

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے سعید بن عمر نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے
لیٹن سہولت بیان کیا ان سے عقل ہے،
ان سے ابن شہاب نے ان سے عروہ سے اور
ان سے عائشہ رضی اللہ عنہا نے بیان کیا کہ نبی
کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا میں تم کو
ہوں کہ فلاں اور فلاں ہمارے عروہ کی کوئی
بات نہیں جانتے ہیں۔ لیٹن سہولت سے بیان
کیا کہ یہ دونوں آدمی منافق تھے۔
(بخاری ص 6067)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



Pakistan demands UN probe into TTP acquiring advanced military equipment

Pakistan has demanded the UNSC to conduct a thorough investigation to find out how the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) acquired advanced military equipment. At the UNSC's United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) briefing on Afghanistan, Ambassador Munir Akram — Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations.



Mushaal declares health as basic right of all

Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has declared health as a basic right of all individuals. She has highlighted the link between mental and physical health to the healthy dietary choices and lifestyle. Speaking as the Chief Guest at a media and civil society awareness campaign organized by the Pakistan National Heart Association (PNAHA), (Details on Page 2)

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Waiting for assistance

GAZA: Palestinian children carry pots as they queue to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen in Rafah.



Photo: Reuters

Gaza children dizzy from hunger

Reuters

RAFAH: The children displaced to south Gaza were craving chicken, but all their mother had left to feed the family for the day was a tin of peas donated by a man who took pity on her when he saw her crying.

Left homeless by Israel's military offensive against Hamas, like most of Gaza's 2.3 million population, Tahany Nasr was in a tent camp in Rafah focused on one thing only: how to find enough food and water to get everyone through another day.

She said her children had lost weight and were getting dizzy spells because they were not eating enough.

"I've been begging to feed my children and don't find anything. I go to the mosque, they say go to the mosque. I go to the mosque, they say go to the mosque," she said, referring to Gaza's welfare ministry which normally organises distributions of basic goods like flour to people in hardship.

Hunger has become the most pressing of the myriad prob-

lems facing hundreds of thousands of displaced Gaza Palestinians, with aid trucks able to bring in only a small fraction of what is needed, and distribution uneven due to the chaos of war.

Some trucks have been stopped and looted by people desperate for food, while swathes of the devastated territory are beyond their reach because access roads are active battlegrounds.

Even in Rafah, which has a crossing to Egypt through which aid trucks enter and is an area where the Israeli army has told civilians to seek refuge, the dearth of food and clean water is so severe it is causing people to lose weight and get ill.

"We have started to see people coming in emaciated," said Samia Abu Salah, a primary care doctor in Rafah.

She said weight loss and anaemia were common and people were so weak and dehydrated they were more susceptible to chest infections and skin conditions. Babies and children were particularly at risk, and their growth would be affected.

PM-Youth

Welfare of youth, Govt's top priority: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday, terming the young generation as the future of nation, said the welfare of the youth was the top priority of the government.

Chairing a meeting of the Prime Minister Youth Programme, he directed that the disbursement of loans under the Program should be done with utmost care and responsibility.

He further directed that the youth of the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be given special attention in PM Youth schemes.

The prime minister ordered to evolve a special strategy to



achieve the desired results of the skill development schemes.

PM Kakar directed that training programmes should also be started for master trainers regarding skill development to

increase their capacity and to impart quality training to others.

During the meeting, the prime minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the PM's Youth Programme.

It was informed that 550,000 people had been trained under the PM Skill Development Program since 2013 while some 56,000 more people would be trained mostly in high-tech skills in the next phase.

Additionally, it was informed that under PM Laptop Scheme, 500,000 laptops were distributed to the youth since 2013, while 100,000 more laptops would be distributed to the youth in current year.

The meeting was further informed that under the PM Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme, easy loans worth Rs 100.7 billion have been provided to the youth since 2013.

Similarly, some 83,323 youths

were given opportunities in badminton, football, squash, volleyball and other sports under PM Talent Hunt and Sports League.

The meeting was informed that schemes worth Rs 80 billion have been earmarked in the PM Youth Development Package 2023-24. These schemes include Education Endowment Fund, Women Empowerment, Business and Agriculture Loan, Tube-Well Solarisation, Laptops Scheme, Sports Endowment Fund, Green Revolution, Digital Hub One Window.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Tourism and Youth Affairs Syed Wasi Shah and other concerned government officials participated in the meeting.

SBP's foreign exchange reserves fall by \$136m to \$6.9bn

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The foreign exchange reserves held by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) have dropped to \$6.904 billion after a decrease of \$136 million.

In a statement issued today, the SBP said the country's total liquid foreign reserves stood at \$12.0 billion in the week ended on December 15, compared to the previous week's total of \$7.04 billion.

The SBP said its reserves decreased by \$136 million to \$ 6.9 billion due to debt repayments during the week under review. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks remained \$5.1 billion.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by Pakistan, in the previous week ended on December 08, 2023, were \$12,206.4 million.

Among them, foreign exchange reserves held by SBP were \$ 7,040.8 million while net foreign reserves

Fawad briefs PM about privatisation process of state-owned enterprises

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Privatisation and Inter-Provincial Coordination Fawad Hassan Fawad called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday.

The Caretaker Minister for Privatisation and Inter-Provincial Coordination briefed the Prime Minister about privatisation process of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

Palestine crisis worries global community: Solangi

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Muratza Solangi said on Thursday that the current situation of Palestine was a cause of concern not only for the Muslim Ummah but also for the civilized nations of the world.

During a meeting with Jordanian Ambassador Dr. Maen Khreast who met with him here, the minister said that peace in Palestine was the responsibility of the whole world.

"International community should play a role for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine," Muratza Solangi said.

Besides, ceasefire between Palestine and Israel, coming elections in Pakistan and Jordan, regional security situation, cooperation in the media sectors and other important issues were discussed during the



meeting.

In the meeting, both the minister and Ambassador expressed concern over the tense situation in Palestine.

Expressing complete solidarity with the Palestinian people, Muratza Solangi said that Jordan's role in aid activities in Palestine was commendable.

The Jordanian Ambassador said that a humanitarian crisis was brewing in Gaza due to lack of food.

Solangi said that Pakistan valued its relations with Jordan as the two countries had deep ties based on religion, common values and culture.

The caretaker minister briefed the Jordanian Ambassador about the progress towards the general elections in Pakistan.

Elections would be held across the country on February 8 next year in

Pakistan, Muratza Solangi adding the Election Commission of Pakistan had already released the election schedule.

He said all registered political parties were provided 54 days for election campaign.

The Caretaker Government, he said was providing all possible support and facilities to the ECP to ensure the conduct of free, transparent and impartial elections.

Muratza Solangi expressed his best wishes for the successful completion of the election process in Jordan next year.

He expressed the hope that a new era of relations between the two countries would begin with the governments established as a result of the electoral process in Jordan and Pakistan.

PTI founder's plea against Toshakhana case verdict dismissed

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday dismissed a petition by incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, seeking suspension of the trial court's verdict in the Toshakhana case.

On August 5, Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Humayun Dilawar sentenced former prime minister Imran Khan to three years in prison after the latter was "found guilty" of graft in the Toshakhana case.

The PTI founder was convicted of misusing his position to sell state gifts worth more than Rs140 million (\$490,000) that he received from foreign dignitaries.

Following his conviction, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified the former prime minister for five years under Section 167 of the Elections Act, 2017.

However, the Islama-

Khalid Khursheed banned from contesting elections

Saif ur Rehman

GILGIT: The Chief Election Commissioner of Gilgit-Baltistan has imposed a lifetime ban on former chief minister Khalid Khurshid on participating in elections. "Khurshid has also been prohibited from

holding the position of president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) GB for the remainder of his life," a news release said.

This decision follows Khurshid's prior disqualification and removal from the GB Assembly on account fake educational degrees.

High-level committee proposes amendments to JCP rules

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The high-level committee constituted to Review Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) rules 2010 has proposed amendments in various areas.

The meeting of the Committee was held on 16th December, 2023, under the co-chairmanship of Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice (Retired) Manzoor Ahmed Malik with mandate to propose such rules of procedure for the Commission in making appointments of the Judges of the Constitutional Courts of the country, that comply with the collegial and inclusive decision-making process enshrined in Article 175-A of the Constitu-

tion, said a press release issued on Thursday.

The important areas of consideration for proposing amendments in the 2010 Rules includes, process for convening meetings of the Commission and making decisions therein, initiation of nomination(s) in the Supreme Court, initiation of nomination(s) in the High Courts, adequate representation of the District Judiciary and the Bar for elevation, diversity, criteria for selection for appointment of Judges to the Supreme Court and the High Courts, confirmation of Additional Judges in the High Courts and establishment of a Secretariat of the Commission, appointment of the Secretary and other staff thereto.

Political parties to incorporate education development in their election manifestos

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi on Thursday urged the political parties to incorporate the education development in their election manifestos.

He said this while sharing his views on the occasion of the Awards distribution ceremony for the 7th Pakistan Excellence Award-2023 organized at a hotel here.

Madad Ali Sindhi said that the general election is close,

therefore, the masses should make the political parties to incorporate and give importance to education in their election manifestos.

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training was of the view that there is no other way, except education for the development of the country.

Earlier, Sindh Caretaker Minister for Culture Junaaid Ali Shah presented awards to the former captain of the Pakistan Cricket Team, Misbahul Haq and famous actress Mahira Khan.

Mushaal declares health as basic right of all

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has declared health as a basic right of all individuals. She has highlighted the link between mental and physical health to the healthy dietary choices and lifestyle. Speaking as the Chief Guest at a media and civil society awareness campaign organized by the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA), Mushaal underscored the pivotal role of a balanced lifestyle in fostering overall health. The event was attended by Surgeon General (Rtd.) Kamal Akbar, Sabien Hussein Mullick (Focal Person to SAPM), Sanaulah Ghuman (Secretary General PANAHA), Munawar Hussain (Advocacy consultant), Abid Abbassi (President Rawalpindi/Islamabad Union of Journalists), and other prominent personalities from the media and civil society. The event served as a platform to promote awareness and dialogue on the crucial link among health, nutrition, and lifestyle choices.



Mushaal expressed deep concern over the alarming statistic that places Pakistan as the third in the world for diabetes cases. She urged individuals not to take their health for granted. She stressed that adopting proper dietary habits and incorporating regular physical exercise could serve as effective preventive measures against numerous diseases.

Mushaal advocated for efforts in raising

awareness among mothers about their children's diets, emphasizing the profound impact on the health of the future generations. She underscored that school and colleges should also be included in these awareness campaigns as educational institutions were where many children develop dietary habits, both positive and negative.

Mushaal drew attention to excessive consumption of sugar and salt based

food, labeling them as "white poisons", the root cause of numerous diseases. She asserted that a concerted effort was essential to address the health risks posed by excessive sugar and salt intake. She offered her support to initiatives focused on preventing diseases stemming from unhealthy dietary practices.

Mushaal extended an invitation to both PANAHA and members of the media for collaboration in the implementation of a 100-day plan initiated by Ministry of Human Rights. She emphasized that health and access to healthcare facilities should be recognized as fundamental rights of all individuals.

Mushaal extended congratulations to PANAHA for organizing the awareness session aimed at educating people about disease prevention. She acknowledged the organization's impactful work not only within Pakistan but also in Afghanistan and Turkey. SAPM Mushaal Hussein Mullick also thanked the dedicated media workers for their unwavering support in promoting the cause of a healthy diet and disease prevention.

Sehat Kahani was the first all-female led company from Pakistan

PPA

KARACHI: In a groundbreaking achievement for Pakistan's startup landscape, Sehat Kahani, a trailblazing female-led health-tech startup, has successfully closed a historic Series A 2.7 million dollars funding round. This landmark positions Sehat Kahani as the first all-female-led company in Pakistan to secure Series A funding.

Amaanah Circle, a Singapore-based health tech fund led by Dr. Razi Yousuf, spearheads the funding, joined by key investors including Epic Angels, a female-only investor collective, Cross Fund, USAID Investment Promotion Activity (IPA), Augmentor, Impact Investment Exchange (IIX) and the Elahi group of companies.

Dr. Razi Said "Sehat Kahani is an incredible health-tech story led by Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram and Dr. Iffat Zafar Aga. Amaanah Circle (Singapore) is



proud to contribute to the subject matter expertise, and in upscaling regionally and globally to the overall vision of Sehat Kahani in the future of digital health and preventive healthcare."

Founded by esteemed medical doctors Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram and Dr. Iffat Zafar Aga, Sehat Kahani's innovative technology ensures a seamless virtual connection between doctors and

patients within 60 seconds.

Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram said, "This funding infusion marks a pivotal moment for Sehat Kahani. It will enable us to develop advanced features, including decision support systems, precision medicine tools, and predictive AI models to help our patients live fully by knowing their disease better."

Sehat Kahani extends its Corporate Application into a comprehensive OPD management solution, providing corporate employees and their families 24/7 hassle-free and cashless access to specialists, online medicine delivery, and efficient claims management.

Dr. Iffat Zafar Aga said "Sehat Kahani has shown a significant average year on year growth of 141% in the last 3 years, overcoming the myth that telemedicine was only beneficial during covid as we have seen 5x cumulative growth in the number of consultations in the post covid era.

Commissioner urged Jirga, resolve all issues including Angoor Ada sit-in through mutual consultation

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Division Zafar Ul Islam Khat-tak Visited of Lower South Waziristan headquarters Wana

On this occasion DC South Waziristan Lower Muhammad Nasir Khan, DC South Waziristan Upper Ashfaq Khan and AC Wana Faisal Ismail were also present with him.

While a grand jirga was held at Upper Camp Wana with the Ahmadzai Wazir tribes on Thursday, the Jirga was attended by the leading elders of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribes.

At the beginning of the Jirga, Commissioner Dera Zafar Ul Islam Khat-tak said while addressing the Jirga that the collective problems of all the tribes will be solved through mutual consultation.

He assured the Jirga that resolving



the demands of the people protesting at the Angoor Adda border on a priority basis was among the top priorities.

You people have objections on construction of road from Karkarna area of Wana near Gomal Zam Dam, I will personally try to build it in the

population

On this occasion, Malik Alla Uddin, Malik Yar Muhammad, Malik Jameel, Malik Tariq and Malik Saidullah Wazir presented their problems and demands.

The tribal elders appealed to the

commissioner to immediately resolve the problems faced by the people on the Angoor Ada border.

The tribal elders also asked that the name of Governor Model School should be removed from the documents by retaining the name of Musa Nikah Public School Wana.

Later, Commissioner Zafar Ul Islam Khat-tak said in his address to the Jirga, that after 9/11, Ahmadzai Wazir tribe has made immense sacrifices in the war against terrorism and the government is aware of your sacrifices.

He said that the sacrifices of tribal elders are not hidden from anyone, we understand your problems.

The commissioner said that it has been more than a month that local people have been sitting on sit-in for their demands at Angoor Adda, and make urgent efforts to address their legitimate demands.

Youth Office Lower Chitral started one month training project for women

Adam Khan Wazir

LOWER CHITRAL: On Thursday, the District Youth Office in Lower Chitral with the support of civil administration and under the special direction of Deputy Commissioner Lower Chitral Mohammad Imran Khan (One month textile product design through weaving) started a month long training project have done.

In which the services of Nighat Bibi, the main trainer of this project, will be hired and she herself is a fashion and textile designer with a bachelor's degree.

In this regard, District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir said that a total of 30 women will participate with us in this project, who will learn about various textile



and fashion designing skills.

He said that the main objective of such projects of Youth Office is to empower the women here, which are often marginalized in such communities and to make

them financially independent.

District Youth Officer Lower Chitral Sardar Ali Wazir said that the main objective of the Youth Office is to eliminate the difficulties

faced by women among the

top priorities, so that women can live a better life in the society. He also said that the Youth Office should continue its efforts to empower women.

Minister of Religious Affairs addresses Hajj training program at IIUI

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Religious Affairs Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed has said that Hajj is a journey from oneself to God.

He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the Hajj Master Trainers training program for women organized by the Dawah Center for Women of the International Islamic University (IIUI).

The Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed said on the occasion that this year women pilgrims will be given Abaya by the Ministry that will have Pakistan's flag embossed on it. He said women protect religious values and transfer religion



to future generations.

On this occasion, Rector of IIUI, Prof. Dr. Samina Malik said that the services of Ministry and Dawah Center for Women of Hajj training program are commendable. She said that the representation of

women from every corner

of the country made this program a success. We are very happy today on the completion of this course as these all participants are now ambassadors of IIUI. Addressing the ceremony Dr. Abdul Rehman Federal

Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs said that it has been decided to extend the training period for pilgrims this time. He said that an app has been launched by the Ministry of Religious Affairs which will guide the pilgrims.

Earlier, Dr. Faryal Anbarin, in-charge of Dawah Center for Women, presented a report on the history, role and activities of Dawah Center for Women and informed in detail about the contents and sessions of this course. She told that the certificate of this center of university is approved by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. At the end of the program, gifts were presented to the guests of the ceremony and resource persons of this program.

Public Defence of Iqra University's Ph. D. Scholar will be held on December 30

PNP

KARACHI: Faculty of Business Administration, Iqra University's PhD Scholar Mr. Minhaj Ikram's Public Defence will be held at ORIC on Saturday, December 30, 2023 at 03:00 pm. Scholars, Faculty members and students of the same field will participate in it. Mr. Minhaj Ikram completed his PhD Dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Minhaj Ikram. As per HEC requirements, his PhD Dissertation has already been approved by foreign evaluators.

Colorful Ceremony at Ladies Club Multan



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: In a colorful ceremony at Ladies Club Multan, prizes were distributed among women in dressing and other competitions. In this regard, a colorful ceremony was held at the Ladies Club Multan. In the ceremony, Tahira Najam, Asma Arsalan, Mrs. Naseem Baloch, Nadia Wasim, Dr. Shehla Aftab, Tehmina Munir, Rabia Bosan, Rahat Bano, Urooj Ahmed and other female members participated in the ceremony. On this occasion, there was a competition among women regarding wedding dressing and prizes were also distributed among them. Speaking at the ceremony, Tahira Najam said that Ladies Club keeps organizing entertainment programs for women, which instills self-confidence in women. She said that ladies club is playing an active role in the city under the leadership of Begum Farrukh Mukhtar and these events will continue to be organized in this way.

Ten year celebrations of Women University Multan will be held on 3-4 January

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Celebrating the 10th anniversary of Women's University Multan, according to the spokesman, Women's University Multan has completed 10 years of its establishment. New milestones have been crossed. To appreciate these achievements, it has been decided to celebrate two-day events on January 4-3, 2024 at Kachhari campus. In the meeting chaired by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Kulsoom Paracha and Registrar Dr. Maimona Khan, it was decided that these events will be held. A memorial will be built, an alumni community will be formed and all the students who graduated from this ancient institution, whether they were college bound or post-university degree holders, will be invited to participate in these events.

Despite the decrease in POL prices, Pakistan Railways has not reduced the fares of passenger trains

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Despite the reduction in the prices of petroleum products several times, Pakistan Railways has not reduced the fares of passenger trains due to which there is serious concern among the poor people. Pakistan Railways had increased the fares by 10% in August and 5% in September. The price of diesel in September was Rs 311. But after that the prices of petroleum products were reduced several times but no relief was given by the railways by not reducing the fares. Currently, the price of diesel is 276 rupees per liter. Since October, the price of diesel has decreased by 35 rupees per liter, but the authorities of Pakistan Railways have not reduced the fares.

Passengers have demanded from the government of Pakistan and the railway authorities that the fares of the railway, which is the ride of the poor, should be reduced by 20 to 25 percent so that the passengers can get relief and benefit substantially from the reduction in petroleum prices

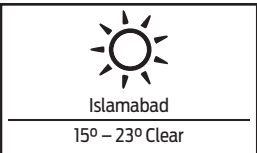
A workshop on 'Mental Health Awareness and Stress Management' held at Cadet College

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A workshop on 'Mental Health Awareness and Stress Management' was arranged by Cadet College Faisalabad for its faculty and training staff. Mrs Anum Hameed, Ph. D. scholar was the source person.



The worthy guest speaker has an experience of counselling at Pakistan Military Academy under the supervision of Brig. Dr. Shoab Kiani (R). SI(M), Ex Chief Psychologist Pakistan Army. The participants of the workshop displayed a keen interest in stress management techniques. The worthy counsellor also conducted counselling sessions with selected faculty members, training staff, and cadets.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:39 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

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
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PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
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WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80

Driving Change: How SAP helps transforming into a sustainable business

PNP

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan can achieve higher GDP growth and improve economic indicators, by adopting technology at government and private level," this was stated by Saqib Ahmad, Managing Director of SAP Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, while talking to media representatives at SAP's Islamabad Office. He emphasized the significance of embracing innovative technological solutions to drive sustainability both locally and on a global scale. Through partnerships and initiatives, SAP supports a network that drives sustainable practices across industries. Saqib said, "At SAP we do not set sales targets anymore, rather we work towards goals that are defined around sustainability. The business objective of SAP is to bring the carbon footprint to Zero. The solutions by SAP are being used by 62% of the countries for budget making, procurement, and taxation at the government level, and even at resident level in the form of billing, purchasing products, receiving pensions, etc."

Save the Children holds stakeholder gathering on institutional resilience in Punjab

PPA

LAHORE: Save the Children, with financial and technical support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) held a Stakeholder Gathering to showcase insights for strengthening SRHR resilience in Punjab. Previously, consultations were held to validate the inputs/ insights on the Institutional Resilience Building Strategic Framework developed by UNFPA in 2022.

UNFPA and Save the Children held this gathering as part of efforts to prioritize actions that contribute to adaptive resilience of the health systems that has the ability to sense early, calibrate and respond to shocks and provides responsive services as and when needed, but still continues to effectively provide a set of basic critical services (including SRH/GBV/FP) in order to sustain the gains as well as to avoid and mitigate the damage caused by humanitarian emergency such as Floods 2022.

Addressing the audience, Chief Guest of the event, Prof. Dr. Jamal Nasir, Health Minister Punjab stressed on the impor-

ance of Punjab Government's Strategic Policy Reforms in the health sector and family planning systems towards ensuring mother-child health and nutrition. He also stressed on the continuous monitoring and sustainability of the successful health initiatives.

Director of Program Quality Evidence and Impact (PQEI), Save the Children, Muhammad Naem, stated, "This session serves as a testament to the power of a united front for strengthening the health system of Pakistan, ensuring access and availability to Maternal Newborn and Reproductive Health (MNRH), which is one of the key focus of Save the Children Health and Nutrition programmes.

Punjab Focal Lead/Provincial Programme Officer Gender/GBV UNFPA, Tania Durrani shared in her remarks that building climate resilience and adaptive capacity has become more urgent. She focused on building knowledge, awareness and capacity for the links between climate-related emergencies and health, especially SRH, maternal health, family planning, mental health and psycho-



social support, GBV, child marriage and other harmful practices. She spoke about integrating a resilience strategy into both health and disaster response frameworks, prioritizing Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP).

The gathering featured an experience sharing session where President Team Dreams and CEO WheelChairwala, Naureel Abbas shared his experiences as representative of Persons with Disabilities. During his remarks, he appreciated

Save the Children and UNFPA's commitment to supporting initiatives that positively impact vulnerable populations and lauded them for including persons with disabilities as their strategic partners in resilience building.

Nomination

ISLAMABAD: Candidates for National Assembly Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar talking to media persons after submissions of nomination papers to contest in upcoming general elections at ECP Offices in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

NIM delegation visits RCCI

PPA

RAWALPINDI: The 34th Senior Management Course delegation of National Institute of Management (NIM) Lahore, visited Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Thursday. The visit was part of the National Institute of Management Course aiming at capacity building and a better understanding of national issues and interacting with the key decision makers and institutions. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq, along with Vice President Faisal Shahzad welcomed the participants and briefed about the activities of RCCI and explained the Chamber's role and initiatives for enhancing and facilitating the businesses and economy.



the government agencies and assists them in the decisions affecting trade and industrial culture. He added that RCCI has played a vital role in the development of commercial, Industrial and Economic activities in the region.

RCCI has also signed MOUs with various chambers local and international, as well as with various Government and private sector organizations of National and International level. He said that the chamber

CEO of CBD Punjab inspects Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed flyover



PPA

LAHORE: Imran Amin, CEO of CBD Punjab, led a delegation on Thursday to inspect the final stages of the Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Flyover, formerly known as Ghora Chowk. Accompanied by Brigadier Amir Rao, Director Land 4 Corps, Mohammad Omer, Executive Director Commercial CBD Punjab, Riaz Hussain, Executive Director Technical CBD Punjab, and other senior officials, the visit marked the culmination of efforts to enhance Lahore's infrastructure and pay tribute to the heroic legacy of Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed.

This landmark initiative, spearheaded by Punjab Central Business District Development Authority, also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), is set for a prestigious inauguration officiated by Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

Speaking about the project's completion, CEO Imran Amin expressed, "We deeply honor the sacrifices of our martyrs, and their bravery will forever resonate in our hearts. The project is now finalized and will be accessible to the public shortly."

The successful and timely completion of the project, under the directive of Chief Minister Punjab, reflects the relentless commitment and round-the-clock efforts of the technical teams from CBD Punjab, NLC, and Nespak.

AIOU committed to provide educational facilities to students at their doorstep: Prof. Dr. Nasir



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University is committed to provide educational facilities to the students at their doorstep, said Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice-Chancellor, AIOU at the inaugural session of a two-day Regional Heads Conference here yesterday.

Regional Heads of all the 53 Regions of the University across the country and all Principal Offices of the University were present in the inaugural session. The conference is being organized to review and strategies better services, improve the outreach system, facilitate students and to bring further improvement in examination and admissions system.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood has emphasized that students are the top priority, and the administration will do everything possible to increase facilities for them. He has directed the regional heads to prepare proposals during the two-day conference about regional services, quality improvements in education, and facilitation of students at their doorsteps. While enrollment in urban areas is satisfactory, dedicated efforts are needed to increase the number of students in remote rural areas where educational facilities are lacking.

Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmad Khan, explained the aims and objectives of the conference. He stated that this conference of regional heads is being held physically after two years, all thanks to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, who believes in teamwork and consultation with the university's stakeholders.

Institutions Javed Intizar inaugurated the 5th Annual Sports Gala

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Career Group of Institutions Javed Intizar inaugurated the 5th Annual Sports Gala of ICC Play Group to Matric Section Simly Dam Road Campus Bhara Kahu. Salim Al Azam, Deputy Director of Directorate of ICC, Muhammad Adnan Abbasi, Principal of Career Coaching Center Simly Dam Road, coordinators, teachers and a large number of students were present in the opening ceremony. Javed Intizar said that sports provide mental, physical and neurological development and training for the player and the team. Every player and team enter the field with the spirit of victory. Students enjoy the game above the defeat. We arranged different games keeping in mind the classes, age and psychology of the children. The students gave them a warm welcome on his arrival.

Unravelling the Dislike for Cash Economies: Understanding Government Concerns

One common issue that governments throughout the world focus on in the ever-changing environment of economic policy is curbing the cash economy. It is also referred to as undocumented economy. This article discusses why undocumented economy is discouraged, as well as the ramifications for tax collection, GDP, and overall national development.

Transactions' Influence
Consider the following scenario: Mr. A buys a car for Rs. 1 million and chooses a bank transfer to pay. Mr. A and the automobile factory both report this transaction to the government, which contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Both of them will likely pay taxes on this transaction because they are aware that if they don't, the government will likely inquire about it soon. If

the manufacturer fails to declare the transaction, the government still has the ability to request information from the bank, which might result in severe fines.

Social Responsibility and the Tax Collection System
Governments all around the globe rely on a tax collecting system based on two principles: fear of punishment and a sense of social obligation.

The government hopes to deter producers from hiding transactions by fostering fear of punishment. This technique not only assures better tax collection, but also presents the world community with a growing GDP.

The Effects of Cash Transactions
In contrast, when transactions are

conducted in cash without adequate reporting, the government confronts difficulties in estimating actual economic volume and combating tax evasion. In such circumstances, the impacted parties, such as the automobile manufacturing, benefit from the chance to dodge taxes, resulting in lower government income. In consequence, a lower government income limits the government's capacity to spend in national development, notably infrastructure.

The Domino Theory
The consequences go beyond low tax collections, affecting the whole economic environment. Inadequate government revenue reduces the funding available for infrastructure development, resulting in a lack of

job possibilities. This economic crisis prolongs poverty and inhibits investors from reinvesting in the nation. A poor GDP discourages foreign investment even more, leading money to drain out of the country and adding to the country's weakening economy.

Conclusion
Finally, discouraging cash transactions is a deliberate decision to maintain economic stability, not just a bureaucratic preference. Governments hope to increase tax income, properly depict GDP, and establish an atmosphere favourable to national growth by supporting transparent payment mechanisms. Understanding the interdependence of these aspects stresses the importance of avoiding cash transactions for a nation's collective growth.

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More than 570,000 people in Gaza now ‘starving’ due to fallout from war

A report released Thursday by the UN finds that more than half a million people in Gaza are “starving” because of not enough food entering the territory since the outbreak of war more than 10 weeks ago.

“It is a situation where pretty much everybody in Gaza is hungry,” said World Food Program chief economist Arif Husain.

He warned that if the war between Israel and Hamas continues at the same levels and food deliveries are not restored that the population could face “a full-fledged famine within the next six months.”

The report released Thursday by 23 UN and nongovernmental agencies found that the entire population in Gaza is in a food crisis, with 576,600 at catastrophic — or starvation — levels.

UN relief workers on Thursday reported “unbearable” scenes in two hospitals in northern Gaza, where bedridden patients with untreated wounds cry out for water, the few remaining doctors and nurses have no supplies, and bodies are lined up in the courtyard — signs of the worsening humanitarian crisis after 10 weeks of war between Israel and Hamas.

The relief workers spoke after delivering supplies a day earlier to Ahli and Shifa hospitals, which are located in the heart of the north Gaza battle zone where Israeli troops have demolished vast swaths of the city while fighting Hamas militants.

Bombardment and fighting continued Thursday, but with Gaza’s Internet and other communications cut off for a second straight day, details on the latest violence could largely not be confirmed.

Israel says it is in the final stages of clearing out Hamas militants from northern Gaza, but that months of fighting lie ahead in the south. The war sparked by Hamas’ deadly Oct. 7 rampage and hostage-taking in Israel has killed nearly 20,000 Palestinians. Some 1.9 million Gaza residents — more than 80 percent of the population — have been driven from their homes.

With supplies to Gaza cut off except for a small trickle, the World Food Program has said 90 percent of the population is regularly going without food for a full day.

A blast Thursday morning hit the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom crossing from Israel into Gaza, forcing the UN to stop its pickups of aid there, according to Juliette Touma, spokesperson of UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. At least four people were killed, the nearby hospital reported.

Positive Outcomes of General Asim’s Diplomacy - II

While the conventional perception associates military leaders primarily with defense and security, historical instances demonstrate that army chiefs have played a significant role in shaping the economic trajectory of their nations.

Park Chung-hee, a former army general, seized power in South Korea through a coup in 1961. During his presidency, Park enacted a series of economic strategies famously known as the “Miracle on the Han River.” His emphasis on industrialization and export-driven growth turned South Korea from a war-ravaged agrarian society into an economic juggernaut. The chaebols, substantial family-controlled conglomerates such as Samsung and Hyundai, played a pivotal role in this economic metamorphosis.

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, a former military officer, assumed the presidency of Egypt in 2014. His tenure has been marked by a focus on economic development, featuring initiatives aimed at infrastructure projects, job creation, and economic reforms. Key projects under his leadership include the construction of the new administrative capital and the expansion of the Suez Canal, intended to stimulate economic growth and position Egypt as a regional economic hub.

General Kenan Evren orchestrated a military coup in Turkey in 1980 and assumed the presidency. During his time in office, he implemented economic reforms to address the nation’s econ-

omy challenges, including high inflation and a substantial public debt. These reforms aimed to stabilize the economy and attract foreign investment, contributing to a sustained period of economic growth in the subsequent years.

General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, who took control through a coup in 2014, has endeavored to fortify Thailand’s economic stability. His administration has pursued infrastructure projects, economic development plans, and initiatives to attract foreign investment. Despite political controversies, the military-led government has actively worked to strengthen Thailand’s economic foundation.

While not an army chief, Lee Kuan Yew, a former military officer, played a vital role in Singapore’s economic development as the first Prime Minister. His leadership transformed Singapore from a struggling post-colonial port into a global financial hub. Lee’s policies concentrated on education, infrastructure, and attracting foreign investments, laying the groundwork for Singapore’s economic success.

Deng Xiaoping, despite not being an army chief, had a military background and significantly influenced China’s economic reforms. In the late 20th century, Deng’s leadership introduced market-oriented reforms that propelled China into becoming an economic power-

house. Key aspects of Deng’s economic policies included Special Economic Zones, opening up to foreign investment, and embracing a market-oriented approach.

In Pakistan, the current Army Chief, General Asim Munir, has actively taken the forefront in addressing the country’s challenges. Utilizing his personal influence overseas, he has assisted the civilian government, making 11 foreign visits and engaging with around 17 foreign diplomatic and military officials. These visits have resulted in decisions related to investments in Pakistan, extending the loan repayment period, and collaborative efforts on defense matters.

After assuming command of the Pakistan Army in November last year, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) embarked on a series of international visits

to strengthen diplomatic and military ties. In January, he visited Saudi Arabia, where meetings with Mohammed bin Salman and other Saudi officials resulted in the extension of the repayment period for loans provided to Pakistan by the Saudi government. Following this, the Army Chief visited the United Arab Emirates, addressing investment and defense matters crucial for Pakistan. Strategic security issues were deliberated during his visit to the UK on February 5, where he attended the Sustainability Conference at Wilton Park as the Chief Guest.

A subsequent visit to the United Arab Emirates on February 11 involved discussions with President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan regarding the extension of loan repayment periods for Pakistan in various sectors. In April, a three-day visit to China led to the signing of agreements on defense, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and technology issues. Details of joint defense agreements were kept confidential due to their sensitive nature.

On July 15, the Army Chief undertook a two-day visit to Iran, engaging in discussions on regional security, US-Iran relations, and other pertinent issues with Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi, the Foreign Minister, and the Army Chief. A return visit to the United Arab Emirates on July 30 finalized arrangements for investment in Pakistan under the Strategic Investment Framework for Cooperation (SIFC) across various sectors.

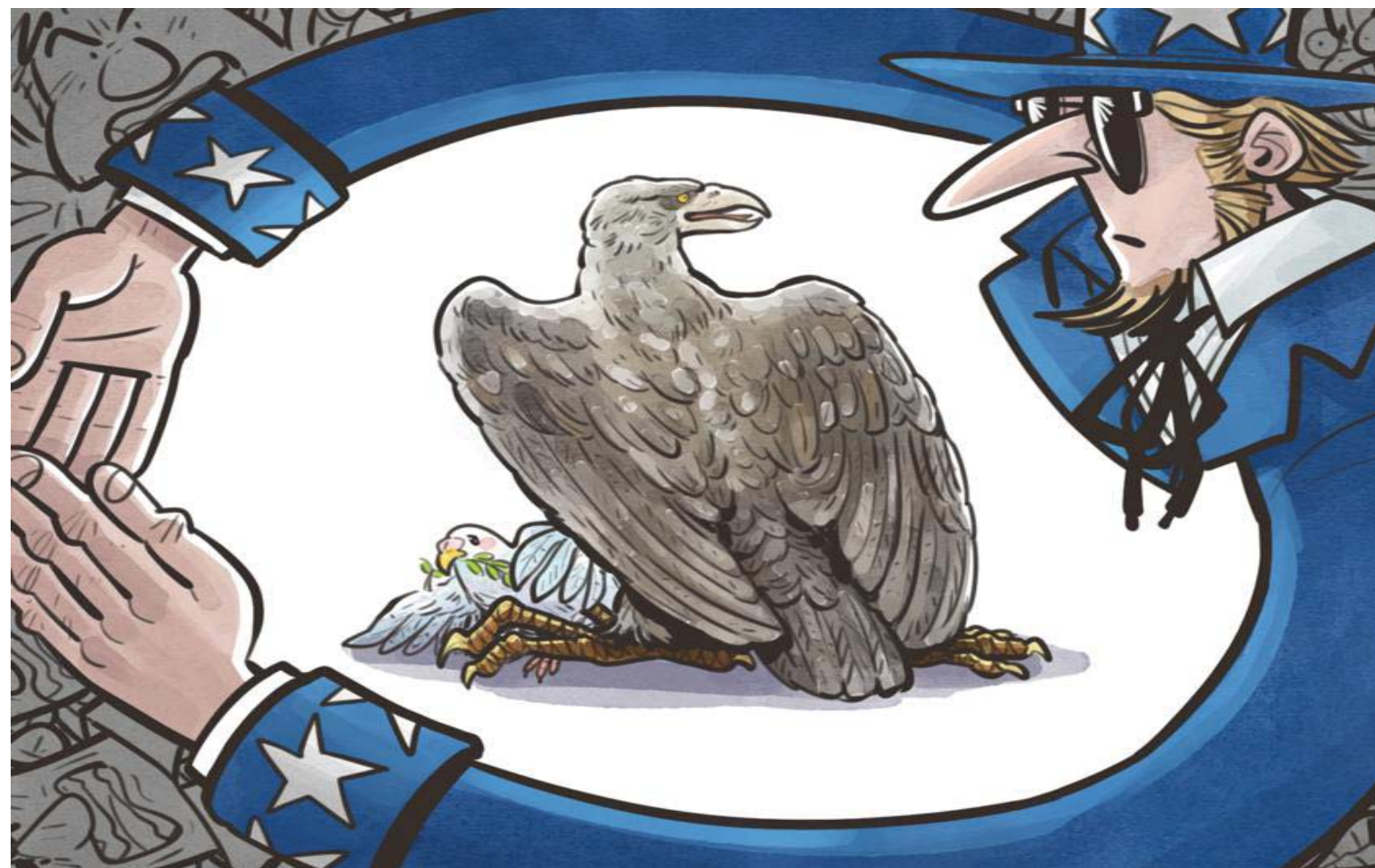
During a visit to Uzbekistan on September 5, joint strategies in the fight against terrorism and regional security issues were agreed upon in meetings with the Uzbek President, Minister of Defense, and military officials. Similarly, discussions on regional security and common defense interests took place during a visit to Turkey on September 13, where the Turkish President expressed gratitude for Pakistan Army’s relief operations, particularly urban search and rescue teams, during an earthquake. The Army Chief was honored with the Turkish Legion of Merit in recognition of his services.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



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

Women — The Broader Perspective - I

Azka Amin Fatima

How do we understand a woman? Do we truly take her as a living being, one with feelings and the ability to think, to strive for progress, to envision a life in which she rightfully deserves every right granted by Islam? In this era, there is a strong need for us to understand what actually the true essence of being a woman is and how important it is to empower women. In the ongoing pursuit of gender equality, a critical aspect that demands attention is the concept of body autonomy for women. This principle asserts that women have the inherent right to make decisions about their bodies, encompassing matters such as reproductive health, medical choices, and personal autonomy. “My Body, My Choice”, a slogan which the whole world is familiar with but not many truly understand. Unfortunately, only a few understand its real essence. It is a powerful statement that advocates women’s individual rights and freedom and choices about their body. It resonates far beyond an individual declaration— it echoes through the corridors of societal transformation and underscores the profound impact of women’s autonomy in broader perspectives. It explores the multifaceted dimensions of a rallying cry, emphasizing its role in reshaping societal norms, fostering inclusivity, and advancing the cause of human rights on a global scale. Some individuals with harmful intentions may misinterpret it, but its positive aspect is women’s self-empowerment. “My Body, My Choice” signifies the idea that a person, especially a woman, has the autonomy to decide who can or cannot touch their body. It strongly emphasizes the importance of consent. It echoes the sentiment that no entity on Earth should violate a woman’s body without her explicit consent. This phrase carries a broader societal message advocating for respect and consent, emphasizing the fundamental right

of individuals to control what happens to their bodies. It is a perspective, a slogan that advocates for bodily autonomy, and it is important to highlight a contrast between individuals who condemn the slogan, expressing concerns about granting what they perceive as extra rights to women, and those who support it. Additionally, it is also significant to highlight a concern about certain men being potential predators or rapists, contrasting their freedom with the lack of freedom experienced by women who face such threats. “My Body, My Rights” is a powerful rejection of any form of coercion or control over women’s bodies. It emphasizes the need to eradicate practices that undermine women’s autonomy, such as forced marriages, and other violations that impede the free expression of personal agency also condemned by Islam. With this in mind, how can we justify incidents like rape, senseless divorces, the abuse of any kind faced by women, or the beating of a wife, daughter or sister? When a man assaults a mother, sister, or daughter, doesn’t the hypocrisy of our society come to the surface? The saddest and most shameful aspect is that if any supreme authority had understood and protected the rights of women as ordained in Islam. Maybe the slogan, “My Body, My Choice” or the concept of women’s marches would never have emerged. It’s time for self-reflection on the correct role men should have played but failed to play. The rallying cry, “My Body, My Rights” encapsulates a profound assertion of women’s fundamental rights. Inherent in this declaration is the recognition that women, like all individuals, possess the autonomy to make decisions about their own bodies. Just as men have autonomy over their choices, women should have the same control, whether it involves reproductive health, medical decisions, or personal expressions of identity. Those men who are not in favor of the “My Body, My Choice” slogan condemn it, claiming that it grants women excessive rights and fosters too much liberalism. These men, when they grow up, turn out to be the preda-

tors, the rapists who, in the future, might rape a woman. They are against the “My Body, My Choice” slogan. And the unfortunate outcomes of this approach reflect in the painfully unforgettable events such as the Noor Muqaddam incident. Noor Muqaddam, was beaten, raped and beheaded. Every year, thousands of women experience violence throughout the nation, and hundreds of them are murdered. Many incidents remain unrecorded. If girls like Noor Muqaddam assert their right to their bodies and end up being murdered, the question emerges if or not women have the right to make their own marital decisions? Was her action so sinful that she deserved such a brutal end? How can we forget the innocent Zainab Amin, a minor absolutely ignorant of the heinous ways of society? What was the sin of the mother of three driving her three children on the Sialkot Lahore motorway? Was this too big a crime on her part to come out of her house in the middle of the night to reach her in-laws? Countless Zainab Amin and Noor Muqaddam’s in this country need this voice for protection. Those who attempt to present this slogan differently to those who see a woman as an emotional being or worse as a toy, are heartless and senseless who, under the burden of their distorted perspectives, fail to understand the “My Body, My Choice” slogan. “My Body, My Rights” is a valid slogan, a rightful demand that should be accessible to women at all.

Whenever there’s an incident in Pakistan that instills fear in everyone and shakes people to the core, it’s only then that everyone recalls women’s rights, protests, and the distinction between right and wrong. How many incidents like Zainab Amin and Noor Muqaddam will it take for us to realize that women deserve all the rights the society denies them? Women deserve respect. A woman’s outcry, shouting “My body, my rights,” is a valid slogan and a rightful demand that should be accessible to her at all times, even without raising this slogan.

To be continued

‘Army Chief visit to US: Takeaways’ - I

I was sitting in my office when I received a telephone call from the President of Pakistan who was still airborne in a special plane from Islamabad to Lahore to discuss the appointment of a new army chief with the chairman of the PTI. He directed me to keep two press releases ready. The Prime Minister had advised the President to appoint General Asim Munir as the Chief of the army staff, but the president was of the view that the head of one of the biggest parties should be consulted before he consented to the proposed appointment. The president used his magic to secure his appointment. Had he failed Pakistan might have been moving in a different direction.

Following the call by the Army Chief, Joint Chief of the army staff, on the President, when President’s Secretary, Mr. Waqar Ahmad, asked about my impression, I replied that the body language of the new chief exuded a sense of extraordinary determination and focus, evident in the depth of his eyes, suggesting he had significant ambitions and plans ahead.

Subsequently, his distinct approach became evident. He initiated a complete overhaul of border and coastline control practices. His decisive actions targeted illegal money exchanges, dismantling the Hawala Hundi business, and curbing the smuggling of currency, petrol, and other commodities. Additionally, he streamlined trade and investment policies, ensuring their consistency and effectiveness through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

He purged the illegal aliens despite potential disapproval from the US, the West, and the Afghan interim government. His strategic outreach to China yielded significant progress

on the CPEC project, accelerating the pace of investment and launching a second phase focused on agricultural development, industrial zones, research & development, and skill development. He also revived the Kashmir issue, supported Pakistan’s principled stance on the Israeli-Hamas conflict, advocated for an immediate ceasefire and urged peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine War without siding with either party.

Given the differences in perspectives between the US and Pakistan on these issues, the recent army chief’s visit was a complex and sensitive diplomatic endeavor. Details about the visit remain largely confidential, but confirmed meetings included high-ranking US officials like Secretary of State Blinken, Defense Secretary Austin, and CENTCOM leadership. While no joint statement was issued, a positive tone emerged with General Austin calling Pakistan a “major non-NATO ally” and Mr. Miller expressing interest in future collaboration on regional security and defense. Discussions reportedly focused on potential areas of cooperation like military ties, regional security efforts, counterterrorism, and economic partnerships. Though specific agreements remain unconfirmed, the visit laid the groundwork for potential future collaboration despite existing differences.

The focus of the visit seemed to be on establishing trust and paving the way for future collaboration, rather than unveiling immediate, tangible results. With details largely under wraps, the visit’s specific outcomes and long-term impact remain shrouded in uncertainty, awaiting either official clarifications or potential leaks through media channels.

To be continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan classic translation book gains popularity in China

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Pakistani Literature (Year 1994, Vol.2-3), one of five books in a project focused on mutual translation and publication of classic books between China and Pakistan, has gained popularity in China and is listed good book of Tencent in 2023.

The book contains over 30 short stories chosen by the Pakistan Academy of Letters and translated and published by Yilin Publishing House. It is the most comprehensive representation of contemporary Pakistani literature.

As the initial set of results from the China-Pakistan Classic Translation and Publication Project led by the Import



and Export Administration of Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, the publication of this book helps promote exchanges between China and Pakistan and satisfies the desire of Chinese readers to understand Pakistani literature.

The thirty or so original novels cover ten local languages, including Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto.

The selection offers a diverse range of styles and rich themes, providing insights into Pakistan's history, economy, art and cultural traditions. It gives readers a glimpse of a cross-section of modern Pakistani society and its future, CEN reported.

Most of the works focus on the daily lives of ordinary Pakistanis. The novels feature various protagonists, including a bride who brings good luck to her family, a gypsy girl who awaits the blossoming of flowers under a fig tree, an artist who breathes life into puppets but becomes one himself, and a painter consumed by an obsession with nature.

The book is written in a subtle and witty style, expressing the observations

and thoughts of contemporary Pakistani writers, thereby greatly enriching the content of Pakistani literature.

Liu Guohui, Deputy Secretary General of the Taofen Foundation, remarked that the book is well-written and authentic, particularly in its precise details and profound portrayal of the protagonists' psychological states.

"The dialogues in the book are simple, animate and engaging. The novels are short and concise, yet sharp and profoundly reflect the richness and colorfulness of Pakistani life, the people's desire for happiness, and the complex ideas and deep insights of Pakistani society. It is a successful collection of translated novels," said Liu.

SI Global Solutions attains global accolades

ABC

KARACHI: SI Global Solutions, a preeminent system integration and IT powerhouse in Pakistan, garnered distinguished recognition at the recent Lenovo UK Summit held in London.

Standing out amidst a multitude of partners, SI Global Solutions has emerged as a stellar representative of Pakistan's technological prowess. As the partner for Lenovo products in Pakistan, the company extends its global footprint to the USA, UK, UAE, Canada, and various other international locales.

Noman A. Said, the astute CEO of SI Global Solutions, articulated his reflections on this noteworthy occasion, underscoring the pivotal role of technology in sculpting Pakistan's IT landscape. Said remarked,



"Revamping Pakistan's IT infrastructure necessitates embracing the latest technologies and a compre-

hensive overhaul of the IT curriculum nationwide to establish a robust foundation for the future.

Delving into hardware manufacturing is imperative, considering our significant lag in this domain. Our commitment lies in importing cutting-edge solutions, advanced devices, and nurturing professional growth within Pakistan.

Harnessing technology at the grassroots level, encompassing devices, equipment, and software, propels the productivity of systems and businesses. Therefore, investing in technology is indispensable for sustainable growth and development."

Lenovo, a global technology titan, stands as the paramount producer, and SI Global Solutions takes pride in its association with such a pioneering force in the industry.

Impact of Social Media on Society



Aliza Arshad, Islamabad

Today, social media plays an important role in our daily life. Social media has a huge impact on society. It has made communication fast and more accessible, allowing us to connect with friends, family and even strangers from different corners of the globe. It is also a great platform for self-expression and creativity.

But, like everything else there are pros and cons. social media can sometimes create unrealistic expectations and lead to feelings of inadequacy, as we compare our lives to the highlight reels of others. It can also lead to cyberbullying and the spread of misinformation.

Overall, social media has definitely shaped our society in both positive and negative ways. It is all about finding that balance and using it in a way that enhance our lives.

Workshop on Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Sector Challenges

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Taking cognizance of the increasing energy import bill, reduced investment in petroleum exploration activities and the challenges presented by exploration and production companies during various interactions, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) took the initiative of meaningfully engaging with upstream petroleum industry. Accordingly, a full day workshop was held on Thursday 21st December 2023 which provided a platform to articulate the challenges faced by the industry and a unique opportunity for meaningful interaction directly amongst the key stakeholders to resolve the challenges and to enhance investment in the sector. The Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali and Secretary Petro-



leum along with all relevant Director Generals attended the workshop. The industry was represented by CEOs/MDs of leading companies including MPCL, OGDCL, PPL, UEPL, PIOGCL, PEL, OPI, POL, KUFPEC, IPR, GHPL, KPOGCL.

Mr. Faheem Haider, MD/CEO MPCL opened the workshop and presented energy

outlook of the country along with potential of hydrocarbon resources which can be tapped to control the depleting trend of oil and gas production in the country. He underscored the need for governmental support through various policy interventions and creating a business friendly environment.

In the penultimate session

an open discussion was held for the participants to appraise the forum about any other issues beyond the fixed agenda in an open manner and matters were deliberated upon. During the course of the workshop on some issues progress was made and directions were given to the relevant departments for the way forward, while for issues

which needed further deliberation working groups were formed to progress the matter further and come up with workable options / proposals within specified timelines. The working groups were advised to complete their assigned tasks within next week and present their recommendations during next workshop tentatively scheduled during 1st week of January 2024.

In his concluding remarks, the Minister for Energy thanked MPCL for taking lead in providing the opportunity on a collaborative interaction of all stakeholders for meaningful discussions and once again assured of his and the Government's full cooperation and support to resolve the issues of the industry to enhance the oil and gas exploration and production in Pakistan.

People's Party is the guarantee of a better future for the youth.

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Senior member of Pakistan People's Party and Liberal Party Captain Farid Khan Abaro said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto is a ray of light for the people. On February 8, the pool of all fake heads will be opened. The Phelphs Party is the guarantee of a better future for the youth. He expressed these views. After discussing the current political situation of Pakistan and Canada and the election situation in Pakistan, he said that the people of Pakistan should see Bilawal Bhutto as the Prime Minister after discussing the current political situation of Pakistan and Canada and the election situation in Pakistan. Want to Bilawal Bhutto has a good ability to solve the current crisis and other issues of the country. The Bhutto family has played a key role in the development, prosperity and peace and order of Pakistan. The Phelps Party will win the election with a clear majority nationwide. And the next prime minister will be Bilawal Bhutto and then prosperity will come to Pakistan. Finally, Farid Khan Abaro said that he thanked the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Justin Trudeau, from the bottom of his heart, who listened to the views of the Pakistani people and Muslims, which has raised the stature of Pakistan and Muslims. We are grateful and grateful to the Prime Minister of Canada



JS Investments Limited launches JS Fixed-Term Munafa Fund

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: JS Investments Limited, the first private sector asset management company of Pakistan, announces the launch of its latest offering – the JS Fixed Term Munafa Fund. Designed to meet the diverse needs of investors, the fund boasts two distinct plans offering attractive fixed returns, providing an avenue for wealth creation with a moderate risk profile:

The first plan presents investors with an enticing 17.50%* Per Annum Fixed Return at Maturity over 3 Years***, benchmarked against the 3-year PKRV Rates at the time of Plan Launch. Meanwhile, the second plan offers 21%* Per Annum Fixed Return at Maturity of 1 Year***, benchmarked against the 1-year PKRV Rates at the time of Plan Launch.

JS Fixed Term Munafa Fund Plans have been meticulously crafted to allow investors to secure a predetermined fixed rate of return upon maturity. It strategically allocates funds to government securities, cash in bank accounts, money market placements, and TDRs, ensuring a well-rounded and secure financial portfolio. The scheme is structured to safeguard the initial investment amount at maturity while aiming to generate a fixed rate of return.

Prague shooting: Student kills 15, injures 24 at historic Charles University



A gunman at Prague's Charles University's Faculty of Arts building in Jan Palach Square shot and killed at least 15 people and injured 24 others in what is being dubbed as the Czech Republic's deadliest mass shooting to date.

The shooter, a student at the university, was subsequently "eliminated" by the police. Earlier on the same day, the shooter's father was found dead.

Prague Mayor Bohuslav Svoboda expressed the unsettling reality, stating, "Now it turns out that, unfortunately, our world is also changing, and the problem of the individual shooter is emerging here as well."

Eyewitness Petr Nedoma, director of the Rudolfinum Gallery, recounted seeing the shooter with an automatic weapon on a gallery, firing towards the Manes Bridge. The assailant eventually surrendered by putting his hands up and discarding the weapon on the street.

Police swiftly sealed off the area, and ambulances lined up to attend to the wounded. A witness described the terrifying moments, recalling, "It was scary, there were a lot of policemen everywhere, who were shouting at us with submachine guns, telling us to run outside."

As news circulated, an email advised staff and students to stay secure within their locations. The tragic event unfolds as Prime Minister Petr Fiala cancels his trip to address the developing crisis. Despite gun crime being relatively rare in the Czech Republic, this incident stands as a grim reminder of the unexpected threats faced by communities worldwide.

AlHuda CIBE's Distance Learning Network Expands Globally in more than 100 Countries

Crossing 100 Countries in Pursuit of Accessible Islamic Finance Education

DUBAI, UAE: AlHuda Center of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) celebrates a groundbreaking milestone: a thriving online student network spanning over 100 countries. This remarkable achievement signifies our unwavering commitment to ultimate access to high-quality Islamic finance and banking education.

"At AlHuda CIBE, we recognize the transformative power of education," says Mr. Muhammad Zubair, CEO at AlHuda CIBE. "Our online programs bridge geographical barriers, offering flexible, affordable, and convenient pathways for students across the globe to pursue their academic and professional aspirations in Islamic finance."

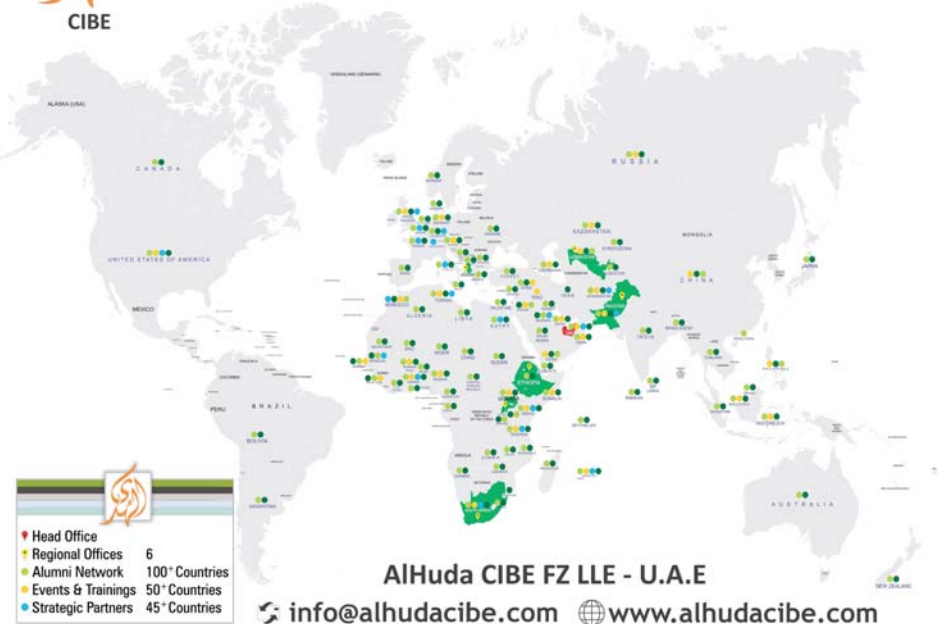
AlHuda CIBE has expanded its presence across every inhabited continent globally, establishing a clientele and alumni network spanning over 100 countries. With a strategic partner network encompassing 40 countries and hosting workshops and events in 60+ countries, AlHuda CIBE has secured its position as the world's largest Islamic Banking and Finance Training Network, as recognized by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). We cater to diverse learning needs with a comprehensive range of programs, from introductory courses to advanced professional certifications. Our experienced faculty ensures an enriching educational experience, guiding students every step of the way

with personalized support and resources. This milestone resonates with AlHuda CIBE's core mission: empowering future leaders in the global Islamic finance industry. We take immense pride in our students' accomplishments and their contributions to building a more ethical and sustainable financial landscape. "Reaching 100+ countries for Asia, Africa, Europe, Americas, and Australia is just the beginning," Mr. Muhammad Zubair continues. "We remain dedicated to continuous improvement, tailoring our programs to meet the evolving needs of students and the industry. Our vision is to be the premier global provider of Islamic finance

and banking education, shaping a future where knowledge empowers change." AlHuda CIBE extends its heartfelt gratitude to its students and staff, whose dedication and unwavering commitment fuel our ongoing success. Together, we are building a brighter future for Islamic finance, one mind at a time. AlHuda CIBE offers a wide range of online certification programs in Islamic banking and finance including: Executive Diploma on Islamic Banking and Finance, Certified Islamic Microfinance Manager, Certified Takaful Professional, Certified Islamic Fund Manager and Certified Sukuk Professional. We are offering the above-men-



AlHuda CIBE's achieved the milestone of 100 Countries for Distance Learning Students



tioned programs in English along-with selected programs in French and Russian language. Mr. M. Zubair Mughal, CEO, AlHuda CIBE, said that we

celebrate expanding our global reach, we're also excited to welcome new talents to our vibrant online community. Take the first step towards a fulfilling

career in Islamic finance – explore our diverse programs and join our mission to empower future leaders in this rapidly growing industry.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
62,693.56	62,448.01
Day's High	Day's Low
62,850.09	61,750.97
Index Value	Change
12,616,127,419	+245.55
Percentage	Time
+0.39%	21 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,694.73	-20.95
Percentage	Time
-0.27%	21 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,180.04	+98.04
Percentage	Time
+0.26%	21 Dec, 12:21 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,140.47	-535.47
Percentage	Time
-1.59%	21 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	77.7	78.5
UK Pound Sterling	359	362.5
US Dollar	282.5	285

ICAP Celebrates
Financial
Excellence with
Thrilling Changes

PPA

KARACHI: In a grand spectacle of financial prowess, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) concluded the National Finance Olympiad (NFO) 2023, setting a new benchmark for excitement and strategic brilliance.

A total of 38 teams representing various sectors and organisations participated in the rigorous competition, which spanned two challenging rounds. The top 6 teams, Engro Fertilizers, Hubco, Midas Safety, EY Ford Rhodes, Falcons Dubai, and KnS School of Business Studies, showcased exceptional financial expertise and secured their places in the Grand Finale.

Reflecting on the event's grandeur, Mr. Samiullah Siddiqui, FCA, Chairman PAIB Committee, and Council Member ICAP, conveyed that NFO has consistently been dedicated to pushing boundaries and nurturing professional development. The introduction of 'Spin the Wheel' added an element of unpredictability, enhancing the competition's dynamism and challenge.

The esteemed Jury comprised Dr. Ahmed Junaid, Dean and Rector KSBL; Mr. Khalid Bin Latif, CEO-Alfalakh Asset Management Limited; Ms. Naila Kassim, Group Director HR for House of Habib, and Mr. Shakaib Arif, FCA, Chief Executive Officer at Naymat Collateral Management Company Limited; all listed in alphabetical order. The Grand Finale comprised of three intense rounds, each designed to test the participants' financial acumen and strategic thinking. From qualifying assessments to simulation-based challenges, the competition built up to the climactic moments of the Board Room- Unwind the Mind, the rapid-fire 100-second round and Spin the Wheel.

The President, Mr. Muhammad Ali Latif FCA, recognised finance professionals' critical role in the nation's socioeconomic development. He congratulated the proud winners and expressed gratitude to the NFO organising team of ICAP's PAIB committee, Unilever Pakistan Limited, Learning Partner KSBL, Technical Partners A. F. Fergusons & BDO Ebrahim & Co. ICAP team from Examinations Department, Information Technology Department, MARCOM, and Administration were also appreciated in making the program successful.

ICCI calls for following Quaid's vision to make Pakistan a progressive economy

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Inspector General, Islamabad Police said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had done a great favor to us by creating an independent country for us and we should develop Pakistan according to his vision. He stressed that the youth should follow Quaid's golden principles of faith, unity, and discipline to play an effective role in the national development of their country. He said that blocking roads and commercial centers to protest is a negation of Quaid's vision.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the birthday of Quaid-e-Azam reminded us to work hard with honesty and dedication in every sphere of life to make Pakistan a rising economy. He stressed that the government should focus on promoting ease of doing business in the



country to enable business activities to flourish. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Quaid-e-Azam had said that no power can undo Pakistan and we all have to play a role in making Pakistan a strong country.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI said that the ongoing repression of Muslims in India is proof of the fact that the two-nation theory of Pakistan was right. He said that we should work harder for the economic development of Pakistan.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that Quaid-i-Azam had emphasized on promoting discipline in the nation, but unfortunately, our society is devoid of discipline at the moment. He said that the businessmen should be promoted as role models to make Pakistan a strong economy of the region.

Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice President ICCI, Afraz Begum Sial and others also spoke on the occasion.

Hardwork

ISLAMABAD: Workers of CDA are busy in repairing the street lights on green belt in the middle of the Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Infinix HOT 40 Series, Powered by MediaTek Helio G99

PNP

LAHORE: Infinix, Pakistan's No. 1 selling smartphone brand, announces the nationwide availability of the much-anticipated gaming Infinix HOT 40 series driven by the powerful MediaTek Helio G99. The series include Infinix HOT 40 Pro, HOT 40i & HOT 40 available for purchase both online and offline.

Talking about the launch CEO, Infinix Pakistan-Mr. Simon said "At Infinix we strive to forge deeper connections with today's younger generation. Infinix HOT 40 series is designed to cater to the diverse needs of our dynamic user base."

Infinix HOT 40 Pro provides a generous 8 GB of RAM supplemented by an additional 8 GB of virtual RAM, delivering a smooth multitasking experience. Moreover, the Infinix Hot 40 Pro offers ample inbuilt storage at 256 GB.

BOP conducts first transaction under EXIM Bank's Export Finance Facility

PPA

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab (BOP) becomes the first bank to execute a transaction for Export Import Bank of Pakistan (EXIM Bank) under its newly launched Export Finance Scheme (EFS) Facility. Under the facility, EXIM Bank will channel the GOP interest rate subsidy to banks to offer low-cost financing to exporters. The facility will eventually replace the existing Export Finance Facilities offered by State Bank of Pakistan.

The ceremony took place in Islamabad and was attended by the caretaker Finance Minister, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, and the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmed. Senior representatives from the Government of Pakistan, the State Bank of Pakistan, and leading export houses of Pakistan were also present. Mr. Syed Irfan Bukhari, President EXIM Bank signed the agreement whereas BOP was represented by Mr. Asim Jahangir Seth, Head Corporate Banking & Mr. Muhammad Saqib Sajjad,



Head FIs & Correspondent Banking.

Recognizing the BOP support to EXIM, Mr. Syed Irfan Bukhari expressed, "The BOP team, under the leadership of Zafar sahib, has proven to be a steadfast and supportive ally to our bank. Today marks a significant milestone as they not only become the first bank to adopt our Bank Master Policy but also demonstrate their belief in the product's utility, lending it credibility. Furthermore, BOP has taken a pioneering step by being the first to sign a transaction in support of the government's reforms program, which involves the transfer of administration for the Export Finance Schemes from the SBP to EXIM" Mr. Asim Jahangir said, "BOP remains true to its values of offering innovative

Nestlé Pakistan extends PKR 5 million to Pakistan Red Crescent Society

PPA

LAHORE: Nestlé Pakistan extended corporate contribution worth PKR 5 million, as part of its philosophy of Creating Shared Value (CSV), to support Pakistan Red Crescent Society's (PRCS) efforts towards social welfare and relief work.

Talking at the event, Jason Avanceña, CEO, Nestlé Pakistan said, "Our collaboration with PRCS over the years has taken many forms. Be it the organization of blood donation camps or partnering during COVID-19 response, we have depended on PRCS' unmatched presence and expertise in providing first-aid and emergency response.

Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Chairman PRCS, said, "We are deeply grateful to Nestlé Pakistan for their generous contribution.

'Cheezious Spreads Cheezy Khushiyan: A Heartfelt Celebration with Housekeeping Heroes'



ABC

ISLAMABAD: Cheezious, a leading name in the [industry], proudly announces a heartwarming celebration that took place to honor the dedication and hard work of its housekeeping staff. This shows Cheezious' commitment to recognizing and appreciating the contributions of every team member.

Zohaib Hassan, Head of Marketing at Cheezious, shared his perspective on the celebration, stating, "At Cheezious, we consider every team member as an integral part of our family.

Our housekeeping staff plays a crucial role in maintaining the high standards that define the Cheezious experience. Celebrating their hard work is not just a gesture of appreciation but a reaffirmation of our commitment to a positive and inclusive workplace."

To express gratitude and recognition, cash awards and prizes were distributed among the each & everyone of housekeeping staff. This gesture aimed to acknowledge their tireless efforts in ensuring a clean and welcoming environment for Cheezious patrons.

Farewell party arranged in honour of two outgoing General Managers of NTDC



PPA

LAHORE: A farewell ceremony was arranged in the honour of outgoing General Manager (TSG), Engr. Safdar Ali and General Manager (SO) NPCC, Engr. Sajjad Akhtar Khilji at the TSG Training Centre, NKLP Lahore.

Both the officers are going to retire from service on 21st (today) and 28th December 2023 respectively.

The ceremony was headed by the Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan. While addressing the ceremony, MD NTDC expressed best wishes for the two officers and paid tribute to their services rendered for the organization.

Both officers also shared their views on the occasion and extended gratitude to the management for hosting farewell ceremony in their honour.

Majority of Pakistanis perceive CPEC positive for Pak economy: report

APP

BELJING: As 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a report titled Perceptions on CPEC in Pakistan, was revealed in the 8th CPEC Media Forum, hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and organized by China Economic Net and Pakistan-China Institute. Data from the report indicate that there is widespread agreement among Pakistanis that CPEC will help revive economic activity in Pakistan.

The report draws its insight from 350 individuals, encompassing key stakeholders including 62 government employees, 22 parliamentarians, civil sector representatives,

private sector professionals, journalists, members of academia and students from Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Paktunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit. Based on the report, 65% of the respondents view Chinese professionals as friends of Pakistan who will help revive the country's economy and socio-economic well-being. This means a majority of Pakistani people strongly believe that CPEC will prove to be beneficial for the country and its people. About how CPEC will help Pakistan, 93.5% of the respondents view CPEC as a project that will significantly help Pakistan through investment in various sectors while also opening avenues for businessmen. And, 75.1% of the respondents agree

that through CPEC, local businessmen will get access to international markets. Moreover, 61.1% of the respondents believe that CPEC will help economically vulnerable groups such as women, which signals positive segments among the Pakistanis with regard to how CPEC is slowly revolutionizing the economy by improving the socio-economic well-being of the people. Additionally, 66.9% of the respondents think that investment under CPEC can significantly improve the agricultural industry of Pakistan, and 72.7% of the respondents believe that CPEC has helped develop state-of-the-art infrastructure in the country. Looking into the future, 54.2% of the respondents think CPEC



should focus on business opportunities more, followed by education (13%), health (5.9%), IT (2.3%), etc. Overall, the majority of the respondents perceive CPEC positively as a game-changer for Pakistan economy. Furthermore, the second highest responses for the questions were "neutral" which stems from the idea that while CPEC is fast progressing and its fruit is visible some people

lack a good understanding of this corridor and its influence regarding different development phases. Statistics from the Embassy of China in Pakistan exhibit that by the end of 2022, CPEC had brought direct investment of \$25.4 billion to Pakistan, creating 2,36,000 jobs, building 510 kilometers of expressways and 886 kilometers of national grid, and adding 8,000 MW of electricity.

Education

ISLAMABAD: A view of debris of the demolished Chambers of Lawyers at F-8 Football ground after the Supreme Court ultimatum, which was till 01-05-2021, as the Workers of Anti encroachments.



Photo: PID

Efforts in collaboration with mosques vital to educate out-of-school children: President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday stressed the need for making all possible efforts in collaboration with the mosques to educate around 28 million out-of-school children in the country. The president, chairing a meeting to discuss the role of mosques in promotion of

education, said the mosques could be used for promotion of literacy in the country.

Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs, education ministers of Sindh and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, provincial education secretaries, and representatives of Auqaf and Religious Affairs departments attended the meeting. In the meeting, the president was

briefed about the Accelerated Learning Program. It was told that over 70,000 out-of-school children in Islamabad were enrolled in the schools.

The Accelerated Learning Program Model envisages the provision of five-year education within 24 to 30 months and enrollment of the out-of-school children.

The meeting was told that

the grown children, who were deprived of education, could benefit from the said program.

It was told the said program was flexible, focused and low-cost initiative which could also be implemented at the places provided by the community, religious seminaries and second shifts in schools. Religious Affairs Minister Aneeq Ahmed said

the federal government would extend all possible facilities to educate the out-of-school children.

The participants of the meeting agreed to formulate a policy paper to utilise the platform of mosques for the education purpose. The draft of the policy paper would be presented before the federal cabinet for approval.

Govt 'releases' all women, children of Baloch protest

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Following widespread condemnations over the police crackdown against Baloch protesters in Islamabad, the caretaker government on Thursday asserted that all women and children had been released, ARY News reported.

"On directions of PM Anwaarul Haq Kakar, all the women and children protesters were released," said privatisation minister Fawad Hasan Fawad at a press conference in Islamabad alongside Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and culture minister Syed Jamal Shah.

Earlier in the day, Islamabad police detained numerous Baloch protesters after using water cannons and baton charges to break the protest against enforced disappearances. Condemnations from human rights organisations and analysts poured in, castigating the "crackdown" on the Baloch protesters.

Soon after the arrests, Baloch Yekjehti Commit-



tee (BYC) filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq warned Islamabad IG Akbar Nasir Khan against any hindrance in the protest, saying that they have the constitutional right to demonstration.

Meanwhile, Caretaker premier Anwaarul Haq Kakar formed a three-member committee comprising Solan-

gi, Fawad and Jamal Shah to hold talks with the families of the protesters. Following the talks, an immediate order for the release of the detained individuals was issued.

The ministers, who were part of the committee, also held a press conference in the federal capital, saying that the force was used to avoid a "catastrophe".

Fawad Hasan Fawad

emphasised that peaceful protests had been ongoing outside the press club for several days, without any interference.

"We have complete conviction that the people coming from Balochistan have done nothing wrong, but some local elements exploited the situation, which led to clashes between the protesters and the law enforcers," Fawad

Hassan claimed.

"Some people — with their faces covered — came there and started pelting stones," the minister claimed. He added that the protesters were earlier requested to stage their demonstration at F-9 Park where they could be given "protection and security".

He said the Islamabad High Court has too sought a report from the Islamabad IG about the protesters and the government does not want to take any decision on a sub-judice matter.

The minister said that Islamabad police had been directed to release all the women and children. "Some of them are yet to be identified," he said, adding that 90% of the men arrested during the crackdown have been released.

Fawad pointed out Pakistan's security situation and said the administration, police and intelligence agencies had "clear and credible evidence" that if people were gathered on a main street for an extended period, the situation would be exploited.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's son decides to contest general elections

PPA

Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's son has decided to contest the forthcoming general elections.

Sources told PPA that Nadir Khaqan Abbasi will contest the upcoming general elections from the ancestral seat in Murree.

Sources added that Nadir Khaqan Abbasi will contest the general polls as an independent candidate on the National Assembly (NA) seat in Murree.

Pakistan, Indonesia to collaborate for distance learning programs

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the University of Terbuk, Indonesia's leading open university, visited the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Thursday to foster collaboration and discuss opportunities and key challenges in the realm of distance learning programs.

Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, Executive Director HEC chaired the meeting. Led by its Rector Prof. Ojat Darajat, the University's delegation included faculty members representing various departments and experts in distance learning programs.

Dr. Muhammad Latif Gondal, Executive Director (Planning and Monitoring) Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Awais Ahmed, Adviser Quality Assurance HEC and



other divisional heads attended the meeting.

The University of Terbuk is Indonesia's prominent open university, providing accessible and flexible education through distance learning. Established in 1984, the University's programs cover a wide array of disciplines, offering degrees at various levels.

The meeting aimed at enhancing HEC's efforts advancing quality of higher education, fostering inter-

national cooperation, and addressing the evolving challenges faced by institutions in the field of distance learning, the state news agency reported.

Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum appreciated the University of Terbuk's credibility by achieving a remarkable rate of access to higher education through its distance learning programs.

He emphasized that by ensuring the quality of online education, particularly in terms of robust quality assur-

ance measures, trust in the online mode of education can be developed and strengthened.

The Government of Pakistan has been a staunch advocate of distance learning to improve access rates in the country. HEC is supporting Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) to increase the number of students, particularly in tertiary education, aligning with the government's vision for enhanced accessibility to higher education," he said.

Both sides deliberated on strategies to create an environment conducive to the success and integration of students within the distance learning system. Various operational, auditing and implementation challenges in distance learning programs also came under discussion.

Canadian High Commissioner calls on Jalil Abbas Jilani



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Canada Leslie Scanlon called on Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Thursday. During the meeting, they discussed various aspects of Pakistan-Canada bilater-

al relations and facilitation by the Pakistani government for the resettlement process of Afghan nationals to Canada.

The Canadian High Commissioner thanked the foreign minister for Pakistan's assistance in the resettlement process.

Seminar held on development journey of Bangladesh



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Thursday held a seminar titled "Development Journey of Bangladesh: Lessons Learnt for Pakistan" in collaboration with International Growth Center (IGC) and Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR).

Country Director International Growth Center (IGC) Dr Ijaz Nabi, Chief Economist Zafar ul Hassan, Additional Secretary Kamran Rehman, representatives from think tanks, economic institutions, academia, private sector, civil society and various government organisations participated in the seminar, a news release said.

Vice Chairman of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh Dr Sadiq Khan gave a comprehensive presenta-

tion covering Bangladesh's early challenges, including quantitative restrictions, economic deregulation, banking reforms, trade with India, sectorial policies, special bonded warehouse systems, raw material imports, and strategies for food self-sufficiency and private investments.

Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb acknowledged Pakistan's economic challenges, including gender disparities and the need to leverage the youthful population, especially women for economic progress.

Expressing gratitude to Dr Sadiq for an excellent presentation, the deputy chairman encouraged participants to draw lessons from Bangladesh's experiences for Pakistan's economic stability.

Later, he presented a souvenir to Dr Sadiq Khan as a token of appreciation.

Pakistan demands UN probe into TTP acquiring advanced weapons

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has demanded the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to conduct a thorough investigation to determine how the banned outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) acquired advanced weapons, used in recent terrorist attacks in the country.

Addressing a UNSC's debate on the situation in Afghanistan, Ambassador Munir Akram — Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations — noted that Pakistan faced a major threat from the TTP and its offshoots for their organised cross-border terrorist attacks. "We also have clear evidence that the TTP receives support from our main adversary," Ambassador Munir Akram said — in an apparent reference to India.

The Pakistani envoy said that TTP and its affiliates have carried out a series of organised cross-border terrorist attacks on Pakistan's soil, noting that the group has access to weapons originating in the stock left behind by foreign forces, which were led by the United States.

"Yet," Ambassador Akram said, "the question is: how did the TTP — a listed terrorist organisation — secured these weapons?"

In this regard, he demanded that the United Nations — whether UNAMA or another agency — conduct a thorough investigation to elicit how these weapons got into the hands of the TTP and to identify ways of retrieving them.

India spreading terrorism in South Asia: foreign office Spokesperson

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: India is spreading terrorism in the world including the South Asian region, said Pakistan's Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday.

Pakistan is deeply concerned over the terror activities of India across the world, Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing. Pakistan has also raised the issue of Afghan soil being used for terror activities in Pakistan at the UNSC, she said and urged the Kabul government to act against such elements.

On Israeli aggression, she said Pakistan demands to hold Israel accountable for its actions and urged the United Nations Security Council to take immediate effective action to impose a ceasefire and lift the inhumane siege against Gaza.

She said we strongly condemn Israel's ongoing war on hospitals and its barbarous bulldozing of tents in the courtyard and vicinity of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza that crushed to death numerous Palestinians including women, children and wounded patients under treatment.

Pakistan FO spokesperson said the crimes against humanity in occupied Palestine are a haunting stain on the conscience of humanity. The spokesperson said Pakistan is also deeply concerned over the recent statements made by senior Israeli officials, rejecting the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state.

She said such statements, especially the comments on the "Oslo Accords", reflect the true intentions of the Israeli occupation authorities, their disregard for International law and commitments and rejection of a just resolution of the Palestinian question.