



President Alvi conveys PTI's concerns on level playing field to PM Kakar

President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday conveyed to interim Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar, the concerns of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on the "erosion of fundamental rights and level playing field for all political parties". (Details on Page 8)



Solar Energy Transforming Pakistan's Energy Landscape: Syed Moutasim Ali

Syed Moutasim Ali, Senior Country Manager for Pakistan at Hangzhou Livoltek said in an interview that I started my career as the Senior Country Manager for Pakistan at Hangzhou Livoltek Power Co. Ltd in December, 2022 and to lead sales efforts in a country with vast potential within the South Asian Market Pakistan, like many nations, has grappled with energy crisis and soaring inflation in recent years. (Interview on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Bilateral cooperation

TASHKENT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar meets Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.



Photo: PID

Pakistan, Uzbekistan resolves for early finalization of Strategic Partnership Agreement

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: Pakistan and Uzbekistan on Wednesday reiterated the resolve to finalize the Strategic Partnership Agreement at the earliest to promote regional economic integration. The bilateral ties were discussed in a bilateral meet-

ing between Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on the sidelines of the 16th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) being held here. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to play an active role for the regional connec-

tivity. The leaders exchanged views on deepening bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including political, trade, economic, security, defence, and connectivity. Expressing satisfaction at the growing level of bilateral cooperation, Prime Minister Kakar stressed the importance

of sustaining the momentum. He underlined that the recent operationalization of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and Transit Trade Agreement (UPTTA) would boost bilateral trade and transit trade in addition to streamlining Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement (ECOTA).

They reaffirmed commitment to the early completion of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project. Prime Minister Kakar and President Mirziyoyev discussed on the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza and other regional and global developments.

Funeral prayer of Gen (R) Sawar Khan offered in Rawalpindi

COAS General Asim Munir attended the funeral at Army Graveyard, says ISPR

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The funeral prayer of Gen Sawar Khan (R), former Vice Chief of Army Staff was offered at Army Graveyard Rawalpindi on Wednesday, ISPR



Pakistan Army in 1947. He was promoted to Lt General on 24 March 1976. He commanded Peshawar as well as Lahore's corps.

Gen Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff, and a large number of civil and military officials including senior retired Army officers and relatives of the deceased attended the funeral. General Sawar Khan was a four-star general of the Pakistan Army who also remained the governor of Punjab during the era of Gen Zia-ul-Haq when Zia was simultaneously the Chief of Army Staff and the President. Sawar Khan was born in December 1, 1924 in Rawalpindi region. He was commissioned before the independence of Pakistan in 1946 into the Indian Army's Corps of Artillery. He later opted for the

General Sawar was retired from the army in March 1984 after completing the four-year term as deputy army chief.

He was a professional soldier and hailed from the Potohar plateau of north Punjab, which had been a traditional recruitment area for the British and Pakistani armies.

PM, ECO secretary general discuss Kashmir, Middle East situation



Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday held a meeting with Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organization Ambassador Khusrav Noziri. In the meeting on the sidelines of the 16th ECO Summit, they discussed the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kash-

mir and Middle East. They reviewed the recent developments in the ECO, especially in the domains of trade, connectivity and economic cooperation. The ECO Secretary General thanked Prime Minister Kakar for Pakistan's firm support to the ECO and assured him of the commitment of the Secretariat to strengthen trade and connectivity in the region.

Sanam Javed re-arrested shortly after release

City Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed was re-arrested shortly after her release from Kot Lakhpat Jail. As per details, PTI activist Sanam Javed Khan was arrested and taken by a lady police personnel to the police station. Yesterday, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed's bail in cases related to the May 9 riots cases. The ATC judge Arshad Javid heard the bail plea of the PTI activist Sanam Javed and co-accused Taj Muhammad and Muhammad Tanvir today.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to expand cooperation in field of media

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday agreed to further expand cooperation between the two brotherly countries in media, drama, and other related fields. The decision was made during a meeting between Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf Saeed Al Malki here. Special Representative of the Prime Minister for Interfaith Harmony Allama Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi was also present in the meeting. In the meeting, it was agreed to speed up the implementation of agreements between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the field of media and communications. In the meeting, discussions were also held regarding cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the field of communication. The minister and the ambassador



also discussed the upcoming meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on November 12. Welcoming the convening of the OIC summit by Saudi Arabia, Murtaza Solangi said as a founding member, Pakistan will continue to play its role in the objectives of the establishment of the OIC and further strengthening of the organisation. Murtaza Solangi appreciated the strengthening of the OIC's role in protecting the interests of the Muslim Ummah and the role of Saudi Arabia

in this regard. Besides, bilateral issues of mutual interest were also discussed in the meeting. He expressed good wishes for Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman. The Caretaker Federal Minister of Information also expressed his best wishes for the Saudi Ambassador. The Saudi ambassador also invited the caretaker information minister to visit Saudi Arabia.

Martyrs' families demand restoration of military courts

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The families of Shuhda-e-Pakistan (Martyrs of Pakistan) on Wednesday demanded the restoration of military courts to ensure speedy justice to the victims of terrorism as their abolition had further added to their pain, ARY News reported. Addressing a presser-cum-protest at the National Press Club, the martyrs' families appealed to the Supreme Court to review its decision against the military courts. Nawabzada Jamal Raisani, Haji Sanaullah Khan, Rahimullah, Wazir Farman Elahi, Anwar Zeib, Fawzia, Muhammad Jamshed and others were among the heirs of martyrs, who addressed the presser.

Fawad Hasan chairs first meeting of SIFC Working Group

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hasan on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of SIFC Working Group to discuss impediments in the development of special economic zones (SEZs) with the objective of fast-tracking industrialization. The meeting was attended by all stakeholders in the provincial governments and their industrial zone authorities, an official press



release said. The Additional Secretary of Board of Investment (BOI) and Director General of Special

Economic Zones highlighted the major impediments faced by existing ones and the framework requirements of future SEZs, including the development of a 'One Stop Shop' facilitation. The forum discussed the limitations of the concept of 'One Stop Shop' and pointed out the need of a mutual agreement between the federal and provincial governments for a development framework based on international best practices and standards, with a legal

mandate in the constitutional scheme. The issues of identification and allotment of land, cost competitiveness, provision of utilities, human resource constraints and consistency of policies were also discussed. It was agreed that based on the key takeouts of the meeting a working paper containing solutions and a clear roadmap for future would be circulated for the second and final meeting of the Working Group to be held next week.

Minister for Heritage, Chinese Ambassador for further enhancing Pak-China cultural ties



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong met with the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah and discussed mutual interest issues particularly cultural relations between Pakistan and China. In a meeting with Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of China, Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah discussed exchange and cooperation in Heritage, Art, Culture, Education, capacity building of our Museums and the promotion of the game of football in Pakistan particularly focus in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

US tech entrepreneurs urged to invest in upgrading Pak tourism industry

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S., Masood Khan, has urged Pakistani-American Tech entrepreneurs to invest in promoting Pakistan's tourism and digitalization of its industry. "With digitalization of necessary information, including bookings, lodging, transportation and availability of accurate information, the tourism sector of Pakistan will witness a transformative change," he said at a special session of the Annual Open Silicon Valley Forum 2023 in San Francisco, a city in the US state of California. The subject of the conference was "Exploring Pakistan's Tourism Treasures: From Mountains to Metropolises." "Our joint ventures will help tapping the existing potential of tourism. Your equity participation will pay you off well," Ambassador Masood Khan said. He thanked the organizers of the session which he said would "induce people to visit Pakistan and get a first-hand experience of witnessing its pristine beauty."

BoG Lok Virsa approves various new initiatives being taken by present govt

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Board of Governors (BoG) of the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) 32nd meeting was held here at Lok Virsa in chair of Caretaker Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah.

The meeting was attended by Secretary National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed, Members Rao Tehsin Ali Khan, Tariq Mahmood, Dr Hassan Sher, Joint Secretary Finance Division, ex MPA Sobia Shahid, and Executive Director Lok Virsa Muhammad Uzair Khan.

The meeting commenced with Fateha for the deceased BoG Member Late

Laiq Zada Laiq.

The BoG meeting highly praised holding of ten-day folk festival. The BoG members said that the events like Lok Mela serve to promote national harmony and integration among all federating units through projection of their indigenous culture and folk heritage.

The events like Lok Mela are a priority of the present government as these promote Pakistan's traditional culture and provide healthy entertainment for the people.

The BoG members also appreciated the events being held at Lok Mela in solidarity with Palestine.

The Board has approved the ongoing ten-day folk festival.

During meeting, the Board of Govern-

ment also approved the reconstitution of Lok Virsa Executive Committee.

The Board has also approved the proposal of establishing a dedicated National Heritage Channel to document and broadcast our cultural heritage, historical landmarks, traditional practices, and artistic achievements in principle.

The Board has also approved the proposal of establishing Cineplex Cinema at Lok Virsa in principle.

The BoG also approved the establishment of Centre of Excellence at Lok Virsa.

The minister said that ten-day folk festival aims at promoting indigenous folk heritage and encouraging traditional practitioners including master

artisans, folk artists, folk musicians and rural performers to demonstrate their skills and win recognition of their talent at national level, adding that the festival also serves to strengthen national harmony and integration among all federating units through their effective participation.

This year's festival is being held from 3rd to 12th November, 2023 at Lok Virsa Complex, Garden Avenue, Islamabad.

The main features of the festival include provincial cultural pavilions, folkloric song and dance ensembles, traditional cuisine, craft bazaar, folk theatre performances, storytelling sessions, Putli Tamasha shows, folk musical evenings, etc.

AIOU organizes seminar on women rights

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: "Plant such a tree that shades the neighbor's house. Human development is possible by spreading the message of peace and love as it never decays. A beautiful society can be built by loving one another", said Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mr. Khalil George while addressing an awareness seminar on Women's rights in Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). He also stressed the fact that we are all equal before the law and must respect it. If we learn to respect the law and perform our duties, we will not even need human rights institutions.



Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, emphasized the importance of balancing rights with duties to build a prosperous society. He urged the participants, especially the students, to play their part in the development of the country and protection of rights. Dr. Nasir also highlighted that Allama Iqbal Open University is committed to ensuring education for all, and provides free education to the transgender community, disabled persons, and children of martyrs. He stressed that education is a fundamental right and AIOU does not deprive anyone of it due to financial constraints.

This event was organized by the Department of History, AIOU, in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Rights. Chairperson, Department of History, Dr. Kishwar Sultana said that the purpose of the session was to spread awareness about women's rights and acknowledge their services. Executive Director, Ministry of Human Rights, Shiraz Ahmad Khan, and Deputy Director, Ministry of Human Rights Uzair Iqbal, spoke about the initiatives taken by the ministry for the protection of women's rights. Dr. Malik Hammad from AIOU presented his thesis on human rights.

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A Two day short course on Research Methodology

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), Islamabad organized a two-day short course on "Research Methodology" on 07 and 08 November 2023. Vice Admiral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed HI(M), DG NIMA, extended a warm welcome to the esteemed guest speakers, Dr. Tauqeer Hussain Sargana, Assistant Professor at the International Islamic University Islamabad, and Dr. Talat Farooq, Visiting Faculty member at Bahria University Islamabad.

On day one, Dr. Sargana focused on the topic 'Understanding the Basics of Research Methodology'. Dr. Talat Farooq, on day two, held an informative session on 'Qualitative Research Techniques'. The sessions were designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of research fundamentals and qualitative methodologies, enhancing the knowledge and skills of attendees. The course was well attended by researchers from NIMA and esteemed faculty members and students from Bahria University.

PRCS and HBL ink MoU for Cash Disbursement Services

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development aimed at providing crucial support to vulnerable communities across Pakistan, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Habib Bank Limited's branchless banking platform Konnect have formalized a comprehensive framework agreement for Cash Disbursement Services (CDS).



A high-level delegation from Habib Bank Limited Konnect, met with Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, at the PRCS national headquarters to formalize this vital partnership.

The framework agreement, signed by Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, and Mr. Agha Israr Ahmed, National Sales Head HBL Konnect, outlines the collaborative effort in providing crucial payment and disbursement services to PRCS. Under this agreement, PRCS will facilitate payments through the bank to duly registered beneficiaries following the established Beneficiary Registration Procedure.

Additionally, Chairman Laghari highlighted PRCS's ongoing efforts to strengthen the Cash Assistance Program, emphasizing the focus on forging more partnerships to efficiently extend the program's services to vulnerable communities.

Aurora Tech Award & CIRCLE Women Association collaborated for an inspiring symposium

City Desk

LAHORE: Aurora Tech Award and CIRCLE Women Association united to host an engaging and inspirational event, "Tech Tales of Triumph," which aimed to raise awareness and invite women from Pakistan to apply for the prestigious Aurora Tech Award.

Held on November 8 at the Daftarkhwan Downtown in Lahore, this symposium was a significant endeavor in the field of women's tech empowerment.

It showcased the stories of remarkable women leaders in the tech industry who had defied norms and overcome challenges, sharing their personal journeys and victories. The symposium inspired and empowered budding women in tech by offering real-life examples of women who had made substantial strides in the industry.

Ekaterina Smirnova, Head of Aurora Tech Awards, said, "At Aurora Tech Awards, we were committed to recognizing exceptional talent and driving innovation in the tech sector. Partnering with CIRCLE Women and inDrive in the 'Tech Tales of Triumph' event was an embodiment of our mission to highlight and celebrate women's achievements in tech."

"CIRCLE Women, through this event, aimed to provide a platform for aspiring women in tech. Our collaboration with inDrive and Aurora Tech Awards was a testament to our commitment to fostering mentorship, insightful discussions, and career growth for women in the tech domain." -Sadaf Abid, CEO & Founder, CIRCLE Women Association

"Our dedication to promoting diversity and breaking gender barriers in tech was at the heart of our collaboration with CIRCLE Women. This event embodied our commitment to fostering an inclusive tech community and empowering the next generation of women in the industry." -Maria Rudnik, Project Coordinator, Aurora Tech Award.

Group photo

RAWALPINDI: Speakers of Hamdard Shura posing a group photo after concluding session on Wednesday.



Painting Competition titled 'Mojza-e-Fun' held at PAC

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council organized a painting competition on the occasion of Iqbal Day under the title of titled "Mojza-e-Fun". Naheed Manzoor and Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed were the chief guests of the prize distribution ceremony.

Assistant Director Mohammad Suleman performed the duties of host in the event. Samiha Khaliq curated the exhibition. Students of Rawalpindi Women University, Fatima Jinnah University, Iqra University, University of Wah and Arts Council participated in the painting competition.

Faiqa Saeed, Ayesha Aslam, Nimra Zia, Umm Ayman respectively won first second third and fourth prize in the competition. Chief guest Naheed Manzoor said on this occasion that Allama Iqbal's message is not only for the Muslims of the subcontinent but for the whole world of Islam.



He was well aware of the key role of the youth in Islam and through his poetry he exhorted the young generation to be open-minded, eloquent and kind. Allama Iqbal said that the high role of the youth is key to deal with the

current challenges faced by the Islamic world and they should play their primary role in taking the nation to new heights by becoming Shaheen of Iqbal. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that this is the requirement of

commitment to Iqbal's thought to make Pakistan a democratic welfare state in the true sense.

The study of the personality and art of the poet of the East also requires intellectual thought. Iqbal's intellectual assets and poems are a common message for every age and class, but the center of his thought and philosophy is the youth, he added.

Assistant Director Muhammad Suleman said on the occasion that Iqbal's poetry mainly demands struggle and effort from the youth. Iqbal made a great addition to the poetic linguistics of Urdu.

He was equally capable of Ghazal and Nazm, but Nazm is his reference that gave him the identity of a philosophical poet in the subcontinent and the world. His poems have great lyricism and poetry. At the end of the ceremony, shields and certificates of appreciation were distributed among the position holders.

American Business Forum and Philip Morris Pakistan hosts 'Collaborate to Spread the Word on Breast Cancer Awareness'

City Desk

LAHORE: American Business Forum and Philip Morris Pakistan Limited hosted an event with a focus on spreading awareness for Breast Cancer recently.

With Pakistanis being 2.5 times more likely to be affected by Breast Cancer than its neighbours such as Iran and India, and it being one of the leading causes of death for women, the two organisations came together to spread awareness of the illness and put to rest surrounding myths and taboos.

The event was attended by approximately 300 guests from the corporate world, civil society and notable medical professionals and dignitaries



who shared their professional and personal perspectives on the matter. Mr. Kamran Ataullah Khan, President

ABF welcomed all guests and emphasized the need for early detection, likely symptoms, and the need for spreading aware-

ness amongst the masses. Host, Ayesha M Hamid, Chairperson of the American School of International Academics spear-

headed the event and encouraged females to learn self-examination techniques for early detection.

Ms Kristin K Hawkins, US Consul General also attended the event to support the cause. Chief Guest Mrs Verda Ashraf, the First Lady of Punjab and Assistant Professor of Radiology at Fatima Jinnah Medical University, took to the podium to emphasise the need for awareness in a country such as Pakistan where there is often shame and stigma associated with the disease. She urged women to be proactive, understand the seriousness of breast cancer and fight for more awareness on the subject for better health for themselves and generations to come.

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Pension reform, shift from defined benefit model to defined contributory model

The exponential increase in the pension and its burden on the budget is a central concern for the country. IMF has also been demanding to bring in reforms in different sectors to reduce the fiscal deficit. 541.9 billion rupees, which is how much the federal government of Pakistan alone has spent on pensions as of the year 2022.

The underlying Civil service pension of Pakistan was adopted from the British Pension Act 1871. The same was adopted by India after independence but was revised in 2004 when the country introduced contributory schemes. Pakistan also went through some amendments, but the scheme remained to be classified as Pay-As-You-Go where the burden is all on the government.

In addition to the Pension Act of 1871 other acts are also in place like Pension-cum gratuity Scheme (1954), the Provisions of Civil Servant Act, 1973, and the Liberalized Pension Rule and Ancillary Instructions, 1977.

As the country is struggling with a fiscal deficit now is the time to reduce the burden on the federal government through some reforms. Based on the recommendations of "Pay and Pension Commission 2020" (POP 2020) the

finance division has initiated reforms in the pension scheme. Eight major changes are under consideration. Starting from the calculation of gross pension, it is stated that the Pension will no longer be granted based on the last pay drawn out than the average pay of the last three years will be calculated for gross pension.

This is something already in practice by the Armed Forces. Secondly, those employees interested in early retirement will have to pay a penalty of 3% for each year in between their desired retirement year and the actual retirement year. The step is taken to ensure the sustainability of the employees in service. The yearly increment imposed on pension will be based on the gross or net pension not on the last drawn pension because the exponential increase was causing severe damage to the government's treasury.

The amount of money entitled to the third tier of the family will be limited to ten years (with the exception of a lifetime for any special child and 20 years for children of shuhada). This does not include the widows. It is only for the third tier i.e.,

unmarried, widowed, or divorced daughter. Re-employed individuals will now have to forgo either their pay or pension. They will not be entertained by both.

The government will no longer facilitate the individual with dual pensions. The commutation formula has been changed from 35-65% to 25-75%. The Ministry of Defense has however demanded some waivers for armed personnel and exceptions for the shuhadas.

Lastly, there will be a shift from a defined benefit model to a defined contributory model. This is the most important of all. The basic difference between the two is that in a defined benefit one gets an already estimated specified amount after retirement.

While in the defined contribution both employee and the government contribute to the employee's retirement account collectively.

The advantage of this scheme is that the employee will contribute some amount from his salary to the government, and the government will add on

and invest. In the end, the employee will get much more than its contribution. So, it will be a win-win situation for both. But usually, the employee does not show consistency, which is a setback for the whole scheme. Consequently, a threshold is to be fixed if sustainability is the demand. There are pros and cons to both ways, therefore, there is a need to weigh the comparative advantage of both schemes.

Developing countries like the United States have shifted to a contributory model years ago. The US introduced a contributory scheme called the "401k Scheme" for employees. In the '90s, 78% of companies in the United States did away with the conventional pension plan and went on to the 401k plan. In the last three decades, it has been proven as a wealth-building tool for Americans as compared to pensions. It has not only helped the government get off the burden financially, but it has increased the employees' productivity too.

Here it is important to appreciate the KPK government that has already introduced a contributory pension scheme. The burden of pension is not solely on the federal government. The provincial government should also take such steps to bring reform and efficiency to the system.



Syeda Noor Ul Ain Amjad

TB fight recovering from COVID-19 setback

Tuberculosis (TB) response is bouncing back from disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but more effort is needed to end the disease, the World Health Organization (WHO), a Geneva-based UN agency has said. The finding comes in the latest WHO Global Tuberculosis Report which reveals that 7.5 million people were diagnosed with TB in 2022 the highest figure ever since the UN agency began global monitoring in 1995.

TB is an infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs. It is caused by a type of bacteria and spreads through the air when infected people cough, sneeze or spit. TB is both preventable and curable. The rise in TB diagnosis was attributed to good recovery in access to, and provision of, health services in many countries, according to the report, which features data from 192 nations. India, Indonesia and the Philippines – which together accounted for over 60 per cent of the global reduction in new diagnoses in 2020 and 2021- all recovered to beyond 2019 levels last year.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, recalled that TB had plagued previous generations for millennia. People suffered and died from the disease without knowing what it was, the cause, or how to stop it. Today, we have knowledge and tools they could only have dreamed of, he said. We have political commitment, and we have an opportunity that no generation in the history of humanity has had: the opportunity to write the final chapter in the story of TB. Globally, an estimated 10.6 million people fell ill with TB in 2022, up from 10.3 million the previous year. The majority were in the WHO Regions of Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Western Pacific, which together accounted for nearly 90 per cent. Smaller proportions were reported in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Americas, and Europe. The total number of TB-related deaths, including those among people with HIV, stood at 1.3 million in 2022, down from 1.4 million the year before. However, COVID-19 disruptions resulted in nearly half a million more deaths from TB during the period from 2020-2022, and the disease continues to be the leading killer among people with HIV.

Meanwhile, multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) remains a public health crisis. Last year, an estimated 410,000 people developed it or another type that is resistant to the antibiotic rifampicin (MDR/RR-TB), but only two in five accessed treatment. Although there is some progress in the development of new TB diagnostics, drugs and vaccines this is constrained by the overall level of investment in these areas, said WHO. Global efforts to combat TB have saved over 75 million lives since the year 2000, but action must be stepped up, the agency said, as it remained the world's second leading infectious killer in 2022, behind COVID-19. Despite the significant recovery in 2022, progress was insufficient to meet global targets set in 2018, with pandemic-related disruptions and ongoing conflicts being major contributing factors. For example, the net decrease in TB-related deaths from 2015 to 2022 was 19 per cent, or far short of the goal of a 75 per cent reduction by 2025. At a meeting held during the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly in September, the international community reinforced the 2018 commitments and targets and set new ones for the period through 2027. The new targets include reaching 90 per cent of people in need of TB prevention and care services, using a WHO-recommended rapid test as the first method of diagnosis, providing all patients with a health and social benefits package, ensuring the availability of at least one new safe and effective TB vaccine, and closing funding gaps. The report emphasized that ending the global TB epidemic requires translating these commitments into real action.



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

Myths Surrounding Pak Army's Recruitment and Promotion System - II

The significance of military professionalism, technological competence, and ethical standards cannot be emphasized enough.

As the world undergoes transformations, a nation's military capabilities must evolve in tandem, making a professional military an indispensable asset that serves as the shield and sword of a nation, guaranteeing its safety, security, and prosperity. The Pakistan Army exemplifies fully professional armed forces, a source of pride for Pakistan, dedicated to serving the country on all fronts.

In any nation's armed forces, the recruitment and promotion of its personnel play a pivotal role in determining the strength, effectiveness, and overall capabilities of its military. While several factors come into play when choosing and advancing individuals within the armed services, one principle takes precedence: merit. Merit-based recruitment and promotion ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, has an equal opportunity to serve and advance within the military. Discrimination based on factors like race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status is minimized, if not entirely eradicated, fostering a more inclusive and diverse armed forces. This diversity often translates to a more versatile and adaptable military, capable of addressing a broad spectrum of challenges. At the heart of meritocracy lies the principle of selecting and promoting individuals based on their competence and skill. This ensures that only the most qualified and capable individuals ascend the ranks. In a profession where the stakes are as high as they are in the military, having the most skilled and proficient personnel is non-negotiable.

Merit-based selection and promotion processes help ensure that those in leadership positions are well-prepared to make critical decisions and lead effectively.

Merit-based recruitment and promotion cultivate a sense of equity and transparency within the ranks. When soldiers witness their peers advancing due to their skills and achievements, it motivates them to excel and continuously strive for improvement. This fosters a culture of healthy competition and a shared dedication to the mission, ultimately boosting morale and unit cohesion. Meritocracy within the military establishes a system of accountability. Soldiers understand that their performance directly influences their career progression. This accountability ensures that individuals remain committed to their responsibilities and strive for excellence, knowing that their performance is consistently assessed and rewarded based on merit. A merit-based system encourages the introduction of fresh ideas, innovation, and adaptability. Individuals who have demonstrated outstanding skills and leadership in their roles are more likely to be identified and promoted. Consequently, these individuals bring their knowledge and expertise to positions of greater influence, contributing to the military's capacity to adapt to evolving threats and integrate new technologies.

In a society where the military is regarded as the guardian of the nation's interests, public trust is paramount. A merit-based approach to recruitment and promotion reinforces public confidence by demonstrating that the military is dedicated to excellence, free from favoritism or nepotism. This trust is crucial for sustaining civilian oversight and garnering support for the

armed forces.

There is speculation among certain groups that becoming an army officer in Pakistan is a straightforward process, often involving individuals who are either the offspring of army officers or who secure commissions through influential connections. It is also assumed that these officers primarily enjoy a life of luxury. However, the reality starkly contradicts these misconceptions. In the Pakistan Army, officers are commissioned through rigorous and transparent criteria that apply uniformly to all candidates.

As per the eligibility criteria for joining the Pakistan Army as a Commissioned Officer through the Long Course, candidates must be male citizens of Pakistan (for combat roles), although dual Pakistani citizens are eligible to apply, with the requirement that they must surrender their second nationality before joining PMA Kakul if selected. Candidates must fall within the age range of 17-22 years, with minor variations where applicable. Educational qualifications encompass a minimum of 12 years of education or a bachelor's degree, with a prerequisite of achieving a 60% score. Candidates hailing from FATA, certain areas of Balochistan, and rural Sindh may apply with marks ranging from 45% to 55%, and age relaxation also applies to underdeveloped regions. Additionally, candidates must meet height and weight requirements based on BMI, and they must clear the initial test to be eligible for the ISSB (Inter Services Selection Board) process. The ISSB evaluation includes academic, psychometric, intelligence, physical, and medical tests, along with a comprehensive interview. The training period at PMA spans two years, during which formal education leading to a bachelor's degree is also provided. Successful graduates are commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the Pakistan Army.

To be continued

Unlocking Pakistan's Potential: A Recipe to Eradicate Food Insecurity

Hassan Zaman H2-L

Food insecurity in Pakistan, a nation blessed with fertile lands and abundant agricultural resources, is a jarring paradox that raises vital ethical and moral questions. Food, besides being a necessity, is a basic human right. Yet, Pakistan, a country brimming with culture and history, millions of people still grapple with the harsh truth of food insecurity. This crisis goes beyond mere economic and logistical issues, however; it is an insurmountable roadblock to the nation's progress, compounded by poverty, income inequality, and a broken food distribution system.

Pakistan boasts fertile lands, diverse climates, and abundant resources. But food insecurity remains a pressing issue. Poverty and income inequality are the prime suspects in this culinary mystery. It's the bitter truth: a prosperous nation can't thrive when its people can't put food on their tables. Since the lockdown back in 2020 the country has been struggling massively in regards to its economic output, or setting a stable currency for its own people to use. Oil prices, and gas prices are not the only things that have gone up. As of 2023 the inflation rate in Pakistan is set to be a jarring 31%.

The talk around the town is that this seemingly existential crisis for all of Pakistan really means "all" of the poor people in the country. With Pakistan facing astonishing income inequality division, and clear sects dividing the general populous it would not be wrong in stating that the issue has highlighted the severe income disparity people in Pakistan face.

Malnutrition, the neon warning sign of food insecurity, is alarmingly high in Pakistan, espe-

cially among children. It's a scarlet letter on our conscience. Food insecurity isn't just about hungry people; it also fans the flames of health disparities. When you can't access nutritious food, you're essentially defenceless against diseases. Malnutrition weakens not only bodies but also our healthcare system. And that is what we see happening to the children of our country. Brain eating amoeba, polio, hepatitis, diseases that could once have been completely neglected are now ravaging the young spirits of our nations, devouring not only their right to eat, but now their right to live.

So, what's the secret ingredient to fix this recipe of woe? It's a basic revamp of our agricultural and food distribution systems. We need policies that give small-scale farmers their due and promote sustainable agriculture. The majority of our folks depend on farming for their bread, quite literally. Fair prices, modern techniques, and better irrigation infrastructure are must-haves. But how do we achieve that under this political cloud of uncertainty? It is by enforcing direct measures through the Pakistan ministry of agriculture.

We must understand that access to food isn't a privilege; it's a right. Issues such as Food waste should also be looked at with concern. Shockingly, in a country struggling with food scarcity, tons of food goes to waste due to subpar storage and transportation. We must tighten our belts and streamline the supply chain, cutting waste and sending surplus grub to those in need.

It's outrageous that, in a nation overflowing with agricultural riches, millions sleep with empty stomachs. Let's tackle the root causes, from poverty to a faulty food supply chain. It's a tough nut to crack, but together, we can turn the tables and ensure no one sleeps hungry in the Jinnah's land of the pure.

Writer is A Level Student in Aitchison College

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
54,261.42	53,735.73
Day's High	Day's Low
54,419.65	53,720.45
Index Value	Change
15,717,969,536	+525.69
Percentage	Time
+0.98%	8 Nov, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,401.72	-8.32
Percentage	Time
-0.11%	8 Nov, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
34,055.71	-96.89
Percentage	Time
-0.28%	8 Nov, 12:40 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
32,166.48	-105.34
Percentage	Time
-0.33%	8 Nov, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	185	186.8
Bahrain Dinar	758.95	766.95
Canadian Dollar	208	210
China Yuan	39.32	39.72
Danish Krone	40.89	41.29
Euro	307	310
Hong Kong Dollar	36.49	36.84
Indian Rupee	3.43	3.54
Japanese Yen	1.74	1.82
Kuwaiti Dinar	924.09	933.09
Malaysian Ringgit	61.21	61.81
New Zealand \$	169.25	171.25
Norwegians Krone	25.46	25.76
Omani Riyal	741.17	749.17
Qatari Riyal	78.4	79.1
Saudi Riyal	76.75	77.6
Singapore Dollar	208.5	210.5
Swedish Korona	26.09	26.39
Swiss Franc	316.92	319.42
Thai Bhat	8.03	8.18
U.A.E Dirham	80.75	81.5
UK Pound Sterling	354.5	358
US Dollar	286.5	289

Zong 4G's 2023 Digital Trainee Executive Program Onboards a New Wave of Talent



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications operator, has taken a significant step towards fostering the future leaders of the digital era. In a two-day orientation session held on November 1st and 2nd at the Zong headquarters, the company successfully onboarded the Digital Trainee Executive Batch of 2023.

This initiative represents Zong 4G's unwavering commitment to nurturing talent, promoting diversity, and providing equal opportunities for fresh graduates from various academic backgrounds.

The Digital Trainee Executive Program is designed to empower young minds with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the digital landscape. In its latest edition, Zong 4G exemplifies its dedication to diversity and inclusion by hiring a diverse and talented group of 36 fresh graduates with more than 50% female diversity ratio.

Zong 4G has been at the forefront of Pakistan's digital transformation, consistently equipping the country's youth with in-depth training and mentorship in the fields of Information, Digital, Communication, & other emerging technologies.

The success of the Digital Trainee Programs not only reflects the company's leadership in digital innovation but also its commitment to providing a platform for diverse talent and equal opportunities.

Value of the Dollar

People once more eager to purchase dollars: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that despite positive negotiations from the IMF and clear possibilities of getting more loans, the value of the dollar is continuously increasing.

The business community is worried because the dollar is getting expensive, while profiteers are taking full advantage of the uncertainty.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that measures to control the dollar should be tightened and the economy should be fully documented.

Speaking to the business community, the

veteran business leader said that the dollar had fallen to 276 rupees on October 16, after which its value started increasing. On November 3, the dollar was 285 rupees, and now it is available at 287 rupees in the market while further increases in its value are possible.

The business leader said that reasons for the increase in the value of the dollar include import financing, debt financing, the law and order situation, the export position, and the increasing interest of the public in buying dollars.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that negotiations with the IMF are underway and that the agreement made by the previous government is being implemented.

The losses in the power generation, transmission, and distribution systems are high, and all the axes of incompetence and corrup-



tion in this sector are falling on the people.

Masses will also have to pay for the infamous circular debt, which has now reached 2.6 trillion rupees, he added.

Similarly, consumers are forced to bear the burden of all the mismanagement in the gas sector, the volume of which is 800 billion rupees per year. 869 billion rupees are still being collected from the people in the name of the petroleum levy, and these measures have made the inflation sky high, he informed.

Mian Zahid Hussain added that Pakistan wants to implement all the conditions of the IMF, while many conditions are being fully implemented, which has saved the country from bankruptcy, but still its global ranking has not improved.

For sustainable economic stability, fundamental but unpopular reforms are needed in various sectors.

New development

ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in construction of the Park Road in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

American-Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC) delegation visited FPCCI

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that a high-profile delegation - vis-à-vis trade, investment and economic relations - visited FPCCI to forge an alliance from the platform of the apex body with the private-sector of Pakistan.

It is pertinent to note that the visit was held under the auspices of the influential American - Pakistan Public Affairs Committee (APPAC) led by Mr. Philip Ramos, Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly and;

was attended by prominent business personalities of Karachi.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh explained that New York is one of the most significant states of the U. S. for Pakistan's business community as it is a financial and commercial center of a country that accounts for upwards 17 percent of total trade of Pakistan; and, as per latest trade statistics, Pakistan - U. S. bilateral trade stands at \$9.4 billion. This is a huge number for Pakistan's economy and our peculiar dependence on foreign exchange, he added.

ICCI demands urgent privatization of loss-making SOEs to reduce fiscal deficit

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), leading a delegation, met with the Irfan Siddiqui, Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, and discussed with him the contours of a future economic policy for the country. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari Former President and Secretary General UBG Pakistan and Rizwan Chheena Executive Member ICCI were in the delegation.

Addressing the delegation, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, said that the business community is the major stakeholder in the development of the economy and he would raise their key issues at every relevant forum for redress. He welcomed the proposals of the delegation for future economic policy, promoting entrepreneurship among the youth to make the youth skilled and professional and assured that these proposals will be discussed in the committee meetings so that they can be considered for implementation.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the government should urgently privatize all loss-making SOEs including PIA, Paki-



stan Steel Mills and Pakistan Railways to reduce its fiscal deficit. He proposed that the government should work for the establishment of a common market of OIC, SAARC and Shanghai Cooperation Organization to promote regional trade. He said that youth are the future of Pakistan, so it is necessary to adapt the educational curriculum according to the needs of the current age to prepare skilled and professional youth.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that the current tax system is quite complex due to which new taxpayers are not motivated, so he emphasized the need to bring necessary reforms in the

tax system to expand the tax net.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI highlighted the importance of the construction industry in the development of the economy, which is currently facing many problems. He shared useful suggestions to provide better incentives to the construction sector for its better growth.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan highlighted the importance of trade with neighboring countries for Pakistan, which can give better promotion to our trade and exports. He also shared useful ideas for facilitating the local investors

IoBM hosts the Int'l moot on Business Management and Sustainability (ICBMS) 2023



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Business Management (IoBM) recently hosted the two-day International Conference on Business Management and Sustainability (ICBMS). This first day of the event poised to be a pivotal gathering, attracting a diverse range of participants, including prominent government officials, experts from renowned educational institutions as well as senior corporate executives from leading companies in Pakistan. The Chief Guest at the occasion was Mr. Younus Dagha, Minister for Revenue, Industries and Commerce, Sindh with the welcome address delivered by Mr. Talib S. Karim, President of IoBM.

The inaugural session featured a keynote speech by Dr. Shakeel Sadiq Jajja, a Fulbright Scholar from

Stanford University and Associate Professor at LUMS. Notable guests included Mr. Ifkhar Ahmed Sheikh, President of the Karachi Chambers of Commerce, and Mr. Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, President of the Marketing Association of Pakistan.

The Chief Guest at the occasion, Mr. Younus Dagha shed light on the agenda of the conference by noting that: "Globalization has created connectivity, it has eased access to information but it has also exposed our businesses, our practices, and our governance to the clients that we deal with on a B2B and G2B basis.

In his address, Mr. Talib Karim, President of IoBM stated: "This flagship conference aims to rigorously review scholarly papers, addressing the evolving landscape of business management.

Telenor Pakistan Launches the 8th Cohort of its Flagship Naya Aghaaz Program

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan proudly introduced the 8th batch of its 'Naya Aghaaz' program, reaffirming their commitment to workplace inclusion and diversity. This 9-month program is designed for women's seamless return to the workforce after a career break, introducing a new era of diversity, creativity, and innovation within the organization.

Launched in 2014 as an industry-first initiative, Naya Aghaaz aligns with Telenor's resolve to provide women not only with a path back into their careers, but also to foster a culture that celebrates diversity, innovation and potential.

Telenor acknowledges the significant role women play in society and remains dedicated to narrowing the gender gap in the professional domain.

Areej Khan, Chief People Officer at Telenor Pakistan, addressed the associates during the boot camp and shared her personal journey within the organization. She emphasized the significance of initiatives like Naya Aghaaz and their profound impact on society. She stated, "Diversity and inclusion are not just a statistic for us; it's a commitment. Telenor Pakistan has consistently strived to create an inclusive culture, offering women a sense of belonging and providing them with exclusive learning and development opportu-

nities. Programs like 'Naya Aghaaz' epitomize our resolve to uplift and empower."

In Pakistan, women make up nearly half of the population, yet the participation of women in the labor market is only 23.31%, with a concerning literacy rate of 46.5%, compared to 70% for men. These figures highlight the socio-economic disparities faced by women in Pakistan, making initiatives like Naya Aghaaz essential for the progress and development of our nation.

Over the years, Telenor Pakistan has welcomed 116 associates through the Naya Aghaaz program and has successfully retained 41% of them as permanent or contractual employees. These women have



not only contributed to the country's socio-economic prosperity but have also played a vital role in steering women toward progress and success.

Pakistani IT Experts Have Big Scope in Japan

Japan needs 790,000 IT Professionals till 2030 - Two Programs Designed for Pakistani Youth

Exclusive Interview of Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad (Order of Rising Sun Award) Shares Experiences of Service in Tokyo

Tazeen Akhtar
Naveed Ahmed Khan

Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad has shared that Japan needs 790 thousand IT professionals, software developers until 2030 that offers huge scope for Pakistani experts to try their luck there. He has played his key role in signing two agreements between Japanese and Pakistani organizations in this regard. Imtiaz Ahmad has served in Japan for a long time as Pakistani Ambassador. He is an expert of the Japanese language. Imtiaz Ahmad has been decorated with the Order of Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star Award by the government of Japan for his services to building mutual cooperation and close partnerships between the two countries.

Imtiaz Ahmad was contacted for a meeting by Pakistani Editors to congratulate for the award. A discussion on the status of bilateral trade and about the prospects of enhancing the level as well as what are the areas where Pakistan can improve the balance in its favor also came under discussion.

Imtiaz is highly optimistic on the promotion of cooperation in the IT sector especially. To a question about this sector, he disclosed that both countries are moving forward in this sphere for its potential to be tapped.

"We are in touch with Japanese organizations to avail this opportunity for Pakistani IT experts. A portal FITTE is available where CVs can be submitted. There is an office of PLUS W at NUST that can also be contacted in this regard.

We signed 2 agreements in 2019. Technical Intern Training Program TITP is for the trainees who are presently going to Japan where they are paid a remuneration during the training. Second is the Specified Skilled Workers SSW program in which skilled professionals with Japanese language proficiency only can apply. We are hoping that a center is established in Pakistan for skills tests, Ambassador Imtiaz said.

He said that we are sharing the details of the IT program for Japan with all concerned Pakistani organizations including Higher Education Commission, NAVTEC, NUTEK, NDMA, Ministries of Education, IT and Overseas to make the maximum out of this remarkable opportunity.

To a question about Pakistanis living and working in Japan, Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad answered that approximately 23 thousand Pakistanis are there playing their constructive role in the economy of Japan and Pakistan in the shape of remittances and repute. Most of them deal in used cars and vehicles exported to more than 70 countries in the world. We are working on TITP with a view that the program is useful to increase the number of Pakistanis in Japan.

"We invited two Japanese companies dealing in food and fruit to Karachi after our successful interaction in an online meeting. They are HOKKEN in Mushrooms and ENERGY in Strawberry business. HOKKEN holds 50% of Mushroom business in Japan. We held a seminar in PC Karachi on how to develop joint ventures in Pakistan. The representatives of the companies visited



farm houses in internal Sindh, Ambassador Imtiaz further shared.

Imtiaz Ahmad, commenting on bilateral trade said, "Pakistan and Japan are major trade partners of each other. Japan has invested in Pakistan in diversified fields including social uplift, cultural interactions, technology, infrastructure etc. More than 85 Japanese companies are working in Pakistan. Japanese exports to Pakistan are \$1.69 Billion while Pakistani exports stand at \$230 Million. This is a huge gap no doubt. Pakistani exports had to bear a big jolt after 1999 when Japan shifted to China and other countries for Cotton Yarn. Pakistan was exporting Cotton worth \$400 to 500 Million at that time."

"Now how can Pakistan narrow this gap? The answer to this question is with export surplus, with alternatives, with value added products, with new items.



We have potential in the agri sector. Japan is importing Pakistani mangoes, Chaunsa and Sindhri. We can work on

the export of Citrus as well. Pakistan is exporting Basmati Rice and Spices as well, Imtiaz Ahmad shared.

Imtiaz Ahmad also outlined the strategy to enhance bilateral cooperation in different sectors. Japan is a high tech nation while Pakistan is mostly a user nation. To walk with a high tech nation, to upgrade ourselves is definitely imperative. Japanese are very strict on time while Pakistanis don't bother even if we are half an hour late.

He recommends projection of tourist sites including Gandhara civilization to Japan. He says that cultural and lingual contacts are the main factors in the acceleration of cooperation. He shared his memories of holding cultural and culinary events for Japanese business and media people in Tokyo only to introduce Pakistani culture and cuisine. Imtiaz concluded that culture and people to people contacts are a must to increase the bilateral ties in other sectors as well.

Photos by Raja Farid

Victory Day

Azerbaijan celebrates the third anniversary of the Great Victory in Karabakh

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Victory Day was established upon a decree signed by the victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President Ilham Aliyev, on December 3, 2020.

In response to Armenia's provocation and further military aggression, the Azerbaijani Army launched a patriotic war on September 27 last year to end the occupation of the Azerbaijani lands, force Armenia to peace, apply the UN Security Council resolutions, return IDPs to their native lands and restore justice. All the people of Azerbaijan were mobilized and united for this sacred cause.

During the 44-day battle, the brave Azerbaijani Army liberated five cities, four settlements, and 286 villages. Thus, Jabrayil city and 90 villages of the homonymous district, Fuzuli city and 53 villages of the homonymous district, Zangilan city, Minjivan, Aghband, Bartaz settlements and 52 villages of the Zangilan district, Hadrut settlement and 85 villages of the Khojavand district, three villages of the Tartar district, Gubadli city and 41 villages of the homonymous district, nine villages of the Khojaly district, Shusha city, three villages of the Lachin district, as well as several strategic heights in the direction of Aghdara and Murovdagh, Bartaz, Sigirt, Shukurataz heights in Zangilan and five more unnamed heights were cleared from the enemy.

In this connection, The Azerbaijan Embassy in Pakistan held a special event to commemorate "Victory Day," marking the successful liberation of Azerbaijani territories from unlawful Armenian occupation. The event, held on November 8th, symbolized the triumphant return of Azerbaijan's



territorial integrity after a long struggle against illegal occupation.

Addressing the participants, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, paid tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

While sharing the background, the Ambassador said, Armenia kept 20% of Azerbaijani territories under occupation for almost 30 years. Almost Armenia committed war crimes in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

He said, Armenia committed the



Khojaly Genocide in 1992, killing 613 innocent civilians, including 106 women and 63 children. They carried out ethnic cleansing against the Azerbaijani population in the occupied territories. All Azerbaijanis were forcibly expelled from occupied territories.

In 1993, he said, the United Nations Security Council adopted 4 resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the territory of Azerbaijan.

"Other international organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation, Non-Alignment Movement, OSCE, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the European Parliament adopted similar decisions and resolutions. Armenia did not implement the resolutions of the UNSC and other international organizations" he added. The ambassador said, Azerbaijan tried to resolve the Karabakh conflict through negotiations but Armenia always ignored it and tried to keep the status quo and Armenia even regularly committed military provocations during the occupation times.

In 2020, he said, Azerbaijan launched a counter-offensive in response to Armenia's yet another large-scale military attack on Azerbaijani Army positions and civilian settlements.

The envoy said, "At the end of the 44-day, under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan liberated its territories from Armenian occupation. Azerbaijan implemented UN Security Council resolutions itself by liberating its occupied territories."

"During the Armenian occupation, Azerbaijani cities and villages were razed to the ground and all cultural and religious monuments were destroyed, mosques were desecrated and looted. Armenians turned mosques into pigsties during the occupation, hundreds of thousands of mines and booby traps have been planted across Azerbaijan's territory" he said.

He said, in response to aggression, Azerbaijan has never targeted any civilian people and civilian infrastructures during the Patriotic War and local anti-terrorism measures.

The ambassador further said, even after the war, Armenia did not stop its heinous military provocations that caused the loss of civilians and military personnel in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan.

"The Azerbaijani Army launched local anti-terrorist measures to ensure the provisions of the Joint Trilateral Statement signed on November 10, 2020, to prevent large-scale provocations committed in the Karabakh economic region of Azerbaijan, to disarm and withdraw the Armenian armed forces formations from Azerbaijani territories, to neutralize their military infrastructure, to ensure safety of the civilian population returning to the territories liberated from occupation, safety of the civilian workers involved in the reconstruction work, the servicemen and to restore the constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan" he said.

He said, immediately after the war, the Azerbaijani side whose 20% of the territory had been occupied by Armenia for almost 30 years, proposed a peace agreement to Armenia.

Raising the right of 300,000 Azerbaijanis to return to their historical homeland in nowadays Armenia, Azerbaijan also set up a special reintegration

portal for Armenian residents living in the Karabakh economic region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, he added.

The envoy said, right after the liberation, Azerbaijan started massive reconstruction and restoration works in the liberated areas by allocating more than 7 billion US dollars so far.

"The allocation of at least 2.4 billion US dollars is envisaged for the year 2024. Great Return has already been started by the Azerbaijani Government. Many former Azerbaijani IDPs have returned to the Fuzuli, Zangilan, and Lachin. Over 140 thousand people are due to return to Karabakh and East Zangezur by the end of 2026. International Airports namely Fuzuli and Zangilan were built, and Lachin International Airport is underway" he added.

The ambassador while acknowledging Pakistan contribution said, "During the occupation and 44 days of the Patriotic War, brotherly Pakistan has always supported Azerbaijan morally and diplomatically."

"I would like once again to extend my gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their continuous support. It is no coincidence that the Pakistani flag is waved along with the Azerbaijani and Turkish flags in Azerbaijan by the common people in this country as a sign of respect and gratitude to the Pakistani brothers and sisters" the ambassador said.

Photos by Raja Farid



16th CNS Amateur Golf Cup 2023 Kicks Off at Margalla Greens Golf Club



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Opening Ceremony and Media Brief of 16th Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup 2023 was held at Margalla Greens Golf Club (MGGC), Islamabad. Commander North and Patron Pakistan Navy Golf (North) Commodore Khan Mahmood

Asif graced the occasion as Chief Guest and formally inaugurated the event. During the media brief, he apprised on the significance of 4 days long event scheduled from 8 to 12 Nov 23 and its conduct in various categories.

The matches will be played in four major categories which include Men Amateurs (54 holes), Lady Amateur



(36 holes), Seniors match (36 holes) and Juniors match (18 holes). In addition to main categories an invitational match (09 holes) for the invited guests and sponsors will also be played.

In 2007, Pakistan Navy instituted Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup at Islamabad to add a national level Golf event in the calendar of Pakistan Golf Federation. Ever since, it has become a regular and major event of national golf circuit. Such

events provide a unique opportunity to showcase Pakistan's positive image to the world as a peace and sports loving nation. This also helps to generate healthy activities in the society. Regular conduct of this event is the manifestation of PN's commitment towards the promotion of golf at National and International level.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by civil & military dignitaries, sponsors golf players and media representatives

New Zealand wary of ICC World Cup 2023 dreams being washed away

Sports Desk

LAHORE: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson insisted his team will "focus on cricket" when they face a potentially make-or-break clash with Sri Lanka, shrugging off fears that rain may return to wash away their ICC World Cup 2023 dreams.

Williamson's team lost a rain-hit match at the same Bengaluru venue last weekend against Pakistan despite posting a mammoth 401.

Pakistan won by 21 runs via the DLS method after scoring 200-1 in 25.3 overs, edging ahead on the required run rate when the game was halted due to the weather.

The defeat was a fourth successive loss for the Kiwis in the ICC World Cup 2023 who had won their opening four games.

New Zealand, runners-up in the last two editions of the World Cup, are fourth in the table and need a win on Thursday to push their bid to secure a semi-final spot.

A washout could open the door for either Pakistan or Afghanistan to leapfrog them and grab the remaining last-four place.



"There's lots of things that we can't control and the weather is one of those," Williamson told reporters on the eve of the game against 1996 champions Sri Lanka.

"You mentioned that there might be some of it, there may be a thought in the back of your mind, but at the end of the day, our focus will be on the cricket that we want to play and trying to put all our

focus and energy into that."

Afghanistan and Pakistan have the same number of points as New Zealand while India, South Africa and Australia have already sealed semi-final places.

Williamson returned in the previous match after recovering from a broken thumb to make a valiant 95 in a 180-run stand with Rachin Ravindra, who hit 108. Lockie Ferguson, who has claimed

eight wickets in five matches, missed the previous two games with an Achilles injury has now recovered to be available for selection.

Kane Williamson said Ferguson "balances out our attack nicely" but did not reveal the team for the all-important match.

Fast bowler Matt Henry was ruled out of the rest of the ICC World Cup 2023 last week with a torn hamstring and Kyle Jamieson has taken his place in the squad.

Ravindra has stood out with 523 runs including three centuries to boost his team's run-making ability despite recent losses.

Ravindra, a Wellington-born Kiwi of Indian-origin, played a key role in the team's opening four victories and Williamson lauded the run-machine for his "amazing talent".

"We sort of knew the talent was there, but to come out and repeat and be one of the players of the tournament so far, not only with the bat, but he's also making really valuable contributions with the ball," said Williamson.

"Very special player and great that he's on our side."

Pakistan Women A beat West Indies Women A to win T20 tri-series

A Sports

LAHORE: Pakistan Women A defeated West Indies Women A by eight wickets to win the final of the T20 tri-series held on 8 November at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.

Opening batter Shawaal Zulfiqar, who remained unbeaten on 39, was crucial to Pakistan Women A's chase after they restricted the visitors for 97 in the first innings.

Pakistan Women A won the toss and invited West Indies Women A to bat first. The visitors scored 97-6 in the allotted



20 overs. Opening batter Qiana Joseph (35, 39b, 5x4s) was the top run-getter for the side. Skipper Rashada Williams also chipped in with 18 from 26 deliveries, including one boundary.

Qiana and Rashada's partnership was broken by Omaira Sohail, who dismissed the former. Shabika Gajnabi (10, 12b, 2x4s), who had retired hurt earlier in the innings, returned to the crease after the first wicket fell.

Zaida James also contributed 12 from 18 including two boundaries, at the back-end of their innings.

The Rameen Shamim-led spin attack was responsible for restricting the visitors to a low total despite a solid start to their innings. Rameen and fellow off-spinner Omaira both took two wickets at the expense of 17 runs each.

Left-arm spinners Saima Malik and Anosha Nasir also returned with a wicket apiece.

Pakistan Women A cruised to the target in just 15.5 overs, losing

only two wickets in the process. Although Shawaal lost her partner Eymaan Fatima (5, 11b, 1x4) early in the innings, the right-handed batter carried the innings to take her team over the line. She hit 39 from 38 deliveries, including four boundaries.

She was supported by Gull Feroza, who produced a run-a-ball 23 including three fours, and Omaira, who remained undefeated at 20 from 23, including a boundary.

Cherry-Ann Fraser and Qiana were the only two wicket-takers for West Indies Women A, getting one each.

England crush Netherlands to boost Champions Trophy 2025 hopes

A Sports

PUNE: Ben Stokes' scintillating knock of 108 runs, paired up with Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid's bowling exploits steered England to thump the Netherlands by 179 runs in the ICC World Cup 2023.

The 160-run victory lifted England from the bottom of the table to the seventh place, enhancing their chances of Champions Trophy 2025 qualification.

Set to chase a daunting 340-run target, the Netherlands' batting unit unfolded for a meagre 179 in the 38th over.

The Dutch side had a dismal start to their pursuit as they lost two wickets with just 13 runs on the board inside the first six overs.

Opening batter Wesley Barresi then partnered with Sybrand

Engelbrecht for the third wicket and added 55 runs to the total before the former got run out in the 18th over.

He scored a cautious 37 in 62 deliveries, hitting three boundaries and a six.

The Netherlands then lost two more wickets in quick succession, with their mainstay Engelbrecht also perishing, and consequently slipped to 104/5.

However, a 59-run stand between skipper Scott Edwards and Teja Nidamanuru kept them in the hunt before Moeen Ali spoiled their resistance by getting rid of Edwards, who scored 38 off 42.

Meanwhile, Nidamanuru stood his ground firm but lost partners at the other end as the Netherlands' batting tail crumbled against the defending champions.

He remained unbeaten with a gutsy 41. His 34-ball knock featured two boundaries and three sixes.

Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid led the bowling attack for England with three wickets each while David Willey bagged two.

England after winning the toss, lost opening batter Jonny Bairstow with 48 runs on the board in seven overs.

David Malan and Joe Root then knitted an 85-run partnership for the second wicket to push England's total to 133 before the former was bowled through his legs by Logan Van Beek while attempting a reverse scoop.

Ben Stokes came in at number four but in the next over, Malan was run out leaving England reeling at 133-2, which soon turned into 192-6 courtesy of Netherlands' disciplined bowling.

Malan played a blistering knock of 87 runs from 74 balls, featuring 10 boundaries and two sixes.

Ben Stokes was joined by Chris Woakes and together they helped England recover by adding 129 runs for the seventh wicket before Bas de Leede removed the latter.

Woakes scored 51 runs from 45 balls with the help of five boundaries and one six.

Meanwhile, Ben Stokes completed his maiden hundred in the World Cup before he was dismissed by Logan van Beek.

Stokes top scored for England with 108 runs from 84 balls, featuring six boundaries and as many sixes.

England's innings ended at 339-9 in the allocated 50 overs.

Bas de Leede topped the wickets for the Netherlands with figures of 3-74, meanwhile,



Aryan Dutt and Logan van Beek added two scalps each to their tally.

Pak medal winning athletes attribute victories to the collective efforts of players, coaches and the PTF



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Shahzeb Khan, who won the gold medal for Pakistan in the Khyurogi event of the 5th COMBAXX Asian Open Taekwondo Championship, has said that I have always fought in the field for the glory of Pakistan, my country is my identity, and winning the gold medal in the Asian Championship is a reason for me to be proud. It is an honour and I have got a new spirit after this win.

"I had made special preparations for the biggest taekwondo event in Asia. My head coach Master Yusuf Karami from Iran played an important role in my success," he added.

It may be mentioned here that in the Asian Championship, in the men's -54kg weight category, Shahzeb Khan won the gold medal for Pakistan by defeating Riyadh Hamidi of Saudi Arabia.

Naila Ali, the national gold medalist in the freestyle category of the Poomsae event, said that the government and private institutions should encourage the athletes who win medals for Pakistan in international events. If encouraged by them, more excellent results can be achieved in the future. I wish to increase the soft image of Pakistan as a Taekwondo player in the whole world.

Gold medalist Ikhtshamil Haq, who defeated World No. 13 Michael Rodriguez of America in the -87kg final, said that the experience of competing with international players in the event was wonderful. In the future, I will play with the same zeal to win more medals and laurels for my country. Hamza Saeed, the silver medalist of the +87kg category, said that winning medals in international events is very helpful in the development and promotion of sports in the country. I am grateful to the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation for providing us with all the necessary facilities for the preparation of the championship, which is very helpful for the youth to achieve more success in the future.

Ireland name white-ball squad for Zimbabwe tour



A Sports

DUBLIN: Cricket Ireland on Wednesday, unveiled separate ODI and T20I squads, under the leadership of Paul Stirling, for their upcoming white-ball tour to Zimbabwe.

According to the details, the contingent, which will be led by Paul Stirling, will depart on December 1 and will play three T20Is and as many ODIs. This will be the first tour led by Paul Stirling since his permanent appointment as white-ball captain.

He has previously captained the side 22 times in an interim capacity. Before the squad's departure to Zimbabwe, the players will participate in a five-day training camp, which will be held in Spain from 19-23 November.

Ireland Men's national selector Andrew White is eager to see how the new set of players evolve under a new leadership.

"This is the first outing for the Men's squad since the ODI series in England in September. This tour marks the start of a new cycle under a new leadership set-up, and we're looking forward to seeing how this playing group evolves as it builds towards the next 50-over World Cup.

"However, before we get to that stage there will be two T20 World Cups to plan and prepare for, and this tour is core to our preparations for the T20 World Cup next June.

"We showed the world what we were capable of at the last T20 World Cup, but with the talent and potential within this playing group, there is a belief we can push on and achieve even more."

Ireland Men's T20I squad

Paul Stirling (Capt), Mark Adair, Ross Adair, Andrew Balbirnie, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Josh Little, Graham Hume, Barry McCarthy, Neil Rock, Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Theo van Woerkom, Craig Young.

Ireland Men's ODI squad

Paul Stirling (Capt), Mark Adair, Andrew Balbirnie, Curtis Campher, George Dockrell, Josh Little, Graham Hume, Andy McBrine, Barry McCarthy, Neil Rock, Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Theo van Woerkom, Craig Young.

Tour Itinerary:

- 7 December: Zimbabwe v Ireland - 1st T20I (Harare)
- 9 December: Zimbabwe v Ireland - 2nd T20I (Harare)
- 10 December: Zimbabwe v Ireland - 3rd T20I (Harare)
- 13 December: Zimbabwe v Ireland - 1st ODI (Harare)
- 15 December: Zimbabwe v Ireland - 2nd ODI (Harare)
- 17 December: Zimbabwe v Ireland - 3rd ODI (Harare)

Achievements

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the recipients of the 14th Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Achievement Recognition Shields at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

President Alvi conveys PTI's concerns on level playing field to PM Kakar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday conveyed to interim Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar, the concerns of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on the "erosion of fundamental rights and level playing field for all political parties".

In a letter to interim prime minister, the President stressed that caretaker government should make efforts as a "neutral entity" to provide a level playing field for all political parties.

President Alvi also forwarded a letter, penned down by the PTI's General Secretary Omar Ayub, to the Prime Minister containing the concerns of the party.

Omar Ayub had conveyed his party's concern on the

erosion of fundamental rights, with particular reference to absence of level playing field for major political parties and mistreatment of female political activists through prolonged illegal detentions.

Meanwhile, the President - in his letter - wrote: "In this context, it was reassuring to hear your recent statements whereby you stated that it was caretaker government's policy that all registered political parties should have equal rights and opportunities to contest the forthcoming elections".

President Alvi further highlighted that democracy was the only viable way forward for the State and people of Pakistan, the essence of which lied in giving people the right to partake in political activities and to be able to voice their



opinions through free media.

He remarked there was a resonance in Pakistan that for free, fair & credible elections, all political parties and leaders had right to contest and it was up to people to decide.

Alvi also said that the President of Pakistan represented the unity of the Republic as Head of State under Article 41 of the Constitution of Paki-

stan and "was, therefore, duty bound along with the Prime Minister and all institutions to protect the rights of the citizens, as enshrined in the Constitution".

He said that it was for this very reason, he was sending the letter containing PTI's allegations, that had also been debated in the media.

The President wrote that

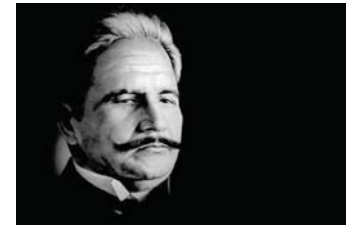
Article 4 of the Constitution clearly stipulated that it was the inalienable right of every citizen to be treated in accordance with law, while Article 17 of the Constitution provided that every citizen shall have the right to form associations and/or be a member of a political party.

He further said that Article 19 of the Constitution stated that every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press.

Concluding the letter, President Alvi urged PM Kakar, being head of the government, to look into the issues and addressed them.

It is pertinent to mention here that major political parties - PPP, PML-N and PTI - have complained about being denied of level playing field.

AJK President, PM pay tributes to Allama Iqbal



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR (AJK): Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry and Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq Wednesday paid tributes to renowned poet and philosopher Alla-

ma Muhammad Iqbal on his 146th birth anniversary being celebrated on Thursday with great enthusiasm and devotion.

In their separate message issued on this occasion, they said that Iqbal was a gifted poet, great intellectual, thinker and philosopher par excellence who devoted his life to arousing the Muslim world from deep slumber."

"Allama Iqbal fully supported the struggle of Kashmiri Muslims against the Dogra dictatorship", they said. "Kashmir was an integral part of Iqbal's dream of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent", they said.

Islamabad admin intensifies crackdown on tinted glasses and fancy number plates

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon on Wednesday directed the magistrates and Excise & Taxation officers to take strict action against vehicles with tinted glasses and fancy number plates.

The ICT administration urged the citizens to remove illegal accessories to avoid penalties, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said.

The crackdown is part of a broader effort to improve the city's aesthetics and ensure that all vehicles adhere to traffic rules and regulations.

"We will not tolerate vehicles with illegal accessories," said Deputy Commissioner Islamabad. "We urge all citizens to remove these accessories from their vehicles to avoid penalties."



The joint operation of the Excise and Taxation Department and the Islamabad Transport Authority is continuing on a daily basis. The crackdown has already resulted in the impoundment of several vehicles.

"We are committed to making Islamabad a cleaner and more beautiful city," said Deputy Commissioner Islamabad. "We will continue to take strict action against those who disregard traffic rules and regulations."

Pakistan Embassy in Brussels celebrate birth anniversary of Allama Iqbal

News Desk

BRUSSELS: To mark the 146th birth anniversary of the great philosopher and poet, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a poetry recital titled "Beyaad-i-Iqbal" was held here at the Embassy of Pakistan on Wednesday. The event was co-organized by the Embassy of Pakistan Brussels and Pakistan Press Club Belgium.

The Ambassador of Pakistan to European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg, Anna Baloch was chief guest on the occasion, while distinguished Urdu poets from Brussels, Germany, Budapest, and other parts of Europe paid rich tributes to Dr. Allama Iqbal and shared their poetry with the audience. An eminent scholar Dr Ali Sherazi, was the Guest Speaker on the occasion and shared his views on Allama Iqbal's poetry and contribution towards rekindling the spirit of freedom and unity among Muslims of the then Indo-Pak

Sub-Continent, a press release issued by the Embassy said. The concept of "Khudi" as envisioned by Allama Muhammad Iqbal was emphasized to re-energize the youth to tackle the future challenges.

Ambassador Anna Baloch, in her remarks, paid rich tribute to the great poet, philosopher, and thinker. She stated that Allama Iqbal envisioned the idea of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent that ultimately led to the creation of a separate homeland.

The Ambassador underscored that Allama Iqbal's poetry, thoughts, and philosophy hold a universal appeal, which continues to inspire millions across the world. Highlighting the importance of revitalizing the message of Allama Iqbal, the Ambassador said that Iqbal's teachings were not constrained by time and could offer solutions to the contemporary challenges. She thanked all the participants for attending the event.

PM asks Afghan interim setup to handover illegal Pakistanis linked with terrorism, act against TTP hideouts

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul-Haq Kakar Wednesday demanded the interim government of Afghanistan to hand over the Pakistani nationals who were illegally residing in Afghanistan and were involved in terrorist activities against their own country.

Addressing a press conference here at the PM House, the prime minister said the government was ready to receive and accept any such illegal Pakistanis.

PM Kakar also asked the Afghan government to take action against the hideouts of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its training centres



in Afghanistan and ensure that "they must not be used against Pakistan".

Since the interim government took to power in Afghanistan in August 2021, he said Pakistan witnessed an increase in terrorist incidents by 60 percent besides a 500 percent surge in suicide blasts.

"Pakistan in last two years has lost lives of 2,867 innocent civilians, for which TTP

is responsible which is operating from Afghanistan," he said.

He mentioned that 15 Afghan nationals were found involved in suicide bombings in Pakistan, while 64 Afghans got killed during their fight against the Pakistani law enforcement agencies.

He said Afghan authorities were cognizant of these facts as Pakistan had been sharing

these details with them since February this year through the fortnightly memorandums of protest.

The monitoring team of the United Nations in its report released this July clearly highlighted that TTP centres based in Afghanistan were conducting terrorist operations against Pakistan.

Asked if Pakistan itself would take action against the TTP hideouts in Afghanistan, Kakar said.

"We are hopeful that they [Afghan government] will take an action themselves, which is in their own interest and also in our interest."

Asked about reports of clandestine activities of the persons awaiting SIVs in Pakistan, the

prime minister said Pakistan's intelligence agencies were vigilant and were doing their job very professionally.

"They have the will and the capacity to identify and neutralize the terrorists who are determined to continue their fight against the State of Pakistan," he said.

PM Kakar said Pakistan had the legal and ethical right to send back illegal foreigners and mentioned that there were 1.4 million Afghan refugees currently residing in the country who were registered via the 'Proof of Residence' card.

The government registered another 0.8 million under the Afghan citizen card and the persons would not be deported, he said.

Three illegal housing societies sealed

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Development Authority sealed three more illegal housing societies in different areas here on Wednesday.

According to official sources, the enforcement team sealed Safia block on Satiana Road, Gulberg Valley on lower canal road and Grand View City near Lasani Puli, Sargodha Road.

The offices of the societies were sealed and structures were demolished.

World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit kicks off in Zhejiang province

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The World Internet Conference (WIC) Wuzhen Summit kicked off at the Chinese river town of Wuzhen, Zhejiang province on Wednesday. Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed the conference via video.

With the theme of "Creating an Inclusive and Resilient Digital World Beneficial to All - Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace," this year's summit features a series of exhibitions, awards and project-launch events, along with 20 sub-forums, Xinhua reported. Launched

in 2014, the WIC has been held in the town of Zhejiang Province for nine years in a row, with a total attendance of nearly 12,000 participants from 172 countries and regions. The summit has yielded a raft of outcomes, such as a concept document and an initiative on jointly building a community with a shared future in cyberspace, with China's proposals and inspiring ideas on cyberspace recognized by more people across the world. The WIC Wuzhen Summit is a vivid example of China's efforts to actively engage in global internet development and governance.

CAA takes key decision in outsourcing of Islamabad airport

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has taken key decision regarding the outsourcing of Islamabad International Airport.

As per details, the CAA extended the date of applications for outsourcing of Islamabad International Airport.

The advertisement issued includes the rules and other conditions regarding the application process.

The CAA officials said that bidders filed applications for the extension, hereby the deadline has been set for March 15, 2024.

Furthermore, the interested bidders can get the

request for proposal meanwhile other formalities, rules and regulations have remained unchanged.

Earlier, the federal government issued tenders to seek applications for outsourcing Islamabad International Airport for 15 years.

It is pertinent to mention here, that the government decided to outsource Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad International Airports.

Sources said the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Turkey, China and Saudi Arabia are taking special interest in outsourcing all three airports.

Following the decision to outsource, the CAA unions launched a protest movement.

SBP announces closure of banks on Nov 10 in Smog hit areas of Punjab

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Wednesday, announced closure of bank branches on Friday, November 10, 2023, in Lahore division and certain other districts of Punjab severely hit by Smog.

All banks and Micro Finance Banks (MFBs) shall keep their branches closed in Lahore Division (viz. Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura and Kasur districts) and Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Sialkot and Narowal districts on November 10, said a statement issued here by the central bank.

The decision has been taken pursuant to the Punjab government's Notification dated November 08, 2023 in the regard, it added.

Two terrorists killed, four seriously injured in Ursoon operation

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: As many as two terrorists were killed and four seriously injured during an intelligence-based operation conducted by the security forces on Tuesday night in general area Ursoon near Afghan border in Chitral District. According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Wednesday, an intense exchange of fire took place between the Pakistan Army troops and terrorists during the operation.

The sanitization of the surrounding areas was being carried out to neutralize any other terrorist found in the area, the ISPR added. Locals of the area appreciated the operation by security forces, who were determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country, it said.

Punjab govt announces public holiday on Nov 10 to curb smog

The Punjab government announced a public holiday on November 10 (Friday) in Lahore, Gujranwala and other districts due to prevailing smog in the province.

"It is notified for general information that a Public Holiday shall be observed on 10th November

2023 (Friday) in Lahore Division (District Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura, Kasur), District Gujranwala, District Hafizabad, District Sialkot & District Narowal, due to smog, except those offices exempted by Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department," said the notification.