



CM Punjab initiates collaborative effort with Chinese experts to tackle smog crisis

Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi launches a crucial initiative following artificial rain to combat rising smog levels. In a concerted effort, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has arranged for a special team of environmental experts from China to visit Lahore next week. (Details on Page 3)



Mao's birth anniversary commemorated at symposium in Beijing

The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Tuesday held a symposium at the Great Hall of the People to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the birth of Comrade Mao Zedong. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivered an important speech at the symposium. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Group photo

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo with participants of 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium in Bangkok, Thailand.



Chief of the Naval Staff Attends Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in Bangkok

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chief of the Naval staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited Thailand to attend eighth Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs at Bangkok. The event involved panel discussions on issues related to cooperation in maritime security of Indian Ocean and Blue Economy- ways forward for sustainable development of IONS members.

During IONS Conclave of Chiefs bilateral meetings between Chief of the Naval Staff and naval leadership of IONS member states were also held. CNS called on Commander of Qatar Emiri Naval Forces, C-in-C of Royal Thai Navy, Deputy C-in-C of Russian Navy, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman, CNS of French Navy, Commander of Iranian

Navy, Fleet Commander of Royal Navy, UK and Vice Chief of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and discussed matters of mutual interest. Admiral Naveed Ashraf focused on PN contributions to regional maritime security and emphasized on collaboration between the regional navies to enhance maritime security of the region. He also stressed upon greater collaboration between Indian Ocean countries to exploit potentials of blue economy.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is an initiative to formalise a regional maritime collaborative forum. Pakistan formally became member of IONS in 2014. PN proactively participates in IONS as it provides a platform to the participating nations to work together for regional peace and maritime security through a collaborative approach.

Caretaker PM orders urgent attention on Balochistan's water

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Tuesday stressed upon focusing the climate resilience and climate finance aspects in all the water projects of Balochistan and reiterated that progress and prosperity of the people of province were among the top priorities of the government.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a review meeting on the important matters pertaining to the Balochistan province. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Balochistan Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki, Education Minister Dr Qadir Baloch and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir, Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Sami Saeed, Caretaker Federal Minister for Law and Water Resources Irfan Aslam, and relevant senior officials, the



PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The chief secretary gave a briefing over different projects of the province.

The prime minister further directed for expediting the

matters related to the construction of a two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi and observed that with its construction, the different parts of the country would get an alternate leeway, besides strengthening of the

linkages.

He also asked for an immediate resolution of the financial issues faced by the universities in the province.

The caretaker prime minister directed for the constitution of an

inter-provincial committee with regard to the matters of Kachhi Canal project and the inclusion of caretaker minister for planning and caretaker chief ministers of Punjab and Balochistan provinces as its members.

The committee would be tasked to finalize proposals about the restoration and expansion of the canal.

A directive was also issued for the construction of check dams to utilize water from the hilly rivulets and streams, and for the protection of Kachhi canal and Pet Feeder from the hilly torrents.

The caretaker prime minister ordered for formulation of a comprehensive mechanism over registration and fitness of vehicles in the province in collaboration with the National Highways and Motorways Police and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).

PTI spokesperson hails PHC decision of restoring 'bat' symbol

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson lauded the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) historic decision suspending the verdict of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) pertaining to the PTI electoral symbol "bat", vowing that the people of the country would bring the most peaceful and unprecedented revolution in the history through their power of vote on February 8, 2024 by bringing PTI into power with thumbing majority.

Reacting to the PHC's ruling nullifying electoral watchdog's decision regarding "bat", PTI spokesperson said that the provincial court provided solid support to the supremacy of the constitution, rule of law, survival and continuity of democracy and people's right to vote in the country through its significant decision, which would have far-reaching impacts on the political horizon of the country.

He went on to say that PTI



leaders and workers have been facing untold state oppression, fascism and the ongoing blind use of force to exclude PTI from the electoral race with great patience, dedication and steadfastness.

PTI spokesperson pointed out that despite the unimaginable series of brutality and the web of conspiracies; they continued their struggle peacefully within the framework of the constitution, law and democratic manners.

He reiterated that the PTI and its leaders and workers would strive peacefully for restoration of true justice system in the country despite all undue bias of the state institutions, the hateful and illegal tactics of the government machinery and the ongoing efforts to crush the largest representative political party of the people in the country.

Senate unanimously approves first Parliamentary Caucus on Water Resources

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Upper House of the Parliament on Tuesday unanimously approved the first ever Parliamentary Caucus on Water Resources by adopting a motion moved by Senator Saadia Abbasi of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in this regard.

The 334th session of Senate was presided over by Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani.

Presenting the motion, Senator Abbasi maintained that under Rule 204 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, the House might authorize the Senate chairman to appoint a Parli-

mentary Caucus on Water Resources in the country, comprising the members of the Senate and the Minister for Water Resources as an ex-officio member.

She said since the Parliament only comprised of the Senate as the National Assembly did not exist so nominations for the Caucus should be made from the Senate.

"The honourable Chairman Senate may also be authorized to make nominations from the Senate to the Caucus and make changes in its composition as and when required. The Senate Secretariat shall provide secretarial support to the Caucus," she read out her motion.

Nawaz Sharif's nomination papers from NA-130 approved



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Nomination papers of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) Nawaz Sharif to contest the election from NA-130 have been accepted.

This was announced by PML-N Lahore leader, Bilal Yaseen, who has been the covering candidate in the constituency. The former three-time premier submitted his nomination papers from Lahore's NA-130 on Sunday.

Talking to the media Bilal Yaseen said that Nawaz Sharif will contest elections from National Assembly constituencies

of Mansehra and Lahore and will become prime minister fourth time.

Bilal Yaseen stated that Nawaz Sharif's lawyer Amjad Parvez also appeared in the RO's office along with him.

It is pertinent to note that the process of document verification will continue till December 30 and the document verification of certain minority and women candidates has also begun. The three-time prime minister — who returned to Pakistan in October after ending a 4-year self-imposed exile in London — hopes to take a fourth shot at power, but still major legal hurdles remain in his path to contest the general elections.

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

PHC suspends ECP decision on 'bat' symbol for PTI

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court on Tuesday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) verdict which declared PTI's intra-party elections 'unlawful' and stripped the party of its iconic 'bat' electoral symbol.

The court also issued notices to all respondents in the case.

On December 2, the ECP had nullified Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's intra-party elections, for the third time since last year, declaring the PTI ineligible for obtaining its traditional electoral symbol of 'bat'.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi detained under 3-MPO for 15 days

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, has been detained in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for 15 days despite securing bail in the cipher case.

The directives, issued by Rawalpindi Deputy Commissioner under the Maintenance of Public Order (3-MPO), stated that Qureshi's release may pose a threat to peace and security.

The order alleged that Shah Mahmood Qureshi was involved

in instigating violence in the May 9 riots, wherein military installations were attacked, and that his release might endanger public safety.

It mentioned that the city police officer (CPO) suggested a 45-day detention on the report of

the station house officer (SHO) concerned. The district intelligence committee also concurred with the assessments of the police and security authorities.

While granting the former foreign minister the right to appeal, the order detained

Qureshi in the Adiala Jail for 15 days.

The detention comes days after the Supreme Court (SC) granted bail to former prime minister Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case.

Govt to follow Senate recommendations on employees' salaries, allowances: Solangi



CITY Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday assured the Senate that the government would follow House recommendations regarding the salaries and allowances of government employees, including Balochistan.

In response to questions during the question hour regarding the less representation of officers from Balochistan at the federal level, the minister asked the

lawmakers to formulate a policy and make recommendations if there was any perceived injustice.

Responding to questions from Senators Fauzia Arshad, Mohsin Aziz, and Danesh Kumar, he welcomed the suggestions from Senate members regarding the use of zig-zag technology in rural areas for making bricks.

He acknowledged that zigzag technology was effective in reducing emissions of pollutants and increasing efficiency, though it was still expensive.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui's question about the non-allotment of plots to retired employees, the minister assured that he would inform the House after obtaining information from the department.

AJK PM hails role of lawyers in ensuring good governance

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while appreciating the legal fraternity's contribution to society, has said that lawyers' role was crucial for strengthening the system of governance and stabilizing the state institutions.

Prime Minister Haq made these assertions while talking to a lawyer's delegation that called on him here today.

Led by President Supreme Court Bar Association Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan Advocate, the delegation consisted of Vice President Supreme Court Bar Sardar Javed Azam Advocate, General Secretary Haleem Azam Advocate, Joint Secretary Jamsheed Ahmed Advocate, Sardar Zarif Aslam Advocate and several others.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that weeding out corruption from society was his government's top priority. He said that being responsible citizens of the state, it was our shared responsibility that we all work together to ensure that every citizen of



the state lives a dignified life in society.

Appreciating the legal fraternity's role in society, the PM said that the government would use all available resources to resolve the problems faced by lawyers.

He said that an action committee, comprised of representatives from the Supreme Court Bar, High Court Bar and other bars, should present its recommendations in this regard.

The Prime Minister said that lawyers have every right to criticize the government and expose those persons involved in dishonesty.

He said that people's tax money would be spent on the welfare of people. He said that the government has allocated more funds to further improve the education and health sectors.

He said that the budget for providing free medicines to the needy in government hospitals has been increased.

Speaking on this occasion, the delegation appreciated the steps taken by the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir.

The visiting delegates said that the legal fraternity would fully cooper-

ate and support the government in its efforts to ensure good governance, merit, rule of law and supremacy of the constitution in Azad Kashmir.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq along with the visiting delegates cut the birth anniversary cake of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Senior Most Minister Colonel (ret'd) Waqar Ahmad Noor, Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan, and Secretary Information Secretary Ansar Yaqub were also present on this occasion.



Ms Shahana Sikandar TMO Nowshera, KPK, receiving the shield from Deputy Commissioner Nowshera Mr Khalid Khat-tak on the occasion of Christmas Event.

DC Gujarat Safdar Hussain Virak inaugurated Pharmacy



Correspondent

KHARIAN: Deputy Commissioner Gujarat Safdar Hussain Virak has inaugurated "Haji Muhammad Iqbal Memorial Pharmacy" and "Digital X-ray Machine" for the deserving patients at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Kharian and Tehsil Level Hospital Dinga, village Mirza Tahir in US. Overseas philanthropists Chaudhry Muhammad Sajid, Chaudhry Aamir Iqbal, Chaudhry Bobby Gujjar have independently established these pharmacies in memory of their respected father. AC Kharian Zohaib Mumtaz Gondal, CEO Health Gujarat Dr. Zakir Rana, MS THQ Hospital Kharian Dr. Zafar Mehdi, Malik Qaiser Mahmood Bobby, former President Kharian Press Club Muhammad Zaman Ahsan, Syed Tanveer Naqvi, Ijaz Mirza and other personalities were also present. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Gujarat also visited the wards of THQ Hospital Kharian and asked about the facilities and supply of medicines to the patients. It is commendable to cooperate with MS Dr. Zafar Mehdi for medicines for deserving patients. He said that development work is ongoing on several projects for the beautification of Tehsil Headquarters Kharian, no new scheme will be launched during the election while the already ongoing works will be completed.

Joint prayer to commemorate Quaid-e-Azam Day held in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A solemn ceremony on the occasion of the 147th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was held under the chairmanship of President Mian Abdul Waheed under the chairmanship of President Mian Abdul Waheed under the auspices of Ideo-e-Pakistan Forum. Da'i Aman Mumtaz Ulema Maulana Muhammad Riya z Kharl, General Secretary Muhammad Arshad Qasmi, Senior Vice President Haji Muhammad Abid, Muhammad Yusuf Ansari, Mirza Muhammad Idris, Mirza Muhammad Shafiq, Muhammad Saleem, Hafiz Muhammad Anas and others participated in the ceremony. A cake was also cut on the occasion of the 147th birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, in a resolution demanding the government of Pakistan to break the silence on the ongoing massacre of Muslims and Israelis in Gaza and adopt a bold policy until the Muslim Ummah it will not take a common stand against the Jews and Hindus, in the same way Muslims will continue to be massacred, the



founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, called Israel an evil. Speakers celebrated Quaid-e-Azam Day with a pledge that everyone should improve their personal lives in the light of the Quaid's edicts, not lie, hypocrisy, jealousy, looting, and indiscriminate use of government resources under any circumstances. The elements will be encouraged, without eliminating the

contradiction between words and deeds, the country cannot progress on the path of development. Today, due to the double standards of the elite, the country is becoming poorer than the poor and the wealth of the rich is increasing day by day. The country is badly stuck in the mire of debts, were these loans obtained by a poor person, but these loans were spent only on the

luxuries of the rulers, this is the best way to pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. That the whole nation should pledge that under no circumstances will the decrees of the leader be forgotten, but for the development of the country, with hard work, honesty and trust, the country will be fought day and night to join the ranks of developed nations.

Three drugs peddlers sentenced by courts in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Three drugs peddlers were sentenced to different terms by different courts in Attock on Tuesday.

In the first case, a special court for the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) in Attock on Tuesday sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment besides imposing fine over a narcotics dealer who was arrested by Police during raid at his narcotics in the limits of Attock Saddar Police station during this year. The convict Mehran Bukshwas arrested under section 9-C CNSA, 1997 after recovery of 1.05 kilogram of hashish from his possession. The judge of the

special CNS court district and session Judge Attock-Asad Ali pronounced the judgment after recording statements of witnesses and final arguments from both sides. In the light of the statements of the witnesses, the convict pleaded guilty and was sentenced to nine years of imprisonment besides imposing a fine Rs 0.1million fine over him.

Moreover, a special court for the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) in Attock sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment besides imposing fine over a narcotics dealer who was arrested by Police during raid at his narcotics den in the limits of Hazro Police station during this year. The

convict Muhammad Riazwas arrested under section 9-C CNSA, 1997 after recovery of 1.93 kilogram of hashish from his possession. The judge of the special CNS court additional session Judge Attock Nadeem AbbasSaqi pronounced the judgment after recording statements of witnesses and final arguments from both sides. In the light of the statements of the witnesses, the convict pleaded guilty and was sentenced to nine years of imprisonment besides imposing a fine Rs80 thousand fine over him.

Separately, a special court for the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) in Attock sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment besides imposing

fine over a narcotics dealer who was arrested by Police during raid at his narcotics in the limits of Hazro Police station during this year. The convict Niaz Akbarwas arrested under section 9-C CNSA, 1997 after recovery of 1.52 kilogram of hashish from his possession. The judge of the special CNS court district and session Judge AttockAsad Ali pronounced the judgment after recording statements of witnesses and final arguments from both sides. In the light of the statements of the witnesses, the convict pleaded guilty and was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment besides imposing a fine Rs0.125 million fine over him.

Man shot dead nephew, injured other

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A man has shot dead his teenage nephew and injured other over land dispute in Mailwah village in the limits of Fatehjang Police station on Tuesday, police sources said.

Police sources while quoting the family of the victim has said that there was land dispute between Muftah Din has land dispute with his nephew Ishfaq Shams. On Tuesday morning when 15 years old Ishfaq was working in his field, Muftah along with his companions appeared on the scene with his companions equipped with different weapons. After exchange of hot arguments, Muftah showered bullets resultantly Ishfaq received multiple bullet injuries and died on the spot while 20 years old Shahzad was injured critically.

Two people die due to wagon sank in DI Khan CRBC canal

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A wagon that drowned in the Dera Ismail Khan CRBC canal was pulled out on Tuesday. Two people have died in the accident.

According to Kuchlak area of Balochistan and Ahmad Khan from Darazinda were among the dead. Rescue officials say that yesterday morning, the wagon full of clothes going from Dera to Tank got lost in the canal due to high speed. As soon as the incident was reported, Rescue 1122 teams completed the search operation by boating, scuba diving and hook under the supervision of Emergency Officer Numan Ullah Marwat and on-Call Duty Officer Imdad Ullah on the special instructions of District Emergency Officer Owais Babar.

Officials is said, a disaster rescue vehicle, a water rescue van, two ambulances and a district tank recovery vehicle took part in the rescue 1122 search operation. Rescue 1122 on-call officer Imdad Ullah handed over the dead bodies of both parties including other valuables, mobile phones etc. to their relatives.



Mach-Kacheri a unique tradition to entertain villagers in Sindh

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

SUJAWAL: A group of people that include a large number of youth, teenagers and septuagenarians sit around the fire in Hussainabad village of district Sujawal almost every night during winters to warm themselves up. Azam 20, who is tasked with collecting wood to lit the fire says; "This bonfire not only warms up the local residents but is also source of learning for youth that gather there every night". He further says that sitting with experienced people added to their knowledge about history culture and moral values.

Mach kacheri- Discussion while sitting around bonfire a centuries old tradition followed in far-flung areas of Sindh during nights of bleak winter. In villages elders of tribes and families organise gatherings with fire lighting off in the center and people sitting around it to discuss issues of the society and finding out their solutions. Such gatherings are followed by cultural events.

Muhammad Hashim Temro an elderly figure belonging to Ali Muhammad Temro village of district Sujawal sharing significance of this tradition said; "Poets and local singers are also invited at such gatherings to entertain local villagers by singing folk songs and reciting poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai- an eminent poet of Sindh.

OPPO A78 Sets the Standard for Style and Power

LAHORE: Brace yourselves as OPPO announces the much-anticipated launch of the OPPO A78 in Pakistan, promising a device that redefines smartphone excellence. With a sleek Ultra-Slim Retro Design, 67W SUPERVOOCTM Flash Charge, 90Hz FHD+ AMOLED Display, and Dual Stereo Speakers, the A78 is set to lead the pack in its category.

Lightning-Fast Charging, Long-Lasting Battery
The A78 boasts the lightning-fast 67W SUPERVOOCTM Flash Charge and a 5000mAh battery, providing one of the fastest charging speeds in its price range. The battery is optimized for longevity, offering up to 1,600 charge and discharge cycles, ensuring a seamless performance for up to four years.

Immersive Audio-Visual Experience
For the first time in the A series, the A78 features a 90Hz FHD+ AMOLED screen, delivering a visually stunning experience. The Dual Stereo Speakers and Real HD Sound 3.0 provide crystal-clear surround sound, making it a treat for entertainment enthusiasts.

Captivating Design and Camera Innovations
Available in Aqua Green and Mist Black, the A78's Ultra-Slim Retro Design incorporates an industry-first Diamond Matrix Design, offering a vibrant and elegant appearance. The camera system, including a 50MP main camera, introduces new features like Dual-View Video for creative vlogging.

Peshawar valley remains stumbling block to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa seat adjustment

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: With the election 2024 nearing, the formation of a united front in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - the PTI stronghold - isn't moving anywhere as the rival parties have been unable to devise a formula for seat adjustment in the province.

There is a deadlock in the ongoing talks after the four political parties - JUI-F, ANP, PPP and PML-N - could not resolve the differences mainly centred around the Peshawar valley, which comprises the most populated districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mardan and Swabi.

All these parties want a share in the region which is the heartland of ANP support base - the nationalist party which always vigorously guards these

constituencies against the influence of others.

Meanwhile, several national and provincial seats in Malakand Division, mainly in Swat and Buner districts, are also proving to be the point of contention. The February 8 general elections come as the ANP has seen dwindling fortunes with the rise of ANP before and since the 2013 when the PTI formed provincial government after emerging as the largest party.

Although Maulana Fazlur Rehman forcefully pushed for forming a coalition which would have included several parties, Nawaz Sharif - who enjoyed the third term as prime minister back then - fought the temptation, saying the PTI should run the province after winning the most number of seats.

Even now some circles believe that it was a political blunder which gave the

PTI founding chairman an opportunity to solidify his position and use the province as a base for future political manoeuvring.

Seat adjustment is vital to the idea of keeping the PTI out of power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - a province known for producing a fractured mandate just like Balochistan - with the exception of 2018 when it obtained a massive majority in the provincial assembly while also bagging most of the National Assembly seats.

Meanwhile, the disputed constituencies in the Peshawar region are most sought-after by all sides for various reasons.

For the JUI-F, it is an opportunity to claim the chief ministership by increasing its number of seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, while the PML-N wants to gain a foothold in the region

where it lost the ground after 1990s and maximise its overall tally at both national provincial levels.

On the other hand, the PPP aims at projecting the image of sole political representing all the provinces [its traditional mantra and slogan], especially in the smaller ones, after losing the voters in Punjab.

But any discussion on the current electoral dynamics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will remain incomplete without taking into another factor - PTI-Parliamentarian, a party faction formed by former chief minister Pervez Khattak who is considered a master of constituency-based politics.

The party position in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly - besides the number of National Assembly seats shared in the province - will depend upon how much damage Khattak will inflict on the PTI.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:41 am
Zohr 12:08 pm
Asr 3:28 pm
Maghrib 5:06 pm
Isha 6:35 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

CM Punjab initiates collaborative effort with Chinese experts to tackle smog crisis

PPA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi launches a crucial initiative following artificial rain to combat rising smog levels. In a concerted effort, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has arranged for a special team of environmental experts from China to visit Lahore next week. The decision stems from Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi's commitment to conducting an in-depth study with international consultants to unveil the root causes of escalating smog. Expressing concern, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi stated, "It is regrettable that we lack authentic research on the reasons for the surge in smog. Addressing smog requires more than hearsay and speculation. Comprehensive measures to safeguard public health can only be formulated with authentic data."



In an appeal to the public, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi urged people to wear masks as a protective measure against diseases. He directed a crackdown on sellers of substandard petrol and diesel, emphasizing the need for administrative action against those engaged in such practices. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized a shift in strategy, advocating for a thorough cleaning of soil from the roads instead of merely sprinkling water. He directed an increase in the number of teams responsible for washing roads, ensuring a more effective approach.

Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired the Cabinet Committee for Anti-Smog convened today in the Chief Minister's Office. Environmental and health experts provided detailed insights into the current smog situation. Provincial Ministers Dr. Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Dr. Jamal Nasir, Bilal Afzal, Ibrahim Hasan Murad, Chief Secretary, Inspector General Police, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Senior Member Board of Revenue, and secretaries of concerned departments, along with environmentalists and health experts, participated in the meeting.

Musical Show held at PAC to mark Quaid-e-Azam Day

PNP

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council organized a grand musical program on the occasion of the 147th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Director Arts Council Waqar was the Chief Guest of the musical program, Assistant Director Muhammad Suleman was also with him on this occasion. Tahir Nayar, Asma Lata, Ashraf Mirza, Hameed Babar and other artists performed in the musical program and get huge round applause from the audience. Chief Guest Waqar Ahmed said that the historical struggle of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent will be highlighted in various aspects so that the new generation can be enlightened about these principles. Through his visionary leadership, he played an important role in reshaping the map of the world. The new generation needs to adopt Quaid-e-Azam as a role model and follow his principles, he added. Assistant Director Muhammad Sulaiman said that Punjab is a rich province in terms of culture, in which colors of Punjabi, Sariki, Pothohari culture are prominent. Culture is the identity of any region. Nations that do not protect their culture lose their identity in the world. Punjab Arts Council and Department of Information and Culture have rendered valuable services for the protection of culture. A large number of people from the root cities participated in the grand musical program.

Winter camp kicks off at AIOU



PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University is paying special attention to the 'joint activities of students' in collaboration with national and foreign universities and other educational institutions to provide Pakistani children with maximum learning opportunities so that they can be successful in every phase of life" said Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood in his message on the inaugural session of a Winter Camp for Children.

Director, Yunus Emre Institute, Prof. Dr. Halil Tokar, remarked that Turkey and Pakistan have enjoyed a long-standing relationship for centuries, with both countries supporting each other on every occasion. He emphasized the importance of educating the younger generation about this relationship and the need to bring the people of both countries closer together. Prof. Tokar expressed his gratitude to the Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and Director, Academic Planning and Course Production, Dr. Zahid Majeed, for their support in organizing seminars and conferences to achieve this goal. The Yunus Emre Institute has previously organized a summer camp with AIOU's assistance, and now winter camp classes have begun to further bring people together.

Dr. Zahid Majeed mentioned in his speech that Pakistan and Turkey have had a longstanding relationship, and AIOU is working to strengthen these ties with the help of the Yunus Emre Institute. He praised the services of Dr. Halil Tokar in Pakistan. Dr. Majeed further explained that due to limited space, only 25 children were selected out of 80 for this winter camp. The camp will focus on promoting Turkish language, culture, art, and traditions. Mrs. Samina Tukar will teach Turkish language, archery and calligraphy experts will also train students.

EFP takes strong notice of SSWMB labor law violations

PPA

KARACHI: The Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) has strongly noted a news item alleging that the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, along with its foreign contractors and sub-contractors, is blatantly violating labor laws without facing any consequences. This report brings attention to the alarming practice of employing child labor, with workers as young as 12 years old being engaged as sanitary workers. The task of garbage collection inherently carries occupational safety and health requirements, and the employment of children in such hazardous conditions poses a serious risk to their well-being. The report has highlighted the employment of Child Labor, as young as 12 years old, as sanitary workers. The job of garbage collection is susceptible to occupational safety and health requirements, and employing children puts them at high risk.

EFP further added that the sanitary workers are not paid the Minimum Wage as they are getting maximum Rs 15,000 net which is less than half of the prescribed Minimum Wage of Rs 32,000 per month. EFP added that it is ironic that the government officials take strict action against those industries and commercial organizations who violate the Minimum Wage payments but there is no action against SSWMB and the foreign contractor.

EFP also demanded that the Managing Director of SSWMB issue a public apology within 72 hours, not only to the sanitary workers but also to the three ILO Constituents, namely Employers' Federation of Pakistan, Pakistan Workers Federation, and Federal Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development.

Christmas celebrations

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Capt (R) Anwar-ul-Haq cut the along with others during an event regarding the Christmas celebrations at Open Air Theater in Shakarparian area of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan 2050

Seminar at Bahria University Islamabad

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers from various business groups, Industry, Social sector shared their experiences on how to launch a project for its success in a seminar on "Future of Work in Project Management-Pakistan 2050" organized by Bahria University Islamabad Campus on December 23, 2023. The speakers recommended that new comers in business and industry should research their respective field, analyze the market, collect data, formulate a strategy, find skilled people to execute their business plan. After the research and preparation, you should give your line of action to your staff for the success of the project.

Honorable Rector Vice Admiral R. Asif Khaliq, in his keynote address, informed the students about the prospects and benefits of the topic in his keynote address. The Rector said the seminar features enlightening addresses and interactive panel discussions that delve into key facets of the



future of work in project management.

Dr Khalid Mumtaz Khan Principal BBS BUI enlightened the participants on Artificial Intelligence for resource management; Optimizing human and material resources and the impact of technology on remote work.

The seminar was organized by Associate Professor Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, former head of CPEC

Project, former Chairman Board of Investment KPK. He mentioned the reasons why projects fail in Pakistan as Disruptive long term planning and long decision making process, Political instability, Poor productivity, Poor narrative handling.

Ms Fajer Rabia Pasha Executive Director Ministry of Human Rights shared her views on smart working and work ethics in Arti-

ficial Intelligence led projects in NGO sector.

Dr Nadeem ul Haque briefed the students about why projects fail and succeed in the Public Sector in Developing Countries and how technology and Artificial Intelligence can help execute projects in Pakistan especially in PPP Projects.

Mr Robert Wheeler, Head of Growth and Outreach, Founding Dean KSBL shared his notes on AI and Project Communication: How to revolutionize stakeholder engagement in developing countries.

Usman Nazir shared his presentation on Future Ready Talents, Technology Lead Growth and touched the topic Ethical considerations in AI-driven project management.

Syed Javed Gilani apprised the students about how to start and accomplish a project in social sector. He mentioned 3 pillars of sustainability in Project Management as 1- Economic 2- Environmental 3- Social sustainability. He recommended better planet, better

business, better communities.

Sajeed Aslam shed light on sustainability and green project management and how technology and AI help embrace ESG in projectized organization.

Dr Fatima Khushnud shared her vision on Resilience and Adaptability in the age of automation in energy sector projects.

Faad Waheed elaborated AI-powered decision support systems for project managers and how to improve the ECO system.

Asad Malik Mehmood future ready talents-technology led professional growth. Mr Hisham of Shaigan project management in Pharma: Industry insights, Tajbeel Ashraf AI integration in Project Management-managing ethics, monitoring and evaluation in infrastructure projects.

The experts helped students understand the evolving landscape of project management in the age of AI and robotics, that empower the new entrepreneurs to shape a future where technology serves as an ally rather than a threat.

FGEHA postpones auction of class-III commercial plots & a fuel station

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) announces the postponement of the Auction event for Class-III Commercial Plots in Sector G-13 & G-14 and a Fuel Station Plot in the Mauve Area, Sector G-14/4, Islamabad.

It is worth to mention that for the said auction a media campaign was also launched in leading newspapers of Pakistan and auction was scheduled on 27th and 28th December 2023.

The decision to postpone the auction has been made in consideration of unforeseen circumstances. The new date for the auction will be announced in due course, providing ample time for interested parties.

Rewriting Dawood Ibrahim

Known to the world as the champion of underworld, the murderer, the most ferocious Dawood Ibrahim. However, behind those guns it's always a person, a man, a humankind like you and me, to whom we never thought to understand. It doesn't matter if you agree with me or not, but our self are very unthoughtful people, we declare someone wrong without understanding the reason, or the problem that lead someone to choose the wrong direction, moreover on some occasions, what seems wrong to us, feel the very right to the other, depends upon the vision and the circumstances. Here I believe before judging to anyone first try to put your-

self in his or her boots, then table talk to come on the mutual solution.

Dawood Ibrahim, a brilliant mind, a true masterpiece, an example of a fortune builder. Born in a humble family on 26 December 1955 in Khed, a relatively small town in the district Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India, his father Ibrahim Kaskar was a constable in "Mumbai Police" and mother named Amina Bi was a normal housewife. In total they were five brothers and four sisters, this means the family have not enough economic means, seeing his father's job title. However, later they moved to Dongri, a port city near Mumbai, where Dawood joined Ahmed Sailor High School, obviously there was lack of motivation or the need to look after

the family or might it be the bad company that Dawood dropped out and started working as a mechanic, or part time rickshaw driver to earn money.

Why a child shifted his childhood to becomes a labor? Answer is to earn money, when there comes a need to earn money, otherwise he could have sat and watch TV in air conditioning room. I am not sure if any of my reader visited the areas where child labor took place, but you all must have seen them selling drawing books on the traffic signals, don't their eyes ask millions

of questions, nor they tell you the untold stories, the unfortunate stories? Well, eyes have the language that not everyone can understand.

Truly there would be some dreams and stories lurking in young Dawood's eyes, that has been ignored.

Indeed, mankind is very fragile in sense of write and wrong, or let's say poverty, inequality, and a very few numbers of opportunities are the root cause of all the delinquency of this world. When you see hunger encircling your home, when you have a number of empty mouths to feed, when have

sisters to wed, parents getting old, things change. However, I agree that, God gave us choice, as there are many other examples of calamitous people rewriting their history, but not everyone is that fortunate.

Thus, by the time Dawood reached his teens, he finds himself involving in doing frauds and petty crimes, he used to sell duplicate watches in the Crawford Market Mumbai. Following he joined the famous gang of Haji Mastan, which cost him the life of his brother, Sabir, in return this flashed the previously composed Dawood, he flamed the city and cleared all the rivals coming in the way or made truce with some hence became the master of Mumbai or Indian underworld.



Munaza Kazmi



India talks lot about Dawood and blamed his name for many of the tragedies, nevertheless it's their usual pattern, whatever the truth is, but India trembles with Dawood Ibrahim's name.

That's what I know about Dawood Ibrahim but am sure there must be another side of this mirror to which I really wish to shed light on. Maybe that might sparkle!

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Jinnah's vision: A dream for Islamic Economics and Finance: The Third Alternative - I

Jinnah's vision: A dream for Islamic Economics and Finance: The Third Alternative December the 25th is celebrated as the birth anniversary of one of the founding fathers of Pakistan; however, not many know that he had a dream to materialize the system of Islamic economics and finance for Pakistan. He shared this vision during his speech at the inauguration of State Bank of Pakistan, on 1st of July, 1948. He said, "I shall watch with keenness the work of your Research Organization in evolving banking practices compatible with Islamic ideas of social and economic life. The economic system of the West has created almost insoluble problems for humanity and to many of us it appears that only a miracle can save it from disaster that is not facing the world. It has failed to do justice between man and man and to eradicate friction from the international field. On the contrary, it was largely responsible for the two world wars in the last half century. The Western world, in spite of its advantages, of mechanization and industrial efficiency is today in a worse mess than ever before in history. The adoption of Western economic theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and contented people. We must work our destiny in our own way and present

to the world an economic system based on the true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice. We will thereby be fulfilling our mission as Muslims and giving to humanity the message of peace which alone can save it and secure the welfare, happiness and prosperity of mankind." Now, what actually is Islamic Economics and Finance? And how is it different from capitalism and socialism or communism? Starting from Socialism, well— Islam and Communism are at one page as far as their critique on capitalism is concerned; however, they differ on their respective approaches as an alternative. In socialism, which is a soft form of communism, it is argued that the "means of production" should only be owned by the state and not by private individuals; thereby, abolishing the Islamic right of ownership of private property, business, private enterprises, industrial complexes and agricultural farmland. It is worth mentioning that Prophet SAW and his wife, Hazrat Khadija RA, were successful traders and owned private business, similarly, many companions of Prophet SAW were from land owning class and

some were in livestock farming. Moreover, Muslims have had an inherent right to property ownership and business for centuries. This is the contradiction between socialism, that forbids private property, and Islam that permits private property. However, Islam and socialism are similar as far as their idea of social justice and welfare is concerned and both are against exploitation of the weak, both talk about state owned businesses as well for social welfare of people, but Islam does not completely forbid private ownership of property or business, which socialism does. Coming toward compatibilities and contradictions of Islam and capitalism, capitalism operates on the model of "laissez and faire," where it advocates that private business should be free from government intervention completely or that there should be no or less state intervention in private business while giving its people the right to private property and also that a government should not be involved in any business of its own. It is true that Islam also gives right of ownership of private business or property, but Islam also talks about regulatory mech-

anisms of private business or property, at least as far as necessary commodities are concerned, while also taxing businesses for social welfare of weak sections of society. The textbook example is the case of "Bagh e Fadiq." Which initially was a public property but later Umar bin Abdul Aziz made it private property of the concerned party. Now, what actually is Islamic economics and finance and what is the difference between commercial banking and Islamic banking system? Firstly, it is important to understand the theory of Islamic and commercial banking, Allah says in the Quran, "They have said: 'trade is but like riba', while Allah has permitted sale, and prohibited riba." Now, a question arises that how riba and trade are similar and what is the difference between them; what constitutes as riba and what as trade? The similarity between riba and trade is that in both generates wealth, profit is earned from both, the money comes in circulation between both; however, the difference is that in trade, all of the things mentioned, comes as a commodity, a physical thing or a utility while in riba, the profit comes at money alone, it generates money on money, cash on cash unlike in trade where the profit is on goods, services or commodities.

To be continued



Analysis
Malik Zohaib Tariq

Agricultural training program in China

As many as 20 agricultural experts from Pakistan, Egypt and other Belt and Road countries participated in the international training program on kiwifruit industry technology in Chengdu and Deyang, Sichuan province of China. Ministry of Science and Technology of China, in collaboration with the Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resources Sciences, organized the 15-day training program.

The experts exchanged knowledge on kiwifruit breeding, cultivation, pest control, post-harvest storage and preservation techniques, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. China is the birthplace of kiwifruit, and Sichuan is the second-largest kiwifruit producing region in China. With over 40 years of development, Sichuan has cultivated kiwifruit on an area of 750,000 acres, with an annual production of 440,000 tons.

During the training period, the members visited numerous local kiwifruit farms, where they had the opportunity to taste the distinctive red-fleshed and yellow-fleshed kiwifruit varieties. They also had the chance to visit the China-New Zealand Kiwifruit Joint Laboratory. Wang Yongzhi, Deputy Director of the Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resources Sciences, emphasized the importance of international scientific and technological cooperation.

In 2014, the academy established the China-New Zealand Kiwifruit Joint Laboratory in partnership with the New Zealand Royal Institute of Plant and Food Research. "Over the past decade, the joint laboratory has achieved remarkable milestones in kiwifruit breeding, cultivation techniques and disease control. The laboratory has independently developed kiwifruit varieties that have been approved in 11 countries, including Italy and Chile, covering an area exceeding 3,500 hectares." He added.

The collaborative laboratory model has drawn the attention of Allah Warayo Rind, Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture in Sindh Province, Pakistan. He was also deeply impressed by the advanced technologies of kiwifruit cultivation and cold chain system in Sichuan. He stated, "During our visits to many farms in Sichuan, we have seen the methods that China uses for kiwifruit cultivation, preservation, and sales. These experiences can all be replicated in Pakistan. In Pakistan, kiwifruit mainly relies on imports, and it is expensive. extensive domestic cultivation can make kiwifruits more affordable for consumers."

At present, China and Pakistan have initiated collaboration in the kiwifruit industry, with numerous kiwifruit seeds sourced from China being planted by Pakistani farmers. Allah Warayo Rind believes that the training program can serve as a promising starting point for deeper cooperation between Pakistan and China in the kiwifruit industry, which could potentially involve joint research, cooperation agreements, and the exchange of experts.



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

Level Playing Field for Rioters? - III

What began as a protest against the certification of the Electoral College results transformed into a chaotic and violent breach of one of the most iconic symbols of American democracy. The Capitol Hill incident unfolded during the joint session of Congress convened to certify the Electoral College results of the 2020 presidential election. Supporters of then-President Donald Trump had gathered in Washington, D. C., to voice concerns about alleged election irregularities. Tensions escalated as the president and his supporters claimed the election had been rigged. As the day progressed, the peaceful protest took a dark turn when a faction of the demonstrators breached security barriers and stormed the Capitol building. This breach led to the evacuation of lawmakers and the suspension of the certification process. The live broadcast of chaos, vandalism, and violence inside the Capitol left Americans and the world in disbelief. Regrettably, the Capitol Hill incident resulted in casualties and injuries, impacting both law enforcement officials and protesters. The aftermath left a lasting scar on the nation's collective consciousness. Political leaders, both domestic and international, widely condemned the incident, expressing shock at the attack on the heart of American democracy. The response of law enforcement agencies faced scrutiny, prompting a review of security protocols on Capitol Hill and raising concerns about domestic extremism. The aftermath saw resignations and calls for accountability, deepening existing divisions and sparking debates about the role of political rhetoric in influencing public behavior. The incident underscored the chal-

lenges of preserving democratic norms in an era marked by intense polarization. It triggered a national reckoning, prompting reflections on the state of democracy, the rule of law, and the fragility of political institutions. Leaders across the political spectrum called for unity, emphasizing the need to heal the wounds opened on that fateful day. The incident served as a wake-up call, forcing a reevaluation of the nation's commitment to democratic values.

A significant development has occurred in the political annals of the United States, with the recent declaration by the Colorado state court disqualifying former President Donald Trump. The court ruled that his involvement in the Capitol incident rendered him ineligible as a candidate, applying this decision specifically to Colorado. The Supreme Court of the U. S. state of Colorado pronounced Donald Trump unfit to participate in the primary for the upcoming presidential election, scheduled for March 5, 2024. This marks the first instance in U. S. history where a court has disqualified a presidential candidate under the 1868 clause.

In the aftermath of various instances of civil unrest and rioting, nations worldwide confront the challenge of preserving the integrity of their democratic processes. An intriguing aspect of this challenge lies in determining the eligibility of individuals involved in riots to contest elections. Numerous examples exist globally where restrictions are imposed on anti-state elements participating in the electoral process. In the United Kingdom, individuals with criminal records, including those arising from participation in riots, encounter limitations on their eligibility for public office candidacy. The Representation of the People Act 1983

outlines disqualifications, emphasizing the importance of preserving public trust in the electoral process by excluding those engaged in criminal behavior from seeking political office.

Bangladesh has also taken steps to address the matter of individuals with a history of involvement in riots seeking public office. The Representation of the People Order (RPO) empowers the Election Commission to disqualify individuals convicted of specific offenses, including acts of violence and rioting, from participating in elections. This legal framework underscores the nation's commitment to upholding democratic values and the rule of law. These examples underscore global efforts to balance democratic principles with the necessity to prevent individuals engaged in violent or criminal behavior from gaining political power. While specific legal mechanisms may differ, the underlying objective remains consistent—to safeguard the democratic process from individuals whose actions undermine the foundations of a free and fair electoral system.

As nations grapple with the complexities of maintaining democratic norms in the face of civil unrest, disqualifying rioters from electoral contests stands as a tangible step toward preserving the essence of representative governance. Examples from around the world unequivocally demonstrate that no one allows anti-state elements to claim a level playing field.

Readers, there is a pressing need to expedite the legal proceedings in the trial of the rioters involved in the attacks on May 9th, as it reflects the voice of the nation and the families of our martyrs. The state is ensuring a level playing field for all those not implicated in attacking military and civilian installations. It is a national demand that anti-state elements should not be allowed to emerge without strict punishment in accordance with the country's laws and regulations.



Analysis
Abdul Basit Alvi

'Democracy in Pakistan: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward'

Pakistan has made significant strides towards democratic governance in recent years, but the country still faces numerous challenges in consolidating its democratic institutions. These challenges include political polarization, corruption, weak institutional frameworks, and the influence of non-democratic actors.

There are many opportunities for Pakistan to strengthen its democratic system and ensure that it represents the interests of all citizens. This can be achieved through greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity within the political process.

One of the key challenges facing Pakistan's democracy is political polarization. The country's political parties often adopt a confrontational approach to each other, which can undermine the democratic process and lead to political instability. For example, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has faced criticism from opposition parties for its alleged authoritarian tendencies, while the opposition parties have been accused of using undemocratic means to undermine the government. Similarly there is a lack of patience among political parties and they don't miss a single chance to criticize each other; it has created disturbance and unsatisfactory situation in the country.

Furthermore, corruption remains a significant challenge to Pakistan's democratic system. The country ranks low on global corruption indices, and corruption is pervasive at all levels of government. This undermines public trust in democratic institutions and can lead to a lack of accountability and transparency within the political process.

To address these challenges, it is essential for political parties in Pakistan to adopt a more cooperative and collaborative approach to governance. This includes

promoting transparency and accountability within their own ranks, advocating for the rights and freedoms of all citizens, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and representation in the political process.

It is important to note that no single party can be considered more democratic than the others except jamat e islami, which is most popular for its democratic culture. Anyhow each party has its strengths and weaknesses in terms of internal democracy, transparency, and adherence to democratic principles. Each party should promote and encourage democratic approach in their decisions.

Moving forward, it is crucial for Pakistan's political parties to work together to strengthen democratic governance in the country. This includes promoting transparency and accountability within their own ranks, advocating for the rights and freedoms of all citizens, and fostering a culture of tolerance and representation in the political process.

Pakistan has made significant progress towards democratic governance in recent years, but there is still much work to be done to consolidate and strengthen democratic institutions. By working together and promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, Pakistan's political parties can contribute to the development of a more robust and inclusive democratic system that truly represents the interests of all Pakistanis. General election is going to be held in February, with hope to bring prosperity and harmony in the country. Govt should ensure fair and transparent elections through independent election commissions and electoral reforms. Let us build a prosperous and developed Pakistan. In conclusion a resilient democratic system remains crucial for Pakistan's stability and progress. Collective efforts from citizens, political entities, and institutions are imperative in nurturing and safeguarding democracy for a brighter future.



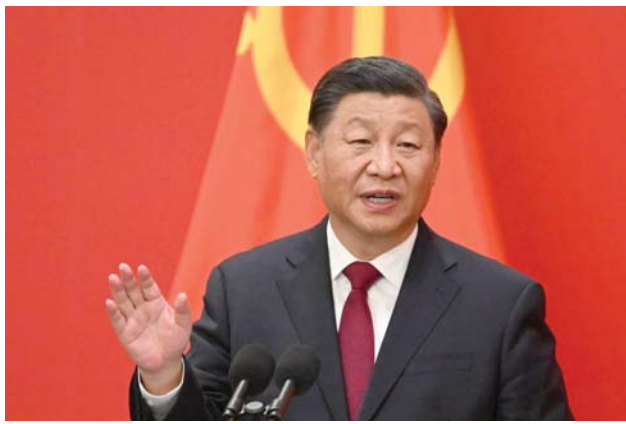
Analysis
Sohail Ahmad Baber

Mao's birth anniversary commemorated at symposium in Beijing

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Tuesday held a symposium at the Great Hall of the People to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the birth of Comrade Mao Zedong. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivered an important speech at the symposium.

Xi stressed the importance of pushing forward the cause pioneered by Comrade Mao Zedong and called for efforts to build China into a stronger country and rejuvenate the Chinese nation on all fronts by pursuing Chinese modernization. "Mao Zedong Thought is an invaluable spiritual wealth for our Party and will guide our action in the long term," Xi said, underscoring that the best way to commemorate Comrade Mao Zedong is to continue to advance the cause pioneered by him. Members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Ding



Xuexiang, Li Xi, and Vice President Han Zheng attended the symposium. Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, presided over the symposium. In his speech, Xi said that the life of Comrade Mao Zedong was one devoted to national prosperity, rejuvenation, and people's happiness. Mao led the people in blazing a trail for adapting Marxism to the Chinese context, forging the great, glorious and correct CPC and founding the New China with the people being masters of the country,

Xi said. He also led the people in establishing the advanced socialist system and founding a new model of people's army that is invincible, Xi said. Mao made indelible historic contributions to the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, which will go down in history, Xi said. Comrade Mao Zedong devoted his life to the Party and the people, and his noble spirit will be forever remembered by posterity. Noting that the central task of the whole Party and the entire nation on the new journey of the new era is to build China into a stronger coun-



try and rejuvenate the Chinese nation on all fronts by pursuing Chinese modernization, Xi said it is a cause passed down from veteran revolutionaries including Mao Zedong, and is the solemn historical responsibility of today's Chinese Communists.

Samarkand hosts World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships this week

Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA: Samarkand hosts the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships on Dec. 26-30, reported the International Chess Federation's (FIDE) press service on Dec. 25.

FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich expressed gratitude to Uzbekistan for hosting the event and emphasized FIDE's objective to organize more global chess events, providing enthusiasts worldwide the chance to witness their heroes in action.

"Dear friends, new pages of chess history will be written in the next five days. Many of the world's finest players have come together to fight for the crowns in Rapid and Blitz chess. There will be excitement and tension, happy and sad moments, but sportsmanship must prevail. To the players, the organizers, and everyone involved in this event – I wish you the best of luck," said Dvorkovich.

The tournament witnesses an



impressive lineup of renowned players, both current and former champions. The Open section includes the current World Rapid and Blitz Cham-

pion and world number one, Magnus Carlsen, former world champion challengers and top players Ian Nepomniachtchi and Fabiano Caruana,

and Levon Aronian. In the Women's section, the current world champion Ju Wenjun and former world champions Alexandra Kosteniuk, Mariya Muzychuk, Tan Zhongyi, Antoaneta Stefanova, and others will compete. The prize fund totals \$1 million.

"We brought a large delegation of young chess players. Samarkand is relatively close, and there is an opportunity for the entire expanded team to play – thanks to our FIDE colleagues for such support. Our players are excited. ..."

Reigning two-time Women's World Blitz Chess Champion Bibisara Assaubayeva is among our favorites in the championship. We wish her and our team good luck," FIDE grandmaster and Vice President of the Kazakhstan Chess Federation Dermen Sadvakassov wrote in his Instagram post on Dec. 26. Last year, Assaubayeva won the 2022 FIDE World Blitz Chess Championship, which took place in Almaty.

China, Pakistan engaged in close economic, financial cooperation: Mao Ning

News Desk

BEIJING: China is willing to work with the international community to play a constructive role in promoting the ceasefire and an end to war between Israel and Palestine and the release of all detained persons, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning said on Tuesday. "Since the outbreak of the current round of Palestinian-Israeli conflict, China has repeatedly called for the release of all detained persons as soon as possible and has made active



efforts to this end," she said during her regular briefing in response to a question regarding release of hostages

in the Palestinians-Israeli conflict.

"We are willing to work with the international-

community to continue to play a constructive role in promoting a ceasefire and an end to the war and the release of all detained persons," she added. Responding to another question about the release of hostages, she said that China maintained communication with relevant parties on relevant issues. "We are willing to work with all parties to promote the release of all detained persons as soon as possible, ceasefire and end the war as soon as possible, and achieve lasting peace in the Middle East," she added.

China's top legislature reviews multiple draft laws, revisions at standing committee session

BEIJING: The Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature, started its seventh session Monday to review multiple draft laws and law revisions.

The session's agenda includes reviewing a draft revision to the Organic Law of the State Council, a draft revision to the Company Law, a draft amendment to the Charity Law, a draft food security law, a draft amendment to the Criminal Law, a draft emergency response management law, and a draft law on rural collective economic organizations.

Lawmakers will also review a draft amendment to the Law on Supervision of the People's Congresses at All Levels, a draft revision to the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law.

Explosion heard near Israeli embassy in India

Reuters

NEW DELHI: A blast occurred near the Israeli embassy in New Delhi on Tuesday evening and all staff were unharmed following the explosion, authorities said.

"We can confirm that around 5:20 pm (local time, 11:50 GMT) there was a blast at close proximity to the embassy," Israeli Embassy spokesperson Guy Nir told Reuters, adding that local police and security teams were investigating the incident.

Israel's foreign ministry said all staff were unharmed following the blast and Israeli authorities were cooperating with their Indian counterparts to look into the cause of the explosion.

The city's fire service had not found anything so far in their search operation, senior fire department official Atul Garg told Indian news agency ANI, in which Reuters has a minority stake.

In January 2021, a small bomb went off near the Israeli embassy in New Delhi, without harming anyone. An Israeli official said at the time that Israel was treating the blast as a terrorist incident.

What is the Boxing Day and what is its significance?

As the holiday season envelops us in the warmth of Christmas festivities, Boxing Day emerges as a special day, distinct from its name's pugilistic connotations.



Contrary to expectations of gloves and rings, Boxing Day is a celebration rooted in the spirit of sharing and caring for our loved ones. In anticipation of Boxing Day 2023, let's delve into its history, significance, and the essence of its celebration.

Date

Boxing Day stands apart from other special days, lacking a specific date for observance. Positioned between Christmas and New Year's Eve, it can fall on any day within this festive interlude.

History

The origins of Boxing Day harken back to a tradition where affluent families assembled boxes filled with gifts for the less privileged, igniting the flames of holiday cheer and Christmas joy.

In times past, the servants of well-to-do households were obliged to work on Christmas, attending to guests and festivities. In gratitude for their dedicated service, employers crafted boxes laden with gifts for the servants to take home on the day following Christmas, thus christening it Boxing Day.

Significance

Beyond its historical roots, Boxing Day imparts valuable lessons in sharing and caring. It serves as a conduit for spreading joy and happiness to the homes of others, fostering a sense of community and understanding.

The day emphasises the notion that festivals are more joyous when celebrated collectively. By partaking in the joy of Boxing Day, individuals contribute to the communal spirit, amplifying the festive cheer.

Boxing Day underscores the profound impact of small acts of kindness, echoing the sentiment that the holiday season is not merely about receiving but giving, not just about personal joy but shared happiness.

As we approach Boxing Day 2023, let's embrace the ethos of generosity, weaving threads of compassion into the tapestry of our celebrations, and making this festive season truly memorable for all.

16 years on, Benazir murder still an unsolved mystery

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: On December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated soon after she had addressed an election rally in the historic Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi. She was reportedly killed by a 16-year-old suicide bomber.

Fifteen years after the assassination of the first woman premier of a Muslim country, her killers are yet to face justice as her trial remains shrouded in mystery despite various national and international inquiries.

One of the most important high-profile cases of the country's chequered history still lies pending in the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi bench.

Over 20 party workers were killed and 71 others were seriously injured in the attack on the

former premier.

In the aftermath of the incident, four inquiries were conducted into the high-profile case with the police joint investigation team (JIT), the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the United Nations (UN) and Scotland Yard striving to solve the matter. However, these inquiries and investigations yielded no results as the Bhutto family did not pursue the case in the special anti-terrorism court (ATC).

A total of 12 challans were filed in this case, 355 appearances were recorded, 10 judges were changed and 141 witnesses, including 68 prosecution witnesses, testified.

Moreover, 16 people were accused in the case, but only eight of them were arrested. The main accused, Taliban commander Baitullah Mehsud, was killed

in a drone strike.

Five other accused – Nadir Khan alias Qari, Nasrullah, Abdullah alias Saddam, Ikramullah, Faiz Muhammad Kaskat – were also killed in encounters with intelligence agencies at different places.

The suicide bomber who attacked the former prime minister was identified as Saeed Blakel, who died in the blast. The police arrested five accused Aitzaz Shah, Sher Zaman, Rashid Ahmed, Rafaquat and Hasnain Gul, and dumped the debris on them.

The FIA also arrested the then-president General (r) Pervez Musharraf, former city police officer (CPO) Saud Aziz and superintendent of police (SP) Rawal Khurram Shehzad as accused in the case. However, they were later granted bail by the

high court.

On August 31, 2017, Judge Muhammad Asghar Khan of the special ATC pronounced the verdict in the Adiala Jail after nine years, acquitting five accused, and declaring Musharraf as a fugitive on absenteeism, and issued permanent arrest warrants, besides confiscating his movable and immovable property.

Meanwhile, police officers – deputy inspector general (DIG) Saud Aziz and SP Khurram Shehzad – were sentenced to a total of 17 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs1 million each for destroying evidence and breach of security.

However, three months later, the high court suspended the sentences and released the two officers from jail. The CPO is now



retired while the SP has now been promoted to the rank of DIG.

Appeals of the accused and plaintiffs have been pending in LHC's Rawalpindi bench for over four years, and are expected to be heard in the last week of February 2022.

Former president Asif Ali Zardari has filed an appeal in the

against the sentences.

The three acquitted accused Aitzaz Shah, Sherzaman and Rafaquat have been released from jail. Meanwhile, two accused Rasheed Ahmed and Hasnain Gul are still locked up in Adiala Jail on various charges.

Federal government's senior prosecutor Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali was killed in a terrorist attack while pursuing the case.

After Benazir's assassination, the PPP formed its government in the centre, but in its five-year tenure, the party failed to pursue this important case. Later, the case was partially disposed of during the tenure of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The case is likely to land in the Supreme Court (SC) and it is not known when the case and appeals will be wrapped up.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
59,170.97	61,705.09
Day's High	Day's Low
61,634.55	59,026.81
Index Value	Change
13,751,753,670	-2534.12
Percentage	Time
-4.11%	26 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,697.51	+2.78
Percentage	Time
+0.036%	22 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,517.20	+131.23
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	26 Dec, 12:52 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,305.85	+51.82
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	26 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	190	191.9
Bahrain Dinar	751.62	759.62
Canadian Dollar	211	213
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Danish Krone	41.74	42.14
Euro	310	313
Hong Kong Dollar	36.17	36.52
Indian Rupee	3.4	3.51
Japanese Yen	1.45	1.53
Kuwaiti Dinar	916.85	925.85
Malaysian Ringgit	61.04	61.64
New Zealand \$	177.84	179.84
Norwegians Krone	27.7	28
Omani Riyal	735.45	743.45
Qatari Riyal	77.64	78.34
Saudi Riyal	75.25	75.95
Singapore Dollar	210	212
Swedish Korona	28.26	28.56
Swiss Franc	330.14	332.64
Thai Bhat	8.17	8.32
U.A.E Dirham	77.35	78.1
UK Pound Sterling	310	313
US Dollar	282.7	285.2

ICCI calls for strong academia-industry linkages to boost industrialization

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs productive entrepreneurs to create new jobs, introduce new technologies, increase productivity, and enhance exports to steer the economy out of current troubles and put it on the path of sustainable growth, therefore, students should focus on entrepreneurship that offers them a prosperous career. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) while addressing the students of Bahria Business School, Bahria University Islamabad during their visit to ICCI led by Dr. Danish, Assistant Professor.

Ahsan Bakhtawari briefed the students about the workings of ICCI and the initiatives being taken by the Chamber to resolve the key issues of the business community and promote the



interests of the business community. He informed the students about the contemporary business skills that are essential to succeed in the current competitive business environ-

ment. He also briefed them about the potential of various sectors of the economy including IT, industries, retail sector, and agriculture sector.

Dr. Danish, Assistant Professor, Bahria University thanked the President ICCI and his team for hosting the students and giving them a detailed briefing on various dynamics of the business field. He said that such regular interactions with students would motivate students to entrepreneurship and business startups.

Adnan Mukhtar, Convener, ICCI HEC Committee also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the importance of academia-industry linkages to improve the economy.

The students asked many business-related questions and got detailed answers. They also got many tips about becoming a successful entrepreneur and listened to the speech of President ICCI with great interest.

Visit

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gohar Ejaz interacting with the members of the Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Commerce Ministry on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

PVTC to train Pakistan's youth to boost employment: FCCI

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Youth must be equipped with latest skills and technologies in order to root out poverty and unemployment and in this connection concerned government institutions must play their key role, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

In a meeting with Madam Bushra Nawaz, Senior Manager Public Relations and Marketing of the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC), Dr Sajjad Arshad said that youth is our most precious asset but we are not utilizing their capabilities for the uplift of the country. He said that China and other countries have successfully revolutionized their economies by efficiently utilizing their youth. He said that 20 million children are unemployed and we must carve out our strategies to give them training in different market driven skills. "It would not only make them



productive for them but also for the country", he said and added that this skilled human resource could start their own businesses instead of running after jobs. He said that Pakistanis diaspora in the world are sending hefty remittances which have saved Pakistan from bankruptcy. He said that this skilled force could also be exported to the potential foreign markets through proper channels instead of their illegal immigration. He stressed the need to upgrade the syllabus and include skills which are demanding all over the world.

IPO, PITB join hands for automation, digitalization of IPO-Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on Tuesday joined hands and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the digitalization and automation of IPO-Pakistan.

The MoU was signed by Director General, IPO Ms. Shazia Adnan and Director General, PITB Saima R. Shaikh for automation and digitalization IPO to facilitate the common masses and business in the country.

On this occasion, Chairman IPO, Ambassador Farukh Amil said that the visibility on indifferent platforms and public awareness are the major priority of IPO at this time, which will make it accessible to the business classes and especially the youth.

The Chairman IPO said that at present we were working on digitalization of IPO with the support of PITB, which was an important tool for modernizing institutions in the modern world, which provided facilities to the public and business classes.

He said that a large part of the population of Pakistan consisted of youth and the youth were currently mostly connected to IT and social media and after this facility, they would be able to make online complaints or other facilities in IPO.



Farukh said that IPO was currently making the youth aware of IPO in universities and educational institutions, which would increase the trend of financial education among them.

He said that after automation in the IPO, there would be transparency and simplification of processes in the institution.

On this occasion, Director General, IPO, Shazia Adnan said that after this agreement with PITB, online payments and another documentation process would be

made easy in the next two months and this would also promote Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in IPO.

She said with this agreement, you can do documentation or payment processes through 27 different channels including online banking which will provide convenience to people.

The Director General IPO said that work on this process started last October 2023 and now 17 forms could be submitted through the online system.

Pakistan jacked up electricity tariff by Rs10.73/unit in 2023



PPA

ISLAMABAD: On the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demands, Pakistan jacked up electricity and gas tariffs in 2023, causing an additional burden of over Rs2,200 billion on the consumers.

As per details, the Pakistan government jacked up the electricity tariff by Rs10.73 per unit in 2023 and ended Kisan and Exports sector packages worth Rs65 billion to minimise the losses on the IMF's demand. Power consumers were slapped with a permanent surcharge of Rs3.23/unit, monthly, and quarterly adjustments and other charges that ultimately put a burden of over Rs1,150 billion on the consumers in 2023.

80mn commuters utilized BRT Peshawar during the year 2023

Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has achieved an impressive ridership of approximately 80 million people during the outgoing calendar year 2023, contributing to a total commuter of 215 million since its inception in August 2020, said annual report shared by the TransPeshawar operator of the urban transport system here on Tuesday.

It said that a noteworthy shift was observed in the gender dynamics of ridership, with women constituting 30% of the total commuters—a significant surge compared to the meagre 2% estimated before the implementation of the BRT system.

Due to the increasing popularity and demand, the system is constantly expanding. "Zu Peshawar is unwavering in its commitment to fostering inclusivity and embracing technological advancements. Our ongoing efforts to make the system more welcoming for specially-abled individuals reflect our dedication to ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from our services seamlessly, said the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TransPeshawar, Dr. Tariq Usman Saeed.

The transformative upgrades to the Zu app enhance user experience, offering features like recharging through Omni Shop, comprehensive travel histories, and NFC-supported balance uploads, he added.

He said that their focus on network expansion for wider city coverage through new feeder routes aligns with our vision of creating a world-class transit system that caters to the diverse needs of our community while

duly accounting for social equity. TransPeshawar's Spokesperson, Saddaf Kamil told the media, that in a concerted effort to enhance facilitation for the citizens of Peshawar, they have introduced a significant augmentation, incorporating 62 new buses into our operational fleet and operationalizing five new routes.

She added that with the addition of 62 new buses, their service now boasts a fleet of 244 buses, all actively engaged in operations to cater to the growing demands and expectations of our valued passengers.

These newly operational routes comprise a Super Express Route XER 15, linking Chamkani to Mall of Hayatabad, along with two Express routes—ER-12 (from Mall of Hayatabad to Shah Alam) and ER-16 (connecting Gulbahar Chowk

to Nawab Market). Additionally, two feeder routes have been introduced—DR-11 (connecting Mall of Hayatabad to Phase 6 terminal via Phase 1) and DR-04B (extending from Chamkani to Malik Saad Shaheed via Ring Road).

The number of daily passengers has hit a figure of 316,000, of which about 90,000 are women. About 234,000 Zu Cards were issued this year, which brings the total number of issued cards to 1.67 million.

In addition, for better facilitation of students, University Express Service was introduced on ER 12 and XER-15.

"This specialized service involves the strategic addition of extra buses during morning and afternoon rush hours on these routes, ensuring efficient and timely transportation tailored to the unique needs of the student community." Said Saddaf Kamil.



As Zu Peshawar gained popularity among the residents of Peshawar, the system was also acknowledged and appreciated on several global platforms. Zu Peshawar bagged another international award this year, adding to

its previous four international accolades. Zu Peshawar was selected as one of the five finalists for the World Resources Institute's Prize for Cities award and was awarded a cash prize of USD 25000.

PCB announces three-tier player development program

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday announced a three-tier development program to groom cricketers into quality professionals through establishment of sub-academies at a National Cricket Academy (NCA) in seven cities, specialised training camps for national cricketers and financial support project for the U19 players across the country.

Chairman PCB Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf, in consultation with Director of Cricket, Mohammad Hafeez endorsed this initiative for the betterment of Pakistan Cricket.

The PCB will collaborate with Defence Housing Authority (DHA) as



the latter will provide land for cricket grounds in Islamabad, Quetta, Bahawalpur, Lahore and Peshawar for sub-academies. The Hanif Mohammad High-Performance Centre in Karachi and the Inzamam-ul-Haq High-Performance Centre in Multan will also be granted the status of sub-academies with the provision of relevant resources.

As part of the development program, specialised training camps will be arranged for national and budding cricketers.

The U19 players will be provided extensive financial support along with skills training and thorough grooming as professionals.

Director of Cricket, Mohammad

Hafeez, while announcing the development programmes said, "We are delighted to announce three development programmes with an aim to groom our young players, hone the skills of national players via specialised camps and activate the sub-academies for year-round training camps."

"This initiative will help our players get ready for the highly competitive cricket at the top level. It is the need of the hour to work on the skills of our players and provide them with world-class facilities. We will also target interior Sindh and erstwhile FATA for further development programmes so that the talent in far-fetched areas can also be turned into international product."

SJAS keep the tradition alive of recognising outstanding athletes and journalists: Sindh Governor

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The 6th Annual Sports Award and Rashid Siddiqui Talent Award ceremony was organised by the Sports Journalists Association of Sindh (SJAS) at the Governor House, here, on Monday.

The Governor of Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, while addressing the ceremony, said that SJAS kept the tradition alive, of awarding athletes with sports journalists in recognition of their services, which is highly commendable.

We all need to play our roles for the development of the country and the role of sports journalists, in highlighting the peaceful image of the country, and in the return of international sports to Pakistan is unforgettable, said the caretaker provincial minister for sports and patron Dr. Junaid Ali Shah.

Dr. Shah added that he and SJAS had been together since SJAS was a small plant. He expressed delight to see that now SJAS had become

a tree.

Looking at the tradition of SJAS, Dr. Shah announced, the Sindh government's plan to also recognise the services of sportspersons and encourage them in January next year, with "Sindh Awards", while the Sindh Games will also be held in January.

Patron of SJAS and Chief Executive of Essa Lab and Honorary Commander of Pakistan Navy Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah said that for any country's development, promotion of sports is the real key. He added that the mission of SJAS is to serve sports and athletes.

SJAS' Patron and Chief Executive Officer of Virtual Axis, Khawaja Ahmad Mustaqeem acknowledged SJAS for its brilliant work, because of which, he said, SJAS has gained a unique spot amongst sports associations in the country, which should be followed.

Shahid Saati, Secretary SJAS, has vowed to carry on their services for SJAS members and keep on recognising athletes, with unity in

their ranks.

Mahmood Riaz, Senior Vice President of SJAS, hosted the event.

At the end of the ceremony, Olympian Abdul Haseem Khan was awarded SJAS Gold Medal along with Rs 50,000/- cash.

Senior Journalist Zubair Nazeer Khan was conferred with Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah Gold Medal and Rs 50,000 cash award.

Ali Salman was declared Best Sports Anchor, Olympic International Referee Judge, Ali Akber Shah Qadri and Senior Journalist Rashid Aziz was recognised with Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Prof. Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah Abdeen was awarded the Best Sports Organizer Award, Javed Iqbal (Best Senior Reporter), Shehzada Moeen (Best Emerging Reporter), Danish Alvi (Best Producer), Nadra Mushtaq (Best Reporter and Analyst for Electronic Media), Tariq Hussain (Best Senior Reporter), Junaid Ahmed Rajput (Best Junior

Reporter), Kulsoom Jahan (Best Emerging Reporter for Urdu Newspaper), Muhammad Osama (Best Reporter English Media), Anisur Rehman (Best Commentator Radio) and Anzar Ahmed Hamdani (Best Reporter Social Media), Karate Player Dilawar Khan Sannan, martial arts coach Jannat Gul, bodybuilder Shehzad Qureshi, captain wheelchair cricket team Muhammad Zeeshan and international cricketer Aroob Shah were able to get the SJAS Awards for athletes.

International footballer, Street Children team, Mohammad Shah Mir, Fencing Champion and Coach Mehwish Aftab, Special Athlete Mohammad Ibrahim, Taekwondo Champion Mehwish Zuberi and swimmer Hareem Malik were honored with the SJAS Rashid Siddiqui Talent Awards.

The event was attended by members of SJAS, senior journalists, sportspersons and organisers in large numbers.

Pak vs Aus: PTV Sports 'discontinues' Test series broadcast

PTV Sports, the sports channel of Pakistan Television, has decided to discontinue the broadcast of the ongoing second Test match between Pakistan and Australia on Tuesday.

The decision comes a week after the government issued an order vowing zero tolerance against the surrogate companies of betting houses. In its order, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry also urged stakeholders to prevent their promotion through any kind of advertisements during live coverage of sports events.

In a notification shared on X, formerly Twitter, PTV Sports wrote: "Pakistan Television (PTV Sports) adhering to the Government of Pakistan's policy, 'Zero tolerance for the surrogate Companies' has discontinued airing the second Test match from Melbourne being played from December 26th, 2023 in lieu of the Pakistan vs Australia Cricket Series 2023-24."

The channel further added that it took up the issue with the parent broadcaster and reported it to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and other relevant stakeholders, seeking the removal of the "brand placements of on ground surrogate companies' advertisements (virtual advertising)."

"The series will be telecast live once the matter is resolved. PTV as a state broadcaster is endeavouring to get the issue resolved to avoid future blackouts of such transmissions in the territory of Pakistan," it added in the post.

Referring to its earlier advisory on the issue last week, the ministry noted an "unambiguous violation" during the live broadcast of the Pakistan cricket team's tour to Australia on multiple media outlets and channels, including Pakistan Television.

The Information Ministry, in its earlier advisory, had urged all the ministries, departments, and organisations not to engage in any kind of contract or cooperation with the surrogate companies illegally operating in Pakistan, especially on print, electronic and social media.

The ministry reiterated its advisory strictly warning the media outlets "not to promote the surrogate companies of betting houses through any kind of advertisements", besides immediately terminating all existing agreements with them.

The advisory, which had already been sent to the stakeholders, specifically mentioned a list of known surrogate companies "to address any unawareness, and to ensure strict and immediate compliance".

The ministry also observed that the logos of at least two of the companies mentioned in the earlier advisory were displayed uninterrupted throughout the live broadcast of the stated event that spanned multiple hours across multiple days.

The ministry urged the stakeholders to ensure immediate compliance with its instant advisory without fail, investigate reasons and responsibility for the non-compliance of the earlier advisory, and submit a copy of the same within a week.

Yasir Arafat appointed High-Performance Coach

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former Test all-rounder Yasir Arafat has been appointed as the High-Performance Coach of the Pakistan Men's Cricket Team and will be part of the team management for the upcoming five T20Is against New Zealand scheduled from 12 to 21 January, 2024 in New Zealand.



41-year-old, Yasir, appeared in three Tests, 11 ODIs and 13 T20Is for Pakistan. He completed his ECB Level 4 coaching course from Loughborough University, becoming the first Pakistan Test cricketer to do so. He has also worked as bowling coach with county teams like Sussex and Surrey, as well as with Australia's Big Bash League franchise, Perth Scorchers. Recently, he worked as a bowling coach with the Hong Kong national team.

Besides coaching, Yasir has featured for different T20 teams in league cricket around the globe, including appearances for Otago and Canterbury in New Zealand domestic T20 league cricket.

Yasir will serve as the camp commandant for the five-day camp in Lahore from 29 December to 2 January for the preparation of the tour.

All-Pakistan Inter-University Badminton Championship to start from Wednesday

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: All Pakistan Inter-University Badminton Championship Zone B will start a joint collaboration of the Directorate of Sports University of Peshawar and Higher Education Commission Islamabad here at the indoor hall of the Campus today (Wednesday).

These views were expressed by the Director General Sports University of Peshawar and former international athlete Bahre Karam while talking to the media here on Tuesday.

He said that under the auspices of the Higher Education Commission and the University of Peshawar, the All Pakistan Inter-University Zone B competition will be played at Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Indoor Hall inside the University Campus.

He said more than 10 University teams are taking part in the Championship wherein one team would qualify for the final round.

The Championship will officially be inaugurated by former basketball player Dr. Atiq Sanjrani.

Handball trials under PM Youth Talent Hunt Programme at Abbottabad concluded



Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: The handball trials under Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Programme has concluded at Kunj Football Stadium, Abbottabad in which 14 players have been selected for the forthcoming Provincial Handball League to be played under the aegis of the Directorate of Sports University of Peshawar.

International handball player Naveedur Rehman and Director of Distance Education System Dr. Noorzada were there and monitored the performance of the players before selecting them for the team to represent Hazara Region in the Provincial Handball League to be played in Peshawar.

Regional Sports Officer Ahmed Zaman was the chief guest on the occasion of the closing ceremony. In the Provincial Handball League teams from Hazara, Swat, Bannu, Peshawar and Mardan would take part and out of that two teams would be short-listed for the National Handball League, also to be played in Peshawar.

The trials at Bannu will be held from December 28-29, 2023. Among the players selected in the trials are Owais Khan, Shahrar Khan, Zahoor Khan, Kamran Khan, Ikhtshamul Haque, Muhammad Abbas, Muhammad Aqib, Amar Khan, Abdul Haseeb, Inam Khan, Saddam Hakeem, Kashifullah, Muhammad Salman and Ghafuran Elahi are included.

Serena Hotels Tennis Championships 2023 kick off

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 8th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Championships 2023 rolled into action at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Tuesday.

International tennis star Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi is also participating in the event. Pakistan's all the top players including, Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, Barkatullah, Shahzad Khan, Yousaf Khalil, Sarah Mahboob Khan, Meheq Khokhar, Sheeza Sajid, Esha Jawad and Amna Ali Qayum are participating in the mega event.

The best match of men's singles 1st round was between Sami Zeb Khan and Ahmed Nael Qureshi wherein the former pulled off a stunning victory. Nael won the first set 6-3, but Sami staged a strong comeback to win the match 6-1, 6-4.



Following are the results of different categories on the day first:

Men's Singles 1st Round: Aqeel Khan bt Syed Nofil Kaleem 6-2,6-0; Yousaf Khalil bt M. Salar 6-1,6-3; Hamid Israr bt Uzair Khan 7-5,6-3; Saqib Hayat bt Ahtesham Humayun 6-1,6-4; M. Hamza Aasim bt Ahmed Babar 6-1,2-1 (ret); Muhammad Shoaib bt Shehryar Anees 6-2,6-2; Hamza Roman bt Waqas Malik 6-4,6-1; Muzammil Murtaza bt Asad Zaman 6-3,6-2;

Mudassar Murtaza bt Mahatir Muhammad 6-2,6-2; Barkatullah bt Veqar Rahim 6-3,6-1; Shahzad Khan bt Parbat Kumar 6-0,6-0; M. Huzafa Khan bt Aqil Khan 5-1,6-0; Jibran ul Haq bt Asadullah 6-2,6-1; M. Abid bt M. Talha Khan 6-4,6-1; Sami Zeb Khan bt Ahmed Nael Qureshi 3-6,6-1,6-4

Boys 18& under Singles 1st Round: Asad Zaman bt Haziq Aasim 6-0,6-0; M. Hamza Aasim

bt Rayan Khan 6-2,6-2; Shahswar Khan bt Talha Khan 6-2,6-2; Hamid Israr bt Kamran Khan 6-1,6-0; M. Salar bt Ruhaab Faisal 6-3,6-4; Mahatir Muhammad bt Inam Qadir 6-2,7-5; Amir Mazari bt Ali Zain 6-3,6-3

Boys 14& under Singles 1st Round: Saqib Ali bt Ehsanullah Kabir 4-5(1),4-0,5-4(4); Haziq Arejo bt Anis Khan 4-0,4-0; Junaid Meher bt M. Arsalan 5-4(1),4-2; M. Yahya bt Arsh imran 4-0,4-0

Pakistan strike thrice on rain-impacted opening day of MCG Test

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Rain interfered with the action on Tuesday at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), where Pakistan and Australia face each other for the second Test of the three-match series. Pakistan bowlers struck thrice to avoid significant damage, countering the solid start by David Warner and Usman Khawaja, according to information made available here by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

After winning the toss, Pakistan opted to field first in the Boxing Day Test, banking on overcast conditions to favour their seam bowling attack. Shaheen Shah Afridi opened the bowling alongside fellow left-handed pacer Mir Hamza. Left-handed batter David Warner was given a new life when

Abdullah Shafique dropped him at first slip off Shaheen's bowling in just the third over of the game. The first-wicket stand between Warner and Usman Khawaja yielded 90 runs.

Salman Ali Agha provided the first breakthrough for Pakistan as Warner was caught at first slip by Babar Azam on the stroke of lunch. Warner, riding on the back of a match-winning century at Perth, returned to the pavilion after scoring 38 from 83, including three fours. Recalled to the Test side for the first time since January, right-arm fast bowler Hasan Ali quickly settled in and brought Pakistan the second wicket shortly after lunch. Australia was reduced to 108-2 in the 34th over after Khawaja (42, 101b, 5x4s), who had braved the new ball well for his team, edged the ball and was

caught by Salman in the slips. Marnus Labuschagne and Steven Smith replaced the opening duo on the crease. The two saw off the second session of the day, with the Pakistan pace attack looking to make the most of the increasingly bleak conditions as dark clouds loomed over the MCG. Hasan Ali and Shaheen worked in tandem to mount pressure on the home side, bowling three maidens in a row at one point.

Soon after, rain enforced an early tea and play was suspended owing to weather conditions. Australia ended the session at 114-2 in 42.4 overs.

Shaheen returned with the ball once play resumed and trapped Smith LBW, but the decision was overturned after a successful review by the batter. Eventually, Aamir Jamal provided the much-needed breakthrough,

cutting short the gritty 46-run stand between Smith and Labuschagne, as the former was caught behind after edging the ball. Smith walked back after scoring 26 from 75, including two boundaries.

Travis Head (nine not out, 19b, 1x4) replaced Smith on the crease. Batting alongside Labuschagne, he helped Australia get to 187-3 in 66 overs by stumps. Labuschagne (44 not out, 120b, 3x4s) will face the first ball on the second day.

Action will resume on day two at the Melbourne Cricket Ground at 0430 PKT.

Scores in brief: Australia overs 187-3, 66 overs (Marnus Labuschagne 44 not out, Usman Khawaja 42, David Warner 38; Salman Ali Agha 1-5, Hasan Ali 1-28, Aamir Jamal 1-47)



Convocation

KARACHI: The President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) Convocation 2023 on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Self-sustenance inevitable for success in the world: President

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that self-sustenance is inevitable for the success in the world and expressed the confidence that Pakistan would progress and develop.

Addressing as chief guest on the occasion of the 35th Convocation ceremony of Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) at Baharia Auditorium here, he said that the world needed intellect at the moment and there was no dearth of it in Pakistan.

Rector National Univer-

sity of Science and Technology (NUST) Lt General (R) Mehmood and Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem were also present.

During the convocation, a total of 368 graduates were awarded Bachelors' and Post-graduate degrees including the foreign students.

The President also awarded 39 medals to the students on their outstanding performance.

Addressing the convocation, President Dr. Arif Alvi appreciated the efforts put in by the PNEC for maintaining high standards of education by

providing quality engineers to the evolving industry of Pakistan.

He emphasized that responsibility of PNEC has further increased in present realm of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Robotics.

He also acknowledged that foreign students were a testimony to the College's credentials in the engineering sector.

He highlighted that NUST PNEC will continue with its legacy of being the premier engineering and technology institution, fulfilling present day engineering needs of the

country.

The President felicitated the graduating students and their parents and advised the graduates to be active members of society in building a stronger and prosperous Pakistan and keep themselves abreast and with fast changing advancements in technology.

President Dr. Arif Alvi termed the completion of degrees by students as an opening of the doors to the knowledge for the students and said, they must learn more and more.

Earlier, Commandant PNEC Commodore Tauqeer

Ahmad Khawaja apprised that PNEC was making all out efforts to provide the best engineering education to its students in multiple disciplines.

Further, he highlighted the achievements of students in various events held at national and international levels.

He highlighted the opportunities provided to the students at different forums in order to groom and nurture the young engineers.

The ceremony was attended by a large number of military and civil dignitaries and parents of graduating students.

Defence Ministry submits reply in audio leak case



City desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Defence on Tuesday submitted its reply with the Islamabad High Court (IHC) regarding the audio leak case involving Bushra Bibi and the son of former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar. IHC's Justice Babar Sattar heard the case.

The ministry, in its one-page reply, stated that several inexpensive accessories and tools were readily available in the market, simplifying the process of intercepting audio during phone calls. It further pointed out that some platforms also offered such services for a fee, and the content

of the audios could also be altered with the use of artificial intelligence.

The ministry said that only social media platforms could provide the source of the recordings posted on them. It mentioned that the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) was the competent authority to obtain information from the social media platforms under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016.

Consequently, the court was made to direct the Cyber Crime Wing of FIA for further investigations. The court then adjourned the case till February 19, 2024.

28,626 candidates face intense scrutiny ahead of Saturday deadline

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The scrutiny of nomination papers for 28,626 candidates contesting for 1,085 general and reserved seats of the National and provincial assemblies is underway, which will conclude on Saturday. According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), some 7,713 candidates are vying for 266 general National Assembly seats, and 609 for 70 women and minority seats.

About 7,242 men and 471 women will compete for the general seats. Likewise, 18,546 candidates have entered the race for 593 general provincial assembly seats, besides 2,367 for 156 reserved seats. Total 17,744 men and 802 women will contest for provincial assembly seats. About 8,592 men and 437 women vie for 297 general seats in the Punjab Assembly; 4,060 men and 205 women for 130 general seats in the Sindh Assembly; 3,349 men and 115 women for 115 general seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, and 1,743 men and 45 women for 51 general seats in the Balochistan



Assembly. More than 1,500 candidates have submitted nomination papers for 22 National Assembly and 47 Provincial Assembly seats in Karachi. The ECP approved nomination papers of 131 candidates running in constituencies of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

In Islamabad, 24 candidates contesting three National Assembly constituencies have passed the scrutiny process. Simultaneously, in Rawalpindi, some 107 candidates have successfully undergone scrutiny for three National and nine provincial assembly constituencies. In Rawalpindi, several notable individuals, including Fayyazul-Hasan Chauhan of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Daniyal Chaudhry of Pakistan

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Qamarul Islam, Nasir Butt, Mian Aslam from Jamaat-e-Islami, and independent candidate Chaudhry Nisar, have their nomination papers accepted. Furthermore, Sheikh Rashid Shafiq from Awami Muslim League also received approval for his nomination papers. In Rawalpindi's NA-35, NA-55, and NA-56 constituencies, 30 candidates for National Assembly seats have got their papers approved. Additionally, across provincial constituencies from PP-10 to PP-17, a total of 90 candidates gained validation for their nomination papers. The ECP will publish the final list of candidates on January 11, with the allocation of election symbols slated for January 13.

Saudi Arabia begins registration of foreign pilgrims for Hajj 2024



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia announced that it has begun official registration of foreign pilgrims for Hajj 2024.

"Muslim pilgrims from all over the world can now register along with their families for Hajj 1445/2024 through the Nusuk Hajj application under the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah," the Center for International Communication (CIC), under the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Media revealed.

Pilgrims from the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and Oceania can apply for the pilgrimage through

Nusuk Hajj application. More details about the registration can be had from hajj.nusuk.sa website, Saudi Gazette reported.

Nusuk Hajj is the gateway to a journey of a lifetime. It is the one-stop-shop platform, overseen by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. It offers pilgrims a variety of Hajj packages offered by authorized service providers, ensuring a seamless lifetime spiritual experience.

The pilgrims can register their names through the website after creating their account by giving an email address and selecting the current country of residence from the provided list, which includes all countries served for Hajj 2024.

Global health security summit preparations planned

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr. Nadeem Jan on Tuesday presided over the review meeting for preparations of the Global Health Security Summit.

The Global Health Security Summit is being held on January 10 and 11 in the federal capital of Pakistan.

During the meeting, Dr. Nadeem Jan was briefed on the preparations for the summit.

The Global Health Security Summit will be attended by top health experts from around the

world.

An integrated strategy to deal with epidemics will be formed at the global conference.

The minister said that by holding the international conference, the positive image of Pakistan will be presented.

He said that holding the summit is proof that Pakistan can play a key role in the health sector.

Federal Secretary Health Iftekhar Ali Shalwani and DG Health Dr. Muhammad Ahmed Qazi participated in the meeting besides other officials of the Ministry of National Health Services.

National conference calls to promote interfaith harmony in country

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Department of International Relations of the University of Karachi in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony organized a national conference on "bridging beliefs: interfaith harmony in Pakistan", at the KU Chinese Teachers Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday. The conference called to promote the interfaith harmony culture in the country and emphasizes the impor-

ance of interfaith harmony, tolerance, love, dialogue, acceptance, and respect for all religions and faiths.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, in his address as the chief guest said that every person in the country condemned the incident of Jaranwala Town in Faisalabad district which was reported in August 2023. He recalled that our scholars opened the doors of mosques for the Christian community and that gave a positive message to the world.

PEMRA prohibits broadcast, distribution of surrogate company ads

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on Tuesday prohibited "broadcast/distribution" of advertisement of surrogate companies in any manner whatsoever with immediate effect.

The Authority, in its prohibition order, warned all the licensees, including satellite television (TV) channels, radio stations, all landing rights permission holders and distribution network operators of legal proceedings under relevant provisions of PEMRA laws in case of non-compliance and/or on repeated violation.

It said that the order was issued in continuity of its earlier letters "wherein office memorandum/advisory issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad with regard to "Zero Tolerance for Surrogate Companies" were circulated among licensees for compliance".

"The Authority, while exercising powers vested under Section 27(a) of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2023, hereby prohibits broad-



cast/distribution of advertisement of surrogate companies (in any manner what so ever) with immediate effect which are promoting gambling/betting in different sports events being telecast/broadcast/rebroadcast in the country and refers the matter to Council of Complaints (Islamabad) for appropriate recommendations to the Authority," it added.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has already vowed zero tolerance against the surrogate companies of the "betting houses".

In an advisory, the Ministry urged all the ministries, departments and organizations not to engage in any kind of contract or cooperation with the surrogate companies illegally operating in Pakistan, especially on print, electronic and social media.

Importance of Preventive Health Education to Reduce NCDs

In a recent assembly held in Islamabad, health experts voiced their disappointment at the apparent absence of a standardized approach to addressing 'Non-Communicable Diseases' (NCDs), particularly diabetes and hypertension, at the policy level. Despite a clear recognition of the seriousness of the health threats posed by NCDs, there is a notable neglect in establishing cohesive strategies.

The 2023 census paints a disheartening picture of Pakistan's health landscape with regards to NCDs. With a population exceeding 241 million and a growth rate of 2.5%, NCDs, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, are on the ascent. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Atlas reports that approximately 33 million individuals in the country grapple with diabetes, representing the highest disease rate in the world. Consequently, 1,100 people in Pakistan succumb to diabetes or its complications daily, attributing 6 out of 10 deaths to NCDs.

The consequences of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension extend far beyond individual suffering, straining healthcare systems, dimin-

ishing productivity, and contributing to a cycle of intergenerational health challenges. It is, therefore, a collective responsibility to instill a sense of ownership over health at an early age and within the broader community.

There is an undeniable correlation between the consumption of sugary beverages and ultra-processed foods,

These products often contain excessive amounts of added sugars, unhealthy fats, refined carbohydrates, and salts, contributing to conditions like obesity, high blood pressure, and metabolic disorders. The addictive nature of these foods compounds the issue, trapping individuals in a cycle of cravings and overconsumption.

Empowering young minds with preventive measures early on is crucial for laying the foundation for a lifetime of well-being. The time has come to integrate comprehensive preventive education, covering cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hyper-

tension, into primary and secondary school curricula nationwide. This, coupled with community-level initiatives promoting healthy lifestyles, has the potential to be a game-changer in reducing early deaths resulting from heart attacks and complications of diabetes and hypertension.

The school environment plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's habits and attitudes. Adding modules on preventive health education in primary and secondary schools can arm students with the knowledge needed to make healthy choices. These modules should encompass the basics of cardiovascular health, the importance of a balanced diet, the risks associated with sedentary lifestyles, and the impact of stress on overall well-being.

Revamping physical education classes would not only encourage physical activity but also educate students about the role of exercise in preventing cardiovascular diseases and managing conditions like diabetes and hyper-

tension is essential. Practical, hands-on activities can make learning about nutrition enjoyable and memorable, setting the stage for a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

Community platforms can also provide a structured environment for such education, where habits are reinforced, and collective change can occur. Community leaders, healthcare professionals, and local organizations play a vital role in promoting and sustaining healthy lifestyles.

By fostering a culture of health from the very start, we can reduce the incidence of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension, ultimately mitigating early deaths and creating a healthier, more resilient nation. The integration of comprehensive preventive health education in schools and community-level initiatives promoting healthy lifestyles represents a powerful strategy in the fight against communicable diseases. The time to act is now, and the path to a healthier future begins with education and community empowerment.

Analysis is Director Operation and General Secretary in Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH)



Sanaullah Ghumman