



President Tokayev signs landmark decree advancing human rights in Kazakhstan

In a landmark move on December 8, 2023, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan signed a decree endorsing an Action Plan dedicated to the advancement of human rights and the rule of law in the country. This action was taken ahead of the International Human Rights Day on December 10 ... (Details on Page 8)



AJK PM blasts Indian court for 'murdering justice' in Kashmir

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while condemning the Indian Supreme Court's verdict upholding the presidential order regarding the revocation of Kashmir's special status, has stated that the Indian apex court has miserably failed in upholding the merit and demands of justice. In his special statement, the AJK premier termed the court verdict as tantamount to murdering justice... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Strategy

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf being briefed during his visit to Coastal and Creeks Areas on Monday.



Photo: Online

Chief of the Naval Staff visits Coastal & Creeks Areas

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited Creeks and Coastal Areas and PN Ships to review operational preparedness and combat readiness of the units.

Upon arrival at Creeks Brigade Sujawal, a comprehensive operational brief was presented to CNS on prevailing threat environment and defences of Creeks Area. During the visit at forward posts, CNS interacted with officers and men and appreciated their readiness to respond any misadventure by the adversary. On the second leg of his visit, Chief of the Naval Staff arrived at PNS AKRAM at Gwadar and interacted with the troops deployed for the security of Gwadar Port. He also visited Jinnah Naval Base, Pakistan Navy Hospital Dar Maanjah and Cadet College at Ormara. Later on, Chief

of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf arrived on PN Ships at PN Dockyard Karachi to review the operational preparedness and combat readiness of PN surface ships.

During interactions with troops at Creeks and Coastal Areas and onboard ships, Chief of the Naval Staff expressed satisfaction on operational readiness of deployed elements. He also appreciated the professional prowess and dedication of officers and men in ensuring impregnable defence of the motherland in challenging harsh environment of Creeks and Coastal Areas and amidst prevailing regional challenges in maritime domain. Chief of the Naval Staff appreciated the morale of troops and directed the field units to ensure optimal utilization of latest weapons and equipment with motivation and alacrity in order to ensure defence of the motherland.

PM asks terrorists to make 'unconditional surrender', says State will not negotiate with them

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday warned terrorist groups in the country to make an "unconditional surrender", saying the State would not negotiate with them.

"The State will not show any leniency towards the terrorists who committed violence and killed innocent citizens," he said in an interaction with the families of

martyrs here at the Interior Ministry, where he earlier launched the country's new visa policy.

PM Kakar categorically said that no person would be allowed to take the law into his hands, adding that only the State had the legitimate right to use armed power through its security forces.

"No one should have any doubt about the stance of the State against terrorists," he said. "All organs of the State have the clarity to remain persistent against

militancy."

He said any damage incurred in the past by giving a lenient space to the militants would be mitigated.

The prime minister said if someone wanted to denounce terrorism must seek forgiveness from the families of the martyrs, who had paid the ultimate price.

"We cannot compensate those who lost their loved ones, but can make a gesture to acknowledge and honour their invaluable sacri-

fices," he added.

PM Kakar said the reward for the martyrs' souls rested with Allah Almighty, however, it was the responsibility of the society to honour them with a distinguished status.

"I pay tribute to all the martyrs—an unending list of heroes from all segments of the society, including police, politicians, journalists, soldiers, and even children," he said.

Earlier, Interior Minister

Sarfraz Bugti received PM Kakar on his arrival at the Ministry of Interior. A contingent of the Islamabad Police presented a salute and guard of honour to the prime minister.

The family members of the martyrs, including veteran politician Mian Iftikhar Hussain, whose son was martyred by the terrorists, expressed gratitude to the caretaker government for recognizing the sacrifices of the martyred heroes.

Nation wants to know why Pakistan's development was halted: Nawaz

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif said that the nation wants to know why the development of Pakistan was halted.

Addressing a meeting of PML-N potential candidates for upcoming elections, Nawaz Sharif said that the people of Pakistan have seen enough hardships, and now it's time to bring prosperity and put the country on the path of development.

He questioned how a person who earns 40,000 will meet his expenses.

US deputy finance minister briefs minister on progress on economic reforms

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Elizabeth Horst, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Affairs, of the United States of America called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs Dr. Shamshad Akhtar at Finance Division, today.

Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar extended warm welcome to Ms. Elizabeth Horst and her delegation and said that Pakistan and the US enjoy long-term, broad-based and multi-dimensional relationship.

The Finance Minister apprised the visiting delegation of the policies and economic reform agenda which aims to bring economic and fiscal stability in the country. She further debriefed on key reforms being undertaken by the caretaker government including SOEs, privatization and reforms in FBR.



She also informed about restructuring of FBR to make it more efficient in documenting & digitization of the economy. We have been successful in concluding first review with IMF recently.

Ms. Elizabeth Horst, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Affairs thanked the Finance Minister and extended full support of the US Government and

its people to the Government of Pakistan. She further underscored that both countries enjoy good relations and extended her support to further promote bilateral economic relations.

The Finance Minister thanked Ms. Elizabeth Horst and reiterated the desire to further deepen bilateral trade and investment ties with the USA.

Bilawal moves application for live broadcast of Zulifqar Ali Bhutto reference

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto on Monday filed a civil miscellaneous application to the Supreme Court, seeking the live broadcast of hearing of reference, pertaining to the case of Zulifqar Ali Bhutto. The application has been moved by advocate Syed Razaqat Hussain Shah. It stated that the reference was filed by the then president Asif Ali Zardari, father of the applicant, hence, he is the son of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and the grandson of Shaheed Zulifqar Aali Bhutto.

Supreme Court to take up lifetime disqualification matter

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on Monday took notice of the discrepancy between the judicial decision on lifetime disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) and the amendments made to the Elections Act.

The top court scheduled the hearing for January 2024 and referred the matter, pertaining to

ascertain the period for disqualification, to the judges' committee for the constitution of a bench.

It also issued notices to Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan, advocate generals of all the provinces and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to assist the SC.

The apex court's notice came on a petition filed by a former MPA of the Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PMLN), Shamona Badshah Qaisrani, who was disqualified over a fake degree in 2007.

During the hearing today, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked that the Supreme Court's verdict on lifetime disqualification and the amendments made to the Elections Act, 2017 could not co-exist.

The chief justice observed that

either the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict or the Election (Amendment) Act, 2023 could be upheld. He noted that discrepancies in the SC's interpretation and the law could result in "confusion" in general elections 2024.

CJP Isa inquired why the petitioner was disqualified to which Advocate Saqib Jilani replied that Qaisrani was disqualified under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitu-

tion based on a fake degree in 2007.

Similarly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo Imran Khan was also disqualified under the same article in the Toshakhana case earlier this year.

However, in June, the then-coalition government had passed an amendment to the Elections Act 2017, which limited the disqualification of lawmakers to five years.

Justice Ijazul Ahsan raises objection to formation of SC benches

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senior Supreme Court (SC) judge, Justice Ijazul Ahsan on Monday expressed 'serious concern' over the formation of two benches hearing the intra-court appeals against the judgement declaring the trials of civilians in military courts 'unconstitutional'.

In a letter to the secretary of the judges committee, Justice Ijazul Ahsan noted that a meeting of Committee constituted under Section 2 of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 was held on December 7th.

He said that it was agreed that since the judgement

in the matter of the trial of civilians by military courts had been rendered by a five-member bench of the court, a seven-member bench would be constituted to hear the appeals.

"I categorically and in clear terms stated that to dispel any impression of pick and choose, all Judges of this Court in the order of seniority be included in the appellate Bench," the judge wrote.

Justice Ahsan further said that Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa had agreed to his point, but said that he would ask the judges and if any of them did not want to sit on the bench, the next available judge will be included.

#KoiJawazNahi

Marking 50th Constitution Anniversary & Trade Fair Success

ABC

ISLAMABAD: The capital city of Islamabad has successfully concluded the 16 Days Campaign, a collaborative initiative by UN Women, generously funded by the Government of Japan. This landmark campaign not only addressed the critical issue of violence against women and children but also marked the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Constitution of Pakistan, reinforcing the commitment to fundamental rights and equality.



Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson of National Commission on the Status of Women in her welcome speech said, "As we conclude these 16 Days of activism, let's intertwine the principles of our Constitution with the dynamic spirit of the Trade Fair. Through collective effort and economic exchange, let's pave the way for a Pakistan where equality flourishes, violence dissipates, and

prosperity blossoms for every citizen of Pakistan".

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international civil society-led annual campaign. It commences from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most

pervasive breach of human rights worldwide.

While addressing the audience, Sharmeela Rassool the Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan, stated "Our #KoiJawazNahi campaign stands shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan's Constitution, commemorating 50 years of justice and equality. In the keynote speech Khal-

il George, Federal Minister for Human Rights said, "No Excuse is more than a rule—it's our guiding principle. Our vision extends beyond policies; it's about weaving human rights into our daily fabric. By collectively safeguarding the dignity and rights of every citizen, we emphasize the significance of the ongoing 16 Days theme that is to invest in the women and girls."

The #KoiJawazNahi campaign was launched at Mohenjo-Daro followed by Quetta, Peshawar and now culminating in Islamabad. The campaign coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the Constitution of Pakistan, a milestone that underlines the nation's commitment to upholding the principles of justice, equality, and human dignity. By integrating this celebration into the campaign, organizers sought to emphasize the constitutional framework that supports the rights of every citizen, regardless of gender or age.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be the prime minister of Pakistan in up coming election

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: President of Pakistan People's Party South Punjab and former Governor of Punjab Makhdoom Ahmed Mehmood Senior Vice President Pakistan People's Party South Punjab Khawaja Rizwan Alam Chief Coordinator Pakistan People's Party South Punjab Abdul Qadir Shaheen. General Secretary of Pakistan People's Party District Multan Rao Sajid Ali and other leaders discussed the country's political situation with reference to ensuring the success of party candidates in the upcoming elections 2024. Makhdoom Ahmed Mehmood said



Makhdoom Ahmed Mehmood said that PPP is a party of martyrs, the leaders of this party gave their

great lives for the people, people will not forget them. However, unemployment decreased and above all

the country's economy strengthened, foreign investment increased, and history is a witness that 150%

increase in the salaries of government employees took place during the PPP era.

Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood further said that the caretaker government is not authorized to take important policy decisions except for constitutionally necessary matters, the People's Party is the guarantee of a prosperous Pakistan, the people should ensure their prosperous future by voting for the People's Party. Pakistan People's Party Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has the trust of the people, at this time the people of the country consider Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the only solution to their problems. Inshallah, Pakistan Peoples Party will win the elections with a huge majority.

20th Frontiers of Information Technology Conference launched in Islamabad

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A two-day 20th International Conference on 'Frontiers of Information Technology' (FIT-2023), organized by COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) started on Monday, December 11, 2023 at COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad. Over 200 industry experts, researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs and senior ranked officials from COMSATS University Islamabad led by the varsity Rector Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar were present at the opening ceremony.



Program Chair of the conference Dr. Usama Ijaz Bajwa, extended a warm welcome to the attendees

and provided an overview of the event. FIT serves as a platform for hosting a wide array of research and intellectual activities. Speakers from France, Netherlands, China, Ireland, Portugal, UK, USA and Pakistan are participating in the two-day

conference.

The event was honored by the presence of Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masood, Deputy CEO of Huawei Technologies, who highlighted that Huawei dedicates 10 percent of its worldwide revenue to foster innovation and

research.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Anne Martel, a Professor in Medical Biophysics at the University of Toronto, is a Senior Scientist and Tory Family Chair in Oncology at Sunnybrook Research Institute, focused on application

of artificial intelligence (AI) to healthcare, particularly in medical imaging.

Upon commencing the conference, Dr. Sohail Asghar, General Chair / Incharge Islamabad Campus, informed that over nineteen-year history, this conference has evolved into a premier international event, bringing together brilliant minds globally to advance technology and innovation.

The two-day conference will comprise a series of invited talks as part of its technical program which will provide an opportunity to scholars to present their ongoing research to gather feedback from industry experts.

CTD Operation in Punjab

9 Terrorists arrested from terrorist organizations: spokesman CTD

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Punjab in the province has foiled a major terror plot by arresting 9 suspected terrorists linked with a banned organization during operations in different areas of Punjab. According to the spokesman, the CTD Punjab conducted 70 intelligence based operations in different districts of the province to effectively deal with any untoward incident of terrorism, in which 69 suspected persons were interrogated and 9 alleged terrorists were arrested with weapons, explosives and other prohibited materials.



Among the arrested terrorists are Abdul Rahman, Abdul Waheed, Mohammad Azim Sohail

, Muhammad Zaman, Muhammad Sufyan, Muhammad Siddique, Muhammad Sajjad, Imran Ali and Umar Farooq, he said and added that they belongs to the banned organizations Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Daesh, Al-Qaeda, Sipah Sahaba Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

The spokesman said that the terrorists had planned to sabotage across the province and wanted to target important installations. The police have registered 8 cases against the terrorists and shifted them to an unknown location, he added.

He said that 314 combing operations were also conducted during this week with the help of local police and security agencies, 12893 persons were checked, 47 suspects were arrested, 48 FIRs were registered and 10 recoveries were made during these

World Aids Day

We All Have to Fight Together to Eradicate the Disease HIV and AIDS from the Society

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A seminar regarding World AIDS Day organized in Wasaib Sanwarou Multan, the purpose of the event was to provide awareness about HIV and AIDS. At the beginning of the event, the president of Wasaib Sanwarou Zia-ul-Salam, said that We all have to fight together to eradicate the disease like AIDS from the society today is also important because we ourselves are working on AIDS and HIV. Program Director Muhammad Ilyas said that our aim is to prevent deadly viruses like AIDS and HIV in South Punjab and especially in Multan. World AIDS Day is celebrated every year in December



The purpose of this day is to show solidarity with HIV-AIDS patients, Program Manager Imad Baig said that the World AIDS Day is to highlight the progress made in the prevention and treatment of HIV, Malik Hammad Rajwana also addressed and said that this day also reminds us of the challenges that are still faced in fighting the diseases. In this event, various documentaries on HIV prevention were shown and other role plays were performed. Rumisa Willin, Shaan Ejaz, Dr. Waqas Rasheed, Mr. Badr Munir, Miss Larib, Haris Javed and Hasan Sheikh also spoke in the event.

Jirga of Mehsud tribes regarding funds for houses destroyed during Operation Rah-e-Nejat

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: A joint jirga of the Mehsud tribes was held on Monday in South Waziristan Upper DC compound Tank, regarding the withheld funds for the survey of destroyed houses during the operation Rah-e-Nejat.



On this occasion, Malik Javed, Malik Lal Khan, Malik Muqrab Khan and Malik Saleem Mehsud addressed the Jirga and said, that a unanimous decision was taken agreeing to the protest jirga which had been working for the last several months on the survey of the destroyed houses.

The tribal elders said that anyone who has taken any action in the survey before today has been blocked or has given or received any bribe in respect of a survey cheque.

They Said, now these things have become anecdotal, after today, regarding the survey, the organizers of the jirga will work on the survey.

Tribal elders Said, Apart from this, no other party shall act without informing the protesting Jirga and no person or group shall pass the survey check back and forth.

The tribal elders added that the areas which have been surveyed earlier will get the checks first.

If any person or group is found to be involved in this, he will be the unanimous culprit of the Mehsud tribes.

13th Pakistan Mountain Festival

'Colours of the ICE' reflects the artistic value of glaciers

PNP

ISLAMABAD: An three-day exhibition of photos and paintings entitled "The Colours of the ICE" kicked off at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Monday in connection with the 13th edition of Pakistan Mountain Festival, the annual flagship event of Devcom-Pakistan to mark the International Mountain Day that falls on December 11.



The exhibition included 21 large-size photos reflecting the colours and textures of the glaciers in the north of Pakistan, 40 photos of the Boltoro cleanup, 12 paintings of Himalayan Odyssey series by Raja Changez Sultan, and some paintings by the students.

Italian Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese was the chief guest on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, he said the mountains play a key role in life on the planet. The Italian government has always been out to support initiatives regarding research, science, conservation and development.

He appreciated the role of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, EvK2CNR, UNDP and IUCN for their relentless efforts to empower mountain stakeholders to conserve the local resources.

The Ambassador said mountains are host to about half of the world's biodiver-

sity hotspots. They are water towers of the world, and supply freshwater to an estimated half of humanity.

Samuel Rizk, the country representative of UNDP Pakistan, said mountains and its natives have become more vulnerable in the changing climate. Mountain regions are complex in their geomorphology and therefore more vulnerable to variations in temperatures and changes in patterns of hydrology.

Gigit-Batistan Secretary Finance Aziz Ahmad Jamil while appreciating the contribution of the development partners said Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) covers over 72,000 square kilometers, also housing the world's highest mountain range.

Maurizo Gallo said glaciers are alive, they move, change, and evolve. They have sounds and colours. The artistic project reveals to us the "Colors of Ice" as seen through the eyes of nature, science, and art. In addition to the satellite photographs documenting the glacier, AI-generated images are used to reprocess scientific data, introducing new colors to the ice that display its boundaries, temperature, melting and future scenarios. The exhibition "The Colors of the Ice" is ultimate interpretation of an artist's sensitivity in the photographs taken inside the glacier.

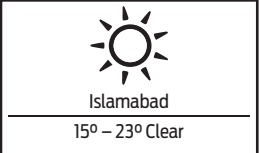
AICS representative, Jacopo Branchesi mentioned their project activities in Pakistan in the sector of mountain conservation, livelihood and tourism.

گیس بل میں بچت کا بے سادہ سا فارمولا

حکومت پاکستان کے توانائی پلان کے مطابق
اگر آگے گیس سیور کوئی کی نصب لاری فرار دے دی

گیس بل میں
بچت کے لیے
سیور کون
استعمال کریں

MANDATORY



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:33 am
Zohr12:01 pm
Asr3:22 pm
Maghrib5:00 pm
Isha6:29 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Enquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7

RPO Rawalpindi region promotes officers to sub-inspector, head constable



PNP

ISLAMABAD: On the orders of Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, a ceremony was held at the regional office to promote the post of ASI to Sub-Inspector, Head Constable to ASI and Constable to Head Constable. In the ceremony, Regional Police Officer Rawalpindi Region Syed Khurram Ali, CPO Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani and ADIG Naeem Akhtar ranked the promoted officers. And Shafiq Ahmed Khan, the operator posted with Rawalpindi region, is also involved. Among those who were promoted from AS to the post of sub-inspector, Abdul Waheed, from head constable to the post of ASI, Shafiq Ahmed Khan, Nazakat Khan, Abdul Ghafoor, Warsat, Shahbaz, Yasir, Sohail Iqbal, Manzoor, Irfan, Zaheer, Aftab, Raja Mehmood, Yasir, Mudassar, Shehzad, Afzal, Mubasher, Faisal while those promoted from constable to head constable include Adnan, Zeeshan, Aftab, Sulaiman, Haseeb, Mohsen, Imran and a lady constable Rehmat Zahra. CPO Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani while talking to the promoted officers said that you should continue your departmental work with the same passion and hard work in the future and continue the journey of further development, RPO Rawalpindi Region promoted while congratulating all the officers, he said that the officers who work with hard work and dedication and establish a positive identity of the department are the real capital of the department.

Mushaal calls on world leaders to take notice of HR violations in Kashmir and Palestine

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: SAPM on Human Rights Mushaal Hussein Mullick called on the world leaders and champions of human rights to take notice of the blatant violation of human rights in Occupied Kashmir and Palestine. She said that the Indian Supreme Court has unanimously upheld the abrogation of Article 370 to end the special status of Occupied Kashmir, which is the darkest act in the history of human rights. She said that for the last 76 years, the Indian army has been violating human rights in Occupied Kashmir, on which the world, including the international champions of human rights, are silent. She was addressing as Chief Guest a ceremony held at ICCI to observe the International Human Rights Day. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice

President ICCI strongly condemned the biased decision of the Indian Supreme Court on Article 370. He said that all citizens should enjoy equal rights. The people of Occupied Kashmir are still deprived of their rights. Everyone should raise voice against genocide in Kashmir and Palestine. President Islamabad High Court Bar Association Naveed Hayat Malik said that the human rights situation around the world is bad. All Islamic countries, including Pakistan, should raise a voice on the violation of human rights in Occupied Kashmir and Palestine. President National Press Club Islamabad Anwar Raza said that the Indian Supreme Court's decision regarding Occupied Kashmir is a dark chapter in history. Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Paki-

stan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Mashaal Hussain Malik has been raising her voice for the rights of Kashmiris all his life. The decision of the Indian SC is a serious violation of human rights. More than 18,000 innocent Palestinians have been martyred by Israel in Gaza, of which more than 12,000 are women and children. The champions of human and animal rights should see the situation in Occupied Kashmir and Gaza. HR activist Syeda Ilya Kazmi, Finance Secretary National Press Club Ms. Nayar Ali, Secretary General of Tehreek Islamabad Party Asma Malik, Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Habib Malik Orkazai also spoke on the occasion and emphasized the need to ensure better protection of human rights around the world including Occupied Kashmir and



Palestine. The Vice President ICCI Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, thanked

all the guests and participants, including the Chief Guest, for attending the event and expressed

his determination that ICCI will keep raising its voice for the better protection of human rights.

Christmas

ISLAMABAD: A girl is taking keen interest in different kinds of stuff on Christmas stall at Koshsar Market in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

National Council accuses chief of Islamabad Boys Scouts of illegally recruiting scouts

PPA

ISLAMABAD: National Council and candidate for Chief Commissioner of Pakistan Boy Scouts Association (PBSA) Mahmood Sadiq Dhotar has said that the forged Chief Commissioner of the association Sarfraz Qamar Doha besides violating the official orders of the President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi and the Federal Ministry of Education, has illegally deployed people on heavy salary packages at scout-headquarters while the low grades employees of Islamabad Boys Scouts Association are deprived of their salaries for the last five months.

Dhotar urged the President of Pakistan to take notice of the matter and take immediate action to stop the violation of the sanctity of the Scouts.

Mehmood Sadiq Dhotar, while addressing in a press conference alongwith Dr. Muhammad Afzal Babar, Syed Iqbal Shah, Zahid Mehboob, Abdul Sattar Gill and Maqbool Hussain Dar said that despite the court stay order Doha has managed to conduct meeting of PBSA, illegally, that



has later been suspended by the court. He alleged that Doha has been found involved in human smuggling through using scouts' platform. He also managed to take millions of rupees to send seven people abroad who fled there immediately while one of his allies Sajjad Masoof Chishti found guilty in sexual harassment in Korea, brining bad name to the country. He said Sarfraz Qamar Doha also embezzled the funds of the Pakistan Scouts

Cadet Trust, a subsidiary of the Pakistan Scouts Association. "Due to which the poor and orphan child who were studying in the school committed suicide in the school which is being exposed," he said.

Mehmood Sadiq Dhotar appealed to the President of Pakistan, the education minister, and judiciary to look into this matter of grave concern and take stern legal action against Sarfraz Qamar Doha who is playing havoc with the national exchequer.

JUI-F chief questions role of election commission in holding upcoming general elections

Raaza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) general secretary Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri has expressed doubts regarding the upcoming general elections as termed the environment not conducive for the electioneering keeping in view law and order situation as well as weather conditions. He was talking to newsmen in Pindigheh town of Attock on Monday.

Haideri termed the role election commission of Pakistan (ECP) "dubious" in holding general election in the month of February next year. He said that if elections are not held within the constitutional time frame of 90 days, then it could be delayed beyond February time frame keeping in view persistent law and order situation and serve weather condition on Northern areas, KP and Baluchistan at the polling schedule.

Responding a question about the future of PT in future political scenario, he termed PTI as a "deflated balloon" made out of "forced loyalty and manipulation". "The PTI was a bubble that was inflated. Now that bubble has burst. The people, whose loyalties were changing, were forced to join the PTI. Those who had become part of the PTI are themselves admitting that they were coerced into joining that party," he said.

International Mountain Day Celebration Addresses Urgent Need for Ecosystem Restoration



PNP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), in collaboration with Hashoo Group and Lakeshore City, orchestrated a transformative one-day conference at the Pakistan National Council of Arts, Islamabad. Focused on the theme "Restoring Mountain Ecosystems," the conference served as a platform for insightful discussions and initiatives.

As part of the festivities, PTDC hosted the 'Salam Pakistan' photography and short tourism documentary film competitions, emphasizing the intrinsic link between vibrant mountain ecosystems and sustainable tourism.

The conference featured two enlightening panel discussions. The first, themed "Restoring Mountain Ecosystems," saw the participation of representatives from IUCN Pakistan, WWF Pakistan, IWMB, and the Ministry of Climate Change. The second discussion, centering on "Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development," brought together senior figures from the private sector and relevant government departments.

Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of PTDC while in his welcome note, highlighted Pakistan's potential as a global mountain tourism destination, with its diverse landscapes, rich heritage, and welcoming communities.

Mountains cover around 27 percent of the Earth's land surface and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. As the water towers of the world, they supply freshwater to almost half of humanity.

Information Minister advocates societal change for women's empowerment

ABC

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, representatives from major political parties have unequivocally expressed their commitment to advancing women's political participation. The women leaders, parliamentarians and civil society leaders on the occasion present a joint Charter of Demand for meaningful political participation with political parties; structure and all decision-making process. This collective dedication was prominently affirmed at the National Policy Forum on "Women's Inclusion in Democratic Governance," a noteworthy event hosted by South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK). The forum aimed to bring together women leaders, policymakers, and international partners to deliberate on strategies for enhancing the role of women in political processes. Caretaker Minister for Informa-

tion and Broadcasting, Mr. Murtaza Solangi, said that women empowerment in the country is a sacred duty which is impossible without the societal attitudinal change promoting equality for women and girls. Solangi said the behaviour of equality should be promoted at the household level where boys are not preferred over girls, and if it is not inculcated in the society then there will be no change, he added.

Renowned political analyst Ms. Mosarrat Qadeem, in her keynote address, asserted the indispensable role of women's voices in constructing a robust and equitable Pakistan. She delineated the efforts undertaken by SAP-PK and its partners to empower women through enhanced political participation, emphasizing that the essence lies beyond numerical representation. Qadeem articulated the imperative of fundamentally altering power dynamics, ensuring women's

voices are integral to decisions affecting their lives.

Welcoming participants, Mr. Mohammad Tahseen expressed SAP-PK's commitment to fostering a more inclusive and equitable society where women assume meaningful roles. The forum provided a unique platform for diverse voices, commencing with a panel discussion featuring accomplished women leaders. Ms. Sana Durrani (Balochistan), Ms. Pushpa Kumari (Sindh), Ms. Nusrat Ara (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Ms. Neelum Sarwar (Gilgit Baltistan), Ms. Anum Khan (representing Persons with Diverse Abilities from Punjab), and Ms. Mahi Ali (transgender activist) shared their experiences and perspectives. Their narratives illuminated both the challenges and opportunities encountered in the intricate web of political participation.

The discourse seamlessly transi-



tioned to the pivotal role of political parties, with representatives engaging in a lively dialogue. Senator Afnan Ullah Khan (PML-N), Ms. Naz Baloch (PPP), Senator Falan Naz (PTI), Ms. Samina Saeed (JI), Ms. Shahida Akhter (JUI-F), Ms. Rahila Durrani (PML-

N), and Ms. Shahida Wahid (ANP) collectively emphasized the urgency of gender-inclusive policies within their respective parties. They stressed the paramount importance of prioritizing women's representation within party structures and assigning them

meaningful roles in decision-making processes. This collective resolve signifies a transformative commitment to supporting enhanced women's political participation across all levels, heralding a new era of inclusivity and equality in Pakistani politics.

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How Pakistan can increase its exports - II

The global halal food market size is over US\$ 2 trillion and being a Muslim country, Pakistan has good potential to tap this growing market for export of halal food products.

Pakistan is endowed with huge mineral resources and can export many mining and mineral products including marble, granite, gems, and other precious stones. To realize its actual export potential, Pakistan needs to focus on the diversification of exports by encouraging a wide range of products and services to reduce dependence on a few sectors for exports.

It is important to focus on emerging global markets for exports including Africa, Central Asia, and ASEAN countries to achieve better results.

Meeting international quality standards is key for Pakistan to enhance its reputation as a reliable exporter of products. To make a positive move in that direction, Pakistan should invest in quality control infrastructure and certifications that will build trust among international buyers.

Pakistan is lacking in research and development due to which the country is not performing up to its potential on the export front. Therefore, Pakistan needs to invest in technology and innovation and promote R&D to enhance productivity and innovation in export-oriented

industries. Adopting advanced technologies is vital for Pakistan to improve production processes and quality of products.

A well-developed infrastructure is key for easy movement of goods and reduce export costs. Therefore, Pakistan should invest in upgrading its transportation, logistics, and port facilities to facilitate the promotion of exports.

Uninterrupted power supply to industries plays a key role in the continuation of manufacturing activities and improving exports. Pakistan needs to focus on renewable energy options to provide consistent and affordable power to industries.

The complicated customs procedures cause delays and increase the costs of exports. Pakistan should simplify customs procedures to reduce delays and costs as well as implement trade facilitation measures to streamline the processes. Early implementation of the Pakistan Single Window is essential for enhancing trade and exports.

SMEs are the backbone of Pakistan's economy as they contribute 40% to the GDP and 25% to the overall exports. However, easy access to finance is a major

problem for SMEs. The government should ensure easier access to credit and introduce export financing schemes for SMEs that would help further increase the volume of exports.

SMEs have insufficient resources to invest in trade promotion and marketing activities. The government's support of export-oriented SMEs in marketing and promotion activities can help create better awareness about Pakistani products in target markets. The cooperation and support of the government to businesses in participating in international trade fairs and exhibitions will also help showcase exportable products and build networking with new buyers for improving exports.

The local industry is facing a shortage of skilled manpower to improve its productivity. The government should establish high-standard skills development institutes to enhance the skills of the workforce to meet the demands of the global markets.

The government must create a conducive policy environment that supports export-oriented industries. Providing financial incentives, tax breaks, and other facilitations can help exporters boost the country's exports.

Pakistan is bordered by the two largest economies China and India. China's annual imports are over US\$ 2.5 trillion. However, Pakistan's trade with its regional countries is quite low as compared to other regional blocs. The government should strengthen regional and bilateral trade agreements to increase market access for exports and collaborate with neighboring countries to improve cross-border trade.

Maintaining economic stability is very important for Pakistan to boost the confidence of international investors. Managing the currency exchange rate is also important to improve the country's competitiveness in global markets.

To conclude, Pakistan needs a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving government, businesses, and other stakeholders to effectively implement the above-mentioned strategies and improve exports. Addressing key challenges such as improving infrastructure, ensuring product quality and standards, enhancing trade facilitation, and promoting innovation and technology adoption can put Pakistan on the path of sustainable export growth. Moreover, market diversification and strategic partnerships can play a crucial role in expanding export opportunities for Pakistan.

The writer works for a trade organization in Pakistan



Analysis
Muhammad Ramzan

Pakistan promoting interfaith harmony, pluralism

Pakistan is striving to build tolerance and religious pluralism, Ambassador Masood Khan told a special event to celebrate Christmas held at the Pakistani embassy here on Sunday. "The spirit of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance permeates Pakistan," the Pakistani envoy said in his remarks at the gathering that included religious leaders of all faiths, including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus.

"Christians" he said, "are an essential and integral part of Pakistan's polity and state and their influence and impact over years has increased exponentially." In this regard, Masood Khan highlighted the significant presence of the Christian community members in the mainstream of national life, including judiciary, civil service, armed forces, parliament, education and other professional fields. "We owe a lot to the Christian community," he said. Referring to the Jaranwala incident this year, the Ambassador said that the entire nation of Pakistan was outraged, with the political and religious leadership as well as the civil society standing in solidarity with the Christian community, offering them help not only in construction of their damaged properties but also offering their own places of worship to them. "We have to promote interfaith harmony which is essential for our progressive state," he added.

"We are a family today and we would continue to maintain this relationship — this connectivity." The Ambassador also highlighted that Christmas also coincided with the birth of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, adding to the significance of the day for the Pakistani nation. He recalled that Christian families were invited to the presidency during his tenure as President of Azad Jammu Kashmir. Pastor Michael Trivett, Dr. Joe Knight from Church of the Nazarene, Michigan; Rizwan Jaka, Chairman of Board, AD-AMS & Compassionate Healthcare Network Clinic (ACHN); Ms. Aisha Khan, Democratic Party Leader, Maryland; Ms. Srilekha Reddy, Republican Party leader, Virginia; Dr. Surinder P. Singh, a doyen of the US Sikh community; and former Senator Akbar Khawaja also spoke on the occasion. They lauded embassy's open-door policy and its efforts to unite people of all religion under one roof. Ambassador Masood Khan especially appreciated the efforts of Ilyas Masih for being a "connector" of people of faiths.



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

Real Face of India - III

Cultural exchange is recognized as a means of fostering understanding and goodwill. Through educational programs, artistic initiatives, and people-to-people exchanges, an ideal nation promotes a positive image abroad and builds lasting connections, using soft power derived from cultural influence to build bridges and strengthen relationships.

Active engagement in economic collaboration with other nations, characterized by fair trade practices, open markets, and mutually beneficial partnerships, contributes to global prosperity. By fostering economic growth at home and abroad, an ideal nation acknowledges that shared economic interests can be a powerful force for stability and cooperation.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of the world, an ideal country understands the importance of adaptability in its foreign relations. It responds proactively to emerging global challenges and opportunities, remaining flexible in its approach to international affairs. This adaptability allows the nation to navigate a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape with resilience and foresight.

Above all, an ideal country refrains from challenging the sovereignty of other nations and avoids interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.

Contrary to these ideals, India has engaged in interventionist activities in numerous countries, utilizing RAW as a tool to exert influence abroad. RAW, India's external intelligence agency, has long operated in secrecy due to its covert undertakings on foreign soil. The agency has been involved in objectionable activities overseas that encroach upon the sovereignty of other nations.

RAW, officially known as the Research and Analysis Wing, functions as India's primary external intelligence agency, tasked with the collection of intelligence and the execution of

covert operations beyond the nation's borders. Established in 1968, RAW's central mission is to safeguard India's national security by acquiring information on external threats, encompassing both military and non-military dimensions, and conducting operations to protect and advance India's interests on the global stage. However, a number of allegations have surfaced concerning RAW's activities abroad.

One enduring accusation against RAW involves its purported support for insurgent groups and separatist movements in neighboring nations, with Pakistan being a notable case. Critics argue that RAW has provided material and financial assistance to various insurgent factions, thereby contributing to regional instability. Additionally, RAW has faced accusations of espionage in foreign countries, involving the collection of sensitive intelligence data and compromising the national security of other nations. These allegations have, on several occasions, strained India's relations with neighboring countries.

RAW has been implicated in covert operations aimed at destabilizing governments and instigating political change in neighboring countries, actions that violate the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. The agency has also been linked to acts of sabotage in foreign countries, including cyberattacks and acts of terrorism. These allegations have led to significant diplomatic repercussions.

India and RAW are consistently engaged in supporting terrorist activities within Pakistan. Kulbhushan Yadav, a retired Indian Navy officer, was implicated in dangerous activities in Pakistan's Balochistan province and found to be spying for India's intelligence agency, RAW. Pakistani Security Forces apprehended him on March 3, 2016, on charges of espionage and involvement in acts of terrorism in Balochistan, with his arrest based on information provided by the ISI.

RAW has been operating from the territories of neighboring countries with the aim of destabilizing and weakening Pakistan, even before the World Trade Centre incident. Pakistan paid a substantial price for its role as an ally in the global war on terror, enduring a prolonged strategy by India to sow division along ethnic lines. India has also used Afghanistan's territory as a launchpad for activities against Pakistan, actively participating in anti-state activities throughout Pakistan, including in regions such as Balochistan and KPK. As a result, these areas have experienced recurrent periods of unrest and conflict, often attributed to India's sponsorship and support for terrorism in Pakistan.

For example, over the past year, an explosion in Lahore's Johar Town resulted in the loss of 22 lives. In a press briefing alongside officials from the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), the then Home Minister of Pakistan disclosed, "We have concrete evidence that India was behind the blast." The CTD official, speaking to the media, asserted, "During the investigation, it has been determined that the primary suspect in the incident had been an operative of the Indian spy agency (RAW) since 2012."

Recent tensions between Canada and India have attracted global attention. Several months ago, Canada publicly announced its active pursuit of credible allegations linking Indian government agents to the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia. This development significantly strained diplomatic relations between the two countries. In an emergency statement to the House of Commons, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau firmly stated that any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen constitutes "an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty." The victim, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45 years old, was fatally shot outside a Sikh temple on June 18 in Surrey, a Vancouver suburb with a substantial Sikh population. Nijjar openly advocated for a Sikh homeland in the form of an independent Khalistani state and had been designated as a "terrorist" by India in July 2020.

To be continued

Is Israel losing the war against Hamas? - III

Did Israel win the diplomatic successes? The big question is No. Since the start of the Israel genocide in Gaza, at least nine countries, including Jordan, Bahrain, Turkey, Colombia, Honduras, Chile, Belize, South Africa and Chad, have recalled their ambassadors to Israel or severed ties altogether. Several South American countries filed diplomatic protests against Israel in response to the conflict with Hamas. Bolivia severed all diplomatic ties with Israel, attributing its decision to alleged war crimes and human rights violations in the Gaza Strip. Chile and Colombia also recalled their ambassadors. Belize suspended diplomatic relations with Israel. The Honduran President Xiomara Castro announced the recall of its ambassador while condemning the genocide and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The United Nation Secretary General in his many statements condemned the Hamas attack in Israel, but was appalled by the killing of civilians in Gaza especially women and children. He mourned and honored the United Nations colleagues who were killed in the bombardment of Gaza. He was dismayed by the break of International humanitarian laws and called on all parties to abide by it, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution.

Once again the role of the USA and its willing partnership to kill the children, women and armedless civilians has endorsed the USA's position as a characterless, immoral and brute military power. All the Muslim countries and those countries and leaders who respect the international humanitarian law have once again awakened to the reality that for USA leadership there is no rule of law or respect for

people of any other countries except their own of their stooges. The Trigger happy USA has been destroying societies after societies and countries after countries mostly by developing a wrong, misconceived and deceptive narrative around it.

Now the countries in large numbers are turning to other powers and urging them to play a much larger role in resolving the conflicts which have been purposefully ignited and willfully prolonged to keep the world and region of their choice in constant state of turmoil.

One such power which has made its niche in resolving the conflicts between states and societies in a logical, peaceful and dignified manner is China. China is perhaps the only super power which latently has no ambition to exploit one nation and against the other to establish its hegemony but it latently and willfully is sharing the prosperity and development achieved by it during the last three decades with other countries without asking anything in return.

Militarily unipower world has played havoc on the peace and development of the weaker countries creating the gap and space for another superpower, which in the current parlance is only China capable of filling this gap.

All peace loving countries of the world should double up their efforts with China in the lead to support complete ceasefire in Israel Hamas conflict, and to start of negotiation process to determine and settle the modus operandi to convince all parties in the conflict to agree for a two states solution as promised by the United Nation Resolution 181 adopted in 1947.

Writer is Former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC



Analysis
Abdul Basit Alvi



Analysis
Qamar Bashir

IS PIDE MacroPolicy Lab—Policy Statement

Monetary Policy: Selected economic indicators to guide decision on interest rate

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Monetary Policy: Background: Since June 26, 2023, Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has chosen to keep the policy rate steady at 22%. In the last meeting of MPC's decision of keeping policy rate at 22% was influenced by the increase in headline inflation in September 2023, the volatility in global oil prices and the scheduled increase in gas tariffs starting November 2023. The MPC is scheduled to convene on December 12, 2023, to discuss and decide about the policy rate; whether the SBP should continue with the same policy rate or change it based on various economic indicators of Pakistan presented at the meeting.

Sector wise analysis and Progress: The indicators that play a crucial role in guiding the conduct of monetary policy span across different sectors, providing a comprehensive view of the economic landscape. In the real sector, the quarterly indicators serve as crucial benchmarks for assessing the performance of key sectors such as agriculture, industry, and services. For the first quarter of the current fiscal year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) revealed growth rates

of 2.48%, 5.06%, and 0.82% for agriculture, industry, and services sectors, respectively. The overall first-quarter growth on a year-on-year basis is reported at 2.13%, signaling a positive trend for the economy.

External Sector Progress: While examining the external sector; MPC focuses on the current account balance, which encompasses both exports and remittances, as well as the stability of foreign exchange (FX) reserves. The MPC meeting held on October 30 highlighted a significant improvement in Pakistan's current account balance. The current account deficit (CAD) witnessed a 58% year-on-year reduction to \$947 million for the period Jul-Sep FY24 after which for the month of September it was almost zero (balanced Current A/c). However, the data from October 2023 reveals a further reduction in the current account deficit to just \$74 million, marking a noteworthy 91% decrease compared to the same month in the previous year. Nevertheless, it's important to note a 61% increase in the deficit compared to the preceding month, attributed to debt servicing payment. Although the reserves have been building but by November 2023, the SBP reserves

declined by \$217 million, reaching \$7.180 billion.

Money Supply Dynamics: Money and credit aspects are vital components, incorporating measurements such as M2 growth, interbank and open market exchange rates, currency in circulation, and the Net Foreign Assets (NFA) and Net Domestic Assets (NDA). Moving on to money and credit situation in the economy, the average money growth in October and November stands at approximately 13.5%, surpassing the previous two-month average. The exchange rate has experienced fluctuations, ranging from 280 to 285 in October and November, in contrast to the range of 290 to 300 observed in August and September for the inter-bank rates.

Inflation: Additionally, an assessment of the inflation outlook involves monitoring headline inflation, global oil prices, and gas tariffs, while also taking into account inflation expectations and overall confidence in the economy. Addressing the inflation outlook, a positive shift in the consumer confidence index (from 26.2 in September to 32.78 in October) and a decrease in inflation expectations (from 78.08 in September to 73.30 in October) indi-

cate growing optimism among consumers in Pakistan regarding the economic outlook and anticipated lower inflation levels. Such low inflation expectations provide the central bank with some flexibility. If inflation expectations remain well-anchored and below the central bank's target, it may have room to relax



monetary policies to further stimulate economic activity. Additionally, the volatility in global oil prices, ranging from \$68 per barrel to \$91 per barrel during the current fiscal year, plays a crucial role in influencing domestic prices in oil importing countries. The recent dip in oil prices to around \$70 per barrel adds to the complexity of the economic landscape.

Fiscal Consolidation: On the Fiscal front government is pursuing fiscal consolidation; a consolidated primary surplus of 417 billion rupees for the first quarter (July-September, 2023) have been achieved as compared to

135 Billion rupees for the same period last year. Taxes have posted a healthy growth surpassing the revenue target set for the first quarter and a 24.4 percent higher than the comparable period last year first quarter (Rs. 2.22 trillion vs Rs. 1.78 trillion). However, the higher policy rates have also led to increase in debt servicing cost which stood at Rs 1.38 trillion for the first quarter as compared to 0.95 trillion for the same period last year. With over all expenditures for the first quarter climbing to Rs. 3.65 trillion this year vs. Rs. 2.84 trillion in the last year for the same period. Interest payment cost stood at 80% of the total tax collection at the federal level, which pays off the interest/debt servicing expenditures.

Cost of High Policy Rate: After examining the recent monetary policy statements and considering these indicators, it is likely that the MPC will maintain the policy rate at 22%. However, it's important to note that an extended period of such a high policy rate comes with significant costs. One of these costs is associated with disinflation, commonly referred to as the Sacrifice ratio. Haque and Jalil (April 2020) have calculated that, on average, this ratio is 0.662 for the Pakistani economy. This

implies that, on average, a sacrifice of 0.662 percent of real GDP growth is needed for a permanent reduction of one percent in inflation.

When interest rates stay high for a long time, it causes a financial stress resulting in deferment of many economic investment decisions or even running of the current businesses.

1. First, the country ends up owing more money for domestic debt obligations, so the government has to collect extra taxes to service this debt obligation.
2. Second, price increase may come from the supply side making the economic situation even tougher. Third, when interest rates are high and prices are rising fast, the real interest rates (the ones that are considered for inflation-based targets) can become very low or even negative. This makes people less interested in saving money, and it also makes it harder for businesses to invest.
3. Finally, there's a bigger risk that the economy might go into a recession, meaning there's less money circulating, but prices are still high – this tricky situation is called stagflation which Pakistan is currently facing.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Dean—Honorary Counselor Corps & Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Tunisia, Peshawar KP Chapter Ammad Rasheed had a meeting with the Mr. Jalil Abbas Jilani—Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Islamabad.



Photo: Spokesman

UK first council to pass Gaza ceasefire resolution



Arif Chaudhary

MANCHESTER, UK: This is the first council in the UK to unanimously pass the resolution.

Credit goes to the leadership of both parties and especially to Councilor Majid Khan and Councilor Javed Najmi who became Lord Mayor for the first time in the UK and Councilor Javed Najmi.

The resolution was presented by Council Leader Jane Ashworth and fully supported by Conservative Party

Councilor Faisal Hussain.

The resolution, which was unanimously adopted, said that the innocent lives lost in the October 7 attack by Hamas and the military response by Israel are causing further loss of life on humanitarian grounds for the citizens of Gaza. An immediate ceasefire is very important. Now the death toll has reached thousands. There is a need to stop the bombing of hospitals, schools, ambulances, and places of worship. There is no safe place for innocent citizens.

Thousands of protests have also been witnessed across the country. Carried—Resolution that in the end it was said that we need to vote to end the suffering of innocent civilians by demanding a permanent ceasefire.

The council was very happy to pass the unanimous resolution on Gaza ceasefire—council leader Jane Ashworth, deputy leader Amjad Wazir, councilor Javed Najmi, young councilor Waseem Akbar and all Muslims and non-Muslims played an important role in passing the resolution.

KC-EU's Chair Ali Raza Syed conferred human rights award of 2023

Sohail Anjum Malik

BRUSSELS: Chairman Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) Ali Raza Syed was given a special award by the Human Rights Council of Pakistan (HRCP) for upholding human rights of oppressed Kashmiris in Europe.

The 2023 Human Rights Award for Ali Raza Syed was received by his son Syed Wasi Shah in his absence yesterday during a prestigious ceremony in the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad.

In a video message, the Chairman of the Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed thanked the

Human Rights Council of Pakistan, whose administration gave him the award in recognition of his services to the human rights of Kashmiris. He appreciated the efforts of Chairman of HRCP Jamsheed Hussain and his team working for human rights.

The Special Human Rights Award is a reward for the efforts of the Kashmir Council EU under the leadership of Ali Raza Syed, which has been done for the past seventeen years to highlight the Kashmir issue including rights of the people of Kashmir at the international forums, including the European Parliament and other European insti-

tutions and European countries. Kashmir Council EU's Chairman Ali Raza Syed said that Kashmir Council EU is raising its voice against India's occupation of a large part of Jammu and Kashmir and worst violations of human rights of the Kashmiri people.

In his message, Ali Raza Syed further said that Kashmir Council EU has been appreciated by Human Rights Council of Pakistan for raising its voice for human rights, it is thanks to the support of Kashmir Council EU's members, supporters and sympathizers.

European intellectual and

journalist Andre Bares was also awarded by the Human Rights Council of Pakistan for his cooperation in efforts to highlight the Kashmir issue in Europe and for raising his voice against the violation of the rights of Kashmiris by Indian authorities. Andre Bares, who is originally from Hungary, has been a long-time journalist and human rights activist at the European headquarters in Brussels.

Andre Bares also thanked the Human Rights Council of Pakistan in his message and said that he will continue to raise his voice in solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiris.



Working together for enduring China-Vietnam friendship

Xinhua

HONG KONG: Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese president, will pay a state visit to Vietnam from Dec. 12 to 13 at the invitation of the Vietnamese side.

Six years after his last Vietnam trip, Xi's upcoming visit is bound to consolidate political mutual trust between the two countries, and promote mutually beneficial cooperation.

The trip will also tighten the bond between the two peoples, and provide a strong impetus for ushering in a new stage in bilateral relations at a higher starting point.

Over the years, both countries have witnessed frequent high-level exchanges and breakthroughs in practical cooperation, and their relations have seen ever-deepening popular support. Their special bond of "camaraderie and brotherhood" has benefited the two peoples and facilitated regional

and world peace and development.

The friendship, deeply rooted in shared ideals and beliefs of the two countries with the same social system, has been epitomized in their respective foreign policies that regard the bilateral relationship as a priority.

Leaders of both sides have also established solid political mutual trust and profound comradeship to chart the course for future growth of bilateral relations and provide important strategic guidance.

In October, Xi met with Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong, who was in Beijing for the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Exactly a year earlier, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong became the first foreign leader to visit China after the 20th CPC National Congress and was awarded the Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China by Xi. Recip-

rocal visits of both leaders took place in 2017, with Xi's state visit to Vietnam being his first overseas trip after the 19th CPC National Congress.

It was during Xi's 2017 state visit to Vietnam when a memorandum of understanding was signed on the joint implementation of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and Vietnam's "Two Corridors and One Economic Circle" plan, resulting in major projects that substantially improved the wellbeing of the people.

Take Vietnam's first city metro. The 13-km Cat Linh-Ha Dong line with 12 stations and covering three districts in Hanoi, provided convenient and comfortable alternatives to traffic for commuters in the city crowded with millions of motorbikes and cars. Built by China and run by Vietnam, the metro line has demonstrated how the two countries are pushing forward practical cooperation.

Their cooperation has reached a higher level as the two countries



mark the 15th anniversary of their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership this year. China has remained Vietnam's biggest trading partner for years, while Vietnam has been China's biggest trading partner in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

After Vietnamese durians officially entered the Chinese market last year, its vegetable and fruit exports to China has been remarkably expanding this year,

with its durian exports expected to top the goal of 1 billion U. S. dollars.

Moreover, Chinese investment in Vietnam has been on the rise, ranking second in the first nine months of this year. Personnel exchanges also bounced back and are expected to grow as more flights resume.

Closer bond and better understanding between the two peoples has been borne out by the increas-

ing popularity of Chinese films and TV series among Vietnamese audience. And more Chinese tourists choose Vietnam as their destination, while more Vietnamese students opt to study and work in China.

Both China and Vietnam see the other's development as its own opportunity for development, and the prospects are bright for the two countries to work together in following the path of socialism and further promoting bilateral ties.

It is important for the two neighbors to actively promote mutually beneficial cooperation at sea, prevent the involvement of external forces, accelerate consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, and make the South China Sea a sea of peace and cooperation.

The two sides should view their relations from the strategic perspective of promoting human progress and boosting the strength of socialism, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi while

co-chairing the 15th meeting of the Steering Committee for Bilateral Cooperation in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi earlier this month.

While meeting with Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, Nguyen Phu Trong said he planted a friendship tree at the Youyi Pass, or Friendship Pass, on the China-Vietnam border, stressing that the border port, the only one named after friendship among neighbors, highlighted the traditional friendship cherished by Vietnam.

The world today is living through accelerating changes unseen in a century. Socialist countries such as China and Vietnam, based on their national conditions and in line with the trend of the times, have successfully explored their own modernization paths.

With shared aspiration and joint efforts, the giant ship of China-Vietnam friendship will surely sail toward greater success.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
66,012.32	66,223.63
Day's High	Day's Low
66,564.04	65,128.99
Index Value	Change
25,201,937,752	-211.31
Percentage	Time
-0.32%	9 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,544.89	-9.58
Percentage	Time
-0.13%	11 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
36,335.35	+87.48
Percentage	Time
+0.24%	11 Dec, 12:11 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
32,791.80	+483.94
Percentage	Time
-1.68%	11 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187.2	189
Bahrain Dinar	754.96	762.96
Canadian Dollar	209	211
China Yuan	39.68	40.08
Danish Krone	40.99	41.39
Euro	307	310
Hong Kong Dollar	36.35	36.7
Indian Rupee	3.4	3.51
Japanese Yen	1.39	1.45
Kuwaiti Dinar	917.76	926.76
Malaysian Ringgit	60.86	61.46
New Zealand \$	173.77	175.77
Norwegians Krone	26.02	26.32
Omani Riyal	737.31	745.31
Qatari Riyal	77.98	78.68
Saudi Riyal	76.1	76.9
Singapore Dollar	211	213
Swedish Korona	27.11	27.41
Swiss Franc	322.6	325.1
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	77.4	78.2
UK Pound Sterling	359	362.5
US Dollar	284	286.5

Politicians should accept the challenge of peace and prosperity. Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that friendly relations between all the neighbouring countries are necessary to lift the people of the region out of poverty.

Improved relations with neighbouring countries are necessary to resolving disputes so that the country can develop, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that prolonged tensions between neighbours are not in anyone's interest as differences are an obstacle to peace and progress.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that Pakistan

should improve its relations with India, Iran and Afghanistan and increase cooperation with China so that the country's image can be improved globally, tourism can be developed and foreign investors can be attracted.

Presently it is difficult to be able to do business in the risky Pakistani market which is barring national development, he said, adding that economic and financial performance cannot improve until local and international political affairs improve.

The business leader said that if the relations with the neighbouring countries improve, terrorism can end in Pakistan, which will allow the development projects to move on a faster pace, while the costs will also decrease.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the new government has to defeat poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and backwardness, while the tax



system has to be balanced and the cost of energy has to be reduced,; the country's exports and

local production will suffer and we will have to import everything.

Huge loans will have to be taken to finance imports which is not sustainable, he observed. He said that after the elections, the new government will have to accept the challenge of ensuring peace, development and economic prosperity.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that those who brought the country to this state have neither been properly identified nor are they being held accountable. The government's commitment to increase exports to 100 billion dollars is feasible and laudable but it is not possible in the presence of current energy prices, their continuous increase and increasing dependence on direct taxes. He said that Export policy must be completely changed from top to bottom to increase exports.

Shortage of Urea

LAHORE: Farmers hold placards and shouting slogans during protest outside press club in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Flour millers refuse to buy govt wheat, asks authorities for intervention

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The negotiations between flour millers and the Punjab Food Department that started on November 13 have ended without any agreement.

The flour millers have refused to buy sub-par wheat from the Food Department and have started buying wheat from the open market.

Private wheat is of better quality as compared to government-provided wheat, but it is also costly, which results in an additional financial burden on the masses.

Due to the use of expensive wheat being purchased from the private sector by millers, flour has become expensive in the market, for which the policies of the food authorities are being blamed.

According to the details, the food department was supplying substandard and unhealthy wheat to 130 flour mills located in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Lately, the ratio of sand, gravel, and dust was almost a kilogram per 100 kg bag, but it has now jumped to eight to ten kilograms, which is not acceptable to millers as it translates into heavy losses.

Moreover, the authorities are also forcing flour millers to buy 25% of the required wheat from the warehouses located in the remote districts of South Punjab to sell it in the local market at the control rate.



This decision of the food authorities is unacceptable to the flour mill owners because the cost of transportation per sack from Punjab to Rawalpindi and Islamabad is almost five hundred rupees.

The pressure on flour mills despite the removal of subsidies is surprising, and it does not make any sense for the people involved in the grinding business.

Currently, the price of government wheat is Rs 4700 per maund, while private wheat is available at Rs 5050 per maund.

The flour mills are using private wheat; therefore, people have to pay Rs 1430 for a bag of 10 kg of flour instead of Rs 1374,

which is an additional burden.

Meanwhile, the President of the Flour Mills Association, Rawalpindi Region, Riazullah Khan, and other leaders, including Tariq Sadiq, Kashif Shabbir, Raza Ahmad Shah, Khawaja Imran, Chaudhry Mukhtar, Sanaullah Durrani Tariq Sethi, Abdul Rahman Khan, and Sheikh Shaukat asked the Secretary Food Punjab, Director Food Punjab, Commissioners of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and other authorities to take note of the situation and take necessary steps aimed at providing relief to the masses and the flour milling industry.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz Champions Bilateral Trade during Visit to China



PPA

BEIJING: Minister of Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz is leading a 20+ member delegation currently in China. This endeavor follows the trailblazing visit of Honorable Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar to China in October, further reinforcing the commitment to fortify the economic ties between Pakistan and China.

The delegation, led by Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz, is engaged in discussions with Chinese counterparts aimed at improving the Sino-Pak trade relations and identifying avenues for collaborative ventures. With a focus on improving the trade balance with China as part

of the Minister's vision to upon the momentum generated during Prime Minister Kakar's visit, the delegation is actively exploring opportunities to enhance economic cooperation.

Commerce Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz's meet with Mr. Zhang Xinmin, Chairman of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles (CCCT). The objective of this meeting was to bolster textile trade between Pakistan and China, with a particular emphasis on addressing trade imbalances. Discussions included strategies for accessing new markets in China to promote Pakistani exports and facilitate smoother trade transactions.

Tetra Pak extends nutrition partnership with Islamabad United for the sixth year

ABC

ISLAMABAD: Tetra Pak Pakistan announced the extension of their partnership with Islamabad United as its official nutrition partner during the upcoming season 9 of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), scheduled between February to March 2024. The agreement was signed by Mr Awais Bin Nasim, Managing Director of Tetra Pak Pakistan and Mr Ahsan Latif, CEO of Islamabad United, during a special ceremony hosted at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) headquarters in Lahore on December 11, 2023. Since 2019, Tetra Pak has remained the official nutrition partner of Islamabad United for PSL making

it the sixth time this year for this continued support. The ceremony was attended by top officials from both sides.

While commenting on this partnership, Mr Awais Bin Nasim, Managing Director of Tetra Pak Pakistan said, "Safe and healthy milk is the most ideal form of nourishment especially to regain lost energy after a vigorous activity or exercise. This is why the milk must remain safe from bacteria and adulteration, achieved with our 6-layer packaging technology that protects milk's nutritional integrity without using any chemicals or preservatives. Our collaboration with Islamabad United increases awareness about the importance of safe and healthy milk consumption in our lives."

Systems recognized as Temenos MEA Delivery Partner of the Year 2023

PNP

KARACHI: Systems Limited has been recognized as the "Temenos MEA Delivery Partner of the Year 2023" at Temenos MEA Sales & Partner Summit, held in Pretoria, South Africa. This prestigious award recognizes the excellence of Temenos partner Systems Limited in delivering transformations and driving customer success on top of Temenos open platform for composable banking. Systems Limited continues expanding its client base, capabilities, and certification level globally.

This collaboration has yielded impressive results, with notable milestones being the grant of License rights by Temenos to Systems Limited

to develop further and sell the Country Model Banks for the GCC region. Furthermore, Systems Limited has made notable efforts to drive banking innovation globally, including delivering local IP such as market specific products and signing multiple banking transformation deals across the region using Temenos solutions. This latest partner recognition has solidified System's position as a true industry leader and a distinguished delivery expert and highlights its dedication to innovation and excellence, both on a global scale and within the MEA region.

I would like to thank and congratulate our delivery teams for their constant commitment and motiva-

tion across all our global projects," said Ammara Masood, Global industry GM Banking and Financial Services, Systems Ltd

William Moroney, Managing Director - Middle East and Africa, Temenos, said: "Congratulations to Systems Limited, Temenos MEA delivery partner of the year for 2023. Temenos is committed to working with the best in the market and Systems Limited has consistently proven its implementation skills, technical expertise, and the capability to deliver transformation and upgrades. Temenos and Systems have enjoyed a long and successful relationship over many years which together has created incredible value for our shared customers in the MEA region."



GFS Builders inaugurates Cheez Mall in Sukkur



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: GFS Builders and Developers has inaugurated Cheez Mall in Sukkur. Presiding over the event, Mansoor Wahid, Managing Director of GFS Builders & Developers, said, "Our every dream can come true if we make them come true."

Have the courage to do it. Alhamdulillah, few months ago, GFS established its foundation here and today the development work is going on fast, the site has been opened to the public of Sukkur, our work and commitment of GFS is telling. We want the people of Sukkur to come to us and invest in GFF, we will take great care of the project's amenities, welcome all dealers and people of Sukkur. We have big brands in education and health with us, we have come up with complete housing schemes and properties where all the comforts of living are present. While

The chief guest of the event, Owais Qadirshah, said that it is a very welcome thing for GFS Builders, who are well-known in the construction sector, to come to Sukkur. The people of Sukkur welcome GFS Builders. After launching projects all over Pakistan, GFS Builders & Developers has now launched a project in Sukkur. Sukkur is a historical city of Sindh. There should be work here. Chaz Mal Sukkur will increase the glory of Sukkur

The event of GFS Builders and Developers was attended by media representatives including political and social figures from Sindh, famous businessmen, anchorpersons from various schools of thought. Famous singers of Sindh including Mumtaz Malai, Marvel and actor Asghar Khoso also performed in the event while the event was hosted by AK Memon.

PM Kakar holds meeting with PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday met with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Management Committee Mr Zaka Ashraf.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Kakar appreciated the measures undertaken by the PCB management committee

and expressed his support.

PM Kakar also urged the PCB Chairman Management Committee Zaka Ashraf to expand PCB's outreach to remote regions of the country.

PM Kakar also expressed support for the organisation of the ninth edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL). Addressing concerns about potential scheduling clashes with election day,



he said adjustments to the HBL PSL matches should be made to prevent any interference with the voting process.

Emphasising the significance of fostering stronger bonds with other cricket boards, PM Kakar commended PCB's efforts and stressed the importance of enhancing relations with boards like Cricket Australia (CA) and the England and Wales Cricket Board

(ECB).

PM Kakar urged the PCB to collaborate closely with stakeholders and security agencies in preparation for the successful hosting of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

He reiterated the government's support for the PCB's initiatives aimed at fostering cricket across all levels within the country.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic returns to AC Milan as advisor

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Zlatan Ibrahimovic has returned to AC Milan as an advisor to the Serie A club's management, owners RedBird Capital Partners confirmed on Monday.

In a statement, American investment firm RedBird said that the former Sweden striker, who won a host of trophies as a player in Italy, will "serve as a senior advisor to AC Milan ownership and senior management".

The 42-year-old has also been hired as "Operating Partner" for RedBird's "sports and media and entertainment investment portfolio".

RedBird said that Ibrahimovic's mandate at Milan "will include player development and high-performance training, advancing AC Milan's global brand and commercial interests, and supporting special projects of strategic importance, including the club's new stadium".

Within RedBird, Ibrahimovic "will help source and evaluate new investment opportunities for the firm, and will advise RedBird portfolio companies on



commercial projects, digital content strategies and strategic brand building initiatives".

Zlatan Ibrahimovic brought the curtain down on his eventful playing career at the end of last season, in which he was dogged by injury and netted just once for Milan.

That goal came in a 3-1 win at Udinese in March and made him the oldest goal scorer in Serie A history.

Ibrahimovic was a key figure in Milan's resurgence to the top of Italian football after his return as a veteran forward in 2019, helping to bring them back from the doldrums and eventually win the Serie A title in 2022.

He was also key to the club's previous Scudetto 11 years before, which was followed by a long period of stagnation and financial problems before revitalisation under current coach

Stefano Pioli.

Over the course of his illustrious career, Ibrahimovic won league titles in the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and France, although his only major European trophy was the 2017 Europa League with Manchester United.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic rejoins Milan with the team nine points behind Serie A leaders Inter Milan and facing a group-stage exit from the Champions League.

Three uncapped players named in England squad for India Tests



A Sports

LONDON: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Monday, announced a 16-man squad for the five-match away Test series against India, featuring three uncapped players Shoaib Bashir, Gus Atkinson and Tom Hartley.

Atkinson had a remarkable stint in the County Championship when he picked up 20 wickets in five matches at an average of 20.20, playing a pivotal role in Surrey claiming back-to-back titles.

Hartley and Bashir, on the other hand, were both part of the England Lions squad that trained in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) last month.

Shoaib Bashir, who made his professional debut in June after signing a professional contract with Somerset, has thus far played only six first-class matches and picked up 10 wickets at an average of 67.

Hartley too, has a modest first-class record for Lancashire, with 40 career wickets at 36.57.

Meanwhile, England Test captain Ben Stokes, who recently underwent knee surgery last month, is also included in the squad.

However, it remains uncertain whether the dynamic all-rounder would be fit enough to bowl in the series.

Ben Foakes, who was dropped for the Ashes, has been recalled for the India Tests, while Jack Leach and Ollie Pope both return to the squad after recovering from back and shoulder injuries during the English summer.

England's 16-man squad for the India Tests features four spinners and as many pacers.

England Test squad: Rehan Ahmed, James Anderson, Gus Atkinson, Jonny Bairstow, Shoaib Bashir, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ben Foakes, Tom Hartley, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Ben Stokes (captain), Mark Wood.

England's Tour of India Itinerary:
1st Test: India v England, 25-29 January, Hyderabad
2nd Test: India v England, 2-6 February, Vizag
3rd Test: India v England, 15-19 February, Rajkot
4th Test: India v England, 23-27 February, Ranchi
5th Test: India v England, 7-11 March, Dharamsala

Karachi Kings appoint Phil Simmons as Head Coach for HBL PSL 9



A Sports

KARACHI: Karachi Kings, Pakistan's biggest city's HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise, has made a ground-breaking announcement as they named Phil Simmons as their head coach for the upcoming HBL PSL 9.

The franchise proudly welcomes the esteemed Phil Simmons as their Head Coach, marking a significant step in their ongoing revitalization and restructuring process.

Phil Simmons, renowned for his dual role as a star player and as the triumphant coach of the West Indies during the 2016 T20 World Cup, brings a wealth of experience and strategic prowess to the Karachi Kings' camp.

During his cricket career, Phil Simmons has scored 4,677 runs and picked up 87 wickets. He had a reputation for being an expert limited-over format player.

Karachi is not an unknown territory to the new head coach of Kings' as he has played a World Cup 1987 match in the city.

Expressing his enthusiasm, Simmons stated, "Returning to Karachi, a city I hold dear from my playing days, feels like a homecoming. I am thrilled to join forces with Haider Azhar and the rest of the team's think tank, drawing from the rich cricketing heritage of this country."

"I am thankful to team owner Salman Iqbal, CEO Tariq Wasi, and Karachi Kings management for this opportunity. We are eager to move ahead with our rebuilding and restart process of Karachi Kings and establish this franchise as a match-winning unit."

Salman Iqbal, the owner of Karachi Kings, extended a warm welcome to Simmons, emphasizing the coach's invaluable addition to the team.

"We are honored to have Phil Simmons join us as the Head Coach. His remarkable track record as a coach and player speaks volumes about his calibre. We are confident his leadership will drive Karachi Kings to greater heights."

The Karachi Kings management expresses confidence in this revamped coaching ensemble, aiming to create a formidable team ready to conquer the challenges of the upcoming HBL PSL 9.

ICC unveils schedule for U19 Men's Cricket World Cup

A Sports

DUBAI:

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday, unveiled the schedule for the upcoming U19 Men's Cricket World Cup, scheduled to commence on January 19 in South Africa.

"Five-time champions India will commence their 2024 ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup campaign against 2020 winners Bangladesh in Bloemfontein, while hosts South Africa take on the West Indies in the tournament opener on January 19," said ICC in a release.

Five venues across South Africa will host a total of 41 ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup matches from January 19 till early February 11.

The 15th edition of the showpiece event will feature 16 teams, divided into four groups.

Group A features defending champions India alongside Bangladesh, Ireland and the United States of America (USA), while Group B consists of England, South Africa, West Indies, and Scotland.

Two-time champions Pakistan are placed in Group D alongside Afghanistan, New Zealand and Nepal while Australia, Sri Lanka, Namibia and Zimbabwe were placed in Group C.

The top three sides from each group progress to the Super Six phase of the event.

The top four teams at the conclusion of the Super Six stage will then advance to the semi-finals, scheduled on February 6 and 8.

Meanwhile, the final of the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup will take place on February 11 in Benoni.

South Africa will host the U19 World Cup for the third time, having previously hosted the 1998 and 2020 editions.

Notably, the International Cricket Council (ICC) awarded the hosting rights of the mega event to South Africa as a consequence of the apex cricket body's provisional ban on Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC).

For the unversed, the ICC suspended SLC's membership after the latter had failed to ensure there was no government interference in its affairs.



Breast Cancer Awareness

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi in a group photo with the participants of breast cancer awareness cricket match, on Monday.



Girona claim historic win over Barcelona to lead La Liga

Sports Desk

BARCELONA: Shock Spanish title contenders Girona earned a historic 4-2 win over rivals Barcelona on Sunday at Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys to move to the top of La Liga.

Girona defeated their Catalan rivals for the first time ever in the top flight in a pulsating battle to rise two points above Real Madrid, second, after their 1-1 draw at Real Betis on Saturday.

Defending La Liga champions Barcelona are fourth after Atletico Madrid, third, beat Almeria earlier on, and Xavi's side trail Girona by seven points.

Artem Dovbyk sent Girona ahead and after Robert Lewandowski pulled Barcelona level, Miguel Gutierrez slammed home again for the visitors.

Valery Fernandez extended

Girona's lead with 10 minutes remaining before Ilkay Gundogan netted to set up a frantic finale.

Veteran striker Cristian Stuani struck from close range in stoppage time to wrap up a stunning victory which reaffirms the minnows' title dream.

Girona, part-owned by the City Football Group, were without injured key midfielder Yangel Herrera, whom they signed from Manchester City, but did not let it set them back.

In La Liga for only the fourth season in their history, they played without any fear of their more illustrious neighbours and took the lead early on as the game saw-sawed deliciously from end to end.

The visitors split the 27-time champions open with a lethal counter-attack, with Ukrainian

winger Viktor Tsygankov feeding his compatriot Dovbyk to slam home in the 12th minute.

Unperturbed, Barcelona levelled quickly through Lewandowski, with the 35-year-old heading home Raphinha's corner to end a run of three matches without a goal.

Former Real Madrid left-back Gutierrez, no stranger to an adventure upfield, drove into the box and cracked an early strike into the near top corner five minutes before the break.

Barcelona tried to force their way back in, with Paulo Gazzaniga saving Frenkie de Jong's low effort and Raphinha sending a free-kick over the bar.

Valery seemed to end Barca's hopes with 10 minutes to go when Stuani headed the ball into his path, and he beat Jules Kounde with ease before firing

home.

However, Gundogan turned well in the box and lashed past Gazzaniga to give the hosts a chance to snatch a draw. Lewandowski might have levelled but headed wide when well-placed.

Stuani bundled home at the death to complete a sensational night for Girona, with several of their players leaping the advertising hoardings and running towards their fans in celebration.

Michel said beforehand that a win would send his team into a new dimension and there can be little doubt now they are genuine title contenders this season.

"We're seven points behind, which is a lot, but there's more than half a season to go," De Jong told DAZN.

"There's time, but we have a lot to come back from."



Group photo

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the members of Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday.



Photo: Online

Mainstreaming of deprived segments, fast decision-making vital for Pakistan's progress: President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said the mainstreaming of the deprived segments including women and differently-abled women, leveraging artificial intelligence and fast decision-making were inevitable for the progress and prosperity of the country. The president, addressing the Members' Convocation of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA), urged the

new graduates to play their role for the welfare of their employees and environmental protection besides fulfilling their responsibilities to their respective industries as well as the society.

He urged the educational institutes to produce leaders as the country faced an acute shortage of leadership which should be honest to the people and the nation besides being capable of addressing the pervading issues. The president reiterated his condemnation of the ongoing kill-

ings in Gaza and rejected the Indian Supreme Court's decision of Article 370 in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He questioned the conscience of the developed world over the barbarism in Gaza and said the world was in dire need of an order anchored on morality which legacy of the Muslims. He said, unfortunately, the vested interests had overpowered the humanitarianism in world affairs.

President Alvi, who earlier

awarded certificates to the new graduates and medals to the council members, said that around 28 million Pakistani children were out of school and needed support to brighten their future. He said the country faced a shortage of professional graduates so the approach of encouraging them to go abroad and send remittances was unjustified. The president said after joining the practical life, they should strive to provide a secure working environment to the women in their busi-

nesses as well as their respective fields besides creating opportunities for the differently-abled women.

Earlier, in his welcome address, ICMA President Shahzad Ahmed Malik said the Institute was committed to imparting quality education as it had constantly been improving its standards by adopting the best global practices. He said ICMA was one of the oldest institutions in the region with 8,000 qualified members and 18,000 active students.

Supreme Judicial Council members accused of harassment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A complaint has been lodged against several members of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) for alleged harassment.

As per details, President of Civil Society Network, Amna Malik, filed the complaint in the Federal Ombudsman, citing misconduct and harassment by senior members of the SJC.

The plea stated that a complaint was made against Justice Sardar Tariq Masood on June 16, 2023 and the complainant Amna Malik was summoned by SJC on November 20, 2023.

In her plea, she accused two senior members of SJC of misconduct and harassment. The plaintiff said that Justice Qazi Faez Isa heard the plea as if it was against him.

Amna Malik said that she felt unsafe in Supreme Judicial Council by the derogatory behavior and the conduct was contrary to the oath taken by the members to treat complainants

respectfully.

The complaint highlighted a threat made against the complainant, of being sent to a place where she wouldn't be able to return.

Citing Article 25 (3) of the constitution, Amna Malik emphasized the right to safety for women, stating, "I was threatened and mentally tortured."

Furthermore, the plea urged the authorities to take appropriate action against Justice Sardar Tariq Masood for the alleged harassment.

Earlier, the Supreme Judicial Council's (SJC) inquiry over the accusation against Justice Sardar Tariq Masood by Amna Malik concluded, as SJC deemed her responses to important questions unreliable.

It is pertinent to mention that Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) had earlier issued show-cause notice to superior court judge Justice Mazahir Naqvi.

The complaint was filed against the apex court judge in the judicial council, by Mian Dawood Advocate.

PPMA calls upon govt to immediately review hardship cases of 262 drugs

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA) has called upon the interim federal government to immediately allow as per the law, a reasonable increase in prices of 262 medicines, whose applications have been pending for over one-and-half years, as any further delay by the authorities concerned in deciding these cases means more essential drugs wouldn't be available in the local market.

The demand to this effect was made by PPMA Central Chairman, Mian Khalid Misbah-ur-Rehman while speaking at a press conference here on Monday. He was accompanied by two former PPMA chairmen, Zahid Saeed, and Kaiser Waheed, and other office-bearers of the association.

The PPMA Chairman informed journalists that revision in prices of these medicines had become high-

ly essential as the last time such an increase had been allowed by the government the value of the dollar was less than Rs 200. "In addition to the phenomenal increase in the dollar exchange rate, the production cost of medicines has increased manifold due to record inflation," he said.

He warned that more multinational drug producers would be left with no option but to wind up their businesses if the government unnecessarily kept on delaying the decision to allow an increase in the prices of medicines whose hardship cases had been pending with the authorities for long.

"The number of multinational pharmaceutical companies in Pakistan has already significantly decreased over the past many years as any further reduction in their number will go against the current efforts of the government to attract foreign investment to Pakistan," he said.

Czech Ambassador called on Caretaker Minister for Finance



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Dr. Shamsad Akhtar welcomed H. E. Alfred Ladislav Steinhübel and congratulated him on joining his assignment in Pakistan. The Finance Minister highlighted bilateral relations and level of development in these relations between Czech Republic and Pakistan. Finance Minister hoped that the newly establishing JEC will provide an international platform for enhancing bilateral commercial relations between the two countries.

H. E. Alfred Ladislav Steinhübel

thanked the Finance Minister and expressed the hope that first meeting of JEC will be held soon to provide necessary information to enhancing trade relations. He further informed that Czech companies are looking for collaboration in Mining, Energy and Chemical sectors.

The Finance Minister welcomed the interest and assured that Government will facilitate B2B contacts. In addition, Finance Minister sought collaboration in higher education. The Finance Minister also briefed about the reforms undertaken by the Government to bring macro-economic stability in the country.

President AJK says Indian Supreme Court verdict in violation of U. N. resolutions

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the Indian Supreme Court's verdict on abrogation of article 370 was in violation of the united nations resolutions that besides acknowledging the disputed nature of the Kashmir call for holding a memorandum to to allow Kashmiri people to determine their political future. Reacting to the Indian courts verdict upholding the validity of the Modi Government's 2019 decision to repeal the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) under Article 370 of the Constitution, Barrister Chaudhry



said that the judgement not only violates the Indian constitution but also the UNSC resolutions that recognize the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.

AJK PM blasts Indian court for 'murdering justice' in Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while condemning the Indian Supreme Court's verdict upholding the presidential order regarding the revocation of Kashmir's special status, has stated that the Indian apex court has miserably failed in upholding the merit and demands of justice. In his special statement, the AJK premier termed the court verdict as tantamount to murdering justice and robbing Kashmiris of their constitutional and human rights. Terming the abrogation of 370 and 35A by the Indian government as illegal and unconstitutional, the PM said Kashmiris had no hope from the



Supreme Court of India. "I was pretty sure that the Supreme Court of India will go extra mile to defend the Indian government's decision", he said, adding that Kashmiris had no faith in the Indian state apparatus, not even in its pliant judiciary. "All Indian institutions including the judiciary have been equally responsible for the current mess and worsening political and human rights situation in the occupied Kashmir", he said.

President Tokayev signs landmark decree advancing human rights in Kazakhstan

ASTANA: In a landmark move on December 8, 2023, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan signed a decree endorsing an Action Plan dedicated to the advancement of human rights and the rule of law in the country. This action was taken ahead of the International Human Rights Day on December 10 and the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This pivotal document underscores Kazakhstan's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations, bolstering human rights institutions, and fostering the development of a national system for the protection of human rights and democracy.

The Decree and the Action Plan signify a new era in



Kazakhstan's dedication to democratic reforms and human rights. They ensure the effective operation of democratic institutions and human rights mechanisms within the country. A notable element of this initiative is the mandatory collaboration with prominent international organizations such as the United Nations

(UN) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in executing the measures outlined in the Plan.

To bring the Decree into effect, Kazakhstan will undertake several significant actions. These include the adoption of seven laws aimed at addressing issues such as domestic

violence, labor safety, and the establishment of regional child rights ombudspersons. The government will also approve four comprehensive plans that focus on labor safety, inclusive policy, the promotion of gender equality, and enhancing security in alignment with UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Moreover, the implementation strategy involves conducting practical activities and training sessions, leveraging the expertise of international organizations like the UN and OSCE.

The Plan encompasses a range of measures to strengthen gender equality, protect child rights, combat domestic violence, and enhance human rights within the criminal justice system. It emphasizes a zero-tolerance policy for torture and cruel treat-

ment, aligning with constitutional provisions. The Plan also includes initiatives to improve the rights of persons with disabilities, the right to work, and occupational safety. These collective measures are designed to eradicate systemic issues, safeguard human rights, boost public trust in law enforcement agencies, and garner support for addressing challenges in criminal justice.

This comprehensive approach reflects Kazakhstan's determination to foster a society where human rights are respected and protected. Under President Tokayev's leadership, the country is set to make notable progress in human rights protection, thereby strengthening its democratic framework and international standing.