

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
تاریخ زریں ہے بیان کیا ان سے کثیرین  
شعیر سے بیان کیا ان سے عظیم ابنی ابرار  
نے بیان کیا ان سے جاہلین عبد اللہ رضی  
اللہ عنہما نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ  
و سلم نے فرمایا سو وقت) برتن بھکت  
یا کر دور دروازے بند کر لیا کہ اور چرخ  
بجھایا کہ کیونکہ یہ چرخ ہوا وقت چرخ  
کی حق سچائی ہے اور ہوا کو جادو تارے۔  
(پنجگانہ ص 295 نمبر 6)  
Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI



LANCE NAIK MUHAMMAD MAHFUZ (SHAHEED) Nishan-i-Haider

**Tribute** Pakistan Army, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chiefs of Services pay tribute to Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfouz Shaheed, Nishan Haider on the occasion of his 52nd Martyrdom Day. Without a doubt, the martyrdom day of Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfouz Shaheed is a manifestation of the sacrifices made by Pakistan forces for the motherland. These shining stars of Pakistan who laid down their lives for the honor of the country undoubtedly deserve honor and respect. The entire nation is proud of its brave children.



## Internet services down across Pakistan

A widespread disruption in internet services was experienced throughout the country on Sunday night, with numerous users expressing difficulties in accessing social media platforms. Complaints flooded in from parts of the country, highlighting outages on YouTube, Facebook and X [formerly Twitter]. Some users resorted to reporting problems on WhatsApp.

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## Funeral

The coffin of Kuwait's late Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is carried into the Bilal bin Rabah Mosque in Kuwait City during his funeral on Sunday.



Photo: AFP

# Body of late Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad laid to rest

### Spokesman Report

DUBAI: The body of late Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was laid to rest at the Sulaibikhat Cemetery on Sunday following a prayer service. The emir passed away on Saturday aged 86. Sheikh Nawaf, whose casket was draped in Kuwait's flag,

was buried alongside his kin, after prayers at Bilal bin Rabah mosque. The late Emir's funeral was attended by members of the Al Sabah family and speaker of Kuwait's parliament, according to state news agency KUNA. His successor, Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, was seen shedding a tear at the prayer service.

Sheikh Mishal and the royal family will personally receive the condolences of people at the Diwan of Al-Sabah Family at Bayan Palace on Monday and Tuesday. Dignitaries from around the world, including U. S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Jordan's King Abdullah were due in Kuwait to pay their respects.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived in Kuwait in the afternoon. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian was also due to present condolences on behalf of President Ebrahim Raisi. Sheikh Nawaf held several posts throughout his six decades in public service, which included minister of defence, interior,

labour and deputy chief of the National Guard. The late emir was perceived domestically as a consensus-builder who sought to repair a long strained relationship between the parliament and government and who pardoned dozens of dissidents and other citizens who had voiced public criticisms.

## PM Kakar to travel to Kuwait to convey condolences on death of Amir Sheikh Nawaf

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday will undertake a one-day visit to Kuwait.

He will convey to the Royal Family, the government and the people of Kuwait the sympathies and condolences of the Government and people of Pakistan on the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf



Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Foreign Office Spokesperson said on X on Sunday.

## Pakistan to observe day of mourning on demise of Amir of Kuwait



18 as a day of mourning in Pakistan as an expression of fraternal solidarity on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan, with the royal family, the government, and people of Kuwait on the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah. The national flag shall fly at half mast throughout the country on the day.

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has declared Monday, December

## IPP promises free electricity after forming govt



### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) President Abdul Aleem Khan promised free electricity on consumption of up to 300 units if they come into power after the upcoming elections.

As per details, the IPP leader said that the nation's major problem is inflated electricity bills however he claimed that after coming into power they will provide financial assistance to WAPDA and people who consume up to 300 units will get free electricity.

Aleem Khan maintained that he is running a network of free dispensaries but he wants to expand it across Pakistan for

the deserving people. In a separate development, sources revealed that Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) prepared a list of national and provincial assembly constituencies for seat adjustment with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the upcoming general elections 2024. Sources told that IPP committee, comprising Ishaq Khakwani, Awn Chaudhry and Nauman Langrial, prepared lists of constituencies for seat adjustment in consultations with the top party leaders. Sources claimed that Jhangir Tareen-led IPP wanted to make seat adjustments in 20 National Assembly seats - 19 in Punjab and one in Karachi.

## Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack at Rask Police HQ, Iran

### PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack at Rask Police HQs in the South-eastern region of Iran, which killed 11 Iranian officials and injuring several others.

We extend heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and pray for the swift recovery of the injured. Pakistan stands in full solidarity with the Government and brotherly people of Iran in this hour of unspeakable tragedy.

Terrorism is a threat to regional as well as global peace and security and it needs to be confronted by all means including through bilateral and regional co-operation.

## Afghan interim govt is arming not only Taliban but also other terror groups

### Mentoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The evidence of foreign weapons smuggled from Afghanistan and being used in terror attacks in Pakistan have emerged as the constant supply of these arms to a terrorist outfit like TTP has serious consequences for regional security. Dunya News reported.

The trend has emerged after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, the allied forces left a massive quantity of military hardware in the war-torn country at a time when Pakistani armed forces have been busy in fighting the TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) for the last two decades.

Meanwhile, it isn't just the TTP with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) too used the US weapons in its attacks on Frontier Corps (FC) camps at Noshki and Panjgur.

Details show that the TTP members armed with US-made weapons had targeted the Zhob garrison, two border posts in Chitral.



Similarly, US weapons were recovered from the terrorists carrying out attacks in Tank as well as targeting the Mianwali airbase.

Meanwhile, the attackers in the recent terror hit in the Daraban area of Dera Ismail Khan were not only equipped with the US weapons but also night-vision gear.

On the other hand, the Pakistani authorities seized Customs officials and security forces seized a large quantity of US-made weapons at Pakistan-Afghanistan border earlier this week on Dec 12.

A variety of weapons - including military-grade assault rifles like M4, night vision equipment, laser devices and thousands of rounds - were among the items recovered from a

vehicle which was seemingly transporting onions.

US Withdrawal Boosted the TTP It is now clear that the haphazard US withdrawal resulted in enhancing the TTP's capabilities of carrying out cross-border attacks from Afghan soil.

Meanwhile, it is not just Pakistan but also international media which has highlighted this fact, as the Eur-Asian Times reported that the TTP was using US-made weapons in terror attacks across Pakistan.

The seriousness of this issue can be gauged by the figures shared by the Pentagon, which show the United States supplied a total of 427,300 weapons - \$18.6 billion in value - to the Afghan forces from 2005 to August 2021. And 300,000 were left behind after the US withdrawal, resulting in a sharp increase in terrorism in the region since then.

These developments a proof that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan has not only been arming the TTP but also providing an opportunity to other terrorist outfits.

## Justice Mansoor Ali Shah-led meeting reviews SJC rules

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was convened on Saturday to review the rules of the Supreme Judicial Council.

Presided over by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the meeting decided to consider the modalities of the appointment of judges in the superior judiciary and to finalise the draft rules by Dec 29.

Those who participated in the meeting included Justice Manzoor Malik, Justice Nadeem Akhtar, Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, Justice Ishaq Ibrahim, Justice Shahzad Ahmed Khan, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan, Akhtar Hussain, Ziaul Hassan, Rahib Khan, Ahmed Farooq Khattak, and Qazi Rafiuddin Babar.

## Israel-Qatar meet, raising prospects of Gaza hostage talks

### Reuters

CAIRO/GAZA/JERUSALEM: Israel appeared to confirm that new negotiations were underway to recover hostages held by Hamas, after a source said Israel's intelligence chief met the prime minister of Qatar, a country mediating in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a press conference on Saturday the war in Gaza

was existential and must be fought until victory. He said Gaza would be demilitarised and under Israeli security control.

Israel's offensive in Gaza helped clinch a partial hostage-release deal in November, Netanyahu said, vowing to maintain intense military pressure on Hamas. He has vowed to destroy the militant Palestinian group, which runs the densely populated strip.

"The instruction I am giving the negotiating team is predicated on

this pressure, without which we have nothing," he said.

Hamas killed 1,200 people and captured 240 hostages in a surprise raid into Israel on Oct. 7. Israel's counteroffensive has killed close to 19,000 people, according to Gaza health authorities, and left thousands buried in the rubble.

Aid organisations say the destruction of Gaza and the displacement of most of its 2.3 million people - many living in tents and makeshift shelters



without food or clean water - is a humanitarian crisis.

The head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, David Barnea, met Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani late on Friday, according to a source with knowledge of the matter, as attention turned to a possible Gaza truce and a prisoner and hostage deal.

The meeting in Europe was apparently the first between senior officials from Israel and Qatar, which has been acting as a mediator, since the collapse of a seven-day ceasefire in late November.

## PPP's Latif Khosa announces joining PTI

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) disgruntled leader Sardar Latif Khosa on Sunday officially announced to join the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that he took the step "on the wish" of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan.

In a press conference held in Lahore, Khosa emphasized that his move was driven by the "interest of the country and democracy," expressing his commitment to raising his voice for the truth.

"I have decided this only in the interest of the country and democracy," he said.



Khosa underscored the importance of adhering to the constitution, describing it as a "civil agreement" with the characteristics of welfare states.

He added: "The motherland can become prosperous if we follow the Constitution. The Constitution has a solution for everything if implemented in its true spirit."

Addressing the role of the

# UMC will meet burgeoning healthcare needs of Karachi: Sindh CM

PPA

KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (r) Maqbool Baqar, has expressed firm optimism that the upcoming charitable tertiary care hospital, University Medical Complex (UMC), to be built in Gulistan-e-Jauhar area after completion will serve as a milestone in fulfilling burgeoning healthcare needs of the residents of Karachi.

The interim Sindh CM was addressing as the chief guest at the fundraiser organised here at a hotel on Sunday for the speedy construction of the UMC. The Medics International (MI) has been building the UMC jointly with the Baqir Health and Educational Welfare Trust and Zaidi Abid Foundation, USA.

Speaking on the occasion, the interim CM noted that the healthcare needs of the residents of the city had been continuously increasing.

He expressed gratitude to the concerned healthcare professionals, philanthropists, and charity leaders who had conceived the idea of building



a charitable tertiary care hospital in the city's heart in the shortest possible time. Justice (retired) Baqar said the construction of the UMC was the embodiment of the collective efforts on the part of the concerned philanthropists and charitable institutions to improve the public healthcare standards in Karachi.

He hoped that UMC after completion would also serve the deserving patients belonging to many underprivileged areas in rural Sindh and adjoining

parts of Balochistan. He said that a new tertiary care health facility was not merely a brick-and-mortar structure as it would emerge as a symbol of hope, compassion, and state-of-the-art treatment for patients from underprivileged communities.

He noted that UMC would also emerge as a centre of excellence in the field of medical education as in this regard it would establish linkages with leading medical universities in the world.

MI Pakistan CEO, Dr Dilbar Saeed, said in his welcome remarks that his non-profit and partner charities had the aim to build the upcoming charitable hospital and make it operational in the next five to seven years.

Dr Husain Mehdi, representing the Zaidi Abid Foundation, informed the audience that the UMC would serve the needy patients without any discrimination as the beneficiaries of the upcoming tertiary care hospital would belong to all ethnicities, religions, and sects in the country.

Chairman of Sindh Higher Education Commission, Prof Dr SM Tariq Rafi, hoped that concerned philanthropists and donors of Karachi would ensure the construction of the UMC in the shortest possible time.

Renowned TV artist, Khalid Anum, who conducted the fundraiser, also announced the donation of an ambulance on behalf of his family for the upcoming hospital. Noted philanthropist, Nadra Panjwani, announced an Rs five million donation for the UMC.

## Punjab Traffic Police Last 02 Weeks issued More than 17 Lakh Driving Licenses

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the direction of IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, the process of providing driving license to the citizens of Punjab province is going on in Lahore Rawalpindi. Faisalabad, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Sahiwal. More than 01 lakh 12 thousand driving licenses have been issued across the province including Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan till 3 pm today.



According to the Traffic Police Punjab in the traffic license issued to the public Learning, Regular, Renewal and International licenses are all included According to Punjab Police spokesperson

With the new online system, citizens are getting their learning license from their mobiles, a special facility for citizens.

Through the new online system citizens are benefiting from the facility of learning license through the online system for just 60 rupees sitting at home.

In addition to online, there is a facility to make learner licenses in all service centers, police stations, patrolling police, traffic and training centers of Punjab Police, IG Punjab Usman Anwar.

## Nishtar Finance and Planning Committee Meeting Chaired By VC Nishtar Medical University



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The finance and planning committee meeting of Nishtar Medical University Multan was held yesterday in the conference room of the VC office. The meeting was presided over by Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed. In the meeting, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Mahnaz Khakwani, Registrar Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Professor Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Professor Dr. Ahmed Ejaz Masood, Professor Dr. Muhammad Abbas Naqvi, MS Nishtar Hospital Dr. Muhammad Kazim, Professor Dr. Azam Khan, Principal, College of Nursing Madam Rukhsana Parveen, Director Finance Nishtar Medical University Ahmed Javed and other administrative officers participated.

In the meeting, the ongoing development projects in the university, M&R work and the release of funds, previous dues and health facility program payments were reviewed and a detailed discussion was held regarding the launch of new courses and their fees in the university and they were finalized. It will be presented in the upcoming Syndicate meeting for approval.

## Rais-ul-Ahrrar was strong proponent of two-nation ideology: PM AJK

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq said that Raees Ur Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was a strong proponent and defender of two-nation ideology in Kashmir. In his message issued on Rais-ul-Ahrrar's death anniversary, the AJK premier said that the deceased leader was a staunch Pakistani who had devoted his entire life to the freedom of Kashmir.

He said that Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was a close confidante of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

While paying homage to the late deceased leader, the PM said that Ghulam Abbas was counted among the trusted companions of Quaid-e-Azam. Terming Rais-ul-Ahrrar as a man of honesty and integrity, the PM said that Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas guided the Muslims of Kashmir in the right direction. He said that Quaid Millat fought against the ideology of Congress and Sheikh Abdullah with great wisdom and courage.

The PM said that Chaudhry Sahib also played an active role in the settlement of Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan.

## Muslim Conference chief says late Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas will be remembered for long time

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Muslim Conference Central Chief Organizer Raja Saqib Majeed has said that the services of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas will be remembered for a long time. He always played an eternal role for the cause of freedom. The Kashmiri people will continue their struggle till the completion of the goal set by the Quaid-ul-Ahrrar Rais-ul-Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. He was a proponent of Pakistan's accession who rendered his valuable services for Pakistan's accession to Occupied Kashmir. His struggle will be recorded in golden letters in the history of Kashmir's freedom movement. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was one of the great supporters of the idea of Pakistan intellectually and ideologically, he had immense love and devotion for Pakistan, he said that the services of the late Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas were remembered for a long time. He said that the Kashmir issue and others Sardar Atiq Ahmad Khan is credited with raising important issues at the international forum and effectively raising the voice of the Kashmir issue and the Kashmir cause. Muslim Conference is the name of the largest and greatest political force of the people of the state.

## Sham Bakhair - شام بخیر

Karachi: Renowned Writer, Journalist, analyst Mehmoos Sham Presenting his book 'شام بخیر' to former Chairman PAAPMA Moshood Ali Khan during the Book Exhibition at Karachi.

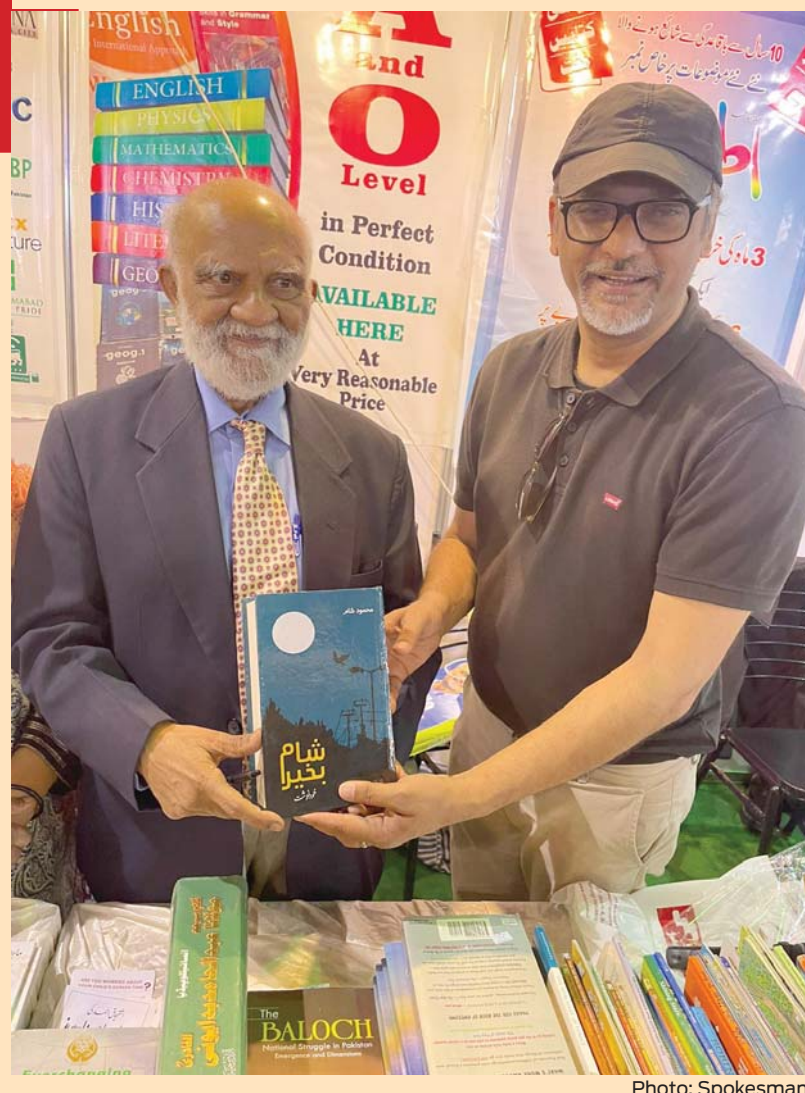


Photo: Spokesman

## Quaid Millat was the symbol of Kashmir: Sardar Atique



Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference leader and former prime minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Atique Ahmad Khan in his message on the 56th anniversary of Quaid Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas has said that Quaid Millat was the symbol of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiris are known by their name. He always did selfless politics. He did not accept any post or position in his life. A very important aspect of the life of Quaid-e-Millat was piety, he had a special concern for purity in addition to sophistication in his nature and this is a position that no one else is blessed with except the Sufis.

This was the reason why the founder of Pakistan had appointed Quaid Millat as his political successor in the state. Sardar Atique Ahmad Khan said that a prominent aspect of Quaid Millat's poli-



tics was that he believed in national and party politics over community, tribe and regional politics. This is the reason why people could not know from which community the leader of the nation belongs to. The ideals and thoughts of the Quaid-e-Millat are a torch for the Kashmiris, his efforts for the freedom of Kashmir and the completion of Pakistan will always be remembered.

They will continue to struggle to achieve their goal. Secretary General of Muslim Conference, Member of Assembly Ms. Mehrul Nasa said that Quaid Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas gave a thought to Kashmiris, thanks to which the movements of freedom and completion of Pakistan started in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

## President CCIM met with the delegation of Industrial Linkage Focal Person of PVTC

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Mian Rashid Iqbal President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan met with the delegation of Industrial Linkage Focal Person of PVTC, Bushra Naz, and informed the President about the services of PVTC. In this regard, Senior Manager PR & Marketing and Industrial Linkage Focal Person of Punjab Vocational Training Council, Bushra Naz met Mian Rashid Iqbal, President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan in the form of a delegation and presented him with PVT. Tell about the CK training programs or



he said that PVTC is making great efforts to enable the young men and women to earn dignified employment to minimize the unemployment rate in the province

through vocational training. It is part of the mission of PVTC, he said that keeping in mind the needs of the industry, PVTC has equipped the youth with advanced training

in Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) to enable them to earn better jobs in the future.

Mian Rashid Iqbal said that unemployment can be reduced

only by preparing the workforce as per the requirement of the industry and the shortage of workforce as per the requirement of the industry can be met. He praised the efforts of PVTC. On behalf of Saraha and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they assured all possible support under the child sponsor scheme. On this occasion, Regional Manager South Nirmal Mahmood, Area Manager Bahawalpur Farast Hussain, Principal Tanveer Ahmed and Assistant Secretary Chamber Sajid Ansari were also present. Ivan also presented PVTC's Industrial Linkage Focal Person Bushra Nazku Ivan insignia.

## Pakistan People's Party to celebrate on Benazir Bhutto's martyr's anniversary on December 27

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir celebrating the death anniversary of the party leader and former Prime Minister of Pakistan, daughter of Mashreq Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed on December 27 in all the four provinces, Azad Kashmir and all over the world with great devotion and respect and ideological enthusiasm. announced to celebrate with

and it was expressed that until the end of terrorism, extremism, lawlessness, intolerance from the country, our peaceful democratic struggle for an equality-based society free from exploitation will continue. And while paying tribute to the Supreme Court of Pakistan for starting the hearing of the Bhutto reference case filed by the former President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, he demanded that justice be given to her shrine by hearing it on a daily basis, Mrs. Benazir

Bhutto. The biggest commemoration of the martyr's anniversary will be held at the Martyrs' Mazar Garhi Khudabakhsh, in which people from all over the country will participate in the form of convoys of the leader of the people, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the daughter of the East, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, and pay tribute to the national achievements of the martyred leadership. Party Chairman, former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, former President of Pakistan

Asif Ali Zardari, Chairperson of Political Affairs Ms. Faryal Talpur, Speaker Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin will address the gathering. Yesterday, Party's Central Deputy Information Secretary and candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven Lipa Shaikat Javed Mir while talking to media representatives regarding the arrangements and preparations for the anniversary, he said that all district, tehsil, city places of Azad

Kashmir. Honorable gatherings will be organized and martyrs of democracy, martyrs of Pakistan forests, martyrs of Kashmir, martyrs of Palestine, martyrs of terrorism including the leader of the people Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Daughter of the East Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, Mother of Democracy Ms. Nusrat Bhutto, Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Murtaza Bhutto. After the Fajr prayer, Quran recitation and prayer events will be organized for the reparation of Gardi.





Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 5:37 am  
Zohr ..... 12:03 pm  
Asr ..... 3:24 pm  
Maghrib ..... 5:01 pm  
Isha ..... 6:31 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA ..... 9221334-43  
CDA ..... 9208301-04

**Tobacco Free Future**

# Health Minister takes bold stand for tobacco control in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a pivotal meeting with the Regional Director of the South Asia Team for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan underscored Pakistan's commitment to robust tobacco control measures. The meeting focused on the urgent need for the Health Levy Bill's swift promulgation, with the South Asia Director presenting a compelling case for immediate action.

Dr. Jan, representing the National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, Government of Pakistan, articulated the Ministry's unwavering dedication to public healthcare. "Our ministry is resolute in ensuring the health and well-being of all citizens, particularly the vulnerable populations of children, youth, and women. We pledge relentless efforts to design and implement policies that safeguard and enhance the health of our citizens, addressing the harms posed by nicotine products."

Acknowledging CTFK's commendable efforts in challenging circumstances over the past years, the Health Minister assured complete support for the Health



Levy bill. He expressed his intent to present the health concern to the Prime Minister, advocating for the bill's transformation into an ordinance. Additionally, he urged CTFK to enlighten the ministry on emerging harmful nicotine products prevalent in Pakistan.

The Health Minister affirmed his commitment to collaborate with CTFK in addressing tobacco-related challenges. "I stand firmly against the tribulations faced by our children, whether through conventional cigarette sales or new tobacco/nicotine products," he declared. Seeking

CTFK's assistance, he instructed a direct letter to the Prime Minister, summarizing the discussed initiatives and seeking support for the health ministry's proposed measures.

Dr. Maheen Malik Regional Director South Asia, CTFK said: "We are eager to collaborate with the Government of Pakistan to protect the health of our children and youth from the dangers of tobacco. Our commitment extends to supporting the government in enhancing the country's tobacco control policy, working together for a healthier and tobacco-free future."

## GUTA strongly condemns false case of sedition against Sindh teachers

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Government College University Hyderabad Teachers Association GUTA has strongly condemned the false case of sedition against the distinguished teachers of University of Sindh Jamshoro. The president of the Association, Dr. Tariq Jalbani, gave a condemnatory statement and said that every nation has a legal, social and historical right to celebrate its cultural day. But here the consciousness of Sindh is being intimidated through false cases. He assured that GUTA stands with the teachers of the University of Sindh. The teachers of Government College University are Alive with the teachers of University of Sindh so the teachers of GC University will wear black bands and record the protest.

## AIOU announces schedule for online workshops

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced workshops schedule for post graduate programs, BS and B. Ed (ODL programs) offered in semester autumn 2023. Workshops for the first batch will be held from December 18 to January 01. Each course workshop will be held for 6 days. It should be noted that workshops will be conducted online on Microsoft teams through AIOU's Aaghi Learning Management System (LMS) portal. According to the Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan, login information (username & password) has been shared with the students and they are instructed to participate in these workshops through Aaghi portal. All those students who have not received their username and password are instructed to contact their nearest AIOU regional office.

As per the instructions of Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the workshops of remaining batches of these programs will be announced soon. Students of the remaining batches are advised to keep checking the LMS portal and the university website for the schedule of workshops.

## Railway union chief demands immediate action on pending demands in Sukkur Division



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Railway Prime Union Central President Sheikh Muhammad Anwar along with Secretary General Khair Muhammad Tonio, Chief Organizer Khalid Mehmood Chaudhry, Vice President Mansoor Safri, Deputy Secretary Lahore Division Junaid Khurram met CEO Pakistan Railways Aamir Baloch. Sheikh Muhammad Anwar informed the CEO Pakistan Railways Aamir Baloch about the problems faced by the railway employees, payment of December advance salaries to present and retired Christian employees due to Christmas, non-upgradation of SM and ASM of Sukkur Division, scale 14 to diploma holders and Upgradation of controller and section controller, restoration of Khushal Khan Khattak, Akbar Bugti, Shah Hussain, Pakpatan Express and other closed trains, delay in salaries of railway workers, non-payment of dues of retired employees, non-permanence of TLA and in-weld employees. He informed about the permanent recruitment of children of railway employees on more than fifteen thousand vacant posts in the railway, non-payment of TA and GPF and other demands. Assuring the resolution of outstanding issues as soon as possible, he announced the issuance of immediate orders for the upgradation of SM and ASM of Sukkur Division. CEO of Pakistan Railways Aamir Baloch told the delegation that after a long time, during my appointment, the railway has earned more than 8 billion from November 15 to December 15. Inshallah, the salary schedule will return to normal by February 2024. He said that Kashmir, Dera Special orders were also issued to repair and make functional the railway track and bridges on the Ghazi Khan section. Special trains consisting of a few coaches are starting the rehabilitation along with the relevant staff. Khushal Express will also start after the completion of the track and bridge work. The passengers of Larkana and Sehun will be provided with better travel facilities, air-conditioned and dyed car facilities through Bolan Mail between Karachi and Larkana, which they will also conduct a surprise inspection. Sheikh Muhammad Anwar thanked CEO Pakistan Railways Aamir Baloch for solving the demands and problems and said that the mission undertaken by Prime Union for the betterment and welfare of railway employees.

## Annual Christmas Religious Freedom Dinner Celebrated by IMRF and JVPM



PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a joyous celebration of religious freedom and unity, the International Multifaith and Religions Foundation (IMRF) and the Joint Venture for Peace and Multifaith (JVPM) collaboratively organized the Annual Christmas Religious Freedom Dinner on December 11, 2023, at the prestigious Islamabad Club. The event, held in collaboration with the esteemed Commonwealth Entrepreneurs Club (UK), brought together distinguished guests and diplomats from various parts of the world, fostering a spirit of goodwill and understanding. The esteemed gathering was graced by the presence of Mr. Mirza Amir Khursid, President (Coord) of Pakistan, who traveled all the way from Lahore to attend the event, showcasing his commitment to fostering interfaith dialogue and international cooperation. Mr. Mirza Amir Khursid, in his role as President (Coord), presented gifts on behalf of the Commonwealth Entrepreneurs Club (UK) and engaged in insightful discussions about the Club's efforts. He was joined by Mr. Tahir Ashraf Mughal, Ambassador of the Commonwealth Entrepreneurs Club (UK), who further coordinated with all diplomats present. Ambassador Tahir Ashraf Mughal facilitated positive discussions with diplomats, unveiling promising avenues for collective efforts between member and non-member countries. Numerous initiatives are in the pipeline, showcasing the potential for collaborative progress beyond borders.

## Natural history

ISLAMABAD: Visitors look on Whale Skeleton in Pakistan Museum of Natural History, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## PTDC organizes a one-day photo exhibition

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark event on December 17, 2023, the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) organized a one-day photo exhibition at the Pakistan National Council of Arts. Renowned mountaineer Nazir Sabir and PTDC's Managing Director Aftab ur Rehman Rana graced the inauguration ceremony. Focused on mountainous tourist places, the exhibition featured 57 captivating photographs from the successful Salam Pakistan photography competition.

The tourist places in mountain areas were the special focus



of this photography competition. The exhibition showcased captivating photographs depicting various tourist sites, capturing the attention of a diverse and enthusiastic audience. After the successful Salam

Pakistan photography competition, 57 photographs were displayed at the exhibition. The competition was organized on the eve of International Mountain Day where people submitted their photographs online in two categories, Professional and Amateur while a

four member jury decided the winner.

A total number of 378 entries were received in professional category while 110 entries were received for the amateur category.

Muhammad Asmar Hussain secured the first position in professional category while Mushahid Hussain secured first position in the amateur category. The winners were awarded with certificates and cash prizes.

The exhibition exemplifies the commitment of PTDC towards promoting the scenic wonders of Pakistan, fostering tourism, and celebrating the nation's rich cultural and natural heritage.

## PAC organized literary reference in memory of Syeda Farrukh Gillani

PNP

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with literary organization Daira and Jhang Chinot Officers Association organized a National Literary Reference to pay tribute to prominent intellectual and educationist Professor Syeda Farrukh Zahra Gilani, which was presided over by the Chairman of the Literary Organization, Mumtaz Scholar Dr. Ghazafar Mehdi. Dr. Ghazafar Mehdi said in his address that Professor Farrukh Zahra Gilani's poetry is the love of Rasool, love of Ahl al-Bayt and patriotism. She was an eminent poet and scholar. We demand the government to name an important highway in Jhang city after Farrukh Zehra Geelani. Ehsan Kabaria said that the literary organization is honored to organize the launch of her five books of poetry. The poet chose poetry to express her emotions, in which she became immortal. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed thanked the participants of the event. Rai Riaz Hussain, Mrs. Madiha Hussain Abdi, Ammar Yasir, Agha Waqar Haider, Sajjad Hussain Qadri and Akhlaq Zaidi from the National Literary Reference gave references to the personality and literary efforts of Farrukh Zahra Hussain. Syed Saqib Hussain Gilani, the son of the deceased, said that Professor Farrukh Zahra Gilani was an active and connected woman intellectual. A large number of people from neighboring cities participated in the reference.

## Two day workshop organized by UNDP on implementation of ADR act 2020 concluded in SWL

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: A two-day workshop of mediators organized by UNDP to implement the Alternative Dispute Regulation (ADR) 2020 Act in Lower Waziristan district concluded.

The two-day workshop was organized by P&D Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with UNDP at the AC Wana Jirga Hall.

On the first day of the workshop, Additional Deputy Commissioner Lower South Waziristan Kashmir Khan in his address as a special guest said to the mediators, that now the role of regional mediators has ended with the merger of administrative authority and the post of political agent after the abolition of FCR law. He said, while now the government



has also changed the status of the agency to the district and appointed the Deputy Commissioner, but with the FCR Act, the role of tribal elders has been very important and exemplary. Among the organizers of the workshop, Dr. Ashraf Ali and Wajahat

Abbas, along with mediators, media-related journalists were also engaged in the training workshop session.

On this occasion, Dr. Ashraf said that no one can deny the importance of mediators, not only tribal traditions can be maintained through Jirga of elders,

but a better solution to a dispute can be found through Jirga.

He said that most of the problems and disputes have been resolved through Jirga and it is the best process of resolution due to the efforts of mediators.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**  
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 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**  
 (mszk786@gmail.com)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
**Islamabad Office:** Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.  
**Karachi office:** Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.  
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.  
**Lahore Office:** 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.  
**Email:** spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com  
**Whatsapp:** 0346-5008408

# Welcome back the Military Courts-I

In every civilized society, the justice system serves as the cornerstone on which the principles of fairness, equality, and the rule of law rest. A robust justice system is crucial for preserving social order, safeguarding individual rights, and instilling a sense of security within the community. Two indispensable elements integral to the effectiveness of a justice system are expeditiousness and transparency.

A rapid and transparent justice system guarantees that individuals gain prompt access to the legal remedies they seek. Delays in legal proceedings can be detrimental, especially for those awaiting resolution in matters of personal safety, property disputes, or family issues. An efficiently operating justice system fosters public confidence, encouraging citizens to pursue legal redress without apprehension of prolonged and cumbersome processes.

Corruption remains a formidable challenge within the Pakistani justice system. Reports of bribery, undue influence, and malpractice contribute to a bad perception of a system that lacks complete impartiality. The absence of rigorous accountability mechanisms allows such practices to persist, undermining the foundational principles of a fair and just legal system.

A significant portion of Pakistan's population encounters barriers in accessing justice due to financial constraints. The inadequacy of legal aid services exacerbates this issue, leaving many citizens without proper representation. Consequently, the system disproportionately favors those with financial means, perpetuating social and economic inequalities. The inconsistent application of the

law in Pakistan raises concerns about the system's fairness. Instances where influential individuals or those with political connections receive preferential treatment, while marginalized and vulnerable groups face a higher likelihood of injustice, erode public trust and confidence in the impartiality of the legal system.

The legal framework in Pakistan has not kept pace with societal changes and global advancements. Outdated laws, particularly in areas such as human rights, cyber-crime, and women's rights, impede the justice system's ability to effectively address contemporary challenges. Reforming and modernizing legal statutes is crucial to ensuring that the justice system remains relevant and responsive.

A just and unbiased judiciary stands as the cornerstone of any civilized society, ensuring that justice is dispensed equitably and without bias. Despite this vital role, Pakistan's judicial system grapples with persistent challenges, with corruption emerging as a significant impediment to the fundamental principles of justice, accountability, and the rule of law.

One of the most conspicuous forms of corruption within the Pakistani judicial system is bribery, with reported instances of judges accepting bribes to influence case outcomes. This compromises the integrity of the judicial process, allowing individuals with financial means or political influence to unduly sway judicial decisions, thereby eroding public trust in the impartiality of the system.

Corruption in the judicial system also

manifests through the inconsistent application of the law. Cases involving influential individuals or those with political connections may receive preferential treatment, while others may languish or face unjust outcomes. This selective application not only undermines the principle of equality before the law but also fosters a culture of impunity.

The intentional elongation of legal proceedings through delay tactics and procedural abuse represents another facet of corruption within the judicial system. Exploiting loopholes in the legal process to prolong cases, some individuals lead to undue delays, undermining the expeditious justice that citizens rightfully deserve.

Political interference in the judiciary is a persistent concern in Pakistan, with political figures exerting pressure on judges and judicial processes, potentially compromising the independence of the judiciary. The fear of repercussions or the allure of political patronage may influence judicial decisions, creating an environment where justice becomes susceptible to external pressures.

The lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms within the judicial system allows corrupt practices to persist. Without robust internal checks and balances, unethical conduct can go unchecked, significantly undermining the credibility of the judiciary.

The absence of adequate protection for whistleblowers within the judicial system discourages individuals from exposing corruption. Fear of retaliation, both

professionally and personally, hampers the reporting of misconduct, perpetuating a culture of silence that shields corrupt practices from scrutiny.

Corruption within the judicial system has a profound impact on public trust and confidence. When citizens perceive the judiciary as susceptible to external influence or internal corruption, it erodes their faith in the legal system. A lack of trust in the judiciary undermines the very foundation of a functioning democracy and the rule of law.

Transparency International Pakistan has recently unveiled its Corruption Perceptions Survey 2023, revealing that the judiciary stands among the three most corrupt institutions in Pakistan. As per the findings, the police ranks as the most corrupt, followed by the procurement and contracting sector, and then the judiciary. The education and health sectors hold the fourth and fifth positions, respectively. Subsequently, local governments, land administration, customs, excise, and income tax are identified as the sixth, seventh, and eighth most corrupt institutions.

The report delves into the dynamics of bribery within the judiciary, citing an average cost of 25,846 rupees for such practices in public service delivery. Interestingly, the survey indicates that the highest average bribe occurs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reaching up to Rs 162,000. Punjab records the maximum average citizen-paid bribe of Rs 21,186, predominantly directed towards the police. In Balochistan, the health facilities witness the highest average bribe, amounting to Rs 1,60,000.

*To be continued*



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Azmat)

## Corruption in sports

The global problem of illegal sports betting, the fraudulent manipulation of competitions, and the involvement of organized crime in the sporting world has been tackled at a UN conference in the US city of Atlanta.

The discussions at the international anti-corruption conference, convened in Atlanta by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), held between 11 and 15 December, built on the ground-breaking Global Report on Corruption in Sport, produced by the UNODC in 2021, which pointed to a dramatic increase in illegal betting, fueled by the billions of dollars flowing through professional sports, as well as globalization, and technological advances, according to a UN press release issued at UN Headquarters in New York.

UNODC, which is at the forefront of international efforts to support governments and sports organizations in preventing and punishing offences in sport through its Programme to Protect Sport from Corruption and Economic Crime, estimates that up to \$1.7 trillion is wagered on illicit betting markets controlled by organized crime.

Speaking at a session on sport and corruption at the conference, James Porteous, Research Head of the Asian Racing Federation Council on Anti-Illegal Betting and Related Financial Crime, said that illegal betting is now the "number one factor fuelling corruption in sports," and pointed out that many of the regulations were drafted in the 19th century and are not fit for the internet world.

Humaid Al Ameemi, Coordinator of the Anti-Corruption Unit of INTERPOL (the International Criminal Police Organization, an intergovernmental body), explained that manipulation of sporting competitions, colloquially known as match-fixing, is a highly organized crime involving money laundering and other illegal activities, and called for improved data sharing.

INTERPOL, UNODC and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have collaborated on a guide for policymakers, to help them to address, and effectively investigate competition manipulation.

Anita DeFrantz, a member of the IOC and a medal winner at the 1976 Games in Montreal, underlined the importance of strong collaboration between sporting organizations and law enforcement agencies in ensuring integrity and credibility, and highlighted the role of the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS), which includes international sports organizations, governments, and inter-governmental bodies including UNODC.

As the world's most popular sport, awash with huge sums of money, football is particularly prone to corruption. Even the sport's world governing body, FIFA, has faced criminal accusations and scandals, most notably in 2015, when several FIFA officials were arrested at a prominent Swiss hotel.

Following the investigation by the US Department of Justice into corruption in FIFA in 2016, the international community's attention on corruption and crime in sports has increased significantly, along with calls to act.

## Why Consistent Policies are Important for Pakistan's Economy

Investors often take a keen interest in the policies of a country while finalizing investment decisions. Countries with consistent policies tend to attract investment from around the world to boost industrialization and economic activities. USA, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, France, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Sweden, and India were the top ten foreign investment destinations in 2022 respectively as FDI inflows to the USA in 2022 were over US\$ 388 billion and to India were over US\$ 49 billion.

However, FDI inflow to Pakistan in 2022 was reportedly just US\$ 1.34 billion showing a decline of over 37 percent as compared to 2021. This dismal performance on the part of Pakistan to lure FDI is the outcome of many factors, one of which is the inconsistent economic policies that tend to erode the confidence of investors and discourage FDI in a country.

Domestic and foreign investors often seek consistency and stability in policies to make informed decisions. However, changes in policies with the change of regime in Pakistan have often led to a discontinuation of policies, which shattered the trust and confidence of investors to invest in long-term projects in Pakistan. This situation has hindered economic growth in Pakistan and disturbed the expansion plans of businesses.

Inconsistent economic policies have contributed to the devaluation of the rupee and high inflation in Pakistan. Frequent changes in fiscal and monetary policies have impacted prices and exchange rates as well as affected the purchasing power of the common man and the stability of the currency.

Policy inconsistency in Pakistan has also

caused economic stability and created additional challenges for businesses to operate optimally. The policy inconsistency many times led to the loss of jobs and gave rise to unemployment. The ban on imports has rendered millions of workers jobless from many sectors of the economy including textiles and construction industries.

Frequent changes in economic policies have disrupted budget planning in Pakistan, and caused inefficient allocation of resources, besides increasing fiscal deficit and public debt. Inconsistent economic policies have also strained relations between Pakistan with the IMF and other international partners as many governments failed to fulfill their commitments to the IMF, which constrained access to external financial resources.

To address these challenges and reduce the cost of policy inconsistency, policymakers in Pakistan need to ensure transparent and consistent economic policies that would provide a stable and predictable environment for businesses and investors. A long-term vision for economic development is the need of the hour for Pakistan to help build the confidence of businesses and investors to foster sustainable economic growth.

It must be emphasized that consistent economic policies are vital for the economic stability and sustainable development of Pakistan. Policy consistency would create a stable environment and attract both domestic and foreign investments. It is a proven fact that investors would never commit to long-term projects in an environment, which is characterized by frequent changes in economic policies.

Consistent economic policies would enable

businesses to make decisions about long-term investments and expansions with confidence. Stable policies would facilitate them in strategic planning and foster a positive business environment.

A stable policy environment would resultantly promote economic growth in Pakistan by providing a foundation for sustained investment, productivity improvements, and innovation. This, in turn, would contribute to job creation and increase the living standard of people.

Consistent policies would also help maintain price stability and reduce high inflation in Pakistan, which has made the lives of the general public miserable. Stable monetary and fiscal policies would also contribute to a more stable macroeconomic environment.

Consistent economic policies would enhance Pakistan's reputation on the global stage, build trust with international partners, and attract foreign investment to the country. It would also help businesses to make more efficient decisions about resource allocation to ensure optimal use of scarce resources that would in turn foster the overall economic productivity of the country.

Consistent policies would allow for effective long-term planning at both the governmental and private sector levels, which is crucial for implementing sustainable development strategies and achieving economic goals over an extended period.

In short, ensuring and maintaining consistent economic policies is essential for Pakistan's economic future to foster a conducive environment for growth, investment, and development. It would provide the necessary foundation for building a resilient and competitive economy in the global context and enable Pakistan to emerge as a strong economy in the region. Let's hope the policymakers will give due consideration to these suggestions to transform Pakistan into a rising economy in South Asia.



Analysis

Muhammad Ramzan

## SC thwarted all attempts to disrupt elections - II

Internationally, postponed elections might tarnish a country's democratic image, straining diplomatic ties and aid packages.

Delaying due to terrorism threats risks compromising democratic values and empowering extremist groups, undermining citizens' rights and democratic principles. The solution lies in reinforcing security measures to ensure safe elections, rather than postponing them. Upholding the election schedule despite security challenges showcases resilience against terrorism, safeguarding citizens' rights and democratic foundations.

Delaying elections due to bad weather, despite being advocated by certain groups, lacks constitutional standing and is an unsubstantiated pretext.

Around the world, election authorities implement contingency plans to ensure smooth elections, even in adverse conditions. Such delays may compromise fairness and representation in affected regions, undermining democratic principles. Balancing concerns about voter turnout with ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens in the electoral process is crucial.

Such precedents could pave the way for future challenges to delay elections, potentially eroding democratic values. Countries facing harsher weather conditions employ alternative measures like transportation assistance, extended voting hours, or temporary polling

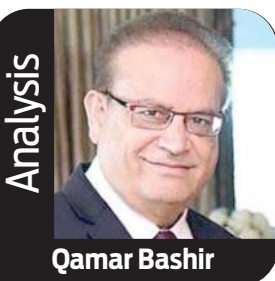
stations to facilitate voting.

The resolute stance taken by the Supreme Court to ensure the elections proceed on schedule stands as a beacon of hope for upholding democratic principles and constitutional sanctity. The court's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the electoral process against any disruption, whether through frivolous petitions or attempts to delay on flimsy pretexts, underscores the paramount importance of timely and fair elections.

The dismissal of baseless narratives seeking to derail the electoral process, including the Lahore High Court's actions, signals a clear message: any attempt to impede the electoral schedule will be met with the severest consequences under the law.

Upholding the sanctity of elections not only reinforces the democratic fabric but also reinforces the citizens' right to choose their representatives, ensuring the peaceful transfer of power and preserving the nation's integrity.

The Supreme Court's firm stand in this critical juncture resonates as a testament to the resilience of democratic values and the unwavering commitment to uphold the rule of law above all else.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

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

# Saudi Arabia leads condolences to Kuwait over emir's death

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent their condolences to the people of Kuwait and the royal Al-Sabah family over the death of Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah on Saturday.

"With utmost grief and sorrow, we received the news of the death of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Emir of the State of Kuwait, may Allah bestows mercy upon him and rest him in His widely vast paradise," read a statement on Saudi Press Agency.

The statement by the Saudi Royal Court said: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people share the sorrows of the brothers in Kuwait, and ask God Almighty to inspire the honorable family and the brotherly Kuwaiti people patience and solace in this great affliction, and to perpetuate security, stability, prosperity, on Kuwait and its people."

King Salman directed the performance of the absentee funeral prayer



for the late emir on Sunday, following the Dhuhr prayer at both the Holy Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque.

Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan issued a statement expressing his condolences. "My sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the leadership and people of the sister State of Kuwait in this great tragedy, the wisdom and vision of the late Azim had an impact in strengthening Saudi-Kuwaiti

relations and supporting joint Gulf action," he said.

The UAE announced a three-day mourning period to mark the death of Sheikh Nawaf.

The UAE Presidential Court said in a statement: "With hearts that believe in Allah's will and destiny, President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan mourns the passing of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, who passed away

today."

Emirati President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed wrote on X that Sheikh Nawaf had been a wise leader who played a major role in strengthening Kuwaiti-Emirati relations.

"He served his country for six decades and fulfilled his duty with all sincerity," said Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, on X, formerly Twitter.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El Sisi offered condolences over the death of Sheikh Nawaf, saying that the late emir was a major supporter to the Arab and Islamic nations.

Egypt announced three-day mourning nationwide over the emir's death.

President of the US Joe Biden was "saddened" to learn of the emir's passing, a White House statement said.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the sheikh was "a great friend of the UK," while a statement issued on Saturday by the Kremlin said "he had great authority in the Middle East."

A statement from the European Union also said it was "saddened" by the news.

*Netanyahu's confessions force Washington to consider him unfit for any future arrangements to resolve the conflict*



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A state of confusion, contradiction, and imbalance was reflected in the statements of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last night, trying to hide his failure and his political and personal crises. On the one hand, he made unprecedented confessions and boasted publicly about his standing behind sabotaging the signed agreements, making them fail, and preventing the establishment of the Palestinian state and its embodiment on the ground. On the other hand, he reproduced his racist colonial policy by making accusations and attacking the Palestinian Authority and its leadership, considering it one of the most prominent outcomes of Oslo, which Netanyahu worked to weaken and withdraw. Its powers confirm his rejection of the agreements, despite the authority providing everything required for the success of the peace process and all previous forms of negotiations. Once again, Netanyahu does not waste any opportunity to confirm that he is a staunch enemy of peace and the two-state solution. He deliberately tampers with the security and stability of the region and the world by igniting more fires and fueling the culture of hatred and malice. He does not hesitate to enter the conflict arena into a continuous, non-stop spiral of violence in a way that serves his programs and personal ambitions. Including his continued attempts to prolong the war of genocide against our people in the Gaza Strip and provide cover for the escalation of his and his settler militias' aggression in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through blatant political maneuvers to maintain the separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to undermine the project of embodying the Palestinian state on the ground. Netanyahu admits once again that he is negotiating with himself regarding everything related to the continuation of the occupation and the rights of the Palestinian people, delusional about his ability to shape the future of the conflict unilaterally and with the force of the occupation according to his political measurements and personal interests. The Ministry believes that Netanyahu began his election campaign early and, as usual, considers the shedding of Palestinian blood and denial of their existence and rights fuel for his election campaign and his narrow partisan interests.

The Ministry calls on the American administration and all countries to deal with Netanyahu's confessions with the utmost seriousness and hold him directly responsible for sabotaging all opportunities for peace, and to consider him a person unfit for any future negotiations or arrangements.

*PFC delegation's China visit to open new business opportunities*

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The visit of Pakistani Furniture Council (PFC) delegation to Guangzhou, China is likely to contribute to the growth and diversification of the furniture market, opening up new opportunities for businesses on both sides.

The visit serves as a platform for fostering collaboration and understanding between the Pakistani and Chinese furniture industries, said a news release here.

The enthusiastic reception underscores the potential for enhanced bilateral trade and partnerships in the furniture sector.

As both countries explore avenues for economic cooperation, the PFC delegation led by its Chief Operating Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq's positive engagement in Guangzhou showcases the commitment to strengthening ties and promoting mutual prosperity.

This exchange is likely to contribute to the growth and diversification of the furniture market, opening up new opportunities for businesses on both sides.

The dynamic interaction between the Pakistani and Chinese representatives reflects a promising step towards fostering enduring connections and maximizing the economic potential within the furniture industry.

*Punjab, Jiangxi Universities ink collaboration agreements on Chinese language education*



Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Punjab University, Pakistan, and Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST), China, signed the Implementation Agreement of the Council of Confucius Institute at Punjab University and the Agreement on Program for Undergraduate Students Majoring in International Chinese Language Education.

According to the program agreement, "The course will be completed in four years. The first two years will be studied at the Confucius Institute at Punjab University, and after meeting the requirements of the mid-term assessment, the last two years will be completed at JXUST," local media reported.

Eligible students can apply for the International Chinese Language Teacher Scholarship from the Center for Language Education and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education.

Over the past eight years, the two universities have maintained extensive and in-depth cooperation.

The two sides also discussed expanding exchanges and cooperation in such areas as faculty and student exchanges, joint scientific research, cooperative education, and people-to-people exchanges.

The two sides hoped to enhance cooperation and exchanges on an existing basis and further promote the construction of the Confucius Institute at Punjab University and the launch of new projects.

# Laser proctology course in Bahrain highlights benefits of minimally invasive surgery

News Desk

BAHRAIN: Kingdom of Bahrain hosted its first hands on training on Laser Proctology at Sulaimania Hospital Ministry Of Health And Royal Defense Force Hospital Royal Medical Services.

The workshop has been conducted with the collaboration of Lasotronix Poland and pure life support Bahrain, a distributor of laser machinery in Bahrain. Doctors from sulaimania hospital and Royal defense forces hospital attended this workshop.

Laser proctology is a term that refers to the treatment of conditions related to the lower rectum and anus, using laser ablation.

Laser ablation uses a high-energy laser to accurately treat affected areas of tissues without pain or bleeding. The procedures are minimally invasive so come with the benefit of short recovery times.

Laser proctology procedures have good success rates and complications are minimal and rare.

Dr. Khan who is pioneer of laser proctology in Saudi Arabia was invited



by Ministry Of Health Bahrain as a master trainer and had performed live surgeries in hospital and trained them about how to perform safe laser surgery.

During his lecture, he highlighted how laser surgery have made patients

life easy by having less complications and early recovery as compared to open surgery.

Doctors appreciated this live surgical session and learned how to manage complicated cases & requested for similar workshops in future.

Dr Yasir from Sulaimania Hospital appreciated this hands on training and felt confident in laser proctology session with Dr Arshad Khan.

Dr Tamer Abbasi requested more laser proctology workshop for his department of surgery and will plan future conference on this topic for betterment of his doctors.

Mr Ebrahim from pure life support talked to us and explained the role of laser in vascular surgery, pain management and dental surgery.

He will introduce this helpful device to many countries and will definitely recommend doctors to attend proper training courses before using this device.

Pakistani Doctor forum and Pakistani community in Bahrain were very much obliged by seeing Pakistani Doctor playing a significant role in Medical Field in Bahrain.

In the end Dr ARSHADULLAH Khan and the organizer showed sincere gratitude to the media for covering this event & look forward to becoming a part of many other Informational and useful workshops again.

# Celebrating Qatar's National Day

Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARGARH: As Qatar marks its National Day, Mr. Ameen Abdul Rehman, the esteemed Country Director of Qatar Charity in Pakistan, extends heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the people of Qatar on this joyous occasion.

The National Day of Qatar, observed annually on December 18th, is a momentous celebration that embodies the spirit of unity, progress, and resilience of the Qatari nation.

Mr. Ameen Abdul Rehman expressed, "On this auspicious day, Qatar Charity joins in celebrating the remarkable achievements and enduring values that define Qatar's journey towards development and prosperity. We applaud Qatar's unwavering commitment to global peace, innova-



tion, and humanitarianism." The National Day festivities serve as a testament to the unity and unwavering

dedication of Qatar's citizens towards their nation's growth and prosperity. It is a time to honor Qatar's

achievements across diverse sectors, including education, healthcare, and social welfare.

Qatar Charity remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting Pakistan's development initiatives, working tirelessly to uplift marginalized communities and alleviate suffering through various sustainable projects and humanitarian interventions.

Mr. Ameen Abdul Rehman affirmed, "We are honored to be a part of the strong bond between Qatar and Pakistan. Qatar Charity pledges to continue its efforts to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the underserved, fostering hope and empowerment."

As Qatar commemorates its National Day, Qatar Charity extends warm regards to the leadership, citizens, and residents of Qatar, wishing for continued progress, prosperity, and unity.

# Media urged for factual reporting on CPEC, countering propaganda

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at the training workshop here on Sunday called upon the Pakistani media to engage in objective and factual reporting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and counter the negative propaganda against the game-changer project. The journalists are the source of information for the public and their impartial reporting can convey authentic information about CPEC to the people of Pakistan, they said.

The speakers expressed these remarks during a three-day training workshop organized by the Center for Democracy and Climate Studies (CDCS) for the jour-



nalists of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Media urged for factual reporting on CPEC, countering propaganda

Bao Zhong, Counsellor of the Political and Media Section, Embassy of China to Pakistan while speaking to

the participants said that the Pakistani media was playing a vital role in promoting CPEC and creating a positive image of the China-Pakistan bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields beneficial for both the nations.

She however said the fake

news and negative propaganda against the CPEC still exist in some sections of the media which should be countered by the journalists.

She said that the Chinese embassy was always open to answer queries about CPEC or information related to any project initiated by the Chinese embassy.

She urged the journalists to do factual reporting on CPEC and play their role against malicious media campaigns and disinformation against the projects.

Expressing deep affection for Pakistani friends, Ms. Zhong, with over six years of service in the country, emphasized the robust foundation of the China-Pakistan relationship, attributing it to

the profound political trust, particularly exemplified by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

She expressed the confidence in ongoing collaboration with the Pakistani government and encouraged media and citizens to contribute valuable insights for the continued success of China-Pakistan relations. She highlighted the warm reception of Pakistani visitors in China, underscoring the reciprocal trust she and her family receive in Pakistan.

Motivated by these strong ties, she called for joint efforts to further deepen and strengthen cooperation, urging the passing on of this relationship from generation to generation.

*Load shedding, low gas pressure hitting consumers hard in Fatehjang, Jand*

By **Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The tall claims by the concerned authorities for improvement in gas supply have dashed to the ground as there is absolutely no respite for the public from low to zero gas pressure at peak hours in Fatehjang and Jand town of Attock.

According to consumers of these areas, the Sui-gas pressure was remained very low during morning and evening hours, making difficulties in preparing meal and other food stuff. The consumers lamented that a substantial increase in prices of firewoods was also witnessed due to low supply of natural gas. The consumers of these area said that they are facing immense problems at domestic level in preparing their breakfast, lunch and dinner due to low gas pressure multiplying their woes of the citizens as winter season is at its peak.

Iqra Bibi- a housewife said, "Cylinder and compressors are unsafe options for me as I witnessed a cylinder blast in my area which scared me and I never adopt these options to cook food. Karam Dad, while sharing his ordeal revealed, "My mother is a patient of arthritis which gets more intense during winter." He demanded the authorities concerned to take notice of the situation and take effective measures for smooth supply of gas to their homes. Malik Rafiq Awan- a social and public figure of Fatehjang has urged the caretaker government and Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) to address the issue and ensure uninterrupted supply of gas especially for the domestic consumers".

Mohammad Usman Gul, a local social worker of Jand while talking to this reporter has said that the routine life of residents has extremely perturbed due to the shortage of gas. He said that there are a number of gas fields in the area where daily hundred and thousands of MMBTU gas being supplied in various parts of the country but local are not benefitting from this natural resource being extracted from their native lands. He was of the view that under Article 158 of Pakistan's constitution, gas producing area has the first right to consume their own production.

Syed Tabeer Shah Naqvi- a civil society representative has said that the caretaker government once again increased gas prices up to 193 per cent only to recover an additional Rs350 billion from poor consumers. He added that the caretaker government has increased gas tariffs up to 172 per cent for domestic consumers and 137 per cent for commercial consumers. "The caretaker government did not feel any kind of shame in giving approval of this increase", Mr Naqvi added.

While contacted, SNGPL area manager has said that the authority had making its best to supply gas in a smooth way despite the cold weather in the district Attock and its surrounding areas.

*Over 5m SMEs receive mere 7% of private sector credit*

By **PNP**

LAHORE: Despite the significant importance, over 5 million SMEs has been facing a huge credit gap, receiving only 7% of private sector credit, far below neighboring countries like Bangladesh (25%) and India (18%), with the State Bank committing to increase SME credit share to 17% by 2023. To achieve this, we must advocate for targeted and fixed SME allocations in concessional financing schemes, particularly those aimed at the export-oriented sector.

These views were expressed by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industries' Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar. He proposed the SBP to allocate at least 25 percent of concessional financing, including the Export Finance Scheme, exclusively to SMEs in the export sector. This strategic allocation will not only boost SME sector's growth but also promote a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Mian Anjum Nisar, who is also SAARC Chamber vice president and the FPCCI former president, suggested the central bank to review its credit policies by fixing a special quota to finance the small and medium enterprises, as only the large industries have been availing government's all major concessional export loaning facilities, with very limited financing is left for the SMEs which are the backbone of the economy, contributing around 40 percent to the national gross domestic product (GDP).

# ICCI calls for withdrawal of massive hike in gas tariff to save businesses from closure

By **Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Ch. Muhammad Naeem Patron-in-Chief, Restaurants, Caterers, Sweets and Bakers Association leading a delegation visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and highlighted problems being faced by their businesses due to the massive hike in the gas tariff. They stressed that ICCI should take up this issue with relevant authorities for withdrawal of the new gas tariff otherwise their businesses would face closure as it is not possible for them to run business activities at the new gas price. Mumtaz Ahmed Chairman, Muhammad Farooq President, Ch. Muhammad Imtiaz & Zahid Mehmood Senior Vice Presidents, Nadeem Kiani & Shaukat Butt Vice Presidents, Imran Elahi Executive Member and others were in the delegation.

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the OGRA has made a massive hike of up to 194 percent in the gas tariff from 1st November 2023, which



is unjustified as it would put an unbearable burden on the people and increase the cost of doing business that would not be affordable for many businesses in these tough times. He urged that the government should withdraw

this massive hike in gas tariff to save businesses from closure and the common man from high inflation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that gas is a key input for many businesses including bakeries, sweet

shops, and restaurants, and if the new gas tariff is not revised, many of these businesses would collapse, which would damage the already fragile economy and cause more unemployment in the country. He said that instead of hiking gas tariffs to cope with the circular debt in the gas sector, the government should focus on controlling the mismanagement and transmission & distribution losses in the gas network. These losses are much higher in Pakistan as compared to international benchmarks. He assured the delegation that ICCI would raise their concerns at all relevant forums for the attention of the concerned authorities.

The delegation members said that the new gas tariff has jeopardized the survival of their businesses as it is not possible for them to absorb this massive hike in gas prices. They said that the new gas tariff would not only cause the closure of many businesses, it would also bring a new wave of inflation for the common man and urged that the government should revise its decision to save the businesses and the general public from serious troubles.

## Hike in gas price

RAWALPINDI: A view of Penaflexes on street light polls displayed from Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) due to protest against price hike in Gas, in the city.



Photo: Online

## foodpanda collaborates with the World Food Programme

By **PPA**

KARACHI: foodpanda Pakistan, the leading food delivery platform, has announced a partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) to raise funds for the people impacted by the conflict in Gaza. Under the partnership, foodpanda users can donate directly to WFP's humanitarian efforts through the foodpanda mobile application (app).

Muntaqa Peracha, CEO of foodpanda Pakistan, commented on the partnership initiative, "At foodpanda Pakistan, we believe in the strength of community and shared responsibility. Our collaboration with the World Food Programme is a small step toward making a big difference. I'd like to

encourage everyone to leverage the foodpanda app and donate generously to WFP to help those in need"

Coco Ushiyama, Country Director of the World Food Programme in Pakistan also stated, "We appreciate foodpanda's commitment to this humanitarian cause. The collaboration is testament to the importance of private-sector partnerships in addressing critical issues. The contributions from foodpanda's customers will go a long way in providing much-needed assistance to people impacted by the conflict in Gaza."

foodpanda encourages its users, partners, and employees to participate in this initiative, stressing that small individual contributions can collectively make a significant impact.

## Pak, China discussed transfer of Chinese technology to Pakistan's SEZs

By **News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Dr Gohar Ejaz has discussed exploring the transfer of Chinese technology to Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in China tour. The minister along with a high-profile delegation, has concluded a visit to China. The comprehensive tour spanned three key Chinese cities, providing a platform for fostering collaborations across diverse sectors, said a press release issued here Saturday.

The delegation actively participated in the China-Pakistan Textile Summit, a pivotal event that brought together industry leaders from both nations. Engaging in insightful discussions, the delegates aimed to fortify bilateral trade relations and explore avenues for increased cooperation. A significant milestone during the visit was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the China Chambers of Commerce and the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA). This agreement marks a commitment to enhance collaboration and promote mutual interests in the textile sector. The delegation comprised businessmen, seized the opportunity to engage in fruitful Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings with their Chinese counterparts. The focus was on enhancing textile imports and exports, with the ultimate goal of strengthening economic ties between the two countries.



Exploring possibilities beyond textiles, the delegates delved into discussions on potential joint ventures across multiple sectors. This exemplifies the collaborative spirit and shared vision for business growth between Pakistan and China. Emphasizing the importance of joint efforts, the delegates underscored the need for collaboration among business individuals from both nations. Discussions included the application of advanced Chinese technology to

enhance value addition in Pakistan's industries. The delegates engaged in detailed discussions on how this transfer could drive innovation and economic development in Pakistan. Highlighting the positive impact of increased Chinese investments on Pakistan's GDP growth, the delegation emphasized the strategic opportunity for Chinese exporters to reach markets in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Africa through Pakistan.

## PIAF for overhauling power sector as anti-theft drive fails to give results

By **PNP**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has stressed the need for overhauling the power sector through some drastic measures as the total cost of inefficiencies in the power sector is continued to rise, crossing Rs2.6 trillion by Oct 31, 2023, showing 13 percent or Rs 75.25 billion per month growth in its flow, indicating

that anti-theft drive failed to give results.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol, referring to the latest data, observed that circular debt stock touched Rs2.310 trillion at the end of FY 2022-23, which has now reached Rs2.611 trillion during July-October 2023-24 with a growth of Rs301 billion against growth of Rs249 billion in same period of 2022-23.



ISLAMABAD: Real Investment Marketing's CEO Asif Malik and M&M Builder pvt ltd CEO Raja Mehtab Khan signed MOU of Exclusive Sale and Marketing for NOC Approved Commercial Project MALL OF MURREE First and biggest Indoor Mall 80 % constructed located on Main Mall Road Murree.

## LUMS Energy Institute launches report on energy efficient buildings

By **PPA**

ISLAMABAD: In a milestone event, the LUMS Energy Institute (LEI), a research and capacity building centre with a focus on Pakistan's energy sector, has unveiled a report titled Sustainable Architecture: Advancing Energy Efficient Buildings. The report addresses the acute energy challenge and how adopting energy-efficient practices in residential construction can drastically reduce loads.

While addressing policymakers, regulatory bodies, and key

stakeholder, Dr. Fiaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director, LUMS Energy Institute, said, "Pakistan's expenditure of nearly USD 100 billion on power plants, predominantly for summer cooling loads, is unsustainable. By adopting the energy-efficient practices we can reduce cooling loads by at least 50%, saving billions of dollars."

The seasonal variation in electricity usage, pronounced by cooling loads during hot summer months, necessitates an additional 18,000 MW of power plant capacity. This extra capacity, largely underutilized



for the rest of the year, imposes a staggering cost of nearly \$100 billion on the national economy.

This operational inefficiency has led to capacity payment obligations surpassing PKR 2 trillion,

a financial weight bearing down on a sector that contributes minimally to the country's

GDP growth.

The report demonstrates how adopting energy-efficient prac-

tices in residential construction can drastically reduce these loads. Through a comprehensive exploration of locally available materials, Building Information Modelling (BIM) results, and cost-benefit analysis, the report provides a roadmap for stakeholders, homeowners, the construction industry, and regulatory bodies to embrace sustainable practices. The publication provides an exhaustive analysis across 5 Marla row houses, 10 Marla semi-detached houses, and 1 Kanal fully detached homes.

# Opening ceremony of 7th CNS Open Shooting Championship held at Karachi

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Opening Ceremony of 7th CNS Open Shooting Championship 2023 held at Pakistan Navy Shooting Range, Karachi. Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

About 400 shooters from Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, FRA, SRA, PRA, BRA, HEC, WAPDA, Pakistan Police, SSU, RSS Club, KGSSR Club, and PNSR Members Club are participating in the competition. During the Championship, 24 events will be



contested in Pistol, Rifle and Shotgun categories. Event matches are being contested under the umbrella of National Rifle Association of Pakistan (NAP) as per International Sports Shooting Federation (ISSF) latest rules and regulations.

Four events of Big Bore Pistol, 50M and 0.22 Open Sight Categories are included in schedule of events as festival matches. Furthermore, apart from 10 events in men category, 05 events for women and 04 for youth in Pistol and Rifle categories are also part of Championship.

## 3rd Fatima Jinnah Punjab Ladies Amateur Golf Championship

Tahir Amin Malik.

LAHORE: The brilliant one of Pakistan ladies golf scene is Parkha Ejaz of Defence Raya, a golfer with accomplished golf playing skills, and she played masterly golf to emerge as the title winner in the Gourmet Foods backed 3rd Fatima Jinnah Punjab Ladies Amateur Golf Championship. Contested on the par 72 Royal Palm Golf Course, this championship lured champion lady golf players from Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and other golf playing arenas of the country including Lahore and these competing lady aspirants applied their golfing skills to try and gain national recognition as players of merit and expertise. And in the final reckoning the successful ones turned out to be Parkha Ejaz, a WAGR recognized player and Bushra Fatima of Lahore Garrison plus Aania Farooq of Karachi. Parkha won the title with three rounds scores of 73, 71 and 75 and a championship aggregate of 219, three over par. The runner up gross was the little one Bushra Fatima and



her scores were 75, 75 and 85 and the aggregate score was 235. As for Aania Farooq, her aggregate score was 242 and she ended up winning third gross. Those were the performances of proficient ones in Gold Category.

In the race for honors in net category, the first net was won by Ana James Gill (Royal Palm) with a three rounds net aggregate score of 216. Ami Qin of Islamabad succeeded in winning second net. Her net score was 218 and third net went to Zaib un Nisa of Royal Palm, her net aggregate score being 221.

Results of Other Events: Junior Girls age 10 and below; Ayra Ali, first

gross; Noor Zahra, second gross; Anabia Waqar, third gross; Junior Girls, Age above 10 and upto 14 years; Noor Bano, first gross; Nabihah Nafees, second gross; Young Ladies; Aliha Amjad, first net; Miss Atallah, second net; Senior Ladies; Shahnaz Moeen, first net; Filza Yousaf, second net; Bronze category; Saqiba Batool, first gross; Minna Zainab, second gross; Samina Ishtiaq, third gross; Salbia Murtaza, first net; Sobia Waseem, second net; Huma Iqbal, third net; Silver Category; Uzma Khurshid, first gross; Hadiya Osama, second gross; Momina Tarrar, third gross; Dr Fauzia Umer, first net; Shahana Waheed,

second net; Laila Malik, third net; Nearest to the pin; Uzma Khurshid; Longest Drive, Parkha Ejaz; At the conclusion of the 3rd Fatima Jinnah Punjab Ladies Amateur Golf Championship the prizes were awarded to the performers by Brig Ayaz Mahmood, Honorary Secretary of Punjab Golf Association and Ali Mehdi of Gourmet Foods in a ceremony attended by Minna Zainab, Tournament Director, Executive Committee Members of Punjab Golf, Col Jameel Khalid of Royal Palm, participating ladies and families and the grand prize distribution was held at Royal Palm Golf and Country Club.

## Nathan Lyon becomes eighth bowler to take 500 wickets in Test cricket



A Sports

PERTH: Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon has become the eighth bowler to take 500 wickets in Test cricket during the second innings of the first Test against Pakistan at Perth Stadium.

Lyon claimed his 500th wicket by dismissing Faheem Ashraf with the help of DRS after the on-field umpire turned down the LBW appeal.

He picked another wicket in the same over to help his side bundle Pakistan for a meagre 89 runs and register a huge 360-run victory in the first Test of the three-match series.

"It's something I'm very proud about, I don't think it's hit me yet," said Nathan Lyon after the match.

"There's obviously been a lot of hard work gone into the journey and I've had a lot more bad days than good days, but to be back out there in the middle... it's pretty special.

"I still pinch myself when I see my name next to those guys," he said of the exalted company he has joined, including fellow spin kings Muttiah Muralitharan and Shane Warne.

Nathan Lyon became the third bowler from Australia to achieve the landmark of 500 Test wickets after spin legend Shane Warne (708) and pace bowler Glenn McGrath (563).

However, he is the slowest among his countrymen as he took 123 Test matches, while Warne took 108 and McGrath took 110.

Nathan Lyon is also the fourth spinner across the globe to join the elite 500-wicket club after legends Muthiah Muralidaran, Warne and Anil Kumble.

Notably, Muralidaran is the fastest to claim 500 wickets as he took only 87 Test matches to reach the milestone.

Nathan Lyon made his Test debut in 2011 against Sri Lanka and picked the wicket of Kumar Sangakkara with the first ball of his Test career.

Lyon has taken a total of 501 wickets in Test cricket at an average of 30.85 with 23 five-wicket hauls and four 10-wicket hauls.

## Mohammad Hafeez backs Sarfaraz Ahmed after dismal performance in Perth Test

A Sports

PERTH: Pakistan's team director Mohammad Hafeez backed wicketkeeper Sarfaraz Ahmed amid criticism following the latter's dismal performance in the first Test against Australia.

Sarfaraz Ahmed had a forgettable outing in Perth as he scored a total of seven runs in two innings.

However, Hafeez defended the wicketkeeper saying that he was excellent in the last series and has served Pakistan with great performances in past.

"Sarfaraz has given a lot of performances for Pakistan. In the New Zealand series in Pakistan, he was excellent. Unfortunately, this match didn't go well for Sarfaraz according to our expectations," Hafeez said in the post-match press conference.



"However, we can't start thinking something totally different after one match. Sarfaraz isn't new - he has toured Australia, South Africa, and England before."

Hafeez stressed the fact that the management cannot drop a player over the performance of just one match.

"Yes, he didn't perform up to expectations as a batsman and keeper. But this doesn't mean that we should start

doubting someone's skill and saying they can only play in certain conditions," he concluded.

Notably, Australia are currently leading the Test series 1-0 after thumping Pakistan by a huge margin of 360 runs in the first Test match at Perth Stadium.

Australian bowlers bowled the Pakistan team for a meagre 89 runs in the second innings after setting a

mammoth target of 450 runs to register a dominant victory.

Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh was adjudged man-of-the-match for his brilliant performance in both innings with scores of 90 and 63\* as well as one wicket in the first innings.

Pakistan and Australia will square off in the second Test match of the three-match Test series at Melbourne Cricket Ground, which is scheduled to start on December 26.

Pakistan Test squad

Shan Masood (c), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafiq, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Nauman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Afridi, Saud Shakeel, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Sajid Khan

## Pakistan Test squad to reach Melbourne on December 19 for second Test

Sports Desk

Pakistan Test squad will reach Melbourne on December 19 to partake in the second Test match of the three-match Test series, which is scheduled to start on December 26 at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Pakistan Test squad will participate in the training session on December 21 in Melbourne before playing a two-day practice match against Victoria XI on December 22 and 23.

They will then take a day to rest before resuming their training at the MCG on December 25.

Meanwhile, the Australia team will report to Melbourne on December 23 and partake in the training session for two days before kicking off the Boxing



Day Test on December 26.

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Australia are currently leading the Test series 1-0 after thumping Pakistan by a huge margin of 360 runs in the first

## Aqeel wins Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan Tennis C'ship title



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Aqeel Khan continued his dominance at the national level as he annexed another men's singles title, the 9th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships, at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex in Islamabad on Sunday.

The seasoned Aqeel, who is Pakistan's number one, overcame the promising Muhammad Shoaib 6-2, 6-3 to lift the prestigious title. In the boys singles 14 and under final, Abdul Basit came from behind to clinch the title, beating Hassan Usmani 5-7, 6-1, 6-1. In the boys singles 12 and under final, Shayan Afridi outclassed Rashid Ali Bacahani 4-0, 4-2.

Ing. Ladislav Steinhubel, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan, was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, while Asad Saifullah Khan was the guest of honour.

The closing ceremony was also attended by Anwar Saifullah Khan, Javed Saifullah Khan, Senator Farhatullah Babar, Dr Muhammad Tahir, and other notables. The President of PTF, Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, in a message, appreciated the efforts of the PTF management for conducting the event in a highly befitting manner.

## Jahangir Khan's provision of facilities of legends arena is a great help: Ronak Lakhani



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Former World Squash Champion Jahangir Khan has said that Pakistan's special athletes are our pride and valuable assets. These brave athletes of the nation won more than 80 medals in the recent World Games and proved that when there is a determination to win and a strong belief in one's hard work, no mental or physical disability can block the way to success.

He expressed these views in a meeting with the Chairperson of Special Olympics Pakistan, Ronak Lakhani, the recipient of Sitara-e-Imtiaz, at Legends Arena Karachi.

On the occasion, Pakistan Olympic Association Media Advisor Asif Azeem, Legends Arena CEO Talal Shah, Sindh Olympic Association Vice President Tehmina Asif, SOP National Sports Director Farkhunda Jabeen and Sports Coordinator Muhammad Huzaifa were also present.

Jahangir Khan said that special athletes have always raised the name of Pakistan and have raised the green crescent flag in the field of sports. For their grooming, all the modern sports facilities in the Legends Arena are present.

Jahangir Khan commended the efforts of Special Olympics Pakistan and said that the way Chairperson Ronak Lakhani and her entire team are engaged in giving special athletes opportunities to participate in sports based on equality and their rightful place in society in the spirit of serving humanity is praiseworthy.

Ronak Lakhani, Chairperson of Special Olympic Pakistan, said that Legends Arena is a unique and state-of-the-art institution of its kind in Pakistan. Jahangir Khan's provision of facilities for our athletes at the Legends Arena will be of great help in improving the physical fitness of the athletes and continuing their performance, Ronak Lakhani concluded.

## Ashiqur Rahman Shibli ton powers Bangladesh to win U19 Asia Cup 2023

A Sports

DUBAI: Ashiqur Rahman Shibli's 129 followed by the combined bowling efforts by Bangladesh bowlers helped them thump the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by 195 runs and win the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup 2023 for the first time.



After being invited to bat, Bangladesh U19 lost their first wicket in five overs with only 14 runs on the board.

Ashiqur Rahman Shibli was then joined by Chowdhur Md Rizwan and together they knitted a solid 125-run partnership for the second wicket.

Dhruv Parashar dismissed Rizwan (60) to break the partnership at a total of 135.

Shibli was then involved in a partnership with Ariful Islam, scoring 86 runs from 76 balls for the fourth wicket Ayman Ahamed removed the latter.

Ariful Islam departed after scoring 50 off 40, with the help of six boundaries. Ashiqur Rahman Shibli waged a lone war from his end, while UAE bowlers kept picking wickets at regular intervals from the other end.

Bangladesh skipper Mahfuzur Rahman Rabbay was the only notable contributor from the lower order with a cameo of 21 off 11. Shibli played a brilliant innings of 129 runs from 149 balls, laced with 12 boundaries and one six, which came to an end in the final over bowled by Ahamed.

Bangladesh U19 finished their innings at 282-8. Ayman Ahamed topped the bowling charts for UAE with the figures of 4-52, while Omid Rehman picked two wickets.

In response, UAE failed to get the start they wanted to chase a 283-run target as they slipped to 39-4 inside ten overs courtesy of brilliant bowling by Maruf Mridha and Rohanad Doullah Borson.

Dhruv Parashar was the only batter who showed resistance against Bangladesh bowlers, but he could not get support from the other end as the wickets kept tumbling at an alarming rate.

Bangladesh bowlers bowled exceptionally well to bundle the UAE team for a meagre total of 87 inside 25 overs.

Parashar remained unbeaten with the top score of 25 off 40 with the help of two boundaries.

## Sad situation

A Palestinian holds a child as they look on at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.



Photo: Reuters

# Israel strikes Gaza as pressure grows to free more hostages

## Spokesman Report

GAZA: Israel carried out fresh strikes on Gaza Sunday as its leaders came under growing pressure to secure the release of hostages still held in the Hamas-run territory more than two months after the October 7 attacks.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced protests on Saturday by relatives of hostages who called for an urgent deal to secure their freedom after the army admitted mistakenly killing three captives in Gaza.

The trio were among an estimated 250 people taken hostage during Hamas's October 7 raids into Israel, which also killed about 1,140 people, according to the Israeli authorities' latest figures.

According to Hamas, Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed 18,800 people, mostly women and children.

At a protest in Tel Aviv on Saturday, relatives of hostages gathered to plea with the government for a deal.

"Take us into consideration and come up with a plan now (for negotiation)," said Noam Perry, daughter of hostage Haim Perry, at the protest.

More than 100 of the Israelis and foreigners seized by Hamas and other militants on October 7 were released in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners during a week-long truce last month, mediated by Qatar.

Netanyahu doubled down on his war effort on Saturday, telling reporters of the three hostages' deaths: "It broke my heart. It broke the whole nation's heart."

"With all the deep sorrow, I want to clarify: the military pressure is necessary both for the return of the kidnapped and for achieving victory over our enemies," he added.

On Sunday, according to the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza, at least 12 people were killed in Israeli strikes on the central city of Deir Al-Balah.

Witnesses also reported Israeli air and artillery strikes on the southern municipality of Bani Suhaila east of Khan Yunis, the Gaza Strip's second city.

Also on Saturday, Netanyahu appeared to address Qatari efforts toward a new truce.

"We have serious criticisms of Qatar, about which I suppose you will hear in due course, but right now we are trying to complete the recovery of our hostages," he said.

In a statement, Qatar reaffirmed on Saturday its "ongoing diplomatic efforts to renew the humanitarian pause."

But Hamas said on Telegram it was "against any negotiations for the exchange of prisoners until the aggression against our

people ceases completely."

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said late Saturday he was traveling to Israel, Bahrain and Qatar to highlight Washington's "commitments to strengthening regional security and stability."

News platform Axios said Israeli spy chief David Barnea met Friday in an unspecified European location with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who helped negotiate the earlier truce.

## New threat: Hunger

Israel's bombardment of Gaza has left much of the territory in ruins, with the UN estimating 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced by the war.

The UN said this week that hunger and desperation were driving people to seize humanitarian aid being delivered to Gaza, warning of a "breakdown of civil order."

International aid organizations have struggled to get supplies to desperate Gazans.

"I would not be surprised if people start dying of hunger, or a combination of hunger, disease, weak immunity," said Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

The agency reported a "prolonged communications blackout" across Gaza that started on Thursday night and has continued over the past 48 hours.

US President Joe Biden, whose administration provides billions of dollars in military aid to Israel, has voiced growing concern over civilian deaths.

UK Foreign Minister David Cameron and his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock wrote in The Sunday Times that the "need is urgent" for a "sustainable cease-fire" in Gaza.

## JI not to form electoral alliance with PML-N, PPP: Sirajul Haq

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Ameer Sirajul Haq announced on Sunday that they will not form an electoral alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

While talking to journalists, Sirajul Haq said that JI won't allow anyone to rob public mandate in the general elections. "PML-N and PPP destroyed the entire country. JI will not accept the election results if fair elections are not held and a level-playing field is not provided to all political parties."

He detailed that JI issued election tickets to more than 50% of candidates. He criticised that a favourable environment is being created for a blue-eyed personality.

The JI Ameer said the judiciary, establishment and election commission must remain impartial for holding free and fair general polls.



Sirajul Haq said that Jamaat-e-Islami is the best option for Pakistanis in the upcoming polls whose manifesto is making Pakistan a welfare, prosperous and peaceful state. "The three major parties failed to deliver despite getting opportunities many times."

He announced that Jamaat-e-Islami will change the obsolete governance system of Pakistan after becoming successful in the elections. He added that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) slaves will see defeat in February 8 general elections.

## PPP won't make alliance with PTI: Zardari

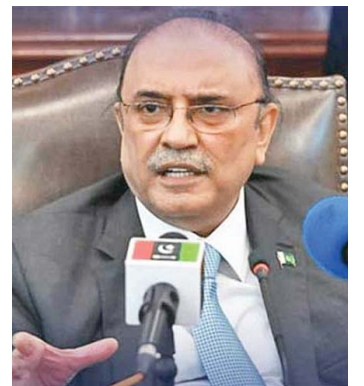
## Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Former President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday said that the PPP would not make an alliance with the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

He expressed these views during a meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali and party leaders at the Governor House. The discussion also touched upon matters concerning the allocation of tickets.

The former president asked a prompt resolution of internal party differences.

As per sources, the PPP co-chairman Zardari particularly urged party leaders not to form an alliance with Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the upcoming



elections. He stressed that decisions regarding alliances with other parties would be determined by the local leadership.

## ECP resumes DROs, ROs training ahead of General Elections

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has resumed nationwide training for District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs), with a focus on election procedures, rules, and other administrative aspects. An ECP spokesperson stated that the training, led by senior commission officers, will conclude for ROs on Monday (December 18) and for DROs on Tuesday (December 19).

The extensive training for 144 District Returning Officers (DROs)



and 859 Returning Officers (ROs) commenced on December 13 but was initially paused due to Lahore High Court orders prompted by a petition from PTI objecting to selecting election supervisory staff from the executive. However, it later resumed following orders from the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

## SSGC seeks increase in gas prices

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) has sought an increase in the prices of gas by Rs226.18 per metric million British thermal units (mBtu).

As per details, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA)

will hear the SSGC's plea seeking an additional increase of Rs226.18 per mBtu in gas prices tomorrow.

It projected a shortfall of Rs47,773 million in its revenue requirement during the current fiscal year. It requested an increase of Rs226.18 per mBtu in its average prescribed prices effective from July 1, 2023.

## WHO team calls Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital a 'bloodbath'

## Agencies

GAZA: The emergency department at the Al-Shifa hospital in northern Gaza, devastated by Israel's bombardments, is "a bloodbath" and is "in need of resuscitation", the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Sunday.

A team from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other United Nations (UN) agencies was able to deliver medical supplies Saturday to the hospital, the largest in the Palestinian territory.

In a statement the WHO said that "tens of thousands of displaced people are using the hospital building and grounds for shelter", and that there is "a severe shortage" of drinking water and food.



"The team described the emergency department as a 'bloodbath', with hundreds of injured patients inside, and new patients arriving every minute," the organisation said, adding that "patients with trauma injuries were being sutured on the floor... (and) no pain management is available".

The hospital is functioning

at a minimal scale with very few staff and the WHO said "critical patients are being transferred to Al-Ahli Arab Hospital for surgeries".

Operating theatres are not working due to a lack of oxygen and supplies, and according to the WHO team, it is a "hospital in need of resuscitation".

Only 30 patients can receive

dialysis daily.

All health infrastructure in the Gaza strip has been hard hit by bombardments and ground operations carried out by the Israeli army since the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israeli territory.

The attack saw about 1,140 people killed and 240 hostages taken, according to the Israeli

authorities' latest figures.

According to Gaza's health ministry, Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed 18,800 people, mostly women and children.

Israel has accused Hamas of running a command centre below the hospital despite repeated denials from hospital officials and the Palestinian group.

The WHO said it would reinforce Al-Shifa "in the coming weeks" in order for it to resume basic services.

"Up to 20 operating theatres in the hospital, as well as post-operative care services, can be activated if provided with regular supplies of fuel, oxygen, medicines, food, and water," the WHO said, along with the necessary staff.

## Northern areas see winter tourism boom: report

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Winter tourism got a high boom in Swat and other northern areas of the country, and snowfall in Malam Jabba and Kalam valleys drew a substantial number of tourists from across the country to enjoy snowball games and

kiing. In winter, the scenic valleys transform into white wonderlands, offering tourists multiple opportunities for adventure coming from all across the country, according to a report aired by a private news channel.

Swat, Malam Jabba, Gabin Jabba, Miandam, Matiltan, Kalam, Utror, Gabral, Matiltan, Mahodand, and Loye Sar are some of the mountain resorts where tourists have



been planning to spend their upcoming winter vacations, said a local in Swat. "Today my dream came true after seeing my first snowfall in my favorite tourists' destination of Swat, where the snow-covered

valleys and mountain peaks attract visitors in droves these days," said a tourist with family. A local of Swat Valley advises tourists that they should come fully equipped with proper shoes and jackets if they plan

on visiting the valley during the winter. "We had heard about the enchanting beauty of Malam Jabba from our friends. We find it to be different from other snow resorts," said a tourist who came from Punjab.

"The Majestic Valley of Swat is my favorite winter destination due to its diverse features, easy accessibility, pollution-free cool weather, and trout fish amid snowfall," said a female tourist. "It is very cold here at Kalam, but I cannot simply keep myself away from the falling snow," said a foreign tourist, adding, "Swat is a hundred times better than what we had imagined; it is like we have come to heaven, and the people here are amazing; they are very cooperative also," a tourist group added. "The winter school holidays have become a good window for tourist arrivals. The feedback we have gotten from our guests makes us hopeful for a better winter season, PTDC officials claimed. "Kalam is a