

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
جابر بن عبد اللہ رضی اللہ عنہما نے کہا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے ہر اس جانور اور میں شہد کا حق دیا تھا جس کی شرکاد میں ابھی تقسیم نہ ہوئی ہو۔ لیکن اگر حدیثی ہو جائے اور راستے الگ ہو جائیں تو پھر شہد کا حق باقی نہیں رہتا۔  
(تجلی ص 296)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



## Sindh Governor calls for joint efforts to steer country out of crisis

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori has stressed the need for collective efforts to steer the country out of economic crisis. The Governor appealed all the stakeholders to join hands for bringing the country out of the difficult situation.



## Boost in Pakistani exports to US discussed in Washington talks: Minister

Pakistan and the United States had comprehensive talks on a range of key issues, including enhancing the export of Pakistani mangoes and dates to the US and more market access for Pakistani textiles, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar has said. Other matters discussed included boosting US investments in Pakistan's agriculture sector, especially in the development of hybrid, climate-resilient seeds as well as supporting Pakistani IT and

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## Support to quake-hit Turkiye

Pakistan Embassy in Ankara, Turkiye-Truck Convoy carrying earthquake relief assistance goods reached Malatya from Pakistan.



Photo: PID

## Five killed in Balochistan blast

Explosion damaged several cars, motorcycles and shops

### Spokesman Report

BARKHAN: At least five people were killed while 12 others were injured when a motorcycle laden with explosives blew up in the Barkhan district of Balochistan, the police said on Sunday.

The police said that the explosion took place in the Rakhni Bazaar area and the injured have been shifted to a local hospital. Some injured were also being shifted to Dera Ghazi Khan hospital, police added.

The law enforcement agency also shared that the explosion had damaged several cars, motorcycles and shops.

Security forces cordoned off the area and completely suspended traffic after the incident.

Meanwhile, the police and law enforcement agencies are collecting the evidence. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sought a report of the incident

from Balochistan Chief Minister Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and the inspector-general of police (IG).

The premier also directed to ensure the best medical facilities for those wounded in the blast. "The terrorists will not be able to escape from the punishment," stressed the PM.

Condemning the incident, the prime minister expressed grief over the loss of lives. "We will make an example out of those who spill innocent blood," he added.

PM Shehbaz also prayed for those who lost their lives and for speedy recovery of the injured.

In a separate statement, CM Bizenjo condemned the incident, directing the authorities concerned to provide the best treatment facilities to the injured. Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of lives, Bizenjo said that anti-state elements will not be allowed to succeed.

# FM Bilawal calls for unity to defeat terrorism

People suffering because of PTI's wrong policies, says Foreign Minister

KARACHI: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has urged people to forge unity among their ranks in order to thwart the ill designs of the saboteurs and counter the rising tendency of terrorism and extremism in the country.

Speaking at a seminar in Karachi on Sunday he said implementation of the constitution in its letter and spirit is the also solution to all problems faced by the country. The Foreign Minister said the people are now looking towards the Judiciary and parliament.

He said the government is making efforts to ensure that every institution should work within its jurisdiction and protect the rights of the common man.

Implementation of the constitution is solution to all problems faced by nation

The Foreign Minister said the constitution is a pact between the state and the people so we would protect.

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the short-sighted policies of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf did not improve the condition of the country and the masses were suffering due to this approach



of the PTI.

He said the PPP was celebrating the golden jubilee of the constitution whose founder was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto while adding the country was democratic and the people had the right to elect their representatives to give the

reins of power anyone they like.

The FM said the PPP would safeguard the 1973 constitution as it was behind its formation and Pakistan would function properly only if it worked according to the constitution.

The minister added the "selec-

tor" was dethroned from power by using purely constitutional manner because Imran Khan destroyed institutions for his interests and he did not play any role for the betterment of the nation.

Talking about the political uncertainty, he said undemocratic forces took advantage of the lack of political stability and also terrorists also used the uncertain atmosphere to instill fear in the minds of the people.

He said the people were hoping that the parliament and judiciary would provide them some relief by giving them justice, while adding there should be rule of law as the court waited for the "Zaman Park prime minister" for a week. Agencies

## 'Jail Bharo Tehreek'

### 70 PTI workers court arrest in Gujranwala

Police facing shortage of vans to shift workers to jail, says Rashid.

LAHORE/GUJRANWALA: Contrary to high expectations of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) leadership, just 70 workers and supporters of the party courted arrest in Gujranwala on Sunday.

The movement, according to the PTI rationale, aims to counter the "attack on constitutionally-guaranteed fundamental rights" and the "economic meltdown by the incumbent government".

The PTI 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' (court arrest movement) appeared to be losing its steam as none of the party's leaders or workers voluntarily surrendered themselves to the police as the Peshawar phase of the 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' (concluded — the city considered as stronghold of the party — on February 23.

PTI leader Yasmin Rashid, however, claimed that six prison vans boarded with PTI workers have departed for jail so far. She said that the police were facing a shortage of prison vans to shift the PTI workers to the jail. She added that the local police barred female workers of the party from boarding the prison van.

The PTI leader paid rich tribute to the people for taking to the street



on the call of former prime minister Imran Khan who announced the police as the Peshawar phase of the 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' (concluded — the city considered as stronghold of the party — on February 23.

Sharing a photo of former MPA Zafarullah Cheema and Nazam Muhammad Gondal in handcuffs on Twitter, the PTI leaders said that they were the first who voluntarily surrendered to the police in the city.

It is pertinent to mention here that several petitions have been

filed in the Lahore High Court (LHC) seeking bail for the PTI leaders who voluntarily surrendered themselves to the police but taking to Twitter, senior party leader Fawad Chaudhry wrote:

"More than two hundred workers in Lahore and Rawalpindi are currently in various jails and they have refused to submit bail requests."

The party's senior leaders, including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar and Azam Swati, alongside other party workers, voluntarily surrendered themselves to the Lahore police on the first day of the campaign — and

later, some of the others followed suit. The movement subsequently reached Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Multan.

A day earlier, PTI Chairman Imran Khan strongly condemned the "fascist approach" of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government for treating his party's workers and leaders detained during the "Jail Bharo Tehreek" like terrorists.

In his tweet, Khan claimed that his party's leadership and workers are protesting against fascism, the violation of fundamental rights, and the crushing of the nation.

As LHC's Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhary heard the plea of PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday, he inquired the petitioner's lawyer about why the party members have been arrested.

At this, the lawyer said the party has started a 'Jail Bharo' movement. Justice Chaudhary asked why they are playing with the courts. To this, the lawyer said: "We are not asking for bail, these are symbolic arrests and we are here to protect the rights of the leaders." Agencies

## IK vows to not let PDM escape elections



LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) officials from Lahore met the party Chief Imran Khan on Sunday to discuss the upcoming elections.

The officials briefed Imran Khan about the elections and door-to-door campaigning, Chairman PTI directed them to mobilize organizations up to the block code level.

Imran Khan directed them to be prepared for the upcoming elections. He said, "The nation is prepared to get rid of the mafia as they will not spare the politicians to escape from elections."

## Rupee to continue winning streak against dollar in coming week

Rupee almost steady in open market deals

KARACHI: The rupee is likely to maintain its upward trend against the dollar in the coming week owing to a major boost in the foreign exchange reserves as the nation received \$700 million from China, a private tv channel reported on Sunday citing traders.

During the outgoing week, the local currency gained about Rs2 or 0.72%, rising to 259.99 against the greenback in the interbank market.

"After the receipt of \$700 million Chinese inflows on Friday, which have improved the central bank's foreign exchange reserves to \$3.9 billion from \$3.25 billion as of February 17, I believe the rupee will continue its upward trend. This will help to increase dollar supplies and improve market sentiment," a forex trader said.

"Investors are concerned, though, about the delay in the International Monetary Fund program's resumption. The staff-level agreement with the IMF to revive the bailout,

according to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, would take ten days to reach," he added.

Since early February, Pakistani authorities and the IMF have been in talks about policy framework issues. They hope to reach a staff-level agreement (SLA) that will open the door for further funding from other bilateral and multilateral lenders.

The lender will release a tranche of more than \$1 billion from the \$6.5 billion bailout arrangement agreed to in 2019 once the deal is signed.

Pakistan has already implemented a number of steps, such as switching to a market-based exchange rate, raising fuel and electricity prices, eliminating subsidies, and increasing taxation to raise money to reduce the fiscal deficit.

The tight measures could cause inflation, which was 27.5% in January, to increase and the economy to further contract. The country's economy has been in disarray and is in need of external funding.



## Despite ban

ISLAMABAD: Youngsters are busy in flying kites during Basant Festival, on their house rooftops, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## PTI's 'Jail Bharo' movement totally flopped: Rana Sana

Says govt had arrested approximately 125 PTI leaders and workers on their own request

FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Sunday said that "Jail Bharo" movement of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had totally flopped and even the PTI leaders and workers were trying to disassociate themselves from the drive.

Talking to the media at the residence of local PML-N leader Kashif Nawaz Randhawa, he said that politics of PTI was full of blunders. He said that Imran Khan did not take any single laudable step during his political career and wasted the time of people.

"Imran Khan claimed to organize million march followed by another gimmicks which all proved in vain" he said adding the ultimate objective

"PML-N fully believes in the sanctity of state institutions."



of Imran was to create political and economic instability in the country.

He created unnecessary problems during his tenure of almost four years in power and now continuing the same for his lust for power. He said that all the dramas staged by Imran Khan had been flopped and people would reject

him in the coming general elections.

To a question, he said the government had arrested approximately 125 PTI leaders and workers on their own request and detained them for a period of 30 days in different prisons.

To another question, he said: "We fully believe in the sanctity of state

institutions but after the audio leak of Pervaiz Elahi it is necessary to clarify the situation. We will not blame anyone till the finding of leaked audio has been released." About attack on Imran Khan, he said that investigation revealed that it was not an organized attack and the attacker was alone.

To another question, he said that various surveys revealed that PML-N was leading political party of Punjab. About issuance of party tickets, he said that parliamentary board of the party would decide to award tickets to the candidates.

Earlier, Rana Sanaullah condoled with Kashif Nawaz Randhawa over the demise of his mother. APP

## National immunization strategy to be prepared for 100% results: Qadir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel on Sunday said that effective measures were being adopted to make further improvements in the national immunization program.

Addressing the annual meeting of the Federal Directorate of Immunization, which was attended by the coordinators from all provinces and representatives from international organizations, Qadir Patel said that a collaborative strategy was being formulated to ensure 100 percent results, by reaching everyone during every immunization drive in the country.

He said that it was the responsibility of the state to provide basic health facilities to its citizens and added that the government was working on a comprehensive plan for the complete eradication of various diseases from the country.

For the purpose, he said, all available resources would be utilized, and urged the provinces to ensure 100 percent coverage of immunization to protect children. He said that while there was



no cure, "vaccination is the most effective way to protect children from various diseases. Each time a child is vaccinated, their protection against the virus is increased."

He said that repeated immunizations had protected millions of children, allowing almost many countries in the world to become free from various diseases.

"The only way to protect our children is to vaccinate them, especially under the age of five. It is critically important that parents and caregivers, particularly in high-risk areas, ensure that their child is vaccinated", Patel said. Agencies

## JI chief takes jibe at PDM govt over crumbling economy

ATTOCK: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Siraj ul Haq said on Sunday that the problems Pakistan faced were caused by its own leaders.

While addressing the gathering in Attock, Siraj ul Haq said, "Today I have brought out the list of those people in Pakistan, whose capital is more than 4 thousand billion in their personal account. This list includes judges, army generals, bureaucrats and other politicians. For the sake of 170bn, they are stepping on the innocent people of Pakistan."

JI Emir said that the leaders of Pakistan destroyed its economy, and made even the children of Pakistan "slaves" of IMF, though they are thankful to Allah Pak that He blessed Pakistan with everything. He added, "Pakistan became a joke, Pakistani passport stands on 124 among 128 countries of the world, even though Pakistan is an agricultural state, still



the nation stands in ques to get flour bags."

Furthermore, Mr Siraj said, "There has been more than 120m of corruption on daily basis. These politicians need to cut down their lavish lifestyles and live a simple life, the cabinet should be reduced, when people like Malik Riaz, Zardari, Bilawal, Nawaz Sharif, and Tareen pay taxes as much as a security guard in Attock's market, the economy will fall, Pakistan needs change." Agencies

## NA-193 by-poll

## PTI's Leghari leads the race

RAJANPUR: Unofficial and unconfirmed results started pouring in after polling ended for the much-hyped by-election in the National Assembly constituency NA-193 Rajanpur.

Polling began at 8am and continued till 5pm without any break. The seat fell vacant due to the death of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) member Jaffar Khan Leghari. He died in Lahore on December 31, 2022, after a prolonged illness.

According to the unofficial results of 176 polling stations out of 237, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) candidate Mohsin Leghari is leading by securing 68,088 votes followed by Pakistan Muslim

League - Nawaz's (PML-N) candidate Ammar Leghari with 38,147 votes.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up 237 polling stations in the constituency out of which 68 have been declared sensitive. At least 2,650 police personnel have been deployed to deal with any untoward situation while Pakistan Army and Rangers personnel are also patrolling the area.

11 candidates are contesting NA-193 Rajanpur by-poll, but the main contest is expected between the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Emaar Owais Leghari and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Mohsin Leghari.

On Friday, Punjab's caretaker government approached the ECP with a written request to postpone the by-election citing security concerns.

Earlier, Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan Division Khalid Manzoor mentioned the security concerns in his letter to the caretaker provincial government.

But, the electoral watchdog on Saturday dismissed these concerns on the grounds that adequate security measures were being taken by the Punjab Police and Rangers for the provision of security at all the polling stations.

A Central Control Room set up at Election Commission Secretariat Islamabad has started monitoring by polls

being held in NA 193, Rajanpur on Sunday.

A spokesman of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said in a statement on Sunday that the Control Room would continue working till receipt of the last result.

Senior officers were monitoring the electioneering process from the Control Room, Islamabad. Separate Control Rooms established at Lahore and Rajanpur have also started registering complaints of election process. Immediate action would be taken against election code violators.

The spokesman said that polling related complaints could be lodged

round the clock on telephone no 051-9204402; 051-9204403; 051-9210837 and 051-9210838 and the complaints could also be faxed to the Control Room on 051-9204404.

Former minister and PTI leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the PTI candidate would be winning Jampur seat today. Taking to Twitter, he said the entire Punjab police had been put in place in Jampur to intimidate [PTI workers] and that the agri lands of influential PTI supporters had been erased with the help of tractors.

He said despite all cheap tactics and high handedness, the PTI candidate would win the by-election. Agencies

## PTI's 'Jail Bharo' movement flop show: Musadik

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik has said PTI's 'Jail Bharo' movement has proven to be a flop show as not a single worker of the party courted arrest in Multan.

Talking to a private news channel, Musadik Malik said instead of calling his workers to court arrest, Imran Khan should show some courage and court arrest himself first.

He further said that Imran Khan considered it his political right to use offensive language against the state institutions.

Musadik Malik asserted that the polarization in Pakistani politics had aggravated to an extent that it was impossible to have a critical and rational discussion. He said the polarization needs to be de-escalated through political dialogue. Agencies

## Two more industrial units start operation in Mohmand Economic Zone

PESHAWAR: The two more industrial units set up in newly constructed Mohmand Economic Zone of KP have been made operational, raising the total number of functioning factories to 13. In the recent few weeks, two units have been inaugurated including one of cooking oil production factory and the other marble industry, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC), Javed Khattak said here on Sunday.

Javed Khattak said Mohmand Economic Zone has shown very positive feedback by attracting industrialists and within a short period of a couple of years, 13 industrial units have been made operational by creating thousands of jobs.

The Mohmand Economic Zone is spread over 350 acres

of land and is surrounded by a bomb proof boundary wall constructed at a cost of Rs. 700 million, Javed added.

For the facilitation of industrialists, the KPEZDMC has constructed a carpeted access



road of 4.5 kilometers starting from Michni check post to the Zone premises. Similarly, a vintage point is also established for visitors for better viewing of the economic zone, he told.

Javed said the KPEZDMC

has set up 14 Industrial Zones in the province, including the merged districts to accelerate commercial activities through increasing production and creating hundreds of thousands of employment opportunities.

These industrial zones are providing facilities including uninterrupted power supply, efficient road network, water supply, job opportunities for locals, telecom and IT infrastructure, centralized

commercial areas, sewerage system. Arrangements have been made to ensure provision of these facilities round the clock 24/7 without any disruption or break, the CEO KPEZDMC added.

These new industrial zones are attracting investors due to facilities offered by the KP Government and a number of production units have been already established and started functioning, Javed continued and informed that around 298 industrial units were under construction in these new economic zones which would soon start production.

Javed said that the government was fully focusing on providing fool proof and secured environment to industrialists who set up their businesses in these industrial zones and in this connection, we had adopted the policy of 'no-compromise on quality'. APP

## Parvez Elahi shows gratitude towards IK

GUJRAT: Former Chief Minister (CM) of Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi said on Sunday that due to Imran Khan's pure intentions for the country, the Supreme Authority of Allah made way for him.

While addressing the PTI Assembly members in Gujrat, Mr Elahi said, "Imran Khan showed utter trust in me when he addressed the nation, he won my and my friend's heart at that moment, he also announced to make me the president of PTI and also backed my commitment to the party, which is a matter of pride for me."

PTI president Chaudhry Parvez Elahi further said that he was thankful to Imran Khan for making him the president, his first priority as a president would be to make sure that PTI wins by 2/3rd majority and PTI rules Punjab once again. In this regard, they have prepared a plan in consultation with the PTI Chief.



The former CM said, "A puppet such as Shehbaz Sharif has no future for the government, the nation has decided to make Imran Khan the PM yet again, Mr Khan is a true leader and well-wisher of the state, the judiciary is taking care of the constitution."

He further said that incompetent leaders and Election Commissioner's effort to delay the elections will not prosper, and the kind of hurdles these politicians are creating in Mr Khan's way will be washed away with the response from the nation in the upcoming elections. Agencies

## Chinese sports shoes company extends help to Pakistani flood-affectedees

## Spokesman Report

BELJING: To help Pakistan recover from the devastating floods, sports shoes worth RMB 1 million (PKR 38 million) were gifted by a Chinese company, said China Leather Industry Association (CLIA).

Pakistan's 2022 monsoon season brought heavy rainfall, devastating floods and landslides that affected millions of people, accounting for about 15% of its population.

By mid-January 2023, months after the worstflooding, as many as 4 million children are still living near contaminated and stagnant flood waters, risking their survival and well-being. Displaced people have begun to return to their places of origin, but they are returning to challenging circumstances.

To help those in need, the CLIA

launched an initiative named "Put on Chinese Shoes, Rebuild New Home" in January. Li Ning Group, one of the leading sports brand companies in China, took action in the first time to express its care for the affected people in Pakistan, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

Pakistan's Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque expressed his sincere thanks to CLIA and the group for their generous help to the flood-stricken groups in Pakistan. He said the donation made him felt once again the warmth of the Chinese people towards the Pakistani people.

Chen Zhanguang, Vice President of CLIA, told the reporter that the initiative was a good start. "We hope that more shoe manufacturers will participate in donating to the affected people in Pakistan and shoulder their responsibilities."



# PTI leader denies corruption allegations made by 'personal assistant'

*Dar alleges govt wants to trap him by accusing him of corruption*

SIALKOT: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Usman Dar has alleged that the federal government wants to trap him by accusing him of corruption, saying that Javed Ali had never been his private assistant (PA).

Addressing a press conference alongside Ali on Sunday — after his confessional statement surfaced — Dar said that he has never touched taxpayers' money as the special assistant to the prime minister.

The PTI leader said the laundered proceeds are found in the accounts of people working under those who are accused of graft.

"Were billions of rupees transferred to my cook and driver's accounts?" he questioned.

Dar requested Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial to take

a suo motu notice on his case. He also urged the Directorate General Anti-Corruption to hear his case in open court.

Coming down hard on the coalition government of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), he said that the rulers are putting PTI leaders in jail and making sedition cases against them, adding that supporting PTI Chairman Imran Khan has become a crime for them. "The government wants to prove that Khan is a thief like them."

Dar also urged that his case should be heard in a Sialkot court.

He said that Ali was tortured for two days, adding that he was threatened that his wife and children will be called and given electric shocks. "Deputy commissioner and district police officer Sialkot

should tell who inflicted torture on Javed [Ali]."

"Javed was never my PA. He was picked up to fix me," said the PTI leader, adding that he never took a kickback from any contractor nor took any car, salary or perks while he was in office.

Speaking at the same press conference, Ali denied what he had said in the "confessional" statement, saying that the statement was false.

Ali said he was not Dar's personal assistant and he did not collect any money from any contractor.

"I had gone to the education department to collect my salary. 10 to 15 people abducted me after covering my face with a cloth."

Ali also alleged that he had been beaten up after being shifted to an unknown place. He said that he



had been asked how much money did he give to Usman Dar. He said that he told them that he hadn't given any money.

"I was stripped of my clothes and tied to a seat and hung upside down. I was tied like a dog," he said, adding that a cop told the others to bring his [Ali's] wife

and children.

Ali further said that he had been told that they would make an illicit video of his wife. He added that this broke his strength and he had to tell them that he would say whatever they want.

He claimed that they took a day for recording his statement in a

washroom after giving him a bath and shave.

Both had held a joint press conference after the alleged confessional statement of Ali had come forward.

In the statement, Ali claimed that he was Dar's PA for three months. He revealed that he collected millions of rupees as commission from five contractors of four union councils of NA-67 and gave it to Usman Dar's brother Ahmed Dar.

Sharing the details of the tenders and commissions for them, Ali said that Bajwa and Co had a tender of Rs20 million, for which he collected Rs2 million commission and gave it to Ahmed Dar. Moreover, he collected Rs500,000 from Zain Bajwa Company for a tender of Rs5

million and Rs1 million commission from Khizer Construction Company and Bilal Contractors, each for the tenders of Rs10 million, respectively.

Ali revealed that Khawaja Imran looked after the union councils and took 10%, 15% or 20% commission for it.

He further said that Ahmed Dar offered him of arranging a government job.

"I am less educated so I got a fake educational certificate made and submitted it to the education department at the behest of Ahmed Dar," he also said.

Ali added that he was currently working at a government elementary model school in Daliyan and collected the commission for Ahmed Dar for this favour. Agencies

## Traffic mess

KARACHI: A view of massive traffic jam at Liaqtabad Square market due to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf protest rally in favor of their demands at S M Taufiq Road, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## DIG reviews security arrangements at Gaddafi Stadium

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Afzal Ahmad Kausar Sunday visited the Gaddafi Stadium and reviewed security and traffic arrangements for the PSL-8 matches in Lahore.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Capt (retd) Mustansar Feroze, SSP Operations, SP Anti-Riots Force and other senior police officers were present.

The DIG reviewed the security arrangements at the route of teams, entry points at gates of the stadium and inspected the checking mechanism. SSP Operations briefed the DIG regarding the security, traffic, and parking arrangements.

The DIG issued directions to the police officers to further strengthen the arrangements. He also took a round of different enclosures of the stadium. He directed deputed police officials to behave with the visiting citizens at the stadium in a polite manner.

## IRSA releases 98,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 98,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 56,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1462.67 feet and was 64.67 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 15,000 cusecs while outflow as 50,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1113.25 feet, 63.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 17,900 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 57,000, 42,500, 30,400 and 6,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 15,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala. APP

## Imran Ismail slams PDM for trying to escape elections

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former governor of Sindh Imran Ismail said on Sunday that they support Imran Khan on every step in the "Jail Bhara Movement."

While addressing the media, the former governor said, "It was all a conspiracy, the nation's favourite Prime Minister Imran Khan was removed over a conspiracy done in the middle of the night."

Furthermore, he said that the power was given to incompetent people who should've been in jail. He added, "People like Rana Sanullah, and Shehbaz Sharif would have been in jails serving time."

Imran Ismail also said, "The current government is trying to escape elections, no matter what they do, elections will be held, there is no other ray of hope other than Imran Khan." Agencies

## PTI chief protecting party's corrupt elements: Tarar

LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was protecting the people around him who had been accused of corruption, and cases had been registered against them.

Addressing a press conference at Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) Secretariat in Model Town here, he said that a man, who had admitted to give bribe to a PTI leader for getting employment on forged documents, was sitting next Imran Khan during his press conference on Saturday. The PTI leader, who had allegedly received the bribe money, was also sitting there.

Atta Tarar said that Imran Khan had also defended Farah Gogi, who was allegedly involved in mega corruption during the PTI government in Punjab. Tarar said the PTI chief was using delaying tactics in Toshakhana, Iyrian White and foreign funding cases against him, and openly protecting people around him who were facing corruption charges.

He said that the PML-N believed in supremacy of law and upholding of the Constitution. He said that the PTI leadership should face charges in the courts as nobody was above the law. APP

## Sit-in enters 10th day against shutdown of internet service

*The sit-in will continue until the demands are accepted*

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: The protest sit-in arranged by Ragzai Youth Society in Birmal Tehsil of South Waziristan Lower entered its tenth day against the shutdown of internet service, the participants of the sit-in protested that the main Pak-Afghan highway has been closed for normal traffic.

They say that until our legitimate demands are accepted, the protest sit-in will continue.

According to the sit-in participants, internet i.e. 3G and 4G services have been suspended in Ragzai area for two and a half months, due to which not only the people of the area are facing severe problems.



Rather, the business activities of local people have come to a standstill due to lack of internet services, along with the fact that most of the people here live abroad.

It should be noted that those living abroad have lost contact with their loved ones for the last two and a half months. In this modern era, thousands of people of South

Waziristan Lower Tehsil Birmal are deprived of internet services Imran Mukhlis Wazir from PPP, former chairmanship candidate Taj Mohammad Wazir, Ayaz Wazir from ANP, Saif Ur Rehman from JI and Maulana Sabir Ullah Wazir, president of JUI Ragzai, addressed the sit-in that has been going on since the tenth day that the demands of Ragzai Youth Society are legitimate.

Addressing the protest sit-in, the speakers said that internet services are a legal and constitutional right of the people of the area, we want to send a clear message to the government.

That the internet service 3G and 4G should be restored immediately in Tehsil Birmal

areas, so that the government should give their constitutional and legal rights to the people of the area.

The speakers announced full support to the Ragzai Youth Society until their legitimate demands are met. The organizers of the protest sit-in presented some demands to the government, immediate restoration of 3G and 4G in the Sholam tower, immediate restoration of Ghoralma teep tower, immediate connection of PTCL and DSL and sanctioned electricity line in Ragzai, completion of work is included. They said that until our demands are implemented, our protest sit-in and the Pak-Afghan highway will remain closed.

## Gomal University Director of Admin honored for services

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A solemn ceremony was held on the occasion of the retirement of Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan, Director of Administration, Gomal University. Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr. Shakib Ullah was the chief guest of the event.

While they were accompanied by the registrar Gomal University Dr. Jabbar, heads of all departments, directors, teachers, administrative officers, class 3 and 4 employees and a large number of students.

On the arrival of retired Director Administration Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan to Gomal University, the Knife-wielding squad of the university security also presented a guard of honour.

A large number of employees in the number of hundreds garlanded the retired Director Administration Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan and brought him to the New Saint Hall of the University showering him with flow-

er petals, an example of which is not found anywhere in the province that any officer was bid farewell with such honor and dignity.

The ceremony formally started with the recitation of the word. Speaking at the event, Vice Chancellor Dr. Shakib Ullah said

That Director Administration Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan worked day and night for the improvement, development and prosperity of Gomal University by working in other important positions including registrarship of Gomal University is not hidden from anyone and their services will always be remembered. He added

Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan always kept all the employees together like a chain, which was a great trait of his and this is the reason that whichever vice chancellor made him a part of his team always succeeded and the institution prospered.

Retired Director Administration Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan while address-

ing the ceremony said That he joined Gomal University in 1989 and today after 31 years he has seen many vicissitudes of life but never gave priority to anyone over nationality, to me, everyone was, is and will be equal. Alhaj Dilnawaz Khan said that he has never tolerated anything against Gomal University and I promise that he will never do it.

This is our educational institution from where I got my education and after that I worked for its improvement, development and prosperity for 31 years. During this period, I came to know that there was a security threat to University Wensum College and the children were scared, so I took my children there. Encouraging these children, the director of administration further said that protecting the dignity and dignity of working women including girls studying in Gomal University, anti-drug operations in the university, provision of a peaceful educational environment were my top priorities.

He further said that today I am grateful to all the teachers, officers, employees and students including Vice Chancellor Dr. Shakib Ullah and I will always remember it. Director Admission Riyaz Ahmad Betni, Principal University Wensum College Dr. Fateh Khan, Dr. Yahya Khan, Superintendent Inamullah Gandapur, Prince and others also addressed the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, Gomal University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shakibullah gave the honorary shield of Gomal University

While along with them, Registrar Dr. Jabbar Khan, Additional Registrar Dr. Shafiqullah, Usman Khan, Dr. Yahya Khan, Dr. Saqib, Dr. Fateh Khan Sulaiman Khel, Riaz Ahmed Betni, Zahir Shah, Malik Qudrat Ali, Inaamullah Khan Gandapur, Dispensar Junaid. A large number of employees and students including Khan, Prince, shields, souvenirs, Flowers They gave bouquets and also wore traditional turbans.

## CM Naqvi reviews Spring Festival arrangements

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi chaired a meeting at his office on Sunday to review Spring Festival arrangements.

A detailed briefing about the arrangements and programmes in Lahore and Faisalabad was given to the chief minister. It was proposed to hold Spring Festival celebrations in Lahore from 5th to 12th March and in Faisalabad from 4th to 12th March. The Spring Festival celebrations would comprise sports, culture, tourism, music, bird and pet show as well as fireworks. Marathon race and cycling competitions will also be held in Lahore and Faisalabad.

Children, women, differently-abled persons and athletes will participate in the marathon race competition.

Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Sahir Ali Bagha and other famous singers will present a musical show. Mehfil-e-Sama will also be held in Lahore and Faisalabad.

The Spring Festival celebrations will be held in the Iqbal Stadium of Faisalabad and University of Agriculture, Players of Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan will participate in the sports events at GC University Faisalabad. A floral and Chinoti furniture exhibition will also be held. Special celebrations in connection with Interna-

tional Women's Day will be held and women Mushaira will also be held.

Horse dance, camel dance, cow, buffalo milk giving competitions will be held and a heavy bike show will also be held in Faisalabad. A laser light and sound show under the auspices of Walled City Authority will be held in Lahore. Charming cultural floats will be put on display at the carnival in Faisalabad. Canals will be decorated in Lahore, Faisalabad and lighting will also be made. More than 7,000 students will participate in the special torchlight march at Government College University Lahore. food festivals will also be held in the Spring Festival.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi directed that maximum participation of citizens should be ensured in the Spring Festival celebrations. Caretaker Provincial Minister Bilal Afzal, chief secretary, additional chief secretary, secretaries of Information & Culture, Higher education, Local Government, Livestock, Sports, Commissioner Lahore division, Commissioner Faisalabad division, Deputy Commissioner Lahore, DG Local Government, DGPR and officials concerned attended the meeting. Caretaker Provincial Minister Ibrahim Murad and Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad attended the meeting via video-link. APP





Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:18 am  
Zohr ..... 12:21 pm  
Asr ..... 4:22 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:01 pm  
Isha ..... 7:24 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

**Chairman PAL terms Amjad Islam Amjad a hallmark of contemporary Urdu poetry**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), Dr. Muhammad Yousuf Khushk lauded the valuable contribution of noted Urdu poet, dramatist, critic, columnist and fiction writer, Amjad Islam Amjad and said that the vacuum created by his death could never be filled.

Sharing his views on Amjad's work, he said the great literary icon was a hallmark of contemporary Urdu poetry and due to his death, Urdu literature has lost an important romantic poet and fiction writer.

He said Amjad Islam Amjad highlighted social, economic and political issues through his dramas and columns and his literary contributions would be remembered for ages.

Dr. Khushk said the legendary writer was of a multidimensional personality, who wrote several books and received ample recognition for his contributions to Urdu literature. He received several awards including the Pride of Performance in 1987 and Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 1998 and Writers Guild Award in 1976. Later on, he also received the prestigious Hilal-e-Imtiaz in 2022, he said.

Dr. Khushk said Amjad Islam Amjad was the author of about 40 books and through his writings, he bridged the gap and brought people closer to literature. He said apart from poetry and columns he wrote numerous dramas for television, through which he highlighted social and political issues in an amazing way and received special President Award on TV Serial Waris in 1980. His dramas "Waris", "Dahl-eez", "Samandar" and "Fisher" were extremely popular among the masses as well as they were an asset for the Urdu drama history, he expressed.

**'Week of Youth' celebrations under PMYP concludes today**

*The present government has declared 2023 as the "Year of the Youth"*

ISLAMABAD: The present government has declared 2023 as the "Year of the Youth" to celebrate the ten years' achievements of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) through its vibrant schemes for their empowerment.

The current week is being celebrated as "Week of Youth", featuring a number of programs including sports competitions, marathons and cheque distribution among successful applicants of the PM Youth and Agriculture Scheme.

According to the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs, Shaza Fatima Khawaja that various programs are being organized to celebrate the decade-long achievements of PMYP during the current "Week of Youth".

The week-long celebrations started on February 21 (Wednesday) with a competition for young start-ups, titled "Future Builder's Contest", arranged in collaboration with the UAE embassy while on February 22, Football and volleyball trials under the Prime Minister's Talent Hunt program and cheques distribution to the successful applicants under the Prime Minister's Youth Loan and Agriculture Loan were also part



of the week's activities.

A discussion at the SDGs Secretariat, to formulate future strategies related to youth, a 10-kilometer marathon race and a photography competition on the issue of climate change were also organized during the week.

The closing ceremony of the youth week will be held on Monday, February 27.

Shaza Fatima told that PMYP was a flagship program of PML-N with the objective

to empower youth and before this, there was no specific program for the welfare of the youth in the country.

In 2008, Shehbaz Sharif as the Chief Minister started this program in Punjab province while on the national level the Program was started by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2013 and Maryam Nawaz was appointed as its first chairperson, she added. APP

**Festival**

ISLAMABAD: Women are busy buying handmade items at a stall during the big family carnival title "A Sunny Sunday" at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**CTP issued traffic plan for PSL cricket matches in Pindi**

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP), Rawalpindi issued a comprehensive traffic plan for the convenience of citizens regarding the Pakistan Super League (PSL) cricket matches being started from 01 March to 12 at Double Road Cricket Stadium.

The CTP has made special arrangements to keep the traffic flowing on alternative routes during matches.

On the occasion, Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Taimur Khan said more than 347 traffic police officers and jawans will perform special duties during the PSL, including seven DSPs, 27 inspectors, 206 traffic wardens and 107 traffic assistants.

During the movement of cricket teams, additional personnel have been deployed by making special arrangements to keep traffic flowing on alternate routes. For the convenience of cricket fans, parking facilities have been provided at three places, including Civil Aviation Ground Shaheen Chowk, Shahbaz Sharif Park near Shaheen Chowk and Graduate Degree College Satellite Town.

Besides, the shuttle service has been provided to access the stadium from the parking area. Murree Road will be completely closed from Faizabad to Double Road.

During this time, the traffic coming from Islamabad will

be diverted from Faizabad to Expressway.

Traffic moving towards Islamabad will be able to enter Islamabad by using 6th Road Said Pur Road while traffic coming from Ghousia Chowk will be diverted to Farooq Azam Road, Kurri Road.

During the cricket match, both sides of Stadium Road from 9th Avenue Chowk to Double Road will be completely closed for traffic.

Meanwhile, the traffic coming from Islamabad 9th Avenue will be able to enter Rawalpindi through Faizabad Expressway and IJP Road through Pandora Chongi, Katarian, Carriage Factory, Pirwadhai Mor, Chak Madad

while the traffic going from Rawalpindi to Double Road 9th Avenue Islamabad will be able to enter Rawalpindi through Murree Road.

The CTO said during the match, awareness banners regarding alternative routes and parking will be displayed on the main highways of Rawalpindi for the convenience of the citizens and to keep the traffic flowing on alternative routes so that the citizens remain updated.

Through the official social media pages of traffic police and radio station 88.6, the citizens will also be provided with moment-to-moment information about the diversion points and traffic situation, he added. APP

**Health Corner**

**Traffic pollution impairs brain function**

ISLAMABAD: A new study by researchers at the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria has shown that common levels of traffic pollution can impair human brain function in only a matter of hours.

The peer-reviewed findings, published in the journal Environmental Health, show that just two hours of exposure to diesel exhaust causes a decrease in the brain's functional connectivity — a measure of how the study provides the first evidence in humans, from a controlled experiment, of altered brain network connectivity induced by air pollution.

"For many decades, scientists thought the brain may be protected from the harmful effects of air pollution," said senior study author Dr. Chris Carlsten, professor and head of respiratory medicine and the Canada Research Chair in occupational and environmental lung disease at UBC. "This study, which is the first of its kind in the world, provides fresh evidence supporting a connection between air pollution and cognition."

For the study, the researchers briefly exposed 25 healthy adults to diesel exhaust and filtered air at different times in a laboratory setting. Brain activity was measured before and after each exposure using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

The researchers analyzed changes in the brain's default mode network (DMN), a set of inter-connected brain regions that play an important role in memory and internal thought. The fMRI revealed that participants had decreased functional connectivity in widespread regions of the DMN after exposure to diesel exhaust, compared to filtered air.

"We know that altered functional connectivity in the DMN has been associated with reduced cognitive performance and symptoms of depression, so it's concerning to see traffic pollution interrupting these same networks," said Dr. Jodie Gawryluk, a psychology professor at the University of Victoria and the study's first author. "While more research is needed to fully understand the functional impacts of these changes, it's possible that they may impair people's thinking or ability to work."

Notably, the changes in the brain were temporary and participants' connectivity returned to normal after the exposure. Dr. Carlsten speculated that the effects could be long lasting where exposure is continuous. He said that people should be mindful of the air they're breathing and take appropriate steps to minimize their exposure to potentially harmful air pollutants like car exhaust.

"People may want to think twice the next time they're stuck in traffic with the windows rolled down," said Dr. Carlsten. "It's important to ensure that your car's air filter is in good working order, and if you're walking or biking down a busy street, consider diverting to a less busy route."

While the current study only looked at the cognitive impacts of traffic-derived pollution, Dr. Carlsten said that other products of combustion are likely a concern.

"Air pollution is now recognized as the largest environmental threat to human health and we are increasingly seeing the impacts across all major organ systems," says Dr. Carlsten. "I expect we would see similar impacts on the brain from exposure to other air pollutants, like forest fire smoke. With the increasing incidence of neurocognitive disorders, it's an important consideration for public health officials and policy-makers." Courtesy: Science Daily



**NUMS takes initiative to create nutrition awareness**

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) has taken an initiative to impart nutrition education sessions to school children in twin cities in its drive for creating awareness to help improve their health as 40.2 per cent of children in Pakistan are suffering from stunted growth, said head of NUMS Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Dr Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed here on Sunday.

Realising the dire state of nutrition indicators in Pakistan and the importance of spreading awareness about nutrition education at the grassroots level, NUMS Department of Nutrition & Dietetics (DND) started education sessions at different schools in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The series of such sessions were held at Roots International School, the Great Maple School, United Charter School, the International School System, and SLS Montessori School and college PWD campus, where NUMS's nutrition experts gave lessons for two days to students of Grade I to grades IV, and Grades V to VIII on the topics of "Importance of Breakfast and Healthy Eating - The Concept of My Plate", he said.

These educational sessions were conducted in accordance with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2) (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality education). NUMS Department of Nutrition & Dietetics aims to continue conducting such training sessions in various schools in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

According to the National Nutrition Survey of Pakistan 2018-19, 40.2% of children in Pakistan are stunted (lower height for age), 17.7% suffer from wasting (lower weight for height), 28.9% are underweight (lower weight for age) while 9.5% are overweight. These indicators call for immediate interventions to bring about a long-term change in the eating habits and dietary choices of people at large.

During NUMS educational nutrition sessions, school children were explained through videos the difference between healthy and junk foods. They were told as how the consumption of healthy and junk food affect their health.



**Pak delegation leaves for Istanbul to participate in Eurasia Summit**

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of the Association of Private Sector Universities Pakistan (APSUP), a 34-member delegation from Pakistan representing 20 universities and organizations here on Sunday left for Istanbul to attend Eurasia Higher Education Summit (EURI) in Istanbul.

The first ever Pakistani Pavilion would be established at Eurasia Summit, wherein six leading universities would set up booths and representatives of other Pakistani universities would brief about the various academic programs and explore opportunities of collaboration, student and faculty exchange and joint academic projects.

The Pakistani delegation would be headed by Prof. Dr. Ch. Abdul Rehman Chairman APSUP, Prof.

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhry Coordinator General COMSTECH and Awaiz Raouf President APSUP Punjab.

The University of Lahore, Superior University, University of Faisalabad, University of Sialkot, University of Management and Technology and Institute of Business Management would set up booths at Pakistani Pavilion.

In addition to leadership of APSUP, the Chairmen Board of Governors, Rectors, Vice Chancellors and representatives of Iqra University, Indus University, University of South Asia, Brains Institute, SBB Dewan University, Institute of Southern Punjab, ISAT, Gift University would also be part of the delegation.

The EURI is an annual largest international higher education

event in Eurasia, providing a great networking and academic partnership opportunities for higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the international higher education sector coming from all around the world.

It also provides an opportunity to the higher education leadership to learn from one another's best practices and experiences. During the visit to Turkey, the Pakistani delegation would also express solidarity with earthquake affected people. Special scholarships along with financial and in-kind assistance would be announced for the affected youth. The delegation would also visit leading Turkish universities and MOUs would be signed with international universities.

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# Russia-Ukraine conflict: Europe's leaders must stop the war out of mercy for their people

**Khalaf Ahmad Al-Habtoor**

The Russian-Ukrainian war took an abrupt turn this week. In his address to the Russian Federal Assembly on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the West of using Ukraine to aim at Russia "to transform the local conflict into a global confrontation." This coincided with the surprise visit paid by US President Joe Biden to Ukraine, before he held talks with the Polish President Andrzej Duda in Warsaw. In response to Putin's remarks, Biden stood firm on pledging more support to Ukraine.

In the meantime, the pro-Ukraine European countries maintain an intransigent and uncompromising official position, increasing supplies of equipment and cutting-edge military weapons to Ukraine, in addition to the US' political, moral and logistical support.

One year into the war, Western countries should deal with the crisis from a logical and realistic perspective. They should work toward peace rather than fueling the flames of war, whose ripple effects are spreading far beyond the battlefield to European countries and communities, threatening the safety and security of their citizens.

A report published last week by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research in Germany concluded that the losses incurred by the German economy due to the Ukrainian war would amount to

€600 billion (\$636 billion) by the end of 2023. The losses per capita are expected to reach €2,000, according to the latest data on Germany's gross domestic product, in addition to a 40 percent increase in energy prices. If the strongest economy in Europe is sustaining such a high cost because of the war, what will become of the populations of the other European countries?

Therefore, I call on the leaders and heads of the EU states and the UK to reverse course because, if they keep pursuing the same path, it will entail serious risks and devastating consequences for the people and economies of their countries. Do not help fuel a war driven by foreign agendas with costly repercussions for the Ukrainians, and for your peoples and states.

In hindsight, it would have been possible to anticipate matters and implement an international mechanism to find a solution to the Russian-Ukrainian crisis with the least possible damage, sparing the innocent Ukrainian people the state of misery and homelessness they are now suffering. This could be achieved by responding to the concerns of the warring parties and avoiding provocative actions, such as the plan to enlarge NATO by accepting Sweden and Finland as members.

It goes without saying that these provocative actions will stir up the anger of the Russian bear, which will spare no effort and use all available means, including strategic and conventional nuclear weapons, to defend what it considers its right to security and sovereignty. Things, as they seem, do not bode well. And if the escalation continues, it will lead to an all-out global nuclear war.

Therefore, I call on the leaders and

heads of the EU states and the UK to learn lessons from the negative repercussions of the war on their countries and the world in general. The number of Ukrainians fleeing the war has exceeded 8 million. Europeans are living in panic, with an alarming rise in unemployment rates and skyrocketing prices of basic needs such as fuel, electricity and food.

The European peoples are fortunate because the winter season in Europe has not been as cold as usual. Thus, their needs for heating have diminished, enabling them to spend less money on energy sources whose prices last year soared to unprecedented levels due to Russia cutting its supplies of oil and gas to their countries. Do the leaders not realize that their ultimate responsibility is to ensure a decent and secure life for their people and not to endanger their security? How would they justify to their electoral bases that their people's fate hinges on the developments on the Russian-Ukrainian front?

Worst of all, are European states ready to engage in a devastating third world war, with dire consequences worldwide? As the war enters its second year, our greatest fear is that it will escalate further and get out of control, with unspeakable repercussions. Then there will be no use crying over spilt milk.

This is an open letter to EU and British leaders. Work for the interests of your people and homelands. Look at their suffering. Stop funding foreign agendas with your money and the assets of your people. Let your priority be to end this war. Invest your best efforts in pursuing reconciliation and agreement between the Russians and Ukrainians, rather

than sending arms supplies and boosting one party over the other. Beware of the consequences of going too far in fueling the conflict, as this could backfire and you would be the first to lose, with all the damage it entails.

The European peoples have stood firm out of humanitarian feelings and compassion for others; however, they are reeling under the weight of their miserable economic and living conditions. Will they keep silent while you pursue your absurd policies? A responsible leader must work first and foremost for the interests and comfort of his people. He shall not make his citizens pay the price for his mistakes and adventures.

Today you are putting the interests of others over those of your own countries. Be the pioneers of peace and stand as a strong barrier against those who seek to undermine and destroy you. The conflict's toll has risen to hundreds of thousands of victims and millions of innocent homeless people, not to mention the destruction, which has exceeded all expectations.

I call on you to work for a sincere and long-term Russian-Ukrainian reconciliation, and I am confident that both parties would welcome this effort. There are no winners in war and the biggest losers are those who engage in conflicts instead of working to put out their flames.

*Courtesy: Arab News*

*Khalaf Ahmad Al-Habtoor is a prominent UAE businessman and public figure. He is renowned for his views on international political affairs, his philanthropic activity, and his efforts to promote peace. He has long acted as an unofficial ambassador for his country abroad.*

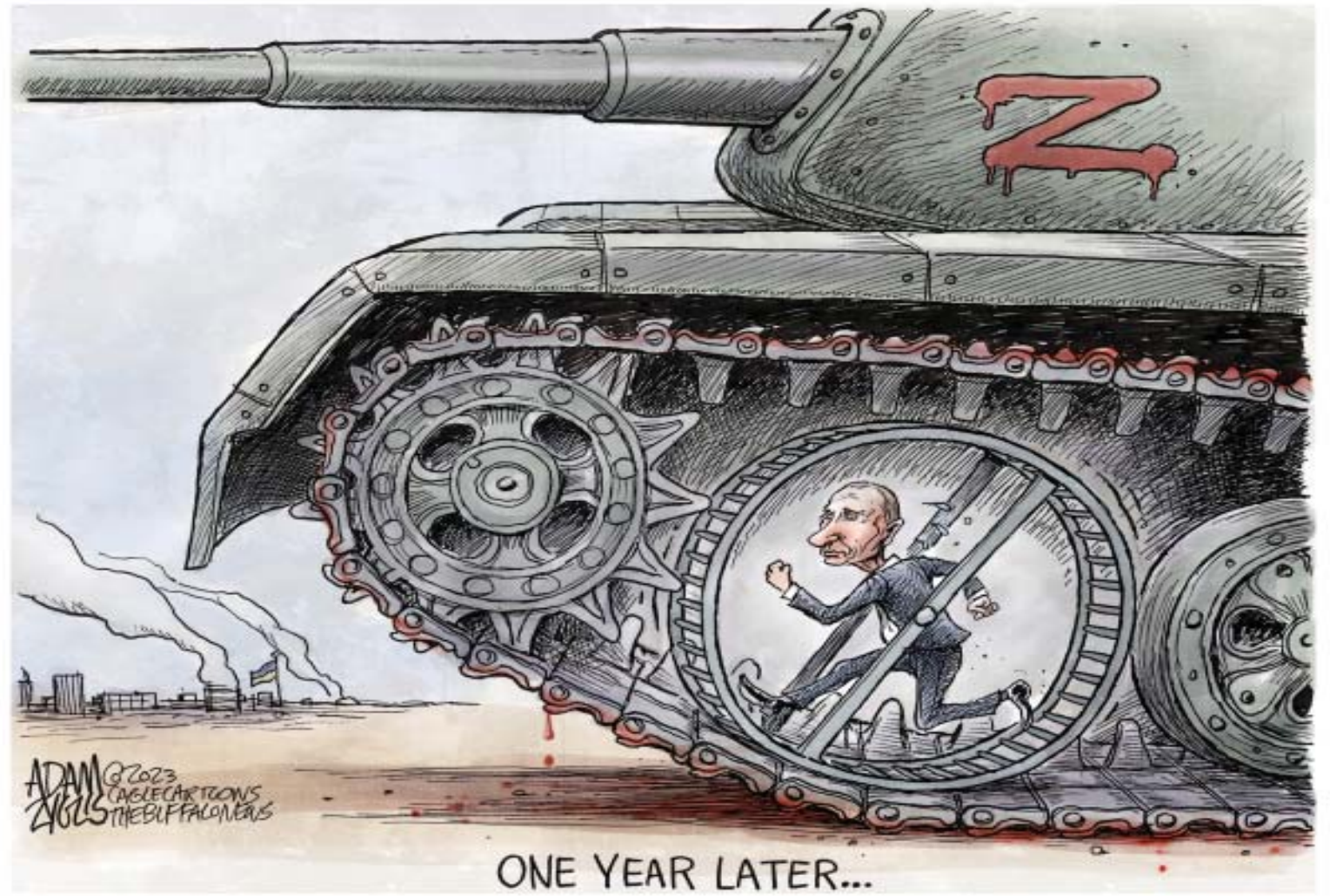
## National unity and collective efforts vital for stability

The motive of the Apex committee represents that we have to work together to counter terrorism. We also have to identify that who wants betterment for the country and who wants to hostile it. For that we have to invite the opposition once again to hold talks and ask them either they are with the nation or not. It is essential to ask them that whether they want to work for the betterment of the people, because this is the prime time to come together and hold that 'Grand National Dialogues'.

It is essential for all the political parties to sit together and hold talks to gain each other confidence and jointly work on National Action Plan accordingly. Due to current economic crisis in the country, it would be quite fortunate that all these political parties could come to the same page for the betterment of the country. The country is again facing the extremism of the militant groups. The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) is very upfront for Pakistan and its security forces. The moment he took oath, he made sure that the security forces will be separated from politics and he ensured it. It is very essential for us to understand that the soldiers sitting on the border to sacrifice their lives for the country, is just because of the spirit of patriotism for the nation. Therefore, it is utmost necessary for us to support our security forces.

Defense Minister Khawaja Asif along with the security forces' high officials recently visited Kabul to held talks regarding terrorist activities in the region. Pakistan has played an active and sincere role for bringing peace in Afghanistan. We have even urging world community to provide assistance to Afghanistan to avert humanitarian crisis there. But unfortunately, the Kabul government is not capable enough to confront the Taliban forces. Deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is not in the interest of the region. Pakistan is highly concerned with the security situation in Afghanistan.

Few people are facilitating these groups in the region. As these activities are prevailing in Pakistan, and now we are direct victim of them. It will not be beneficial for the region and Afghan people as well. It was a positive step by the incumbent government to hold talks in these regards. As Pakistan is going for various ventures with world countries, so they can be benefitted from it.



## German chancellor faces a tricky trip to Washington

**Andrew Hammond**

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has undertaken a wide-ranging itinerary of foreign travel in recent weeks, including official trips to Latin America and Asia. But his most important foreign trip as leader so far comes on March 3, when he will meet US President Joe Biden at the White House.

In the post-war era, Germany's alliance with the US has long been a strong one but it became extremely frayed during the presidency of Donald Trump. The personal relationship between Trump and former Chancellor Angela Merkel might have been the worst, by some stretch, of any between leaders of the two countries. Trump even appeared to refuse to shake Merkel's hand during a press conference after their first meeting in 2017.

In addition to their personal differences, Merkel also got a rocky ride from Trump on several long-standing issues related to the bilateral relationship between their countries, especially trade and defense spending, about which previous US presidents had been more sanguine in public.

On trade, Trump described Germany as "very bad" because of its significant trade surplus, meaning exports that exceed imports. In particular, he singled out the German automobile industry and threatened to impose tariffs on exports.

A second sore point for Trump was Germany's failure to spend at least 2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense spending, a key target for NATO members. While Germany has expanded its foreign missions in recent years, from Mali to Afghanistan, its post-war disinterest in military force has been a longstanding driver of relatively low levels of defense spending.

Ukraine will be high on the agenda for Scholz's meeting with Biden on Friday, given the continuing uncertainties about the months ahead as the conflict apparently remains locked in a war of attrition. The two leaders will also review bilateral cooperation on other security issues, including the challenges presented by China.

Within the agenda there will be much on which the two leaders can agree. However, despite the better personal relationship between Biden and Scholz compared with that of Trump and Merkel, there are several festering issues that remain irritants to bilateral ties.

The first is the continuing caution that has characterized Germany's policy on Ukraine compared with some other Western allies. Certainly, Scholz has made some wide-ranging policy changes in the year since the Russian invasion, in areas including energy and defense.

However, tensions persist between Berlin and some other key allies about the pace and scope of Western support and strategy for Kyiv. This was revealed by initial disagreements between Scholz and Biden over providing tanks to aid Ukrainian forces, which threatened the unified allied effort.

A second point of contention is China, with Biden's administration concerned about the German policy pertaining to the emerging market giant. In November, Scholz became the first leader of a G7 nation to visit China since the start of the pandemic, which was a reflection of the importance Berlin places on its trade ties with Beijing. Between January and June 2022 alone, German businesses invested more than €10 billion (\$10.5 billion) in China, according to the German Economic Institute.

While Scholz's trip was largely uneventful, it gave rise to perceptions of intra-Western splits over China. Germany, especially under the long chancellorship of Merkel, had long been the

primary advocate of Western economic engagement with Beijing.

That long-standing strategy on China has come in for much stronger criticism since Merkel left office in December 2021. The perception that Scholz might be seeking to keep much of her policy on China intact has been widely criticized. For example Ivo Daalder, an Obama era former US ambassador to NATO, warned that Germany is "headed for a collision" with the Biden administration on the issue, not least because of China's qualified support for Russia over Ukraine.

Another issue complicating bilateral ties is the US Inflation Reduction Act. This landmark legislation was initially welcomed by key EU stakeholders, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

However, it subsequently triggered a huge transatlantic row over the massive amount of green-energy subsidies given to US industry, especially in the context of high energy costs in Europe since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The issue has caused much alarm in Germany — in particular, when Robert Habeck, the vice chancellor and minister for economic affairs and climate action, said a few weeks ago that there was urgent need for an intensified European "industrial policy that enables our companies to thrive in global competition, especially through technological leadership."

Taken together, all of this underlines why the visit to Washington will be a tricky one for Scholz. US-German ties are stronger now than they were during the Trump era but multiple pitfalls remain that could threaten Biden's overarching goal of fully restoring the Western alliance following the divisions that characterized his predecessor's presidency.

*Courtesy: Arab News*  
**Andrew Hammond is an associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics.**

## American school shootings shake international students

**Mitchell Blatt**

The last time I was in China before the COVID-19 pandemic began, I heard from parents who were afraid to send their children to study in the U.S. because of their fears about school shootings.

For two families from China, their worst fears were almost realized. On Feb. 13, a murderer descended on the Michigan State University campus in Lansing, Michigan, with two handguns and 50 rounds of ammunition. He busted open classroom doors during evening classes and study sessions and unloaded fire. He ended the lives of three students and severely injured five others. Among the injured were two Chinese students. Another was an American-born daughter of immigrants.

John Hao, one of the victims identified by name, will most likely survive, but he could be paralyzed from the chest down. He will have medical problems for the rest of his life, and his freedom of movement will be greatly limited. His parents are visiting him from China. His medical bills are massive, but the community has chipped in, with over \$300,000 raised on GoFundMe.

The reality of American carnage leaves no one unscathed. Over a million international students are studying abroad in the U.S., and 28 million foreign-born workers are living in the country. In recent years, Chinese students have been among the victims of shootings, including students at the University of Chicago, Yale, and the University of Utah. The shooting at Monterey Park, California, which occurred during the 2023 Lunar New Year, robbed the lives of three foreign citizens and multiple immigrants. A Mexican traveler was killed while visiting family at a shooting during a parade in Illinois on July 4, 2022.

The frequency of these brutalities is cutting

lives short and coloring perceptions of America. Foreign consulates put out warnings. Tourists think twice before adding America to their itineraries.

China is not the only country whose government is expressing dire concern.

Japan has issued an advisory that "one of the main security concerns in the United States is gun crime."

The Mexican government warns that "historical racial and ethnic tensions, including opposition to immigration, have led to attacks by violent extremist groups."

Canada says, "Incidences of mass shootings occur, resulting most often in casualties. Although tourists are rarely involved, there is a risk of being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Germany's travel advisory for the U.S. notes, "The number of arms and ammunition purchases have increased significantly during the COVID-19 crisis."

According to a global survey conducted in partnership with U.S. News and World Report, the perception of the U.S. as a safe country dropped from No. 38 in the world in 2021 to No. 47 in 2022.

Americans, of course, are victims themselves. Unfortunately, there is little that could make the laws or culture around gun violence change. With each tragedy, the supporters of unfettered access to killing weapons voice excuses and platitudes to deny the need for taking action. Now the Republican Party controls the House of Representatives, the lower house of the legislature, and they would block any proposed gun safety laws.

So people will have to live with the slight feeling of uncertain anxiety when visiting the U.S. Or, as the Australian government advises, "If you live in the U.S., learn active shooter drills."

*Courtesy: China.org.cn*  
**Mitchell Blatt is a columnist with China.org.cn.**



# Pakistanis among 45 migrants dead after shipwreck in Italy

*So-called central Mediterranean route is known as one of world's most dangerous*

ROME: Forty-five people died, including some children, when a wooden sailing boat carrying migrants crashed against rocks on the southern Italian coast early on Sunday, authorities said.

The vessel had set sail from Turkey several days ago with migrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries, and crashed in stormy weather near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria.

The provisional death toll stood at 45, Manuela Curra, a provincial government official, told Reuters. Eighty-one people survived, with 22 of them taken to hospital, she said.

One survivor was arrested on migrant trafficking charges, the Guardia di Finanza customs police said.

Cutro's mayor, Antonio Ceraso, said women and children were among the dead. Exact numbers for how many children had died were not yet available.

His voice cracking up, Ceraso told the SkyTG24 news channel that he had seen "a spectacle that you would never want to see in your life ... a gruesome sight ... that stays with you for all your life".

Wreckage from the wooden gulet, a Turkish sailing boat, was strewn across a large stretch of coast.

Curra said the vessel left Izmir in eastern Turkey three or four days ago, adding that survivors had said some 140



CROTONE: Rescue workers patrol the sea after what local media report to have been a deadly migrant shipwreck, off the eastern coast of Crotona, Italy on Sunday. Reuters

to 150 were on board.

The survivors were mostly from Afghanistan, as well as a few from Pakistan and a couple from Somalia, she said, adding that identifying the nationalities of the dead was harder.

"Many of these migrants came from Afghanistan and Iran, fleeing conditions of great hardship", Italian President Sergio Mattarella said.

Initial reports from ANSA and other Italian news agencies, spoke of 27 bodies washed up on the beach and more found in the water.

Ignazio Mangione, an Italian Red Cross official, told SkyTG24 that very

few of the children believed to have been on the boat survived.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni expressed "deep sorrow" for the deaths. Blaming human traffickers, she vowed to block migrant sea departures to prevent such disasters.

Her right-wing administration has taken a hard line on migration since taking office in October, mostly by restricting the activities of migrant rescue charities with tough new laws that won final parliamentary approval on Thursday.

Meloni accuses charities of encouraging migrants to make the dangerous

sea journey to Italy, acting as so-called "pull factors".

Charities reject this, saying migrants set off regardless of whether rescue boats are in the vicinity.

"Stopping, blocking and hindering the work of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) will have only one effect: the death of vulnerable people left without help," Spanish migrant rescue charity Open Arms tweeted in reaction to Sunday's shipwreck.

In a separate statement, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi said it was essential to stop sea crossings that he said offer migrants the "illusory mirage of a better life" in Europe, enrich traffickers, and cause such tragedies.

Pope Francis, the son of Italian immigrants to Argentina and long a vocal advocate for migrants' rights, said he was praying for everyone caught up in the shipwreck.

Italy is one of the main landing points for migrants trying to enter Europe by sea, with many seeking to travel on to richer northern European nations. The so-called central Mediterranean route is known as one of the world's most dangerous.

The United Nations Missing Migrants Project has registered more than 17,000 deaths and disappearances in the central Mediterranean since 2014. More than 220 have died or disappeared this year, it estimates. Reuters

## Police rescue kidnapped child in N. Afghanistan

KUNDUZ: The Afghan police have rescued a kidnapped child in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province and arrested an alleged kidnapper, provincial police spokesman Jumaudin Khaksari said on Sunday.

Following search operations, the three-year-old boy was rescued from kidnappers' custody on Saturday evening and police handed the child over to his family, Khaksari told reporters.

Police have also detained a man involved in the kidnapping of the boy, the spokesman added.

In a similar operation, the police released a child from the kidnappers' clutch in the neighboring Balkh provincial capital Mazar-i-Sharif days ago.

Criminal gangs often attempt to kidnap children of well-off families for ransom in the war-torn and impoverished Afghanistan. Xinhua

## Russia halts oil supply to Poland: Polish refiner



WARSAW: Russia has halted oil supplies to Poland via the Druzhba pipeline, Poland's leading oil and gas conglomerate PKN Orlen said.

The company said it is fully prepared for such a situation and that deliveries to its refinery can be made entirely by sea.

"Only 10 percent of the raw material came from Russia, and we will replace it with oil from other directions," Daniel Obajtek, CEO of the Polish refiner, said on Twitter.

Local media reported that the supply halt through the pipeline, exempted from the sanctions imposed by the European Union on Russia following the Russian special military operation in Ukraine, came a day after Poland delivered its first Leopard tanks to Ukraine. Agencies

# A woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth every two minutes: UN

### Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: Maternal health setbacks in many parts of the world have contributed to the worrying finding that a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth around every two minutes, UN agencies have said.

According to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO), maternal deaths have either increased or stagnated nearly everywhere, from 223 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, down from 227 in 2015 and 339 in 2000.

Unless progress is made on global targets for reducing maternal deaths - most of which are preventable - the lives of over one million more women by 2030 could be at risk, the WHO warned.

"Pregnancy ... is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world who lack access to high quality, respectful health care," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director-general, said in a statement.

Tedros highlighted stark disparities in healthcare access in many regions and the urgent need "to ensure every woman and girl has access to critical health services before, during and after childbirth, and that they can fully exercise their reproductive rights".

Furthermore, as the world slowly emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic which has highlighted that coronavirus infections can

increase risks during pregnancy, the report's authors stressed that more research will be needed to show the true impact of the global health emergency on maternal deaths.

The WHO-produced report, Trends In Maternal Mortality, tracked maternal deaths nationally, regionally and globally from 2000 to 2020.

It calculated 287,000 maternal deaths worldwide in 2020, which represented "only a slight decrease" from 309,000, in 2016.

This was the case despite countries' pledges in 2015



to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), whose target is less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Although the report indicated "some significant progress" in reducing maternal deaths between 2000 and 2015, gains largely stalled, or in some cases even reversed, after this point, its authors said.

Responding to the report's findings, the UN

Population Fund's (UNFPA) Executive Director, Dr Natalia Kanem expressed alarm that "so many women continue to die needlessly in pregnancy and childbirth. Over 280,000 fatalities in a single year is unconscionable."

Dr Kanem added: "We can and must do better by urgently investing in family planning and filling the global shortage of 900,000 midwives so that every woman can get the lifesaving care she needs. We have the tools, knowledge and resources to end preventable maternal deaths; what

we need now is the political will."

Among the report's key findings: that maternal deaths remain largely concentrated in the poorest parts of the world and in countries affected by conflict.

In 2020, about 70 per cent of all maternal deaths were in sub-Saharan Africa. And in nine countries facing severe humanitarian crises, maternal mortality rates were more than double the

world average (551 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to 223 globally).

The leading causes of maternal death are severe bleeding, high blood pressure, pregnancy-related infections, complications from unsafe abortion and underlying conditions that can be aggravated by pregnancy - such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

"These are all largely preventable and treatable with access to high-quality and respectful healthcare," the report's authors stressed.

Additional data showed that roughly one-third of women do not receive four of the recommended eight antenatal checks or receive essential postnatal care, while some 270 million women lack access to modern family planning methods.

The report's authors also stressed that inequality related to income, education, race or ethnicity "further increase risks for marginalized pregnant women, who have the least access to essential maternity care but are most likely to experience underlying health problems in pregnancy".

The report was produced by WHO on behalf of the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group comprising WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank Group and the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

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## Death toll rises to 54 from landslides on Brazil's coast



SAO PAULO: The death toll from landslides caused by heavy rains on the coast of Brazil's Sao Paulo state over the weekend has risen to 54, as rescuers continue to search for dozens of missing people under mountains of mud, officials confirmed Friday.

Rescue teams have identified 13 minors among the dead, the Sao Paulo state government said in a statement.

The municipalities of Sao Sebastiao, Ubatuba, Caraguatatuba, Ilhabela and Bertoga were the most severely affected by the rainfall, which in less than 24 hours was twice as heavy as expected for all of February, marking a new record in Brazil.

The rains caused landslides in the Serra do Mar mountain range along the coast, where key tourist resorts are located, sweeping away homes in poor neighborhoods on the hillsides, where about 4,000 people fled or lost their homes.

The disaster is focused in Vila do Sahy, the most affected community, located next to the exclusive beaches of Baleia and Camburi, in the municipality of Sao Sebastiao.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva proposed this week to the Sao Sebastiao mayor's office the construction of housing in flat areas outside risk areas for those who have lost their homes.

In addition, Sao Paulo governor Tarcisio de Freitas proposed the installation of a siren system, like that in other mountain areas at risk of landslides, since the telephone warning system in use was not effective. Agencies

## India, Germany sign innovation, clean energy pacts



NEW DELHI: India and Germany on Saturday signed two government-to-government agreements on cooperation in innovation and technology and cooperation in green hydrogen and clean energy technologies.

The pacts were signed during the ongoing two-day visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, in the presence of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This is Scholz's first visit to India as the German Chancellor.

The two sides also signed a business-to-business memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Skill Council of Green Jobs and Bundesverband Solarwirtschaft. An announcement on the organization of the Asia Pacific Conference (APK) in India next year was also made on the occasion.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict was also discussed between the two leaders. Modi said that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine conflict have been felt across the world. These have had a particularly negative impact on developing countries.

The two leaders also heard useful thoughts and suggestions from industry leaders of both countries, on topics such as Digital Transformation, FinTech, Information Technology, Telecom, and Diversification of Supply Chains, according to Modi. Xinhua

## Macron announces China visit for Ukraine peace

KYIV: French President Emmanuel Macron said he would visit China in April and urged it to pressure Russia to end the war in Ukraine, a day after Beijing presented a peace plan.

China has attempted to maintain a neutral stance while retaining close ties with strategic ally Moscow, publishing a 12-point position paper on Friday that called for urgent peace talks and a "political settlement" to end the conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday also expressed hopes to meet Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, calling it "important for world security".

Macron on Saturday said he would visit China in "early April" and urged Beijing to help "put pressure" on Russia to end the war.

"The fact that China is engaging in peace efforts is a good thing," Macron said on the sidelines of an agricultural show in Paris, in reference to the position paper. Peace was only possible if "Russian aggression was halted, troops withdrawn, and the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine and its people was respected", he added.

Earlier on Saturday, the Chinese foreign ministry said Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko would pay a state visit from February 28 to March 2 at the invitation of President Xi.

# Turkey widens probe into building collapses as quake toll exceeds 50,000

*Firefighter says body parts found in rubble on daily basis*

ANTAKYA/ISTANBUL: Turkey has arrested 184 people suspected of responsibility for the collapse of buildings in this month's earthquakes and investigations are widening, a minister said, as anger simmers over what many see as corrupt building practices.

Overnight, the death toll from the earthquakes, the most powerful of which struck at the dead of night on February 6, rose to 44,128 in Turkey. That took the overall number of deaths in Turkey and neighbouring Syria to more than 50,000.

More than 500,000 buildings containing 520,000 apartments collapsed or were severely damaged in Turkey by the disaster, the worst in the country's modern history.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag said that more than 600 people had been investigated in connection with collapsed buildings, speaking during a news conference in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir, which was among 10 provinces hit by the disaster.

Those formally arrested and remanded in custody include 79 construction contractors, 74 people who bear legal responsibility for buildings, 13 property owners and 18 people who had made alterations to buildings, he said.

Many Turks have expressed outrage at what they see as corrupt building practices and flawed urban developments.

President Tayyip Erdogan, who faces the biggest political chal-

lenge of his two-decade rule in elections scheduled to be held by June, has promised accountability.

In the province of Gaziantep, the mayor of the Nurdagi district - who is from Erdogan's ruling AK Party - was among those arrested as part of the investigations into collapsed buildings, state broadcaster TRT Haber and other media reported.

Nearly three weeks since the disaster, there is no final death toll in Turkey and officials have not said how many bodies may still be trapped under the rubble.

A firefighter helping to clear the rubble in the hard-hit city of Antakya said body parts were being found on a daily basis.

"It's very difficult. You cannot tell a man to continue working if

he's lifting out a person's arm," said the firefighter, who declined to be identified.

Nearly two million people left homeless by the disaster are being housed in tents, container homes and other facilities in the region and in other parts of the country, Turkey's disaster management authority said.

More than 335,000 tents have been erected in the quake zone and container home settlements are being established at 130 locations, while nearly 530,000 people have been evacuated from affected areas, it added.

But near Antakya, Omran Alswed, a Syrian, and his family are still living in makeshift shelters.

"Our houses are heavily



damaged so we have taken shelter here, in a garden in our neighborhood," said Alswed.

"The biggest issue is tents. It has been 19 days and we are yet to receive a single tent. We also applied to move into a tent camp

but they said the ones nearby are full," he said.

Turkey's only remaining ethnic Armenian village, Vakifli, was badly hit by the quake, with 30 of its 40 stone houses heavily damaged.

"Vakifli is all we have, the only Armenian village in Turkey. It is our home. Seeing it like this is breaking my heart," said Masis, a 67-year-old retired jeweller, who moved back to his hometown after spending 17 years in Istanbul.

Turkey and Armenia are still at odds over the 1.5 million people Armenia says were killed in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor to modern Turkey. Armenia says this constitutes genocide.

Turkey accepts that many Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were killed in clashes with Ottoman forces during World War One, but contests the figures and denies it was systematic. Reuters



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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
40,707.76	40,838.51
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,978.46	40,682.46
Index Value	Change
4,226,465,574	-130.75
Percentage	Time
-0.32%	24 Feb, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,878.66	-29.06
Percentage	Time
-0.37%	24 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
32,735.36	-418.55
Percentage	Time
-1.26%	24 Feb, 12:50 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
27,453.48	+349.16
Percentage	Time
+1.29%	24 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	184.4
Bahrain Dinar	693.87	701.87
Canadian Dollar	194	196.2
China Yuan	38.28	38.68
Danish Krone	37.09	37.49
Euro	275.90	278.65
Hong Kong Dollar	33.45	33.8
Indian Rupee	3.16	3.27
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	850.18	859.18
Malaysian Ringgit	59.33	59.93
New Zealand \$	163.68	165.68
Norwegians Krone	25.78	26.08
Omani Riyal	677.48	685.48
Qatari Riyal	71.89	72.59
Saudi Riyal	69.35	70.05
Singapore Dollar	194	196
Swedish Korona	25.32	25.62
Swiss Franc	279.18	281.68
Thai Bhat	7.61	7.76
U.A.E Dirham	171.50	172.22
UK Pound Sterling	313.25	316.38
US Dollar	266.8	269.5

# Boost in Pakistani exports to US discussed in Washington talks: Minister

*The Commerce minister says significant progress has been made in some of the critical areas*

WASHINGTON: Pakistan and the United States had comprehensive talks on a range of key issues, including enhancing the export of Pakistani mangoes and dates to the US and more market access for Pakistani textiles, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar has said.

Other matters discussed included boosting US investments in Pakistan's agriculture sector, especially in the development of hybrid, climate-resilient seeds as well as supporting Pakistani IT and tech industry, he told reporters Saturday at the end of his three-day visit to Washington during which he also co-chaired the meeting of Pakistan-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Ministerial Council.

The minister said that significant progress has been made in some of the critical areas while further headway was expected during



the course of the discussion that would follow. He said the TIFA meeting, held after a gap of eight years, reflected an understanding and commitment of the two countries to pursue a broad-based agenda and make mutually beneficial trade and investment ties an important pillar of the relationship.

Naveed Qamar said that the two sides have agreed to have regular follow-up engagements during the current year to ensure progress on all issues to achieve tangible results. It was also agreed to convene the next TIFA Council Ministerial meeting in Islamabad in early 2024.

Expressing satisfaction over the ongoing and forthcoming high-level dialogues in various sectors including energy, climate change etc., the minister said that Pakistan was now being seen as United States' sovereign trading partner. "The United States is an important country for us and we want our relations to further grow in all possible areas," he said.

Talking about the economic challenges being faced by the country, the minister said that the tough decisions taken by Pakistan to revive the IMF programme, have started showing results.

"In anticipation of revival of the programme, the reserves had started increasing and the rupee-dollar parity was witnessing stability," he said.

"The turn-around period has started." The minister expressed the hope that with the formal approval of revival of the programme by the IMF Board, the reserves would increase with inflows from friendly countries and international banks. He, however, stated that the revival of the programme alone was not a panacea for all ills.

"We need structural reforms. Our processes need to be changed."

Responding to a question, the minister said that the revival of the dialogue would significantly boost the confidence of the business community and would help in providing them with a conducive environment marked by economic stability. APP

## PM launches BOP Freelancer Segment and Credit Card at PMYB&ALS Event

**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, has launched the BOP Freelancer Segment and Credit Card at a ceremony for cheque distribution among the beneficiaries of the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme

(PMYB&ALS). The event was part of on-going 'Week of Youth' celebrations. Mr. Zafar Masud (President and CEO - BOP) and other senior officials of BOP were also present at the occasion.

The Bank of Punjab (BOP), one of the leading financial institutions of Pakistan, through this proposition, aims to improve financial access of freelancer community by addressing their transactional, lend-

ing and payment related needs. Additionally, this initiative will also enhance the country's potential of attracting foreign exchange.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr. Zafar Masud (President and CEO - BOP) said, "There are around 3 million freelancers in Pakistan. Freelancers contributed \$400m out of the total information and communication technologies export remittances of \$2.616 billion recorded by the country during FY 2022, while their potential is worth billions of dollars. Through our freelancer segment & credit card initiative, we aim to unlock this potential and help the economy. Freelancers and IT professionals can open Freelancer Digital Accounts in both PKR and USD, which can help bring foreign remittances

through official channels and can support enhanced credit and debit limits of up to USD 5,000 per month & USD 30,000 per annum. In addition, IT professionals and companies are now allowed to retain 35% of their export proceeds in such special foreign currency accounts, in an aim to bring and retain foreign exchange earnings."

Furthermore, freelancers can get BOP PSEB co-branded Debit & Credit cards. These cards give access to exciting tech-related discounts at our alliance partners and boast features customized for this segment, such as better transaction limits. We're thankful to our partners MasterCard and Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) for their tireless efforts in making this possible."

## Philippines keen to promote trade ties with Pakistan: envoy



**Mian Rashid Asghar.**

FAISALABAD: Philippines wanted to buy sugar, agricultural machinery and textile products from Pakistan while the Philippines can also provide training facilities to promote tourism in Pakistan.

This was stated by the Ambassador of the Philippines Ms. Don Irwin C. Bagaporo during a meeting with Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Dr. Khuram Tariq & Senior Vice President Dr. Sajjad Arshad.

The Ambassador of the Philippines expressed his satisfaction on the bilateral friendly relations between the two countries and said that they need to promote the economic ties with keen interests of both countries. Ms. Don Irwin C. Bagaporo expressed that one sugar mill in the Philippines has been blacklisted while the

others are Close to closure. In this situation, Pakistan can meet the sugar needs of the Philippines. She said that the Philippines can import many products from Pakistan except sugar, agricultural machinery and textiles and in this regard he will visit Faisalabad in mid-March to have direct contacts with the relevant businessmen.

Ms. Don Irwin C. Bagaporo further pointed out that although Philippines is importing textile products from Pakistan but the volume is much less than the potential that needs to be increased. Ms. Don Irwin C. Bagaporo said that for some time, the Philippines was providing large-scale services to Pakistan, after which there was a sudden decrease. However, due to improving global conditions, the situation is gradually improving and the services sector of the Philippines is coming back to Pakistan.

## KE aims to achieve 30% renewable energy share

*Plans to invest 484 billion in next 7 years, says CMCO KE*

**Our Correspondent**

ISLAMABAD: K-Electric has submitted an investment plan of about 484 Billion for the next 07 years for its Transmission and Distribution Segments in NEPRA, which is more than the investment KE has made in last 17 years, said Sadia Dada - Chief Marketing & Communications Officer at K-Electric while addressing at a seminar "Addressing the Economic, Energy, and Environment (3-Es) Crises: Innovation and Technology Driven Approach" organized by SDPI in Islamabad.

Sadia Dada further added that Karachi's power demand is growing exponentially and as per the utility's estimates, its consumer base to expand to the tune of 05 million and power demand to reach at least 5,000 MW by 2030. She commented that through this plan, KE focuses on system reliability, growth in customer base, adoption of technology to drive more efficiency and automation in the process while also adding significant share of renewable energy in its power mix to support the Government's objectives to reduce the consumption of imported fuel and benefit the environment. Through this plan, KE is eyeing to achieve its ambition of 30 by 30 which includes increasing the share of renewable energy to the tune of 30%, increasing the consumer base by 30% and also reducing the power outages by 30%.

Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, Senior Advisor and Research Fellow at SDPI in his keynote address highlighted that the interrelation between energy, environment and economy is fundamental to the socio-economic development of the society, especially due to the

environment being under immense stress. He stressed on the role of society, behavioral changes and deliberating novel technology and policy solutions as the way forward from the existing crisis.

Muhammad Basit Ghauri, Program Officer, Renewables First said that Pakistan has been struggling to phase the role of private sector and must be given due attention. He stressed on Demand-side Management through innovation to efficiently manage the energy peak load and strengthening the linkages between academia and industry to support innovations driven by industry demand.

Mr. Amer Zia, Chief Distribution Officer, K-Electric stressed that unless access to tertiary energy sources is increased, the efficiency of primary and secondary energy sources must be focused to meet the increasing energy demand. He stressed on enhancing data quality so that robust, efficient and intelligent decisions can be taken. He informed that K-Electric has brought various innovative technologies like smart metering, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), while advanced distribution management systems are also in the pipeline.

Asad Mahmood, EE&RE Expert stressed on the need to establish energy conservation cells across the public and private energy distribution companies to address the energy intensity to resolve the energy crisis. He said as the per capita energy consumption increases, the competition for resources and consequently the cost of energy increases thereby triggering energy poverty in the future as well. He stressed that

public energy companies must align standard industrial classification codes with that of Bureau of Statistics so economic activity can be reflected in billing, data collection and industries can be efficiently captured in billing. He stressed that we need to realistically revisit our NDCs to catalyze progress to their achievement as we approach 2030. He emphasized on reducing grid emissions being crucial to accessing international climate finances.

Dr. Khalid Waleed, Research Consultant SDPI said that our energy choices are coming at the cost of economy and environment and innovative and technological solutions are at the heart of the triple E crisis. He suggested that Pakistan should negotiate for debt restructuring in the form of debt to climate and nature swaps to build adaptation and resilience to climate change, support the transition to clean energy and reduce the national dependency on import fuels.

Mr. Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, Senior Research Associate at SDPI mentioned that Pakistan has been using a "short-sighted" and a "Just in time approach" to address its energy security concerns over the past years. While it did provide some short-term relief for energy supplies, it has led to an economic trap in the form of increasing circular debt (PKR 2.4 trillion in 2022), high-capacity payments, and a limited power evacuated capacity; all that is highly dependent on high cost imported fossil fuels. He further added that in the backdrop of high inflation, increasing interest rates, high supply chain cost, and rising commodity prices; the competitiveness of RE projects against fossil fuels has been impacted.

## Small cage and floor poultry production owners demand action against hoarders

**M.A Rashid**

FAISALABAD: The Small cage and floor poultry production owners in Punjab have demanded that the hoarding and the stinging mafia will have to be reined in, otherwise the economic massacre of the common people at their hands will rise even more.

According to the reliable sources, it has been confirmed that Punjab Egg's Association is functioning as a private association of friends related to the poultry, which provides rate and market information to the public. Delivering of certain information to the market via this association regarding some kind of (egg or feed) rate is possible, while the eggs rate are fixed by the

Punjab Rate Committee (consisting of farmers) and the feed rate is controlled by the Pakistan Poultry Association and livestock owners with mutual consultation.

In view of Cage and Floor Brailers Production, the small farmers have the ability to do it in common areas and on a small scale, making poultry production within the reach of a common man in the market. Livestock and big farmers have fostered a culture of exterminating these small scale production farmers, causing egg and chicken rates to sky-rocket, which will further upset the public.

Sources elaborated that, In fact, small farms holders have been eliminated in the broiler production, and



small farms are also being eliminated in the layer products. Larger control houses have started to be built-up, and the smaller floor farms have almost disappeared and now it is the turn of the small cage farms to face untoward circumstances through which the poultry production can succeed in the economic massacre of the people at the hands of the mafia without any

ultimatum. Small farms comprising cage and floor poultry production have demanded to end in smoke such activities affecting badly the small farms comprising cage and floor poultry production instantly to save the reach out of common man for purchasing poultry needs of life. The Department of Livestock should formulate a comprehensive policy on monopolies to promote equal rights and increase employment opportunities as well as scaling down the rates going up day by day.

Until the Secretary Livestock takes practical action to review the reasons behind the increase in the prices of poultry products, it is impossible to assess the reasons for the sharp

increase in the prices of poultry products.

Secretary Livestock Masood Anwar will have to bring out the real facts after meeting the people of established private poultry farms and feed mills.

There is an urgent need to formulate a policy and attempt to end the so-called mafia and farmer monopoly by playing the role of common person facilitation schema for the stability of the prices of poultry products.

A detailed review of the availability of raw materials, quality control and marketing system should be formulated on certain recommendations for reducing the rising prices so that the people who are suffering from inflation can breathe a sigh of relief.

## Dar, Sardar Tanveer discuss financial issues of AJK



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan and Federal Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar met in Islamabad. During the meeting, important financial issues related to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and public welfare projects and schemes were discussed.

The Federal Minister of Finance was informed about the government's efforts to increase revenue and sought the support of the Federation in this regard. During the meeting, ongoing and future development projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir were also discussed.

Ishaq Dar welcomed Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan in a grand manner and reiterated the federal government's support for the construction and development of AJK. He further said that the development of the people of AJK is the top priority of the federal government and No effort will be spared in its development. He offered the assistance of the Federal Board of Revenue in increasing the revenue.

Federal Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, highlighting the economic condition of the country, said that despite the current challenging situation, the government has Finance of the country Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan thanked the finance minister for his cooperation for the development of the Kashmiri people. Azad Kashmir Chief Secretary Mohammad Usman Chachar and Finance Secretary Ismatullah Shah also attended the meeting. Federal Secretary Finance Hamid Yaqub Sheikh, Special Secretary Finance Awais Manzar Soomro and Assistant Secretary Finance Zulfiqar Ahmed Assistant the Federal Minister.



PSL 2023

# Karachi Kings defeat Multan Sultans by 66 runs

Karachi Kings won the 14th match of the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League

KARACHI: Karachi Kings won the 14th match of the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) against Multan Sultans by 66 runs as the Sultans were unable to chase the 168-run target set for them, at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi on Sunday.

Put to bat first, Kings posted a competitive target of 168 runs before bowling out Sultans for 101 runs in 16.3 overs, thanks to a half-century from Tayyab Tahir and an exceptional display of spin bowling from Tabraiz Shamsi, Shoaib Malik, and Imad Wasim.

In reply to the target, Sultans' batters couldn't find the momentum as Kings' spin bowling shone and didn't let their opponents settle.

Opener Shan Masood departed after scoring 25 runs in 16 balls with the help of four boundaries. The batter fell to Akif Javed after an inside edge.

Meanwhile, Rilee Rossouw was cleaned up by a beauty from spinner Shoaib Malik. The left-hander could only score seven runs in six balls.

The next batter to fall was David Miller, who was sent back by his compatriot Tabraiz Shamsi after scoring seven runs.

Veteran all-rounder Malik struck again in his third over as he sent Sultans' skipper Mohammad Rizwan (29) back to the



KARACHI: Karachi Kings players celebrate during the 14th match of the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League played in the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi on Sunday.

pavilion. The wicketkeeper-batter tried to play a sweep shot to the leg side, but the ball hit the edge, and the rest was done by debutant Tayyab Tahir, who took a sensational catch.

It was spinners' day among Kings as Shamsi delivered again for his side, bowling out Khushdil Shah (4) with a brilliant delivery. The South African spinner claimed his third wicket by dismissing Usama Mir after he scored 10 runs.

For Kings, Malik and Shamsi claimed three wickets each, while Akif and Imad secured two scalps each. Earlier, Karachi Kings finished on 167-3 in their allotted 20 overs. During the first inning, it had seemed at one stage that Kings would post a massive total on the board but the Sultans bowlers bowled exceedingly well in the death overs to get back into the contest.

Opener James Vince departed after a brief cameo, 27 runs in 12 balls, with Anwar Ali sending the England player back to the hut. However, Matthew Wade and Tayyab Tahir stitched an impressive hundred partnership, 109 runs in 83 balls, for the second wicket.

Tahir was caught in front of the stumps by tournament's leading wicket-taker Ihsanullah but not before the former had scored 65 runs in 46 balls. The right-hander's confident knock included eight fours and a six.

Meanwhile, Wade, who scored 46 runs in 47 balls and struggled to get going, was cleaned up by Ihsanullah while trying to play a lap shot. Skipper Imad Wasim only faced six balls but made full use of those to score 14 runs with the help of a four and a six. Ihsanullah was the pick of the bowlers for Sultans with figures of 2-22 in four overs. Agencies

## Home Run Snow Festival concludes

SWAT: The Red Bull Home Run Snow Festival, organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority and district administration in collaboration with Simons Malam Jabba and Red Bull, was concluded at Malam Jabba Ski Resort in Swat here Sunday.

During the Festival, competitions were held in different categories of snow-boarding and skiing.

On this occasion, Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah and Brigade Commander 6 Brigade Sajid Akbar were the special guests.

They were accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Swat Irfan Wazir, officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and other important personalities. Local athletes from other parts of the country including Chitral, Dir, Swat,



Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Malam Jabba participated in the Festival.

More than 80 athletes from Chitral, Dir, Swat, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and other parts of the country and Malam Jabba participated in the Red Bull Home Run Snow Festival.

In snowboarding, Samar Khan won the first position, Ayesha Khan won the second position, Iqra won the third position, Umis Hussain won the first position, Ali Hasnain won the

second position and Gibran Aziz won the third position in the same. Ayesha Khan claimed the second position while Iqra grabbed the third position.

In the Men snowboarding events, Amis Hussain won the first position, Ali Hasnain won the second position and Gibran Aziz won the third position. Bushra was declared the winner in the women skiing competition, while in the men skiing competition, Zahid Khan won the first place, Sher Ghani won the second place and Ilyas won

the third place in Men skiing.

A traditional Rabab music to entertain the tourists and sportsmen in the snow festival also mesmerized a large number of tourists. The participants in the festival were awarded with trophies, medals as well as certificates and cash prizes. Along with the provision of all kinds of facilities to the tourists, an emergency medical facility was also provided along with Rescue 1122.

Speaking at the event, Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah said that peace had been restored in Swat and tourists could visit Farfaza Hussain and other tourist places of Swat without any fear. To promote winter tourism and adventure tourism in Swat, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority and district administration are organizing the Festival to promote tourism. APP

## Freak Brandt goal sends Dortmund three points clear

BERLIN: In-form Borussia Dortmund midfielder Julian Brandt scored a freak first-half goal to secure a 1-0 win at Hoffenheim on Saturday and send his side three points clear at the top of the Bundesliga.

Just before half-time, Dortmund captain Marco Reus swung in a free-kick from just outside the box to Brandt, who looked to be trying to get out of the way, but the ball skimmed off his back and into the net.

Brandt, who was named Bundesliga player of the month on Thursday, has now scored in five consecutive matches for Dortmund, who are on a nine-match winning streak.

He said his side "pushed our luck a bit" but declared the victory was a "strong snapshot" of where the team is right now. "In the past we've often lost games like that," he said.

After the break, Dortmund midfielder Emre Can's clumsy challenge on Hoffenheim midfielder Kevin Akpoguma inside the box survived a VAR review, despite the former Liverpool player clearly clipping his opponent's heel.

## Zyla defends World Ski title in Slovenia

WARSAW: Poland's Piotr Zyla defended his ski jumping title at the 2023 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Planica, Slovenia.

The Pole was only 13th after the first jump of 97.5 meters on the normal hill, but then broke a hill record with a result of 105m to make a sensational jump to the top with a total points of 261.8.

Andreas Wellinger from Germany finished second with 259.2 points, while his compatriot Karl Geiger took bronze.

Austrian Stefan Kraft, who was the leader of the competition after his first round jump of 102.5m, finished fourth.

Zyla defended the title he won in Oberstdorf, Germany in 2021, becoming the first athlete to win the title back-to-back since Adam Malysz's triumph in 2001 and 2003. The 36-year-old also became the oldest individual world champion in ski jumping.

"It's hard to explain how happy I feel right now," Zyla said. "I'm close to bursting into tears as I'm so moved. I don't know what happened."

"After the first round, I thought the game was over. I can't believe that I won a gold medal. It was really hard to win the title two years ago, but here in Planica, I worked even harder."

## Celebrations

PLANICA, Slovenia: Piotr Zyla (top) of Poland celebrates after winning the first place of the men's Ski Jumping Normal Hill event at the 43rd FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Planica, Slovenia.



Photo: Zinhua

## Qatari breaks Guinness world record for most matches attended at FIFA World Cup

Spokesman Report

DOHA: Hamad Abdulaziz, a football enthusiast from Qatar, has been recognised as the holder of a unique world record for "most matches attended at a single football FIFA World Cup by an individual", after attending 44 of the 64 games during the Qatar World Cup 2022.

The 39-year-old's attendance in a single FIFA World Cup tournament is undoubtedly the result of meticulous planning, and it is not likely to be surpassed anytime soon.

With all eight venues located within an hour's drive of central Doha, Qatar staged the smallest FIFA World Cup in tournament history.

Qatar hosted four matches each day, with three hours between each kickoff. The longest distance between stadiums was 75 km, which was the trip between Al Janoub in Al Wakrah and Al Bayt in Al Khor, reported The Peninsula Qatar. Subway and bus routes connected all stadiums.

Hamad, who works as a coach

for the Generation Amazing Foundation, said that he dreamt of playing in the World Cup when he was a kid.

"... and as the kick-off approached, I found a way of being part of the tournament's success while showing how well everything was organised and how easy it was to get from one stadium to another," he told The

Peninsula Qatar.

Before the competition, Hamad made contact with Guinness World Records to make sure he would match their requirements. He needed two witnesses to attest that he showed up for the entirety of every game, and the paperwork had to be signed before kickoff and at the end of the game.

## Islamabad Rapid chess championship organized

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad open Rapid chess championship organized on Saturday at Bara Dar, F-9 park Islamabad.

The championship was organized by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration in collaboration with Islamabad Chess Association where players from all over the country participated.

More than 100 players participated in the championships in three main categories including under-fourteen, professional and amateur, moreover, the budding juniors and women were also given the opportunity to enhance their game by playing with top-seed players.

Member state Capital Development Authority (CDA) Afnan Alam, director of Sports, Culture and Tourism Jawad Haider Shah attended the prize distribution ceremony.

According to the Islamabad administration spokesperson Dr M Abdullah Tabassum "Chief Commissioner women volleyball, Islamabad cycling championship, Punjab and Baloch culture days and auto shows would also be organized in the coming week.

He added that ICT administration is determined to encourage sports enthusiasts and athletes to showcase their skills through ICT platform. APP

## Japan's Panthalassa wins Saudi Cup horse race

RIYADH: The 2023 Saudi Cup concluded with the Yoshito Yahagi-trained Panthalassa emerging victorious at the King Abdulaziz Racecourse.

Panthalassa covered the 1,800-meter distance in a time of 1:50:80, beating Country Grammar, trained by Bob Baffert and ridden by Frankie Dettori.

In other groups, four-year-old Salfan won the Jockey Club Cup, and the Tital Al Khaleidiah horse won the Obaiya Arabian Classic Cup.

Meanwhile, the Neom Cup went to Mostahdaf of the United Arab Emirates.

The top-tier racing tournament was organised by the Jockey Club of Saudi Arabia, with the races beginning on Friday with the participation of 243 horses from 16 countries and regions. Xinhua

## HK beat Malaysia to reach FIBA Asia Cup 2025 qualifiers

ULAN BATOR: Hong Kong's basketball team grabbed the last ticket to the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 qualifiers after beating Malaysia 71-66 in the second round of the pre-qualifying tournament in Group F here on Sunday.

The second round opened here on Friday, witnessing teams from Mongolia, Hong Kong (China), Malaysia, Thailand, Guam and Singapore. Xinhua

## Schwarz pips Odermatt in California giant slalom

LOS ANGELES: Austria's Marco Schwarz won his first World Cup giant slalom beating Swiss favourite Marco Odermatt by three hundredths of a second at Palisades Tahoe on Saturday.

Odermatt, the overall World Cup leader who earned World Championships giant slalom and downhill gold in Courchevel this month, led after the first run but the pressure was on after a fine second effort from Schwarz.

The Swiss lost his line, going wide in the upper section of the course, losing over half a second on Schwarz but then attacked the bottom of the course making up time but falling just short.

The win for Schwarz is the first giant slalom World Cup win for Austria since the now retired technical specialist Marcel Hircher's 2019 triumph in Adelboden.

Schwarz won bronze at the recent World Championships and took silver in the combined.

It was Odermatt's 16th straight podium in giant slalom and extends his lead over Norway's Aleksander Aamodt Kilde in the overall standings to 386 points.

Kilde finished in 24th place, 3.05 seconds off the winning pace but his compatriot Rasmus Windingstad took third, 0.36 seconds behind Schwarz, for his third career podium and his first since 2019 in Alta Badia.

Another Norwegian, Henrik Kristoffersen, who is second to Odermatt in the giant slalom standings, finished fourth.

There was disappointment for France's Alexis Pinturault, who was just 25 hundredths off the lead after the first run but ended up in seventh, 1.40 seconds off Schwarz. AFP

## No storybook ending in sight for Liverpool: Klopp

LONDON: Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp said there is no Hollywood ending in sight to his side's struggles after a 0-0 draw at struggling Crystal Palace.

The Reds travelled to Selhurst Park low on confidence after a 5-2 humiliation at home to Real Madrid in the Champions League in midweek.

A point edges Liverpool up to seventh in the Premier League, but they are still six points adrift of fourth-placed Tottenham in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Klopp's men came close to an unprecedented quadruple of trophies last year, but have looked a shadow of that side this season.

"This will not be the season of history," Klopp told reporters. "There will not be movies about it, but we have to go through it anyway."

Palace remain without a win in nine games, but a draw takes the Eagles six points clear of the relegation zone.

Liverpool had appeared to be building some momentum with two consecutive Premier League wins before being brought back to earth with a bang by the European champions in midweek.

A lack of energy has been one of the major factors behind the Reds' fall from grace this season but Klopp put his trust in experience.

