statement noted that, for the first time in Pakistan's history, public sector financial reporting would be aligned with internationally recognized IPSAS accrual standards, enabling a clearer and more realistic picture of the government's financial position and performance.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman awarded honorary doctorate at Governor House Sindh

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman was awarded an honorary doctorate by a private university at Governor House Sindh on Monday.

The ceremony was hosted by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, who praised the religious community for standing firm on its principles.

Speaking to the media, Governor Tessori said global powers view Pakistan's religious groups as a symbol of strength.

He also highlighted the presence of India-backed elements in Afghanistan.

Addressing the gathering, Fazlur Rehman criticised the treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, saying decades of hospitality had been wasted.

He also labelled the 2018 and 2024 elections as rigged and called for fresh polls. On constitutional matters, he urged that the 26th Amendment should not be made controversial.

This event underscores the ongoing political discourse in the country, with JUI-F emphasising electoral transparency and national unity.



Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

All set to hold open bidding for PIACL's 75% shares on Tuesday



Commerce Desk

The event would be telecast live on TV and digital media.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation, Muhammad Ali would also hold a press conference after the conclusion of the bidding process.

The privatization of PIA is being undertaken as part of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's economic reform agenda.

As the government is committed to ensuring transparency, the whole privatization process would be telecast live and streamed across all TV channels as well as respective social media handles of the government and Privatization Division in line with the vision of the Prime Minister for transparent and trustworthy privatization activity.

PIACL, the national carrier, is being privatized to ensure 'the legend returns to the glory'.

Amir Muqam welcomes Sardar Mir Akbar announcement of joining PML-N



City Desk

leadership.

He said the inclusion of Sardar Mir Akbar and other leaders would further bolster the party's strength in AJK.

The minister also paid tribute to the people of Kashmir for their unwavering struggle for the right to self-determination and their deep-rooted love for Pakistan, noting that their sacrifices would not go in vain.

He added that victory in the Marka-e-Haq gave new hope to the Kashmiri freedom movement.

Reaffirming Pakistan's principled stance, Amir Muqam said the Pakistan would continue to extend its full moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmir cause and would never backtrack from its commitment.

LHC suspends Punjab property protection ordinance

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The Lahore High Court on Monday temporarily suspended the operation of the recently-enacted "Punjab Protection of Ownership of Immovable Property Ordinance 2025" while hearing petitions filed by Abida Parveen and other applicants.

The court recommended the formation of a full bench and ordered the immediate restoration of all properties taken under the ordinance.

During Monday's hearing, the Punjab chief secretary appeared before the court, drawing strong criticism from the chief justice.

The chief justice warned that if

the law remained in effect, even high-profile properties like Jati Umra (the Sharif family's residence) could be vacated within half an hour.

The court questioned why the advocate-general of Punjab had not appeared. The court was told that he was unwell.

Expressing frustration, the chief



justice noted that she, too, was unwell but was present in court.

Justice Neelum criticised the law for undermining citizens' fundamental rights and the supremacy of the judiciary.