



Telephonic conversation between President of Pakistan and President of Iran

In a telephone call today that lasted almost 45 minutes, President Dr. Arif Alvi of Pakistan and President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran underscored the need for coordinated efforts by the Islamic countries to bring an end to the ongoing massacre and crimes against humanity in Gaza. (Details on Page 8)



PRCS organizes blood donation camp at Turkish Embassy

Pakistan Red Crescent Society in collaboration with Turkish Red Crescent Society organized Blood Donation Drive at the Turkish Embassy here on Wednesday. The event took place in the beautifully decorated hall at the Embassy of Türkiye and witnessed an enthusiastic response, with numerous Turkish individuals from diverse walks of life coming together to contribute to this noble cause. Diplomats, representatives from PRCS, TRC... (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Called on

Rawalpindi: General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee called on His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussain. During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed various areas of interest including, bilateral politico-diplomatic and military cooperation and prevailing regional security situation.



Pakistan, country of consequence, wishes to develop as hub of connectivity: COAS



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, said Pakistan was a country of consequence both from a geopolitical and geo-economic perspective and wished to develop itself as a hub of connectivity and a gateway to Central Asia and beyond.

The Army Chief further said, "The country, however, eschews bloc politics and believes in maintaining balanced relationships with all friendly countries."

The COAS remarks came after he engaged in a candid discourse with the members of prominent US think tanks and media, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued here.

The COAS, during the interaction, put across Pakistan's perspective on regional security, transnational terrorism, and

the importance of maintaining strategic stability in South Asia.

General Asim Munir highlighted that Pakistan desired to broaden bilateral engagement with the U. S. through a long-term multi-domain partnership.

He highlighted, "His interactions during the visit to the U.S. with political and military leadership have been very positive, and he looks forward to further strengthening the relationship."

The COAS also highlighted, "Pakistan stood as a bulwark against transnational terrorism for decades, ensuring regional stability and global peace and security." "It has made unparalleled contributions and sacrifices in its enduring fight against terrorism and will continue to fight till the logical end, in line with the aspirations of people in Pakistan," General Syed Asim Munir said.

Promoting science & technology key to achieve rapid development: PM

Bureau Report

SWABI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday emphasized that focusing on science and technology was important to achieve goals of fast development in the country.

Addressing at Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences (GIKI) in Topi area of Swabi, he said the institute was playing vital role in promotion of science and technology as it was preparing high quality graduates

in a range of fields of engineering sciences.

The prime minister recalled that when he visited GIKI for the first time in 1990s, he was much impressed by the not only the infrastructure of the institute but also the quality of education and energy of students.

He said Allah Almighty created human being for a noble cause. The ability to think, the ability to conceptualize things and seeking knowledge makes the human being different from the angels,



he added.

The prime minister said Paki-

stan was formed to have the prestigious educational institutions such as GIKI.

He also stressed the need to establish replicas of this institute in other parts of the country. He said he would try his best to establish GIKI campuses in all provinces of the country.

The prime minister also commended the great work done by the faculty of the institute. He assured that the government would provide all out support to the institute in any of its initiative.

Inaugural round of Pakistan-Brunei Bilateral Consultation and Cooperation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The inaugural round of Pakistan-Brunei Bilateral Consultation and Cooperation (BCC) was held in a virtual format this morning.

The inaugural round was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei, Pengiran Norhashimah Binti Pg Mohd Hassan.

During the BCC, the two sides engaged in extensive discussion on bilateral relations, regional developments and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

Minister Finance announces technical supplementary grant for public sector power plants

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamsahad Akhtar presided over a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, today.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Mr. Sami Saeed, the Minister for Privatization Mr. Fawad Husan Fawad, Minister for Industries and Commerce Mr. Ejaz Gohar, Minister for Power & Petroleum Mr. Muhammad Ali, Minister for Information Technology Mr. Umar Saif, Advisor to PM on Finance Dr. Waqar Masood, Federal Secretaries, and other senior government officers of the relevant ministries. Provincial Chief Secretaries,

Governor State Bank and other relevant officers also joined the meeting through Zoom link.

ECC considered a summary of Ministry of Energy (Power Division) regarding release of Rs. 57 billion advanced subsidy for payment of K-Electric arrears and approved the Technical Supplementary Grant in order to meet the operational requirements of power sector.

Another summary of Power Division for settlement of payables to Government Owned Power Plants (GPPs) at par with IPPs was approved and ECC directed to release Rs. 262.075 billion to public sector power plants through technical supplementary grant. This matter will further be discussed in next meeting.

ECC agreed to initiate phase out

of the Export Finance Scheme of the State Bank of Pakistan- a requirement of the IMF Standby Arrangement. To operationalize this requirement ECC gave approval to release of Rs. 3.87 billion to EXIM bank for current Fiscal Year.

While discussing report on ECCs decisions on PSMs liabilities towards GoP as discussed on September 19th 2023, Minister Finance directed Ministry of Industries to carry out a diagnostic survey to determine why liabilities of PSM persisted even though it had not been operational since 2015 and how PSM land had been allocated to housing companies and served other industries without due process. ECC showed its displeasure on PSM board and recommended that Industries Division may look into this issue for further necessary action.

US left weapons to strengthen Afghan forces, says John Kirby

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: United States National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said weapons were left in Afghanistan as a part of the US policy after departure.

"We left the US weapons with approval from Congress to strengthen the Afghan army," John Kirby said in his press briefing on Wednesday.

US National Security Council spokesperson admitted that the weapons they left for the Afghan army were confiscated by the Taliban government after the fall of Kabul.

John Kirby further said that Pakistan "continues to face a viable terrorism threat" across the border.

Two cops injured in grenade attack on ex-CJP Saqib Nisar's residence

Bureau Report

LAHORE: At least two cops injured in a hand grenade attack on the residence of former chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) Saqib Nisar.

According to the initial report, the house of former CJP was attacked with hand grenade at 8pm and injured two cops.

The report revealed that CCTV cameras were neither installed at the Ex-CJP's residence and nor at any streets connecting the residence.

However, forensic team, police crime unit and bomb disposal squad are present at the spot of incident. The police investigation team have gathered evidence from the spot of



incident and further investigation is underway.

The former CJP said that "Thankfully all the family members are safe". He said that an object was thrown from outside what which exploded and destroyed the car which was parked in the house.

He added that the police is conducting investigation to ascertain the details and motives behind the explosion and "hopefully, the suspects will be arrested soon".

Saudi Ambassador discusses plan for Faisal Mosque renovation with Secretary Interior



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Maliki on Wednesday held a meeting with Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani to discuss the plan for the renovation of Faisal Mosque. Secretary Interior welcomed Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Maliki at his office and offered all support for renovation of the Faisal Mosque, built after the name of Shah Faisal with Saudi

Arabia's cooperation.

Interior Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Maliki agreed to further promote mutual relations between the two countries. He said that the relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were exemplary. He also lauded the recent visit of Imam Kaaba's visit to Pakistan while the Saudi ambassador expressed best wishes for the upcoming elections in Pakistan.

Pakistan: World Bank approves \$350m in financing to support

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved on Tuesday \$350 million in financing for the Second Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy (RISE-II) Opera-

tion, which aims to strengthen fiscal management and promote competitiveness for sustained and inclusive economic growth.

"Pakistan needs urgent fiscal and structural reforms to restore macroeconomic balance and lay the founda-

tions for sustainable growth," says Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "RISE-II completes a first phase of tax, energy and business climate reforms geared to raising additional revenues, improve the targeting of expenditures and stimulate

competition and investment."

The operation contributes to better fiscal management by improving fiscal policy coordination, enhancing debt transparency and management, strengthening the taxation of property, and improving the financial viability of the power

sector. The operation also aims to foster growth and competitiveness by reducing the cost of tax compliance, improving financial sector transparency, encouraging the use of digital payments, and promoting exports by lowering import tariffs.

All-Party Conference condemns Indian move to cede Jammu and Kashmir to India



Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: The participants of the All-Party Conference (APC), while terming Kashmir as an internationally recognized disputed territory, have said that neither Indian parliament nor its judiciary has any mandate to legislate or adjudicate on the matters related to Kashmir. Held under the chairmanship of the AJK prime minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, the APC was attended and addressed by the Kashmiri leaders, civil society activists and legal experts hailing from both sides of the line of control. Through a unanimously adopted

resolution, the APC condemned in strong terms the Indian government's attempts aimed at legitimizing its occupation over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Terming the Modi government's 5th August move as illegal, the conference resolved that the successive steps taken by India to merge occupied Jammu and Kashmir into Indian union and attempts to change the region's demography were against the spirit of the UNSC resolutions. The participants of the conference said that such attempts on the part of Indian government cannot change the disputed nature of the Kashmir dispute that has

now assumed dangerous proportions. "The future of the state of Jammu and Kashmir will be decided through a simultaneous state-wide plebiscite," another resolution said. This meeting strongly condemned the ban on freedom of speech and expression, arbitrary arrests and detentions of All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders, political activists, youth, journalists and human rights workers in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The conference also paid special tributes to the Kashmiri resistance leaders including Muhammad Yasin Malik, Musarat Alam Bhat, Shabir Ahmad Shah, Ms. Asia Andra-

bi, Dr. Qasim Faktoo, Nacem Ahmad Khan, Fahmida Sufi, Nahida Nasreen and other leaders. The conference voiced its serious concerns over the fast deteriorating health condition and threats to the lives of the Kashmiri prisoners who have been languishing in different jails within and outside Kashmir for the past several years. The conference demanded immediate release of all the political leaders who have been arrested on trumped up charges. The APC also appreciated the Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, for raising the issue of Kashmir during his meeting with the UN

Secretary General. This meeting expressed the resolve that the people on both sides of the cease-fire line would spare no efforts in taking the ongoing struggle for self-determination to its logical conclusion. The conference was attended and addressed by Kashmiri leaders hailing from both sides of the LoC including opposition leader Khawaja Farooq Ahmed, Tehreek-e-Insaf President Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi, People's Party Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Muslim League-N President Shah Ghulam Qadir, Muslim Conference President Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan,

former President and Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan, former Prime Minister Raja Mohammad Farooq Haider Khan, President Jammu and Kashmir People's Party Sardar Hasan Ibrahim, President Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League Khawaja Manzoor Qadir Advocate, APHC convener Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Rafiq Dar and others. Whereas government ministers including Waqar Ahmed Noor, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Mian Waheed, Hafiz Ahmed Raza Qadri and others were present on the occasion.

Nomination

HYDERABAD: Former Sindh Minister Jam Khan Shoro submits his nomination form to returning officer for upcoming General Election 2024.



Photo: APP

Indian Supreme Court ruling has no bearing on Kashmir: Shabir Shah

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Senior Hurriyat leader and chairman Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmed Shah has said that Jammu and Kashmir has never been a part of India and thus no act of Indian parliament, no piece of legislation or any judicial order has any moral and legal standing.

In his message from Tihar jail the incarcerated leader, while referring to the promises the secular touting Indian leaders had made with the people of Kashmir from time to time, said that the Indian supreme court verdict was yet another big betrayal involving the breach of trust and violation of commitments.

He said that the Indian court has miserably failed to do justice with the people of Kashmir. "The Indian judiciary has a history of being biased towards

Kashmiris", he said, adding that execution of Shaheed Maqbool Bhat and then judicial murder of Shaheed Afzal Guru in a sham trial serve as worst examples of prejudice and injustice.

He said that the Indian supreme court has repeated the history and instead of hearing the case on merit and do justice, the five-judge bench has preferred to satisfy the Modi government.

"The court verdict has been a big disappointment for the pro-India political parties but for a vast majority of the Kashmiris it was a non issue as they believe that Kashmir is a disputed territory that was illegally and forcibly occupied by India in 1947", he said, adding that expecting any good from a country that has breached the international obligations and violated its commitments was a futile exercise.

"Reinstating article 370 is not the



real issue or demand of the Kashmiri people", he said, adding that holding referendum in the region in line with the UNSC resolutions, allowing the people of the region to exercise their right-the right to self determination and providing them an opportunity to determine their political was the only thing Kash-

miri have been demanding and fighting for the past several decades.

He said that instead of fulfilling the Kashmiris' just demand, the Indian government was trying to further complicate the issue by weaving a cob of confusion around it.

He said that such tactics won't really help India from running away from the reality i.e. Kashmir is a UN recognized disputed territory still pending on the UN agenda.

As per the UN resolutions, the Indian government has no mandate or authority to change the disputed nature of the Jammu and Kashmir or annex the territory unilaterally either through an act of Parliament or a judicial order.

"The Kashmiri people have rejected the move and made it clear that they won't accept anything short of freedom", he said, adding that no decision can be imposed on Kashmiris.

AJK summits on electricity bills, announces joint declaration

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Chairman Negotiating Committee Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore while addressing the news conference along with Government Ministers Mian Abdul Waheed and Sardar Zia Qamar and Jammu and Kashmir Public Action Committee Shaukat Nawaz Mir and representatives said that A joint declaration has been agreed between the Government Reconciliation Committee and the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Public Action Committee on the Charter of Demand, except for determining the per unit cost of electricity, all other matters have been agreed upon as per the Charter of Demand, now the cause of the dispute is Determining



the cost of production of hydropower generated by WAPDA for which the government has agreed in principle that relief will be given to the people, apart from determining the modalities and assessing the financial implications of the entire process. Taking all the stakeholders including the cabi-

net, the assembly into confidence, the implementation will be implemented in the next two weeks. The public action committee has withdrawn the call to burn electricity bills on December 21.

Press conference Shaukat Nawaz Mir, Umar of public action. Tanveer, Raja Ghulam Mujtaba, Intiaz Aslam Faisal Jameel Kashmiri, Shahzad Khan, Sardar Sajjad Khan, Mujtabi bin Farooqui and others were present.

In his address to the press conference, the chairman of the negotiation committee, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that the government's negotiation committee sincerely negotiated with the public action committee and this process has been going on for the last two months. He said that Prime Minister Chaudhry

Anwar Haq highlighted the problems of Azad Kashmir in the institutions of the Federation of Pakistan and in the national electronic and print media with tact and beauty. And their effort is to provide maximum relief to the people.

He said that there was a long discussion on each point and there was an opportunity to understand each other's point of view.

He said that Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq said that these demands are my words, all the issues that came up were discussed, negotiations were held for eight hours at night, an agreement was written between the government and the action committee. In response to a question, Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that there are numerous challengers. Which will be resolved.

Lions Club offers free medical in Multan for diabetes patients

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: President of Multan Jasmine Lions Club Shahnaz Zulfiqar said that the spread of infectious diseases and other deadly diseases is intensifying due to inadequate supply and lack of hygiene. We want to ensure health awareness education and sustainable health initiatives among the public. These views were expressed by the Multan Jasmine Lions Club at Chowk Ghanta Ghar Tughluq Road for free for diabetes patients. On the occasion of the medical, Dr. Irfan Ahmed Pracha said that diabetic patients should exercise daily, avoid smoking, take special care in diet, and follow the instructions of the doctor to keep the sugar level balanced.



Dr. Subhan Nisar, Saishita Zeiba, Mrs. Anjum Jilani were also present in the Medical camp.

Manpower Company deputy director achieves first position in Pakistan in promotion exams

Asim Tanveer



MULTAN: Electric Power Company (MENPCO) Deputy Director Material Management Regional Store Multan, Deputy Director Material Management from Basic Scale 18 to Director Material Management. 19th Promotion Examinations were held on November 21-22, 2023 in Lahore in which Deputy Director Material Management Regional Store Multan Muhammad Faisal Maqbool secured the first position in Pakistan. It is a great honor for Pakco region in Multan to get the first position in the exam among the people who came from all over Pakistan. The circle of friends congratulated him on this success and declared it as a welcome for WAPDA, with this success the department will develop further.

Nishtar Vice-Chancellor reviews medical facilities in Hospital



Asim Tanveer

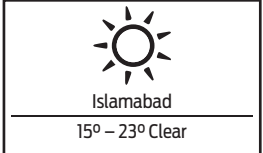
MULTAN: Vice-Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Rana Altaf visited various departments yesterday to review the medical facilities and renovations available for patients in Nishtar Hospital. He went to Ward No. 4, 12, 17, 20 and Physiotherapy Department including Ward No. 26. During his visit, he also reviewed various educational and teaching activities going on there, including the attendance of medical staff, renovation works and cleanliness in the wards. On this occasion, he visited the patients there and inquired about the medical and other facilities provided to them. Prof. Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed also spoke to the medical staff on duty and learned about the problems faced by them.

MS Nishtar Hospital Dr. Muhammad Kazim, heads of departments, admin registrars and nursing staff were also present on the occasion along with the Vice Chancellor. Prof. Dr. Rana Altaf Ahmed directed the administrative officers to ensure uninterrupted service delivery and assured his all possible cooperation in all matters. Besides, Prof. Rana Altaf Ahmed, Prof. Dr. Mahnaz Khakwani, Prof. Dr. Ghulam Abbas and Prof. Dr. Mohammad Naveed Akhtar also inaugurated the new lift service and canteen for the convenience of patients at Pak Italian Modern Burn Center.

77 industrial, business establishments challaned under Labour Act for not paying minimum wage

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: 77 industrial and business establishments of Hyderabad region have been challaned under the Labour Act for not implementing the minimum wage set by the government of Sindh. On the instructions of the Regional Director of Labour, Hyderabad, the Labor Department has stepped up action against the industrial and business establishments violating the Labor Law. In this regard, the Regional Director of Labour Ghulam Sarwar Utterro said that the Labour department Hyderabad is taking action against the institutions that do not implement the minimum wage set at 32,000 thousands for workers. So far, 40 factories, restaurants and other industrial and business establishments of Jamshoro district have been challaned in the Labour Court, of which the court has passed judgments in most of the cases and imposed fines on the violators of the law.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:38 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	3:25 pm
Maghrib	5:03 pm
Isha	6:32 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 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

PRCS organizes blood donation camp at Turkish Embassy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society in collaboration with Turkish Red Crescent Society organized Blood Donation Drive at the Turkish Embassy here on Wednesday. The event took place in the beautifully decorated hall at the Embassy of Turkiye and witnessed an enthusiastic response, with numerous Turkish individuals from diverse walks of life coming together to contribute to this noble cause. Diplomats, representatives from PRCS, TRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Pakistan, and volunteers participated in the event, generously donating blood at the camp. Notably, the occasion also commemorated the 76th Foundation Day of PRCS.

Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Dr. Mehmet Paçaci (Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan), Dr. Maen Khreasat, and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Jordan in Pakistan were among the dignitaries who contributed to this blood donation initiative. A total of 36 individuals donated blood during

the drive, expected to yield red blood cells, plasma, and FFPs, ultimately benefiting 108 people.

Speaking on this occasion, Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, emphasized the significance of saving lives through blood donation and highlighted the crucial role regular blood donations play in assisting patients in need.

Dr. Mehmet Paçaci, Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, expressed appreciation for everyone who contributed to the success of the event. He reiterated the commitment to initiatives supporting the well-being and health of individuals in Pakistan and beyond, while also extending congratulations to PRCS on its 76th Foundation Day.

Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors, emphasizing the powerful impact of blood donation in saving lives and serving humanity.

Piwi Ophoff, Head of Country Delegation, IFRC in Pakistan, commended PRCS on its 76th Foundation Day and the organization of the blood donation drive. He acknowledged PRCS's commendable efforts in rescue and relief, blood donation



initiatives, health and WASH activities, volunteerism, and climate action, pledging IFRC's steadfast support for PRCS in achieving its objectives for a sustainable future.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Regional

Blood Donor Centre, renowned for its responsible supply of safe and high-quality blood to the community, operates under a safe blood program that upholds the principles of altruism and voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation.

The Embassy of Turkiye expressed appreciation for everyone contributing to the event's success and reiterated its commitment to initiatives promoting the well-being and health of individuals in Pakistan and beyond.

15% increase in the price of yarn, local market suffering from crisis: Alhajj Abdullah

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: After electricity, needle gas and now due to the increase in the prices of yarn, there is a fear of complete closure of the cloth industry, this was said by the Senior Vice President Central Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhajj Abdullah Nawaz Vohra while talking to the media. He has further said that if the export of yarn is not controlled by the government, not only the Kapra markets will suffer from the crisis but also the wheels of the small industry may be jammed. He said a new crisis may arise in the country. Abdullah Nawaz Vohra while talking about the yarn market said that the price of yarn has increased by 15% and the power loom has started to close. The country is starting to be sent. The export of yarn has increased by 100% in the last month, the price of yarn in the market of Faisalabad has increased from 5 thousand to 7 thousand per bag. The power loom industry has started to close again. The investment is millions, billions of rupees. Millions of people are involved in employment. But nothing is being done by the government. After electricity prices, gas prices and now the price of yarn has gone up, which has broken the back of the businessmen due to which thousands of factories have closed down.

NTDC officer secures 1st position in Senior Management Course held at WAPDA Staff College Islamabad

PNP

LAHORE: An officer of National Transmission & Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has secured 1st position in the 61th Senior Management Course (SMC), held at WAPDA Administrative Staff College Islamabad.

28 Officers of BPS-19 from WAPDA, state-owned Generation, Transmission and Distribution companies participated in 11 weeks long SMC, a mandatory course for promotion in the next grade. Out of these, Dr. Muhammad Saood Akhtar, Manager (Learning & Development) HR NTDC secured the first position in the course.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan appreciated the outstanding achievement of the officer.

Cleaning up

ISLAMABAD: Shepherds are bathing the lambs from the water of the Rawal Dam spillways in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Conducted psychology test, interview of 236 candidates from SW Lower & Upper in Dera

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: In Police Line Dera conducted a psychology test for newly recruited candidates for South Waziristan Lower (SWL) and South Waziristan Upper (SWU) on Wednesday.

According to the report, Regional Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Division Nasir Mehmood Satti, District Police Officer South Waziristan Upper Malik Habib and District Police Officer South Waziristan Lower Farman Ullah along with Major (Rtd) Dr. Salim Khan at Ijaz Shaheed Police Line Dera Ismail Khan here on Wednesday.

It should be noted, under the supervision of RPO ETA to be Recruited tested and interviewed the candidates who passed the examinations.



Bank Alfalah launches Pakistan's First Digital Payments Sales and Service Centers

PPA

LAHORE: Bank Alfalah, one of the leading commercial and digital banks, inaugurated Pakistan's first Digital Payments Sales and Service Centers- digital payments hubs strategically positioned in the vibrant and bustling Badar Commercial DHA and Disco Bakery Gulshan in Karachi to facilitate and provide convenient access to merchants and all their payments acceptance and financing needs within the sphere of digital eco-system.

Speaking at the launch event, the Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Dr. Inayat Hussain, expressed, 'Digitisation is the only way

forward for inclusive banking in Pakistan. The State Bank of Pakistan is committed to driving this transformation, working with banks, and ensuring

that digital payment channels and innovative ideas like digital payments sales and service centers are utilised by banks for the financial convenience



of people in Pakistan.' Atif Bajwa, President and CEO of Bank Alfalah, stated, 'At Bank Alfalah, we are driven by a commitment to providing our customers with the most relevant, convenient and efficient banking services. Introducing Digital Payments Sales and Service Centers in market areas is a testament to our dedication to innovation and ensuring that our small business customers can access banking and, in particular, payment services at their businesses with support in the vicinity at all times. These centers are a one-stop solution, facilitating various self-services to meet the diverse needs of our valued small business/merchant customers.'

Maison Sonraj Permeates Karachi with an Air of Luxury with its Grand Launch

PPA

KARACHI: In the heart of uptown Karachi, Maison Sonraj—an opulent three-storey experience dedicated to niche fragrances and high-end skincare situated in Zamzama, opened its doors to the city this weekend on the evening of 17th of December 2023 in a grand affair, which was graced by Mr. Alexis Chahatinsky, Consul General of France and Mr. Martin Dawson from British High Commission to represent their respective countries' brands.

Spearheaded by Arbaaz Sattar, the third generation of the Sonraj family, Maison Sonraj's opening is a culmination of his endeavor to introduce Karachi to a whole new luxury fragrance experience with a design philosophy which showcases the very best and is sure to be the perfect one-stop shop for niche fragrance aficionados.

PSN's annual sports festival kicks off with colorful opening ceremony

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A month-long sports festival, being hosted by Private Schools Network (PSN) for Capital's low-fee schools got underway with a colourful opening ceremony at Margalla Town Islamabad's Multi-purpose Sports Ground on Wednesday.

Teachers, students and their parents in large numbers attended the ceremony. A traditional parade, involving students of participating schools was the hallmark of the ceremony.

Students from Capital's several private schools got ample opportunities to showcase their sporting skills and potential.

Students featured in the events—100m race, 200m race, sack race, tug of war, rope skipping and several other sports.

Both boys and girls participated in all the events barring cricket, which was open for boys only. The fixtures are taking place on league-cum-knockout basis. Parents of the students and their teachers cheered for their children and encouraged them every step of the way to come out on top.

Acting Chief Commissioner Pakistan Boy Scouts Association, Shoaib Ahmad Dahri was the chief guest at the opening ceremony. He commended PSN for arranging sports gala for the students on regular basis. "The organisers (PSN) are doing great work by holding such a coveted event for the students every year," he remarked.

Dareechay Films & Zaheer Uddin's Crime Thriller 'Chikkar' Premieres in Karachi

News Desk

KARACHI: Promising a unique blend of suspense, drama, and realism, Dareechay Films' masterpiece 'Chikkar' premiered in a star-studded evening here. The directorial debut of Zaheer Uddin is undoubtedly the most gripping and highly anticipated crime thriller movie of 2023 in Bollywood. Usman Mukhtar, Ushna Shah, Faryal Mehmood, Nausheen Shah, Saleem Mairaj, Ali Sheikh, Adnan Shah Tipu, and all the debutant and support cast received praise for their stellar performances from both critics and audiences. Zaheer expressed gratitude to the film and the entertainment industry for attending the premiere, acknowledging the love and support they showed for the film.

SMAP urges govt to liberate salt industry, unlocking export potential

PNP

KARACHI: Qasim Yaqoob Paracha, Acting Chairman of the Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SMAP), has called for government intervention to alleviate the axle load restrictions that are hindering the salt industry. In a press release on Wednesday, the Acting Chairman of SMAP shed light on the critical issue of axle load restrictions affecting the salt industry's prosperity, especially within the broader context of the Truck Load Policy. He underscored the immediate necessity for government intervention to alleviate these restrictions, allowing the industry to unleash its export potential.



"Axle load restrictions are a burden on export growth and economic stability. The press release delves into the specific impact of axle load restrictions on the salt industry's ability to thrive under the shadow of the Truck Load Policy."

Qasim Yaqoob Paracha articulates how these limitations are obstructing the transportation of salt products, leading to increased logistics costs and hindering the industry's competitiveness. The appeal is not just a plea for relief but a demand for the liberation of the salt industry from the constraints imposed by axle load restrictions, proving to be a significant hurdle to economic stability.

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Positive Outcomes of General Asim's Diplomacy - I

Military diplomacy sphere entails utilizing military capabilities, personnel, and expertise to achieve diplomatic goals. It operates on the principle that a nation's armed forces can act as ambassadors and facilitators in international relations. Unlike traditional diplomacy, which often focuses on negotiations, military diplomacy complements these efforts by utilizing military relationships to advance diplomatic objectives.

Military diplomacy plays a crucial role in preventing conflicts and managing crises. Establishing regular communication channels between military officials from different nations helps diffuse tensions, clarify intentions, and avoid misunderstandings that could lead to hostilities. The implementation of crisis communication protocols enhances the ability to manage and de-escalate potential conflicts. Building military partnerships fosters trust and cooperation among nations. Joint military exercises, exchanges, and training programs create opportunities for armed forces to collaborate, learn from each other, and foster mutual understanding. This shared experience contributes to the development of personal relationships and lays the groundwork for diplomatic collaboration.

The logistical capabilities of the military are instrumental in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. During natural disasters or

humanitarian crises, armed forces can collaborate across borders to deliver aid swiftly and effectively, showcasing the softer side of military capabilities and reinforcing positive diplomatic relations. Military diplomacy is also evident in participation in peacekeeping missions. Multinational military forces deployed to conflict zones under a United Nations mandate demonstrate the international community's commitment to maintaining peace and stability. These operations involve cooperation, coordination, and negotiation skills, all of which contribute to diplomatic efforts.

Military diplomacy extends to initiatives focused on capacity building and training. Advanced nations often assist developing countries in enhancing their military capabilities through training programs, equipment provision, and knowledge transfer. This not only fosters goodwill but also creates avenues for collaboration on broader geopolitical issues. Additionally, military diplomacy plays a crucial role in addressing transnational threats such as terrorism, cyber threats, and organized crime. Collaborative efforts among nations are essential to effectively combat these challenges, involving the sharing of intelligence, coordinated responses, and joint operations by military forces to contribute significantly to global security.

While the primary mission of armed forces is to protect a nation's sovereignty and security, military diplomacy emerges as a dynamic force with far-reaching implications for a country's economy. In an era where global interdependence is the norm, the synergy between military and economic objectives is becoming increasingly evident.

The foundation of economic prosperity rests upon a stable and secure environment. Military diplomacy assumes a pivotal role in guaranteeing the security essential for the flourishing of businesses. By fostering and preserving peaceful relations with neighboring nations and adeptly addressing regional security concerns, military forces significantly contribute to establishing a conducive atmosphere for economic growth. Nations boasting a robust and credible military presence tend to attract elevated levels of foreign direct investment. The perceived stability and security provided by a formidable military presence inspire confidence in foreign investors. Through strategic alliances and defense cooperation agreements, military diplomacy cultivates trust, augmenting a country's attractiveness as a secure destination for foreign investments.

Military diplomacy actively promotes defense exports and the arms trade. Countries with technologically advanced

armed forces often engage in cooperative agreements, leading to the export of defense equipment, technology, and services. This not only generates revenue but also fortifies economic ties between nations, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship that extends beyond the defense sector. Collaborative military initiatives frequently involve the exchange of technology and innovation. Joint research and development projects, along with training programs between allied nations, facilitate the transfer of cutting-edge military technologies. This transfer can have positive effects on civilian industries, promoting innovation and technological advancements that benefit the broader economy.

Military forces are frequently engaged in disaster response and relief efforts. Beyond the humanitarian aspect, these missions contribute to economic recovery and infrastructure development. Military diplomacy ensures nations are well-prepared to collaborate in times of crisis, potentially fostering economic ties while addressing urgent humanitarian needs. Given the reliance of many economies on maritime trade routes for the transportation of goods and resources, military diplomacy, particularly in naval cooperation, plays a crucial role in protecting vital sea lanes. This safeguarding of economic interests on the high seas is indispensable for the uninterrupted flow of goods and resources, supporting the stability of global and regional economies.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Will anyone have the courage to sanction Israel?

Anyone observing the results of the war on Gaza can see that Israel has adopted brutal and indiscriminate policies that reflect exactly what the Israeli commanders wanted.

In fact, those in the Israeli political sector set the tone for the unimaginable brutality whenever they spoke. The dehumanizing rhetoric began with an Israeli army spokesperson publicly admitting that its airstrikes were "focused on maximum damage." That was followed by the most harrowing statement of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who said that Israel was "fighting human animals." Then, so-called moderate President Isaac Herzog said all 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza were combatants, not civilians, because they did not revolt against Hamas.

All levels of the Israeli political map made similar statements, including a Cabinet minister suggesting dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza — the first time that Israel has admitted what the world has known for decades: that it has a military nuclear program.

But despite the rhetoric and horrific results on the ground, Israel's defenders, first among them the Americans, were still saying that Israel does not intentionally kill civilians.

Then the killing of three Israeli soldiers who had escaped from their captors occurred last week. Since the victims in this case were Israelis, the Israeli army admitted that they were fatally shot even though they had their hands in the air and were holding a white flag. The Israeli army has not investigated — and it is unlikely to in the future — the 20,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza and it last year refused US pressure to investigate the killing of American-Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

Nevertheless, the Israeli army, under pressure from its public, held an initial investigation into this incident and came out with an important conclusion: The soldiers who shot at surrendering individuals violated the Israeli army's standing orders.

No one believed that this was the case for 70 days, while Israel was shelling innocent civilians without even expressing remorse or admitting that maybe some were killed by accident. This leads all of us to believe that the killing of civilians and the destruction of hospitals, churches, mosques, schools and bakeries was done on purpose and on the orders of the very top military and political leaders. Proof. No one has yet been held responsible for the massacre.

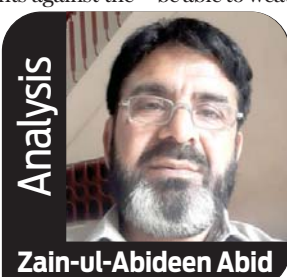
But if the incident with the surrendering Israeli soldiers being killed because they were thought to be Palestinians was a turning point, the very next day the killing continued.



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

Truth comes out, IG Police annoyed

On December 15, 2023, Amnesty International released a report titled "Pakistan: Police Torture and Impunity." The report found that police in Punjab, Pakistan, routinely use torture and other forms of ill-treatment against citizens. The report also found that the police are often not held accountable for their actions. The report also calls for reforms to the Punjab Police, including the establishment of an independent oversight body to investigate complaints against the police. The report's findings are supported by a wealth of evidence. The report includes detailed accounts of torture and ill-treatment, including beatings, electric shocks, and sexual assault. The report also includes evidence that the police are often not held accountable for their actions. The report has put IG Anwar in a difficult position. He has been accused of defending a police force that is responsible for widespread human rights violations. He has also been accused of trying to cover up the truth about the Punjab Police.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

On this Usman Anwar, the Inspector General of Police (IG) Punjab, has been defending his force since the release of the report. He has called the report "baseless" and "full of lies." He has also said that the report is based on the testimony of "selected individuals" who are "out to malign the police force."

Every person know that the performance of the police at the Thana level in the Punjab is very disappointing. Every employee sitting in the police station considers it an insult to work within the law. In the police stations, every policemen have made their own customs into law. Even the lowest employee like the Muharar puts innocent citizens in the lockup without any crime. If a complaint is made against him before the senior officer, then the complaint is sent to the accused for

hearing. The police officer does not listen to the complaint of his law-breaking and corrupt employee. This has led to corruption and human rights violations in the police department.

The Amnesty International report reflects the serious situation of violence and impunity in the Punjab Police. The recommendations of the report should be taken seriously by the government and the Punjab Police in order to protect the rights of citizens. It remains to be seen whether IG Anwar will be able to weather the storm created by the Amnesty International report. However, it is clear that the report has raised serious questions about the Punjab Police and its ability to protect the rights of citizens.

"At present, the Punjab Police, especially the Multan Range, is completely failing to implement the Vagrancy Ordinance 1958. No action is being taken against beggars who are begging intentionally. IG Police, please tell me if this is not corruption?"

Corruption at the police station level in Punjab Police is a disgrace to the entire police department. No investigator does a raid without taking a bribe, does not write an internal summary, does not send a challan to court, these are the basic behaviors of the police that citizens have to deal with. This is the face of the police that is being recognized in the institutions. IG Police should take note of human rights violations at the police station level.

When the police are corrupt, it undermines the rule of law and creates a climate of fear and intimidation for citizens. Without understanding the ground realities, a Punjab Police commander should not refrain from defending his department. At the root level, police officers neglect their duties, misusing their uniforms and powers. They lack awareness of legal regulations and human rights protection. Police personnel are involved in

crimes ranging from luring civilians to drug trafficking, brothels, and gambling dens and they collect extortion and bribe from here.

In a society like ours where the gap between the powerful and the weak is large, people are habitually reluctant to lodge complaints against the police; it is difficult to produce or sustain witnesses/evidence against the police and quite exacting to pursue the case all the way as they lack the requisite means in a system where the odds are already stacked against the weak. Labelling extra-judicial killing as a crime is also not a firm stance in our society, as popular opinion is divided over the nature and extent of criminal liability in such cases.

In the words of Kofi Annan, "leadership arises not from your position but from your actions". Police Officials need to exercise such leadership to improve efficiency and fairness in the system and, importantly, to do justice to their own respective roles. Fearful minds throw reason, justice and mercy to the wind.

The IG Punjab Police should stop the corruption found in the police department and the abuse of power at the lower level, so that there is no fear of the police in the hearts of the people. Considering the police as his protector, at that time a gentleman cannot dare to go to the police station. In such situations, the police can never be accepted in the society. The opinion of a few citizens is enough to evaluate the performance of a department. The whole pot is not eaten to taste the taste of rice. When the respect of the police increases in the hearts and minds of the people, the survey reports will also come in favor of the police. Before publishing any survey report or information, Amnesty has to take care of its reputation. False surveys affect the credibility of the organization.

The Amnesty International report reflects the serious situation of violence and impunity in the Punjab Police. The recommendations of the report should be taken seriously by the government and the Punjab Police in order to protect the rights of citizens.

Secret for Chinese miracle: Selection and Election - II

After the agricultural fast track, his attention was drawn to the people's economic development. He set up the first sewing workshop and educated the women to create clothing for the locals and export them to adjacent markets. He established a consignment shop where members of the community could buy and sell groceries and other items. He created a classroom where the villagers learnt to read and write, as well as a mill with machinery supplied by Xi that anybody could use. When Xi won a motorcycle, he traded it in for a tractor and gave it to farmers, introducing mechanization into farming techniques. According to villagers, Xi's only goal was to deliver prosperity and advancement to his people, which he accomplished better than any other leader of his level. In one of his rare articles, he stated that when he was given the responsibility of Liangjiahe at the age of 15, he was perplexed, but when he left at the age of 22, he had a firm goal of life and was full of confidence to become a faithful servant of the people, a philosophy that remained unchanged even when he became president. The firm foundation he provided to Liangjiahe in 2018 made it one of the first villages in the region to say goodbye to absolute poverty, with per capita income surpassing \$3500 USD.

His ascension was inexorable, yet it was based only on merit. He showed leadership potential while ascending through the ranks in Shaanxi. Notably, as Zhengding county's party secretary, his agricultural reforms became a national example. His presidency in Fujian was defined by transformational measures. He demonstrated his economic acumen and strategic vision by spearheading Xiamei's emergence as a Special Economic Zone and modernizing Fuzhou. He focused regional growth and poverty alleviation in Ningde, demonstrating a dedication to equitable progress. His time as governor helped to cement Fujian's economic power by improving infrastructure and attracting investment. His achievements in Fujian provided the platform for his later climb to higher levels of authority, demonstrating his leadership caliber and political insight.

Following his governorship in Fujian, Xi Jinping rose up the ranks to become Party Secretary of Zhejiang and, eventually, Shanghai. He oversaw a shift to a diverse, knowledge-based economy in Zhejiang, supporting innovation and ecological sustainability.

According to the World Bank, the World Bank's top ten success under Xi's ongoing erasure: pulling over 800 million people out of extreme poverty is a tremendous feat on a global scale and has considerably improved the lives of millions in China. China's economy has grown steadily, cementing its status as the world's second-largest and boosting living standards for millions. Rapid development in artificial intelligence, renewable energy, space exploration, and other fields has helped it establish itself as a prominent participant in the global IT landscape. The CCP's anti-corruption campaign has targeted both high-ranking and low-level officials. Heavy investment in infrastructure projects such as high-speed railways, highways, and bridges, which connect multiple regions and stimulate economic activity, launching clean air and water initiatives, as well as committing to carbon neutrality. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global infrastructure and investment program with grandiose goals, has the potential to enhance economic growth in partner countries. Assert its position on the international scene, increasing its visibility and influence in international affairs. Traditional Chinese ideals and cultural rejuvenation are emphasized, encouraging national pride and cultural identity. Economic growth and development are aided by relative stability and social order.

If we want to achieve growth and prosperity, we must follow the Chinese example of defining targets for each administrative head of federation, province, division, and district on the five performance metrics as set by Chinese leadership, determining meritocracy as the only criterion for moving up the career ladder, developing zero tolerance for corruption, and re-focusing all of our resources on developing high-quality human resources, both men and women. Otherwise, we'll be stumbling around in the dark with no light to guide us.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

3rd International Hydropower Conference

Speakers for removing bottleneck in harnessing hydropower, RE potential in country

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at 3rd International Hydropower Conference while terming the hydropower and renewable energy (RE) crucial for the sustainable future of the country on Wednesday stressed the need to remove bottlenecks in harnessing the hydropower and RE potential for provision of affordable electricity to the people and industry.

The third International Hydropower conference themed "Hydropower: A Renewable Energy Source for a Sustainable Future" was organized by the Energy Update in collaboration with the Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and International Hydro-power Association (IHA).

They were of the views that RE and Hydropower were of the future of the country but there was a dire need for consistency of government policies to exploit these areas for the benefit of the people.

Speaking on the occasion, caretaker minister for Power Muhammad Ali while lauding the Energy Update for

organizing the conference said that it would help us to improve the policy framework in energy sector.

He said enhancing share of RE and hydropower in energy mix was the government's top priority as it was the only way to reduce the power tariff besides provision of affordable energy to the people. Currently, the share of hydel and RE in total energy mix stood at 31 per cent adding that the government has embarked on an ambitious plan to enhance it to 61 per cent by 2030, he said.

He said Pakistan has tremendous potential for wind, solar and hydropower. We could alone generate around 64,000 megawatt (MW) from hydel and only tapped 11,000 MW so far.

He said work on 4200 MW Dasu hydropower, 800 MW Mohmand dam and 4500 MW Diamer Basha dam was being carried out. However, financing was a big issue for such mega projects, he added.

The minister said Pakistan has 175 billion tons of Thar coal reserves which could generate electricity for decades.

On energy conservation side, the minister said that some 3000-4000 MW could be saved only through energy efficient fans across the country.

Earlier, Managing Director Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) Dr Shahjan Mirza said hydropower projects were equally beneficial for environment and economy. He said that PPIB has commissioned four projects having 1100 MW capacity so far. However, he said it was not an easy task to attract private investor for hydropower projects as it required huge financing and long time-period for completion. He said the government has also set target of 60 per cent of RE and hydel share by 2030 and it would attract around \$ 100 billion investment.

Chief Executive Officer Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) Engineer Muhammad Naem while speaking on the occasion said that RE could turn the future of the country. RW was not only important for the industry and consumers but also for climate and economy of the country,



he said.

He said Pakistan has huge hydro energy potential at North and RE particularly wind and solar at South. He said PEDO was playing its role to develop small hydropower projects in remote and far flung areas of KPK. Some micro hydro projects have already been supplying power supply to the near by localities at very cheap rate, he added. He said more nine such

projects having 750 MW capacity were in pipelines.

He stressed the need to focus more on RE projects besides removing hurdles in its way to ensure affordable electricity to the consumers and industries.

CEO International Hydropower Association (IHA) Eddie Rich in his video message highlighted the importance and future aspect of hydropower energy.

Chairman organization Committee Naeem Qureshi in his welcome address said that the conference was not just a gathering rather it was a dynamic exchange idea aimed at propelling the hydropower sector forward. The theme reflected a commitment to exploring hydropower's potential as a key player in the global shift towards renewable energy, he said.

He said the conference would serve as a platform to showcase progress made in the hydropower sector, not just in Pakistan but in the broader region. It's an opportunity to set the stage for collaborative efforts that would define our approach to sustainable energy, he remarked.

In addition to the conference proceedings, the Energy Minister presented two awards. One was awarded to the 4th extension of the Tarbela project by WAPDA, and the other to the 720 MW Karot project, sponsored by CSAIL. These awards recognized outstanding contributions to the development of hydropower infrastructure in the country.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, famous film and TV actress Nashiz Jhangir and others clapping during the inauguration ceremony of a beautician cream at a local hotel on 19 December in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

100% scholarships-based program

Nearly 90 students graduate animation program by the makers of Burka Avenger

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Unicorn Black, the production company behind the award-winning series Burka Avenger conducted the 3D animation training program that provided skills in 3D animation, Unreal Engine and Storytelling.

Thousands of students applied from all over Pakistan and the 100 that were accepted for this 7-month course, received a 100% scholarship. Of the 100 that enrolled in this rigorous animation course, 86 graduated with their diploma, which is certified by the Government of Punjab.

Speaking about the training courses, Director/Producer, music icon and Founder / CEO of Unicorn Black, Haroon said: "Our organization has taught and mentored dozens of trainees who have gone on to obtain lucrative jobs in the animation industry across Pakistan, UAE, Malaysia, USA and other countries. There is an incredible amount



of potential in the animation industry and our goal is to help it flourish in Pakistan.

Adeel Abid, COO of Unicorn Black, said "Female representation remains woefully low in the animation industry not just in Pakistan but even in Hollywood, the percentage of female animators working on animated films is very low. Only 37% of the applications we received were from women but it is a source of pride for us that of those who completed the program, 52% were women."

Ayesha Siddiqi, one of the students enrolled in the program said: "With the help of our teacher's assistance and the study materials, I was able to clarify my basics of animation. With the practical assignments and exercises provided in the course, I was able to build a portfolio. I started applying for jobs and have fortunately secured a job as a character animator at a startup."

The global market size of the animation industry is around 270 billion dollars

and expected to grow to 415 billion dollars by 2025. Pakistan has a huge potential to become a part of this growing industry. The animation training will provide specialized training in 3D animation, after which students will have acquired the skills to obtain jobs as well as work on freelance projects in the field of animation. Animation is not just used in the media industry but has also been adopted in various fields including education, healthcare, engineering and defence.

Addressing Climate Vulnerability

First National Dialogue Platform on Anticipatory Actions in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with key partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), German Red Cross/Pakistan Red Crescent Society, World Food Programme (WFP), Welthungerhilfe (WHH), Concern Worldwide (CWW), and UN OCHA, organized the First National Dialogue Platform on Anticipatory Actions (AA) in Islamabad.

Over a 100 participants from the humanitarian sector, international financial institutions, hydrometeorologists, climate scientists, national governments, academia, community lead-



ers, and decision-makers participated in the dialogue.

The participants discussed about how their experience in developing anticipatory action initiatives can support the building, strengthening, and scaling up of AA and forecast-based financing to reduce the impact of forecastable disasters; how to learn from each other to improve the design of existing projects; and advance the

use of weather and climate data.

The aim of the dialogue is to promote a shared understanding of anticipatory action among stakeholders, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences, understand the roles of international financial institutions in advancing the practice of AA including funding on disaster risk and pre-arranged financing, develop

practical recommendations for the effective implementation of AA in Pakistan and identify opportunities for collaboration to develop and implement AA jointly.

Anticipatory action is a unique approach which involves taking timely and informed actions based on credible forecasts or collective risk analysis to mitigate the impacts of potential hazards. It encompasses various terms such as Forecast-based Financing (FbF), Early Warning Early Action (EWEA), Forecast-based Action (FbA), and Anticipatory Humanitarian Action (AHA). Harmonizing these terms will ensure a unified approach to anticipatory action in humanitarian efforts.

USSEC and PPA Join Forces to Strengthen Pakistan's Poultry Industry

PNP

KARACHI/DUBAI: The U. S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Dubai, UAE on December 12, 2023, marking a major milestone between the two parties. This memorandum will catapult Pakistan's poultry industry on a path towards accelerated growth.

Reflecting on the future between Pakistan and USSEC, Stan Born, Chairman of USSEC, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, while Ms Sarah Saeed, Special Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce attended the event as a special guest.



ships with key stakeholders in the soybean value chain. Collaborative efforts like the MoU between USSEC and the PPA will steer us in achieving our collective goal

of food and nutrition security. I am positive that this MoU is only the beginning. Together we can nourish and build a more resilient, food secure Pakistan."

When asked about the MoU, PPA Chairman, Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf responded "We recognize the positive impact that USSEC and PPA can make on Pakistan's Poultry Industry. At PPA, we are committed to providing our customers with the best quality ingredients. With U. S. Soy's continuous supplies, we are confident that the Poultry Industry of Pakistan will prosper. PPA looks forward to the sustained and continuous support and help of U. S. Soy to educate our Association members about the appropriate.

PIDE launched the report on 'The State of Commerce in Pakistan International and Domestic'

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) launched its latest research report, "The State of Commerce in Pakistan - International and Domestic" at the P-Block Auditorium, Pakistan Secretariat. The report explores the challenges and opportunities shaping the landscape of Pakistan's commerce sector. It sheds light on the current state of commerce in the country. As a premier institution dedicated to fostering economic development, PIDE's report serves as an invaluable source of information and statistics on the state of commerce in Pakistan.

Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of PIDE, has developed this report for the Ministry of Commerce & Industries to fill the comprehensive report, and explore into all facets of internal and external trade in Pakistan. The primary objective is to gain a profound understanding of markets, growth and international and domestic trade. He emphasized that despite the sector being vibrant it faces challenges stemming from the various governments' indifference, regulatory problems, and various other problems.

He highlighted the growth potential of several entities within sectors such as construction, retail, chain stores, food, fran-

chises, and transport. Dr Haque said that PIDE's research shows that the government's footprint on the economy is at over 70% of the economy, with heavy-handed government involvement in trade and markets, stifling market development and growth. The cost of regulation, estimated at over 60% of the GDP, particularly affects segments larger than 50% of the GDP, turning regulation agencies into a burgeoning industry in Pakistan. Our current approach is to fragment out the markets and segment ourselves from the global value chain.

PIDE has presented proposals to the government for deregulation, specifically targeting markets such as real estate, and improve-

ments in tax documentation to foster the creation of large multinational businesses. However, the government's preoccupation with borrowing and reliance on lenders to decide policy remains a significant challenge.

The chief guest on the occasion was Dr. Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, while Ms Sarah Saeed, Special Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce attended the event as a special guest.

In his address, Dr. Khan underscored the paramount role undertaken by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). He lauded PIDE for spearheading cutting-edge research crucial for



the nation's immediate requirements. He further said that a fundamental tenet of effective governance is the government's responsibility to not only generate revenue but also to ensure its judicious utilization through

enhanced public expenditure. Emphasizing the need for improvement in public expenditure, we are committed to optimizing the impact of public funds for the betterment of our society and fostering sustained economic

advancement.

In her remarks, Ms Sarah Saeed commended PIDE's efforts in highlighting the importance of domestic commerce in Pakistan. She further stated that the Ministry of Commerce acknowledges the significance of domestic commerce in Pakistan, as rightly emphasized and consistently advocated by PIDE. Consequently, the ministry has established a separate domestic commerce department. While domestic commerce has become a provincial subject after the 18th amendment, coordination and collaboration among the federal and provincial governments are essential to set the direction of policies supporting the external trade sector and domestic commerce.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
62,448.01	62,833.03
Day's High	Day's Low
63,261.05	61,082.50
Index Value	Change
20,411,119,149	-385.02
Percentage	Time
-0.61%	20 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,715.68	+77.65
Percentage	Time
+1.02%	20 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,620.46	+62.54
Percentage	Time
+0.17%	20 Dec, 12:41 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,675.94	+456.55
Percentage	Time
+1.37%	20 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	188	190
Bahrain Dinar	745.89	753.89
Canadian Dollar	210	212
China Yuan	39.82	40.22
Danish Krone	41.4	41.8
Euro	309.5	312.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.97	36.32
Indian Rupee	3.41	3.52
Japanese Yen	1.39	1.45
Kuwaiti Dinar	911.82	920.82
Malaysian Ringgit	60.66	61.26
New Zealand \$	175.83	177.83
Norwegians Krone	26.98	27.28
Omani Riyal	728.49	736.49
Qatari Riyal	77.81	78.51
Saudi Riyal	75.5	76.2
Singapore Dollar	210.5	212.5
Swedish Korona	27.56	27.86
Swiss Franc	322.98	325.48
Thai Bhat	8.12	8.27
U.A.E Dirham	77.9	78.6
UK Pound Sterling	360	363.5
US Dollar	283.6	286.3

Monetary and import policies can be relaxed after substantial investment: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that the unpopular and harsh decisions of the government and the central bank have made life very difficult for the people and the business community.

However, these decisions helped restore the confidence of international institutions, while the pressure on foreign exchange reserves, the rupee has eased and the current account deficit has come down, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that a surplus of nine million dollars in the current account in November is a good development. This achievement was made possible due to the tight monetary policy, which reduced demand.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that in addition to the



central bank's initiatives, imports were also controlled, which positively impacted foreign exchange reserves and proved that the country could survive in the absence or lack of many imports.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the

current account deficit for the first five months of this year is \$1.16 billion, which was \$3.26 billion in the first five months of last year.

This deficit reduction is a great achievement, and if there is no indiscriminate increase in spending after the election, the annual deficit will not exceed four and a half billion dollars, which will be a great success for policymakers.

The business leader said that a strict policy is also necessary because, despite the IMF program, the expected capital is not coming to the country.

Apart from this, remittances are decreasing, while the situation of exports is also not satisfactory due to an increase in production costs.

After possible foreign investment under SIFC, the central bank may consider easing monetary policy while easing imports, but this is not an immediate possibility, he observed.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that economic growth has stopped due to measures to reduce the current account deficit. The business environment has been affected, and new

employment opportunities are not being created. Administrative measures have improved the economy, but this is not a long-term solution.

He said that to stabilize the economy, exports must be increased, and the reasons for the decrease in remittances must be known, and the confidence of the people living abroad must be restored.

Apart from this, there should be a crackdown on the handi business so that the remittances come into the country legally. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that along with administrative measures, reforms, the sale of failed government institutions, reductions in oil, gas, and electricity prices, better incentives to investors, and the elimination of terrorism are also necessary.

He said that agricultural and industrial production needs to be increased by paying special attention. In contrast, political stability needs to be given attention, without which investment will remain a dream and policymakers will continue to try to save the economy instead of growing it.

Dry fruit

MUZAFERABAD: Workers are busy in packing the walnuts at a shop at local bazaar in City.



Photo: Online

PML-N has plans to address economic issues of Pakistan: Nasir Butt

PPA

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Nasir Butt said that his party has experienced persons to manage the economy and if voted to power, PML-N has plans to address the key economic issues of Pakistan. He said that the PML-N government had achieved many economic milestones for Pakistan during its previous tenures. If voted to power, it would again bring Pakistan out of economic trouble and provide relief to the common man. He said this while talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry during his visit to ICCI.

Nasir Butt said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and PML-N would finalize economic policies by taking them on board to achieve win-win outcomes. He said that Pakistan has great potential to emerge as a strong economy and it only needs visionary leadership and good govern-



ments to achieve this goal. He said that PML-N's leadership has the ability and experience to resolve issues and deliver up to the expectations of the people.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the two rising economies border Pakistan and it has to catch up with them in terms of economic growth to remain relevant

in the world.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that Pakistan needs direct air links with all major export destinations and stressed that the PIA should be given to private hands for its revival so that it could help connect Pakistan with international markets for promoting trade and exports of the country.

Meezan Bank holds its 63rd Shariah Board Meeting

PNP

KARACHI: The 63rd meeting of Meezan Bank's Shariah Board held at Darul Uloom, Karachi under the Chairmanship of Justice (Retd.) Muhammad Taqi Usmani, along with other members of the Shariah Board, Dr. Muhammad Imran Ashraf Usmani, Sheikh Esam Mohamed Ishaq and Mufti Muhammad Naveed Alam (Resident Shariah Board Member).

Meezan Bank's Founding President and CEO, Mr. Irfan Siddiqui, and the Deputy CEOs, Mr. Ariful Islam and Syed Amir Ali, along with the Senior Management, were also present at the meeting.

In the meeting, SSB provided guidance on various Shariah structures for the issuance of Sovereign Government of Pakistan Sukuk, which would aid in the effort to align the economy with Islamic principles.

The Shariah Board also reviewed various policies and procedures of the Bank and expressed satisfaction with the diverse training sessions and Shariah review activities conducted within the Bank.

The Shariah Board expressed satisfaction with the Bank's meticulous adherence to Islamic principles, reinforcing its commitment to pioneering Islamic banking and ensuring that financial solutions align with Shariah guidelines.

Daraz and Visa partner to launch first e-commerce co-branded cards for Pakistan



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a ground-breaking move, Daraz, Pakistan's leading e-commerce platform has teamed up with global payments technology company Visa to introduce co-branded cards for e-commerce usage. This strategic alliance is set to transform the online shopping landscape in Pakistan for consumers by leveraging Daraz's dedication to a secure and user-friendly digital shopping environment and Visa's advanced technological solutions.

The introduction of

these co-branded cards aims to enhance the online shopping experience and marks a significant stride in increasing financial inclusion across Pakistan. Daraz, with its vast user base of 34 million monthly active users, is uniquely positioned to facilitate access to banking services, helping to pivot the nation towards a more cashless economy. This initiative is a significant leap forward in making digital commerce more accessible, secure, and rewarding for Pakistani consumers, aligning with the country's vision of a digital-first economy.

ATM establishes official partnership with ICCA and GBTA as global business travel spending to reach US\$1.8 trillion by 2027

PPA

DUBAI: Arabian Travel Market (ATM) has announced a strategic partnership with the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) for the upcoming edition of the event, which takes place from 6-9 May 2024 at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

The renowned global organisations have been appointed as 'Knowledge Partners' for the regional trade show, providing in-depth insights and opportunities for the thriving segments of business events and travel.

According to the ICCA statistical forecast, which charts the history and performance



of the International Association Meetings Industry from 1963 to 2022, 10,602 business events were recorded worldwide

last year, of which 9,009 (85%) were in-person. This represented an astounding 349% increase from the previous year when only

2,007 in-person events occurred. Interestingly, the Middle East accounted for the highest percentage (94%) in last year's official figures.

The business travel industry is also experiencing significant growth, as evidenced by statistics from the 2023 GBTA Business Travel Index™ Report, which found that the global business travel industry rebounded faster than expected in 2023. Pent-up demand following the pandemic and healthier economic conditions than forecasted were highlighted as significant contributing factors for this shift. The report also stated that global business travel spending rose by

47% to \$1.03 trillion last year and is expected to grow to nearly \$1.8 trillion globally by 2027. Dr Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA, said: "ICCA proudly announces our collaboration with ATM as we celebrate the exciting inclusion of business events as a foundational segment in future editions. Envisaging a dynamic future, we see global business events seamlessly integrating with ATM's rich tapestry of opportunities.

With ICCA joining as a Knowledge Partner for the MICE segment, we are collectively positioned to redefine the landscape of collaboration, innovation and success in the interconnected realms of business. We look forward to working together in

and is expected to grow to nearly \$1.8 trillion globally by 2027. Dr Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA, said: "ICCA proudly announces our collaboration with ATM as we celebrate the exciting inclusion of business events as a foundational segment in future editions. Envisaging a dynamic future, we see global business events seamlessly integrating with ATM's rich tapestry of opportunities.

PNP

KARACHI: UBL wins 'Highest Remittance Mobilizing Bank of Pakistan', with UBL Tezraftar the No. 1 choice for Overseas Pakistanis and holding the highest market share in home remittances.

United Bank Limited (UBL) has once again proven its leadership in the banking industry by winning 'Highest Remittance Mobilizing Bank of Pakistan' at the Pakistan Remittance Summit 2023, held in Malaysia.

UBL's achievement is attributed to the success of UBL Tezraftar, which has the highest market share for the

home remittances business in the banking industry and caters to the diverse needs of both senders and recipients. The bank has strategically positioned itself as a reliable partner for Pakistani expats by offering seamless and secure channels for remittance flows. This has made UBL Tezraftar the No 1 Choice for Overseas Pakistanis.

UBL's success in the remittance sector emphasizes its commitment to providing exceptional financial services and contributing to the economic development of Pakistan through the inflow of foreign funds through legal channels.

Meeting held to review arrangements for 19th Cholistan Rally

Bureau Report

BAHAWALPUR: A meeting was held at the Commissioner's Office to review the arrangements for the 19th Cholistan Desert Rally.

In the meeting, Provincial Secretary Tourism Department Raja Jahangir Anwar, Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtisham Anwar, Regional Police Officer Bahawalpur Rai Babar Saeed, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa, Additional Commissioner Coordination Jam Aftab Ahmed, Assistant Commissioner General Muhammad Tayyab, Managing Director Cholistan Development Authority Rao Nadeem Akhtar along with the officers of related departments partic-



ipated.

Provincial Secretary for Tourism Raja Jahangir Anwar said a 7-day South Punjab Mela will be organized on the occasion of the 19th Cholistan Desert Rally.

He said steps will be taken to increase tourism potential in the province through "Pretty Punjab" branding. He said that a tent hotel would be established in Cholistan for the tourists.

Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtisham Anwar briefed about the previous rally activities and new events. He directed the officers of the concerned departments to complete the set targets on time.

Regional Police Officer Rao Babar Saeed informed about foolproof security and traffic arrangements for the rally.

Adil Rashid grabs No. 1 bowler position, Babar Azam is back as top batter

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: England spinner Adil Rashid has moved up two slots to grab the number one position in the MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings after consistent performances in the five-match series against the West Indies which is level at 2-2 with one match to go. Rashid grabbed five wickets in the three matches played over the past week to move to the top of the bowlers' list for the first time in his career, overtaking other leg-spinners Rashid Khan of Afghanistan and Ravi Bishnoi of India. Rashid's previous best was second position that he last occupied in September 2023.

Left-arm wrist spinners Tabraiz Shamsi of South Africa and Kuldeep Yadav of India are among the others to advance. Shamsi has moved into the top 10 while Yadav's five-wicket haul in the third and final match of the series against South Africa in Johannesburg has lifted him 19 places to 24th position. South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj



(up five places to 19th) and India fast bowler Mohammad Siraj (up 37 places to 69th) are among others to move up after the latest weekly rankings update. In the rankings for batters, West Indies opener Brandon King, who scored a match-winning 82 not out off 52 deliveries in the second match of the series, has gained six slots to reach a career-best sixth position

while Nicholas Pooran (up two places to 12th) and Rowan Powell (up 14 places to 23rd) have also progressed. England's Phil Salt has galloped to 20th position and India's Yashasvi Jaiswal has moved to 14th position in the list led by his teammate Suryakumar Yadav. In the ODI Rankings, Babar Azam is back as the number one batter after Shubman Gill

did not figure in the ODIs against South Africa, even as Ireland players were in the limelight after their 2-0 series win over Zimbabwe.

Harry Tector (up one place seventh) and Curtis Campher (up 19 places to 73rd) moved up the batting rankings while Mark Adair (up nine places to 24th), Andy McBrine (up two places to 27th) and Joshua Little (up 28 places to 34th) have all gained in the latest update. KL Rahul (up two places to 16th) has also moved up the batting rankings while New Zealand's Trent Boult (up one place to seventh) and Bangladesh's Shoriful Islam (up 14 places to 59th) have progressed in the bowling rankings.

The latest update to the Test rankings sees Australia opener David Warner move up nine slots to 27th after scoring 164 in the first innings of the first Test against Pakistan while Usman Khawaja's scores of 41 and 90 have lifted him three places to fourth. Opener Imam Ul Haq (up one place to 29th) and Agha Salman (up two places to 32nd) are the Pakistan batters to advance.

Junaid Khan expresses concern over Khurram Shahzad

A Sports

LAHORE: Former cricketer Junaid Khan expressed his concerns over the fitness of young right-arm pacer Khurram Shahzad ahead of Pakistan's second Test against Australia in Melbourne.

Khurram Shahzad bowled 38 overs, conceded 128 runs and ended up with five wickets in the Perth Test.

Things did not get better for Pakistan following their hammering 360-run defeat in the series opener as the pacer became doubtful for the upcoming fixture.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) stated that he complained of discomfort in his left side during the game and was sent for an MRI scan after the match.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's former ace pacer Junaid Khan acknowledged Khurram Shahzad's performance in the Perth Test before highlighting a technical flaw in the latter's bowling action.

"Everyone is saying that Khurram Shahzad bowled outstandingly. No doubt, he bowled well, but, his bio-mechanic is



not right," asserted Junaid. The former pacer then highlighted a significant decline in Shahzad's pace before expressing his concern that the emerging star could get injured if the management makes him play another fixture.

"In the first innings, he was bowl-

ing 135 [kph] and in the second 130 [kph]. But, if he plays a Test or two then he might get injured," he added.

Pakistan, who were at the top of the World Test Championship (WTC) points table with a perfect record, got another blow to their campaign when the International Cricket Council (ICC)

penalized them for maintaining a slow over-rate during the Perth Test.

Pakistan were fined 10 per cent of their match fee and docked two ICC WTC points.

The sanction after a hammering defeat, consequently resulted in them slipping to the second spot with a winning rate of 61.11.

Two-time runners-up India benefited from Pakistan's demotion and reached the summit with a winning percentage of 66.67.

Australia squad:

Pat Cummins (captain), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Steve Smith, Mitch Starc, David Warner

Pakistan's squad:

Shan Masood (captain), Sarfaraz Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha, Faheem Ashraf, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Aamir Jamal, Khurram Shahzad, Sajid Khan, Abrar Ahmed.

Soumya Sarkar's 169 in vain as New Zealand down Bangladesh in second ODI

A Sports

NELSON: Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar's marathon 169-run knock was not enough as New Zealand thumped Bangladesh by seven wickets in the second ODI of the three-match series on Wednesday.

Put into bat first, Bangladesh could put on an average total of 291 on the board despite Soumya Sarkar's gritty knock.

The touring side, after having a dismal start, lost wickets at regular intervals.

Sarkar put together brief partnerships with Anamul Haque (2), Najmul Hossain Shanto (6), Litton Das (6) and Towhid Hridoy (12)

before getting subtle support at the other end in the form of Mushfiqur Rahim.

The pair added 91 runs for the fifth wicket before Jacob Duffy got Rahim caught behind in the 35th over to break the threatening partnership.

Mushfiqur Rahim remained a notable run-getter for Bangladesh with a cautious 45. His 57-ball knock featured five boundaries.

Meanwhile, Soumya Sarkar continued to keep the scoreboard ticking singlehandedly while Bangladesh kept losing wickets.

He scored more than half of Bangladesh's total before finally returning to the dugout in the final over.

He smashed 22 boundaries and two sixes on his way to a 151-ball 169.

William O'Rourke and Duffy were the pick of the bowlers for New Zealand, picking up three wickets each while Josh Clarkson, Adam Milne and Adithya Ashok had a wicket apiece to their names.

In response, New Zealand comfortably amassed the target with 22 balls to spare, courtesy of a combined effort from their top order.

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Openers Will Young and Rachin Ravindra gave the hosts a commanding start with a brisk 76-run partnership.

Ravindra, who was the core aggressor of the opening stand, walked back in the 11th over after scoring a brisk 45 in 33 deliveries with the help of

seven boundaries and a six.

Young was then joined by Henry Nicholls and the duo partnered strongly to put New Zealand in further control as they added 128 runs for the second wicket.

The right-handed batter fell just 11 runs shy of his well-deserved century when he spooned Hasan Mahmud an easy caught and bowled dismissal.

He conceded 94 deliveries amid his outstanding knock and hit eight boundaries and two sixes.

Henry Nicholls tested the same fortune as he too, fell agonisingly short of a century.

He became the victim of Shoriful Islam in the 41st over, just five away from the milestone when New Zealand needed a mere 32.



Henry Nicholls remained the top-scorer for New Zealand with an anchoring 95 in 99 deliveries, laced up with eight boundaries and a six.

Skipper Tom Latham (34) and Tom Blundell (24) made sure there were no further hiccups and steered New Zealand to glory at the back of their unbeaten 36-run partnership.

Hasan Mahmud led the bowling attack for Bangladesh with 2/57 while Islam could pick up a wicket.

The seven-wicket victory in the second ODI powered New Zealand to an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series over Bangladesh.

The third ODI of the series will take place on December 23 in Napier.

Master trainer Tariq Sidhu delivers insightful lectures on Growth, Development



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Growth, Development, Talent Identification and Types of Energy Systems were the topics on which Master trainer International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) Level 4 Athletics Coach Tariq Sidhu delivered insightful lectures in two sessions on the 3rd day of Track and Field Course being organised under Institute of Sports Sciences Punjab (ISSP) at Punjab Stadium, Lahore.

It is worth-mentioning that the 2nd phase 5-day Track and Field Course is being organized by Sports Board Punjab for imparting modern training to divisional and provincial coaches of the province under the directions of Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail.

Principal ISSP Chand Parveen, Chief Instructor Hafeez Bhatti, Instructors Shaista Qaiser and Sajid Ali were also present on this occasion.

Pakistan's top female climber sets her goal for next 2 years

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's top female mountaineer Naila Kiani on Wednesday revealed her future plan, stating that she would be attempting to complete her feat of summiting world's all the fourteen above 8000-metre peaks within next two years.

"Initially, I wanted to accomplish my target as soon as possible, but after the Shishapangma incident I have changed my mind. Now I have decided

to achieve the milestone a bit slower. Hopefully, I'll complete my mission in two years," Naila, who is the only Pakistani female to climb ten peaks above the height of 8000 meters.

Naila faced a critical ethical dilemma on Shishapangma Mountain in October 2023, making a life-saving decision to move back just 400 meters below the summit after two climbers were lost. She prioritized ethics over ascent, ultimately sparing her and her team's lives. "I believe human life should be prioritized over reaching the summit in the dangerous world of mountain climbing," she maintained.

The year 2023 has been the most successful year for her as she became one of the only seven climbers in the world, who have climbed multiple peaks in six months.

Naila, a former aerospace engineer, banker and a boxer, who took a unique path of scaling world's highest peaks, was also honoured by the President of Pakistan in a conference held by Alpine Club of Pakistan.

Naila's successful summits include Mount Everest (8,848 meters) in 2023, K2 (8,611 meters) in 2022, Lhotse (8,516 meters) in 2023, Nanga Parbat (8,126 meters) in 2023, Manaslu (8,163 meters) in 2023, Annapurna (8,091 meters) in 2023, Broad Peak (8,051 meters) in 2023, Gasherbrum II (8,035 meters) in 2021, Gasherbrum I (8,080 meters) in 2022, and Cho Oyu (8,188 meters) in 2023.

Despite her remarkable success, Naila acknowledges the challenges female athletes face in Pakistan. She highlighted the difficulty female athletes encounter in securing brand endorsements.

In a poignant reflection, she refuses to compromise her integrity by aligning with brands that view her as merely a social media figure. She underscores the struggles faced by athletes and mountaineers, emphasizing that she would not settle for inadequate compensation.

Looking ahead, she is seeking additional sponsors to join her on this unprecedented journey to climb the last four peaks. Despite her numerous achievements, she recognizes the importance of continued support to overcome the challenges that lie ahead.

Naila's message to the youth echoes through her journey — invest in personal development, seek mentors, and relentlessly pursue dreams. "Dream big, stay consistent, and work hard to turn aspirations into reality," she reckoned.

Behind the scenes, Naila emphasizes the critical role of family support, particularly her husband's unwavering dedication in caring for their three and four-year-old daughters. In a world where she encountered robust foreign climbers, Naila became a trailblazer, standing tall as the first Pakistani female mountaineer to reach the world's highest summits.

A crucial part of Naila's success has been the support from her main sponsor, the BARD Foundation. Naila expressed a deep connection with it, describing the foundation as a family that played a pivotal role in her journey. She said Fauji Foundation and Sensodyne also stood by her side as supporters.

Group Photo

ISLAMABAD: Judicial Assistants of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a group photo with Mr. Justice Athar Minallah at the Federal Judicial Academy on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Telephonic conversation between President of Pakistan and President of Iran

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In a telephone call today that lasted almost 45 minutes, President Dr. Arif Alvi of Pakistan and President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran underscored the need for coordinated efforts by the Islamic countries to bring an end to the ongoing massacre and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

President Dr. Arif Alvi voiced deep concern over the dire situation in the occupied Palestine including Gaza as a result of ongoing Israeli aggression and occupation. The President regretted that despite the deaths of over 19,000 Palestinians includ-

ing women and children, the UN Security Council has failed to impose a ceasefire and bring an end to the unspeakable. The President reiterated that a just solution to the Palestinian question based on an independent and contiguous Palestinian State with Al-Quds-Al-Sharif as capital was critical for lasting peace in the Middle East.

The President reaffirmed Pakistan's support to all diplomatic initiatives to this end and appreciated Iran's concerns and initiatives about the ongoing situation. He also appreciated the Iranian leadership for its principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir



dispute and its support to the Palestinian cause.

The President conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the government and brotherly people of Iran over the heinous

terrorist attack on an Iranian police station in Siestan-Baluchistan on 15 December, 2023. He expressed Pakistan's resolve to work with Iran to combat terrorism.

The two leaders discussed bilateral economic cooperation. President Alvi termed the joint inauguration of Mand-Pishin Border Sustenance Market place and Gabd-Polan Electricity Transmission Line as tangible developments that would further strengthen bilateral ties between the two brotherly countries.

The two leaders agreed that Pakistan and Iran were brotherly Islamic countries, sharing the same culture, religion and history. They agreed to work together for further improving economic, trade and cultural relations between the two brotherly countries.

Ambassador Hashmi underscores media's role in highlighting successes of China-Pakistan ties

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi on Wednesday underscored that media collaboration has a vital role in highlighting successes and solidify the mutual trust which is the bedrock of China-Pakistan relationship. He made these remarks while speaking via online at the 8th CPEC Media Forum "Next Decade of CPEC: Opportunities and Learning from Past Decade" held in Islamabad to celebrate the completion of the first decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Ambassador Hashmi highlighted that the 2nd phase of CPEC is poised to focus on the socio-economic development of our peoples. The key CPEC projects promise to improve the lives and livelihood opportunities, including for those in the remote areas. He said enhancing

bilateral industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China remains pivotal. In the next phase of CPEC, both sides would endeavour to accelerate implementation

of 2022 Framework Agreement on industrial cooperation to develop industrial parks and special economic zones in Pakistan. Ambassador Hashmi said with CPEC's increased focus on green projects, such as hydro power generation and solar parks, we are determined to

achieve the target of 60 percent renewables in our national energy mix by the year 2030. He noted that CPEC symbolizes the combined efforts of two countries to bring their economic and trade ties at par with their robust political partnership. He underlined that the seamless connectivity between Xinjiang and Gilgit Baltistan is key to facilitate trade, promote people to people exchanges and solidify geopolitical ties between our two countries.



Elections 2024: nomination papers acquiring, submitting process starts

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The acquisition and submission of nomination papers for candidates intending to participate in the National and Provincial Assembly seats in the upcoming 2024 general elections commenced on Wednesday and will persist until Friday (December 22).

According to the schedule issued by the Election Commission, candidates interested in contesting elections can obtain and submit their nomination papers from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm until December 22.

The initial list of candidates is set to be released on December 23, with the scrutiny of nomination papers scheduled to take place from December 24 to December 30. Electoral symbols will be assigned to candidates on January 13, and the general elections are scheduled to hold on

February 8.

The cost for acquiring the nomination papers is set at Rs. 100. Each candidate is allowed to submit a maximum of five nomination papers, each with different endorsers.

For those contesting a National Assembly seat, the non-refundable fee is Rs. 30,000. Meanwhile, candidates vying for a Provincial Assembly seat are required to pay a non-refundable fee of Rs. 20,000.

Candidates must attach their income tax return documents from the past three years along with their nomination papers. The fundamental eligibility criteria for candidates include being a citizen of Pakistan and being at least 25 years old.

As per the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), individuals contesting National Assembly seats must be registered voters in any location within Pakistan.

Nawaz Sharif to 'contest' from Mansehra

Bureau Report

MANSEHRA: PML-N leader Captain (retd) Safdar Awan on Wednesday claimed that party supremo Nawaz Sharif, who was disqualified from holding any public office in July 2017, will contest the upcoming general elections 2024 from Mansehra.

The three-time prime minister — who returned to Pakistan in October after ending a 4-year self-imposed exile in London — hopes to take a fourth shot at power, but still major legal hurdles remain in his path to contest the general elections.

The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan had disqualified Nawaz Sharif from holding public office in a landmark decision on the Panama Papers case in July 2017. Subsequently, he stepped down from the role of the prime minister.

Moreover, the PML-N supremo



was handed a disqualification of 10 years from holding a public office in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption.

Talking to journalists today, Capt Safdar Awan said that the three-time prime minister would contest the upcoming general polls from NA-15 constituency of Mansehra. "He will address the 24-year deprivations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)", he added.

Meanwhile, Safdar said that her wife Maryam Nawaz would contest both national and provincial assemblies' seats from Punjab, adding that he would not contest the polls.

PTI Founder, Bushra Bibi summoned in NAB Toshakhana reference

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been summoned in connection with NAB Toshakhana reference on December 23.

As per details, the Accountability Court has accepted the Toshakhana reference filed by NAB against the former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi for hearing.

The reference stated that the accused had obtained 108 items from the Toshakhana and kept 58

with them.

Yesterday, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) filed a reference with the Accountability Court against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi pertaining to Toshakhana case.

As per details, the Registrar Office of the accountability court would take further action after scrutiny of the case. The NAB Rawalpindi has named two accused in the graft reference.

NAB prosecutor Sohail Arif and Investigation Officer Mohsin Haroon submitted the reference to Registrar's Office.

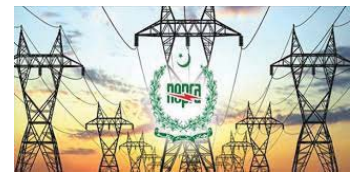
NEPRA jacks up electricity tariff

PNP

ISLAMABAD: In yet another shock to the already overburdened power consumers, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has notified a hike of Rs1.15 per unit in electricity tariff.

According to the notification issued by the power regulatory authority, NEPRA approved hike in electricity in the wake of the monthly fuel adjustment for first quarter of the current financial year.

It added that electricity consumers would have to make additional



payments during January to March 2024 bills.

The increase in electricity tariff would increase the financial burden worth Rs22.297 billion on the power consumers.

The hike will also be applicable to all the consumer categories except lifeline ones and K-Electric users.

PTI's Asad Qaiser released from Mardan Jail



Bureau Report

MARDAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser has been released from the central jail in Mardan. As per details, Asad Qaiser was released after Deputy Commissioner of Swabi took back the 3 MPO order on the direction of Peshawar High Court.

The PTI leader was in jail under

3MPO from November 24 despite his bail in May 9 violence case.

On December 9, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser was rearrested after securing bail from the district and sessions court in Mardan. Prior to this, the district and sessions court in Mardan granted him bail in the May 9 case against surety bonds of Rs90,000.

However, following his release, Swabi police rearrested him under MPO.

Qaiser, who is accused of corruption in the procurement of equipment for Gajju Khan Medical College, was arrested from Bani Gala, Islamabad, on Nov 3. The ACE booked Mr Qaiser over his alleged corruption in the purchase of medical equipment for Swabi's Gajju Khan Medical College.

Iranian envoy meets FBR chairman

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam on Wednesday held a meeting with Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana. During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters pertaining to customs, cross border trade and management for smooth flow of bilateral trade between the two countries, said a FBR news release.

They agreed to remove the irritants in the barter trade for increased economic activities between the two neighbors. The two sides also agreed on



early operationalisation of gate at Rimdan-Gabd crossing point for facilitation of traders and enhanced cross border trade. The Iranian ambassador

said that expansion of parking area on Taftan side would facilitate Iranian trucks.

He also requested to allow free movement of Iranian

trucks at least up till Quetta. Chairman FBR apprised the ambassador of the legal hurdles in this regard, however, he assured to look into the matter. It was also agreed that both sides will work on sharing trade related data digitally through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system. The Iranian ambassador also invited a delegation comprising of officers of Pakistan Customs and other relevant Departments of Pakistan to Iran for a meeting to resolve all border related issues between the two brotherly countries. Members of Customs also attended the meeting.

MQM-P demands extension in deadline for nomination papers filing

PPA

ISLAMABAD: As February 8 general elections drew near, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has demanded the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Raja Sultan to extend the deadline for filing of nomination papers.

According to the election schedule issued by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), nomination papers could be filed with respective returning officers by the candidates from December 20 to 22, while names of all nominated



candidates would be published on December 23.

In a letter to CEC Sikandar Raja Sultan, the MQM-P expressed concern over duration — three days

— of filing nomination papers, saying that the process is a "tedious job, and has a long list of formalities requiring time and a lot of paperwork".

Therefore, the political party said, three days duration does not seem enough, and it may "discourage adequate participation".

In the interest of free and fair elections and to encourage wider participation, MQM-P urged the Election Commission that the duration for filing nomination papers may be extended sufficiently, under Section 58 (1) of the Election Act, 2017.