

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فہرمان رسول والذکر علیہ
ہم سے ایوب نے بیان کیا، ان سے کرم
نے اور ان سے ان عباس رضی اللہ عنہما
بیان کیا کہ تمہیں کتاب سے ان کی کتابوں کے
مسائل کے بارے میں کچھ سوال کرتے ہو،
تمہارے پاس خود اللہ کی کتاب موجود ہے جو
زندگے اظہار سے سچی تم سے سب سے زیادہ
قریب ہے، تم سے پڑھتے ہو وہ خاص ہے
اس میں کوئی ملامت نہیں۔
(تفسیر: ص 522)

Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI



Pakistan conducts successful flight test of Fatah-II

Pakistan conducted a successful flight test of missile Fatah-II, equipped with state-of-the-art avionics, sophisticated navigation system and unique flight trajectory. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the weapon system is capable of engaging targets with high precision up to a range of 400 kilometres.



Research vital for overcoming climatic disaster: Solangi

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that climatic disaster was one of the biggest challenges the country was facing currently, and acquisition of research-oriented knowledge was vital to tackle it. He expressed these views while addressing the 4th convocation of Information Technology University (ITU) Punjab here. (Details on Page 3)

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Israeli brutality

The Israeli army continues its military operations by land, air and sea.



Photo: via Eye on Palestine

Israeli aggression on Gaza, more than 20915 Palestinian martyrs, 54918 wounded

Spokesman Report

GAZA: On the 82nd day of the Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army continued its military operations by land, air and sea.

Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas broadcast videos of its fighters targeting Israeli military vehicles penetrating the Sheikh al-Zayed area in northern Gaza.

Iran threatened retaliation against the assassina-

tion by Israel of one of its top generals in Syria, while the Lebanese Resistance group Hezbollah escalated its attacks on Israeli occupation soldiers in south Lebanon.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, 20,915 Palestinians have been killed, and 54,918 wounded in Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza starting on October 7.

Palestinian and international estimates say that the majority of those killed and wounded are women and children.

Qureshi arrested from outside Adiala Jail after release on bail



Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Punjab police took Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi into custody from outside the Adiala Jail here on Wednesday after he was released on bail in the cipher case.

Police manhandled Qureshi and drove him to an unknown location in an armored vehicle.

It may be recalled that a day ago, Rawalpindi deputy commissioner issued his detention orders under MPO 3 on the application of CPO.

However, the DC withdrew the detention order but Rawalpindi R. A. Bazar police arrested him in a May 9 vandalism case registered by it.

Earlier talking to media

outside Adiala Jail, Qureshi said that he was being arrested in a frivolous case. "I have represented the nation. I am innocent. I am being subjected to political revenge for no reason," he added.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah granted him bail after hearing arguments, he said.

He warned that he would move the Supreme Court against any "unlawful action" against him.

Regarding his bail, Qureshi said that the judge signed my release order (robkar). Then the deputy commissioner issued orders for my arrest under MPO 3 and police detained me. "I accepted his order and went back to my cell [in jail]," he stated.

Govt taking steps to boost foreign investment in IT sector: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said the government was taking steps to boost foreign investment in the Information Technology sector.

"In this regard, positive progress has already been made," the prime minister said while chairing the 5th meeting of Board of Governors of Special Technology Zones Authority.

In a bid to promote and develop IT sector in the country, he directed the authorities



concerned to chalk out necessary policies to attract interna-

tional IT experts in Pakistan.

PM Kakar highlighted that the Information Technology sector could play a vital role in strengthening the country's economy as Pakistan had huge potential in this sector.

During the meeting, various matters linked to the Special Technology Zones Authority, came under discussion.

The meeting endorsed the decisions, concluded during the 4th meeting of the Board of Governors of Special Technology Authority.

It approved the re-struct-

uring of the finance, audit and technical committees of the Board of Governors of the Authority.

Furthermore, the meeting also approved the presentation of drafts of the Authority's licensing framework, procedures and regulations before the technical committee.

Federal Secretaries of Cabinet, Finance, Information Technology, Science and Technology, Chief Secretaries of all the provinces and other Board members, attended the meeting.

PML-N establishes web portal for suggestions about manifesto

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has established a web portal to seek public opinion on its manifesto ahead of the general elections, scheduled for February 8, 2024.

While establishing a web portal, the Nawaz Sharif-led PML-N has sought suggestions from professionals, experts, overseas Pakistanis and citizens for the party's election manifesto to 2024. The party has sought suggestions on Pakistan's multiple sectors, including economy, energy, education, health, women empowerment and foreign policy.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif said that his party was preparing its manifesto for General Elections 2024 with the "objective of identifying Pakistan's main issues across various sectors and areas, and proposing implementable solutions".

"We would like to invite suggestions and proposals from you, the people of Pakistan and overseas Pakistanis to help achieve this objective," he added.

16th death anniversary of Benazir Bhutto being observed today

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The 16th death anniversary of former prime minister (PM) Benazir Bhutto is being observed with reverence all over the country today (Wednesday).

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has finalised arrangements for the main function in this regard at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

A big public meeting is scheduled to be held in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh for which a big stage has been prepared for top leadership of PPP while the venue has been decorated with party flags and posters of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto.

Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, former President and co-chairman PPP Asif Ali Zardari, and other central leadership of PPP will address the public meeting.

Special security and traffic arrangement been made to organise the event. At least 8,000 police personnel, including women police, will be deployed to ensure the law and order on the occasion.

Maryam Nawaz's nomination papers be rejected

Correspondent

SARGODHA: A citizen filed objection to the nomination papers of Maryam Nawaz saying that she is a convict and a liar because she concealed her assets and requested the returning officer to reject her candidacy.

A local man submitted on Wednesday an application before the returning officer for rejection of nomination papers of Maryam from the Punjab Assembly constituency PP-80 were forged.

Moreover, the objector said that signature on nomination papers were forged.

It may be recalled that Maryam was convicted by an anti-corruption court in 2018 along with her father for not being able to disclose a known source of income for buying London properties.

She was sentenced to seven years in jail.

However, in September 2022, a two-judge Islamabad High Court bench overturned the conviction.

What is Egypt's proposal for Gaza?

News Desk

GAZA: Egypt has held talks between Hamas and its allied Islamic Jihad to try and broker a permanent ceasefire in Israel's war in the Gaza Strip, which has killed tens of thousands, laid waste to the Hamas-governed territory, and displaced the majority of the 2.3 million Palestinian residents.

Egypt is proposing that Hamas and Islamic Jihad relinquish power in the Gaza Strip in return for a permanent ceasefire, said two Egyptian security sources.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad officials have rejected such a proposal, the Egyptian sources said. Officials of the two groups denied publicly what the sources said. Leaders of the two groups have repeatedly insisted a post-Gaza war future should be decided by the Palestinians themselves and not according to foreign dictation.

Israel has demanded the destruction of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, with aides to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying this would entail the dismantling of all of their military and governance capabilities and a deradicalising of the Gaza population.

Suspension of disqualification doesn't mean relief in punishment: SC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court judge Justice Athar Minallah says there is no judicial precedent in the country for suspension of penalty on the basis of undoing of disqualification.

A hearing was held by the apex court on the request of the PTI founder against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) contempt. The apex court hinted that it would hear the contempt of court petition against the ECP on Thursday.

Justice Tariq Mehmood said the Toshakhana disqualification case application was not filed in the SC. Lawyer Shehbaz Khosa appealed to the court to fix the disqualification petition before a three-member bench.

Justice Tariq Mehmood said only two judges were available in Islamabad where as the Toshakhana case was required to be decided by at least three-member bench.

Justice Athar Minallah stated there was a request before the SC if the judgement of Toshakhana case was suspended, the sentence should also be declared null and void.

ECP ensures smooth operations for general elections 2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday assured smooth operations for upcoming general elections 2024, saying that all its operational and IT systems were working "satisfactorily", ARY News reported.

In a statement issued today, the electoral watchdog said that it wasn't facing any difficulty in conducting the upcoming general election.

The ECP further said that it has developed an automated and modern Election Management System (EMS) that will be used to "transform and compile election results from Presiding to Returning officers".

It added that the system has been tested several times for the mentioned purpose. "Besides, some additional functions and features have been included to the EMS to facilitate the Returning Officers (ROs) so that the data can be used in future even during



the initial phases of the polling process," it noted.

The process of scrutiny of the nomination papers would continue until December 30 after which the candidates could challenge the decisions of the returning officers, if any, in appellate tribunals until January 3, 2024, which would be decided by January 10, according to the election schedule.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) released the data of papers, which showed that the number of candidates in this election is the highest ever in the country.

Overall 28,626 candidates for both national and provincial assemblies submitted their nomination papers - 7,913 for the 266 general seats of the National Assembly and 18,546 for the 593 general seats of the four provincial assemblies.

16th Death Anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the occasion of the death anniversary of Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, the People's Party Human Rights Wing South Punjab organized a candle light prayer ceremony at the residence of the President of South Punjab Salimur Rahman Mayo, Nizamabad Old Shujabad Road. By lighting candles in memory of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto they paid their respects and recited Fatiha for the repose of their souls and prayed for forgiveness by Khalilur Rehman Advocate. While Salim-ur-Reh-



man Mayo, M. Salim Raja, Mughith Shahzad Bhutto said that Benazir Bhutto would not hesitate to make any sacrifice under the leadership of Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani to strengthen the party to fulfill the mission of Shaheed. They promise to fight for the country's people and development, he said. The workers are excited and ready to struggle for the upcoming election. Inshallah the party will make the candidates successful and make Bilawal Bhutto the Prime Minister. Rahman Mayo, Muhammad Siddique, Muhammad Jamshed, Muhammad Raheel, Muhammad Azhar participated.

Dua

LARKANA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Former President of Pakistan and President PPPP Asif Ali Zardari, Sanam Bhutto and others offering Dua on the occasion of 16th death anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.



Photo: APP

Provincial Minister shows displeasure over non-submission of Chiniot iron ore source report

PNP

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Mines and Minerals Ibrahim Hassan Murad said that the Punjab government has entrusted the important responsibility to the Punjab Mineral Company. We all have to move forward with the vision of Punjab government for exploration, development of mines Sector. These views were expressed by the provincial minister while presiding over a meeting of the Department of Mines and Minerals at camp office on Wednesday. CFO Punjab Minerals Company Rana Faisal told the provincial minister during the briefing that seven new points identified in some areas adjacent to Chiniot Iron Ore while it is being identified metallic minerals may be present, but it is yet to be studied. The provincial minister was also shown a presentation on behalf of the company's representatives, in which the provincial minister was given a detailed briefing about the Chiniot iron ore. The minister showed displeasure, not submitted source report pending till June 2013, directed that a detailed report be submitted within a week. The provincial minister said that in the previous meeting, it was directed that the report of the consultant should be presented. He said that a video link meeting should be arranged with the consultant, however.

Wasting time is not acceptable under any circumstances. Ibrahim Hassan Murad emphasized that the Chief Minister of Punjab has a close eye on the Mines and Minerals sector. Deposits like Chiniot Iron Ore are our valuable assets and the economy is being stabilized with such deposits. In the meeting, DG Mines and Minerals Rana Abdul Shakoor, Representatives of Punjab Minerals Company, PSO Mines and Minerals Shoaib Naseer and related persons participated.

Commissioner Dera issued instructions to provide facilities to people

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Division Zafar Ul Islam has said on Wednesday that all resources should be used to provide maximum facilities to the people related to the board of revenue and estate department.



He gave these instructions while presiding over a meeting held in his office related to the board of revenue & estate department.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, South Waziristan (Upper), South Waziristan (Lower) and Service Delivery Center officers.

During the meeting, Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan was given a detailed briefing on land cultivation and land record computerization.

On which the Commissioner directed that the process of computerization should be accelerated while soon the remaining places should also be computerized, so that not only immediate records are available but also the difficulties faced by people in obtaining various records can be solved.

Remembering melodious voice of Sindh on his death anniversary

Kamran Khamiso Khwaja

HYDERABAD: Along with former Prime minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto, December 27 also marked 26th death anniversary of popular Sindh folk singer Abdul Raheman Mughal who gained recognition as Sarmad Sindh. Cruelty of destiny deprived Sindh of one of its melodious voices in an unfortunate way on 27 December 1997 when Sarmad Sindh lost his life in a road accident near Thatta. An engineer turned singer Sarmad mesmerized music buffs of Sindh during 80s and 90s through his melodious and God-gifted voice. He was born in Pariyalo town of district Khairpur in 1958 in middle-class family. During his days at school and College he would sing songs at different academic events but was awaiting a mega opportunity that came his way when he was introduced on Radio Pakistan by Kausar Buriro and on Pakistan Television by it, s director Sami Baloch. Sarmad then never looked back and used these two mediums to earn unparalleled fame across the country by singing songs in Sindh, Saraiki and Urdu languages.

In 1980 during the dictatorial regime of General Zia ul Haq he sang songs to attract masses for Movement for Restoration of Democracy.

His voice played a vital role in fostering nationalist politics in Sindh. Besides that he was also famous amongst common folk of Sindh as his songs were often played by tractor drivers while cultivating barren lands late night.

He sang poetry of prominent Sindh poets including Sheikh Ayaz, Ustad Bukhara, Ghulam Hussain Rangrez, Haleem Baghi and Mama Juman Darbadar.

In recognition of his services he was bestowed with several titles and awards including Victor Arra of Sindh and Sindh Jo Bechal.

Over 192 candidates for 5 seats in Punjab Assembly include all villages of Tehsil Attock

Raaza Naqvi

ATTOCK: As many as 192 candidates have submitted their nomination papers for two seats of the National Assembly and five seats of the Provincial assembly. Candidates belonging to Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Muslim League (N), Tehreek-e-Labeek Pakistan, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam are included. Several PTI candidates submitted nomination papers as an independent candidates.

According to Election Office Attock, Constituency NA-49 Attock I includes the area of Tehsil Hasan Abdal (except three villages of Hisar, Kotsundki and Pathargarh) and Constituency NA 50 Attock II which includes the total area of Tehsil Jund, Tehsil Pindi Gheb and Tehsil Fateh Jang and only three villages of Tehsil Hasan Abdal, Hisar, Kot sundki and Pathargarh.

Among the 5 constituencies across the district of the Provincial Assembly, Constituency PP-I Attock I will include the entire area of Tehsil Hazro and only Kamra Cantt. Constituency PP-2 Attock II will include the entire area of Tehsil Hasan Abdal and Tehsil Fateh Jang only from Fateh Jang city to the area of Ex Municipal Committee and Bahtar Qanoon gooh Constituency. Constituency PP-3 Attock III will include the entire area of Attock Tehsil except Kamra Cantt. Constituency PP-4 Attock IV will include the rural area of Tehsil Fateh Jang (except Fateh Jang City Ex Municipal Committee and Bahtar qanoongooh Constituency) and the area of Tehsil Pindi Ghib (except Surag, Kasran, Tawain Constituency). The last Constituency PP-5 Attock V will include the total area of Tehsil Jund and Surag, Kasran, Tawain of Tehsil Pindi Gheb.

According to Election Commissioner Attock Noor ul Khattab, the total number of male and female voters in NA-49 Attock I and NA-50 Attock II will be 13,49,040 in which the number of male voters will be 6,97,362 while the number of female voters will be 6,51,678 will exercise their right to vote, according to the details, the number of male voters in NA-49 Attock I will be 3,34,246 and female voters will be 3,06,433, thus in NA-50 Attock II the number of male voters will be 3,63,116 while the total number of female voters will be 345,035.

India is subjecting Kashmiris to extreme atrocities: Sardar Atique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/ RAWALPINDI: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference) President and former Prime Minister Sardar Atique Ahmad Khan has said that India is subjecting Kashmiris to extreme atrocities for demanding the right to self-determination, and the lives of Kashmiris are at the mercy of Indian soldiers. Due to Indian atrocities, daily life of Kashmiris has become hell, Indian forces have unbridled powers under black laws and are martyring uring detention and fake encounters. He expressed these views while talking to the Muslim Conference delegations at Mujhid Manzil in Rawalpindi. He said that the Kash-



miri people in Occupied Kashmir are struggling for their freedom under Indian oppression and tyranny. The situation in Occupied Kashmir is very disturbing because India wants to end the Kashmir issue and usurp Occupied Kashmir, so we have to raise our voice to the international community and international human rights organizations and the major chambers around the

world to stop Indian atrocities in Occupied Kashmir. It is only then possible that Kashmiris and Pakistanis all over the world expose the false propaganda of India and expose the real face of India, which flouts human rights in Occupied Kashmir, before the world. India has been violating human rights in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir for the past seven decades and has been breaking mountains of inhumane atrocities on Kashmiris, especially after the unconstitutional move by India to end the special status of Occupied Kashmir on August 5, 2019. Kashmiris have been encroached on their own land, Indian occupation forces are using crude tactics like killing Kashmiri youth,

raping elders and women and using pellet guns in fake encounters. India is settling non-state Hindus in Occupied Kashmir to change the population ratio in Occupied Kashmir and the constituencies of Occupied Kashmir are also being changed so that India has a Hindu population in Occupied Kashmir. Chief Minister can pave the way to bring The Indian Supreme Court's upholding of the Modi government's move to end the special status of Occupied Kashmir is a biased decision that favors the continuation of Modi's Hindutva policies. With this decision, the fortress of India's claims of being the world's largest democracy and so-called secular state has now been exposed to the world.

Chaudhry Yasin says Bibi Shaheed was chain of four provinces



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that the first woman prime minister of the Islamic world was the chain of four provinces. My sister, your sister Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed was taken away from us today by anti-patriotic and anti-democracy terrorists. If Bibi had lived, today Kashmir would have been free, this country would have been prosperous, today there would not be economic and political instability.

High officials take notice of manipulation of pocket money of tribal elders

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Malik Jameel said that the higher officials of the district administration of South Waziristan Lower (SWL) take notice of the manipulation of funds and monthly pocket money (Kharcha) coming in the name of tribal elders.

Elders said, like other tribal districts, the government should give us our full rights, otherwise we will register a strong protest.

Chief Malik Jameel Wazir and Malik Shehryar Wazir along with other elders held an emergency press conference at District Press Club Wana on Wednesday and

expressed their displeasure with the district administration.

That Ahmadzai tribal elders were demanding the establishment of a separate district so that the tribal elders can get the full right of privileges at his doorstep.

But now the DC Lower South Waziristan staff is distributing the honorary and pocket money fixed to the tribal elders from the British era to half of the elders, which is equal to total injustice and abuse.

On this occasion they said that earlier our DC used to be called South Waziristan that due to the fact that the district account of the District SWL is



not open, the Pocket money and honorary money cannot be given to the elders.

Tribal elders said that our DC also used to say that Mehsud tribal elders of Upper Waziristan are getting

pocket money and honorary because their account is already open.

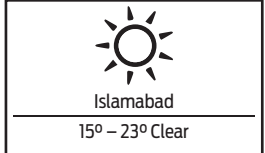
They said that now the account of our district has been opened but the district administration SWL is giving

us half the pocket money and honorary which is not only unfair but also a place of shame for the administration.

Malik Jameel and Shehryar said that the district administration does not respect tribal Chiefs and elders, where we are not respected, we do not accept that pocket money.

They demanded to take notice of this inappropriate behavior from the provincial authorities, IGFC South KP and Commander SWS Brigade Wana.

They said that the district administration should correct the behavior of Lower South Waziristan otherwise, they will soon be forced to protest strongly.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings table with columns for Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha.

EMERGENCY

Emergency services table including Police, Bomb Disposal, Fire Services, and Ambulance.

Women Police Stations

Table listing Women Police Stations in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

ENQUIRY

Enquiry services table including Edhi Ambulance, PIA Flight Info, and Railway Enquiry.

HOSPITALS

Hospitals table listing various hospitals like CMH, MH, Cantt Hospital, and others.

DEPARTMENTS

Departments table listing CDA, RDA, TMA, and other municipal services.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints table listing Water Tanker Service, E-7, F-10 & F-11, and other services.

Fog engulfs plains of Punjab

City Desk

LAHORE: With evening fell, fog settled in plains of Punjab where many highways were closed for traffic.

According to spokesperson for Motorways police, Motorway M-2, M-3, M-4 and M-11 were closed for all type of traffic due to dense fog.

Motorway M-2 was also closed for all types of traffic from Thokar Niaz Baig to Balkasar.

Because of the fog in Phaliya city and its surroundings, the traffic flow was severely affected due to the low visibility in the early evening.

Furthermore, due to heavy fog in Kasur and its surroundings, the visibility become zero.

Research vital for overcoming climatic disaster: Solangi

City Desk

LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that climatic disaster was one of the biggest challenges the country was facing currently, and acquisition of research-oriented knowledge was vital to tackle it.

He expressed these views while addressing the 4th convocation of Information Technology University (ITU) Punjab here. Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman, ITU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Adnan Noor Mian, vice chancellors (VCs) of various universities, ITU Dean Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Arif Mehmood, Dean Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Dr. Yaqoob Bangash, Dean Faculty of Business and Management Sciences Dr. Sara Khawar, faculty members and a large number of students and their parents attended the event.

He said, "We observe the negative effects of global warming and other climatic changes every day; therefore, we have to play our due role to protect the natural environment."

The federal minister said that Pakistan was faced with challenges of economic depression, intolerance and violent behaviours also. Emphasising the important role of students to overcome these challenges, he said that only those nations attain the uphill tasks of development and prosperity which face the challenges firmly, asserting that education was the most important tool to overcome these challenges. Pakistan could also fast progress and develop only through the acquisition and promotion of knowledge, he added.

Murtaza Solangi said humanity had been the characteristic of all religions and that very objective was of the education that people become better persons.



He also stressed the need for tackling the negative propaganda, citing that unfortunately some people were spreading false and baseless news on social media to secure high ratings, which the government and patriot-

ic people would have to fight out. He said if research universities like the ITU maintain the very basis of their establishment, many of the problems would be solved automatically. In this regard, he referred to the well-known German dramatist's famous play "The Exception and the Rule".

In the 4th convocation of the ITU, 524 students were awarded degrees including five with Ph. Ds and 16 with gold medals.

Fascinating

ISLAMABAD: Visitors are enjoying at grand Shah Faisal Mosque during evening hours in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

APHC condemns banning of Muslim League Jammu Kashmir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Azad Kashmir Chapter Secretary General and Convener Muslim League Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Abdul Mateen, here on Wednesday, strongly condemned the banning of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League led by Masarat Alam Bhat. "Banning a political organization by leveling false and baseless allegations is another stain on so-called democracy," he said in a statement issued here adding that such low-handed tactic by India could not silence any voice raised for justice in the past nor could it do in future.

Referring to the tweet by Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, declaring Muslim League Jammu and Kashmir an unlawful organization under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Mateen said, Massarat is well-known for his anti-Indian and pro-Pakistani stance.

He said, the members of the Muslim League were at the forefront of the freedom movement in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, aiming for Kashmir's liberation from India.

The statement by Indian Home Minister accused the Muslim League activists, particularly Musarrat Alam, of involvement in anti-Indian activities and designated the party illegal for a period of five years under UAPA.

Masarat Alam Bhat has consistently maintained that Jammu and Kashmir was a disputed territory acknowledged by the United Nations and has rejected any resolution of the issue within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

Int'l moot on Allama Iqbal kicks off at AIUO

PNP

ISLAMABAD: "Undoubtedly Iqbal's poetry, philosophy and thought is universal and his message is for the people of the whole world. His message is as fresh as ever and we still need it today", said Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi while addressing the opening session of a two-day International Conference on "Iqbal's Thought in the Perspective of 21st Century and Two Great Poets of Islam: Iqbal and Akif" at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIUO). This conference is being organized by the



Department of Iqbal Studies in collaboration with Yunus Emre Institute

Madad Ali Sindhi mentioned that Iqbal's thought provides a solution to the problems of today and serves as a guiding light for all human beings. Iqbal's political philosophy is a source of strength for democracy in Pakistan. He expressed his delight at the two-day international conference on Iqbal's thought being held at AIUO, where eminent intellectuals and Iqbal enthusiasts from all over Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, and

Turkey are present. The Federal Minister congratulated Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor AIUO, and his entire team for organizing this International Conference on Iqbal.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, mentioned that our university is one of the few universities that have established a Department of Iqbal Studies to promote Iqbal's thoughts and poetry. He stated that through this department, we aim to convey the message of Allama Iqbal to the youth. Dr. Nasir emphasized the need to elaborate and explain Iqbal's thoughts to train the new generation. Turkish Ambassa-

dor Mehmet Pacici and Dr. Halil Tokar commented that Iqbal's poetry has profoundly impacted the Turkish nation. In Turkey, there have been many translations of Iqbal's poetry, and research work on Iqbal is being conducted in Turkish universities. However, in Pakistan, Muhammad Akif is not recognized, and in collaboration with AIUO, the Yunus Emre Institute will promote the poetry and thoughts of the Turkish poet Muhammad Akif in Pakistan.

Other speakers including Director General, NLPD, Prof. Dr. Saleem Mazhar, Dr. Baseera Ambreen from Punjab University and Dr. Fatima Hasan from

Karachi expressed their concern about the challenges that today's young generation is facing including academic, intellectual, cultural, and moral crises. They emphasized that Allama Muhammad Iqbal's thoughts, philosophy, and poetry can inspire and guide the youth to overcome these problems.

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, expressed his gratitude to all the guests and participants. Dr. Shiraz Zaidi explained the aims and objectives of the conference, while Dr. Arshad Mehmood Nashad hosted the inaugural ceremony.

Exclusive

Last 100 Hours of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Life

Asim Tanveer

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto reached Rahim Yar Khan from Sukkur along with her best friend and Political Secretary Miss Naheed Khan in the freezing cold weather of December 23.

At night, she held a full meeting with the officials of the People's Party District Rahim Yar Khan and the next day informed the district officials of the People's Party about the preparations for the public meeting of Rahim Yar Khan and the arrival of the crowd to make the public meeting a success.

She also Issued instructions to the district officials of the People's Party to make the general meeting a success.

On December 24, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto along with her Political Secretary Miss Naheed Khan arrived at Rahim Yar Khan Sports Stadium with a huge Crowd

On reaching the Of Public meeting place she first asked about the live coverage of the media, on which Miss Naheed Khan told her that apart from the Private Electronic and print media With Asim Tanveer the correspondent of the international news organization Reuters, Mian Khalid Tanveer of the Associated Press of America (AP) and Arif Ali of Agency France Press (AFP) and the BBC team are present at the stadium to cover their rally.

On which Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto called foreign media representatives on the stage and discussed with them.

Seeing the enthusiasm of the people in Rahim Yar Khan Mohtarma Benazir paid a huge tribute to her Political Secretary Miss Naheed Khan

Intelligence agencies reported more than 100,000 public participation in Rahim Yar Khan of PPP, while according to independent sources, more than 200,000 PPP workers participated in the meeting.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto reached Bahawalpur on the same day from Rahimyar Khan on 24th December by a chartered plane and in the evening addressed a huge historical public meeting in Bahawalpur Stadium despite the bitter cold.

She stayed at the house of People's Party leader and former chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board Zaka Ashraf in Sugar Mill and attended the dinner.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto arrived at Lodhran at 12 noon on December 25 to address a public meeting and addressed the largest public meeting in the history of Lodhran

Immediately after addressing the historic public meeting in Lodhran, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto reached Muzaffargarh to address the public meeting and at 4 pm addressed a very large public meeting at the college ground of Muzaffargarh.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and her political secretary Miss Naheed Khan directly arrived at Multan Airport after addressing the public meeting

of Muzaffargarh, where they met with Shakeel Anjam (current President Press Club) of Express TV Multan.

Mohtarma. Benazir Bhutto arrived in Islamabad directly from Multan at 8 pm on December 25 and met with the party leaders at her residence F-8-2 till late night. She was accompanied by her Political Secretary Miss Naheed Khan and Senator Safdar Abbasi.

On December 26, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto left for Attock and Peshawar to address public meetings and addressed public meetings at Arbab Niaz Stadium Peshawar

Terrorists were also looking for Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's life like a shadow. The terrorists tried to attack Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto in Peshawar once again after the Karsaz bomb blast, but the security agencies foiled the terrorist operation in Peshawar and recovered the weapons from the accused.

After addressing the Peshawar jalsa. Mohtarma Benazir and her political secretary Miss Naheed Khan returned to Islamabad to Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's Residence.

On December 26 Mohtarma. Benazir Bhutto reached Islamabad from Peshawar. Mrs Naheed Khan left Mohtarma. Benazir Bhutto's residence at 2:30 PM after taking permission. At 3:00 AM DG ISI Lt. Gen Nadeem Taj arrived at Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's residence and met with the security in-charge of Ms. Benazir Bhutto Brigadier (retired) Aman and asked him to



arrange an emergency meeting with Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. I have an important message to give her.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto who was giving a special interview to Asim Tanveer, correspondent of the British news agency Reuters at that time, Brigadier Aman sent a message to DG ISI Lt. Gen. Nadeem Taj to meet him immediately.

After giving the interview Mohtarma Benazir met General Nadeem Taj In the meantime, DG ISI prohibited Ms. Benazir from addressing a public meeting at Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi in view of the threat of terrorism the next day on December 27 and Ms. Benazir Bhutto was banned from the threat of terrorism. Informed and forbade her to go to Liaquat Bagh

On December 27, Ms. Benazir read local and foreign newspapers after having breakfast and during this time she was talking to her political secretary Miss Naheed Khan.

On December 27, a meeting between Mohtarma. Benazir and the President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai was scheduled at 10:30 in the morning, but due to the delay of Hamid Karzai's flight, the meeting started at 11:30. Political Secretary Miss Naheed Khan and Senator were also present.

Mohtarma. Benazir Bhutto along with Miss Naheed Khan arrived at her residence after meeting with the President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai at 1 pm.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Miss

Naheed Khan and Asim Tanveer, correspondent of the British news agency Reuters, had lunch together and after that Ms. Benazir was talking on the phone with domestic and international politicians and Media Persons.

Death Journey Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto left her residence F-8/ 2 at 3:30 p.m. for Liaquat Bagh Public meeting Aam with Miss Naheed Khan and Safdar Abbasi along with former Federal Minister Amin Fahim

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto addressed a public meeting at Liaquat Bagh despite the prior notification of terrorism.

After addressing the public gathering at Liaquat Bagh, Mohtarma Benazir was to go to Golra Sharif Dargah for prayer and attendance and at 7 pm to meet the 3-member delegation of American Senators.

After addressing the meeting at Liaquat Bagh, the crowd was moving along Mohtarma Benazir's car, suddenly Mohtarma Benazir asked her car driver Javed to open the sunroof and after a few seconds

And after few seconds Ms. Benazir was responding to the slogans of thousands of PPP workers by waving her hands from the sun roof of the car, suddenly the terrorists opened fire on her and after 10 seconds the bomb exploded. In which former Prime Minister Ms. Benazir was martyred.

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Army Chief Vs Mafias - I

A well-structured community is founded on a bedrock of values, principles, and institutions that collectively contribute to the advancement and welfare of its members. These foundational elements act as guiding beacons, molding the character of the community and cultivating an environment conducive to individual flourishing.

At the core of a civilized society lies the rule of law, a fundamental pillar ensuring that the community operates within a framework of just and equitable regulations. This establishes the groundwork for justice, accountability, and the safeguarding of individual rights. In such a society, the rule of law establishes an even playing field, where all citizens are subject to the same laws and enjoy equal protections, fostering trust in institutions and providing a sense of security.

Social justice, the principle advocating for fair and equal access to opportunities, resources, and privileges, is another vital element. A civilized society actively addresses systemic inequalities, eradicates discrimination, and fosters inclusivity, enabling every member to contribute to and benefit from collective progress. This approach promotes empathy, understanding, and a shared responsibility among citizens.

Education stands as a pillar empowering individuals with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to meaningfully contribute to society. In a civilized society, accessible and high-quality education is essential for promoting innovation, informed decision-making, and dispelling ignorance. A well-educated populace forms the backbone of social and economic progress.

Economic prosperity, a crucial pillar,

enables a civilized society to meet the needs of its citizens, invest in infrastructure, and provide essential services. Sustainable economic development, driven by innovation, entrepreneurship, and fair trade practices, contributes to the overall well-being of the community, creating employment opportunities, reducing poverty, and enhancing the standard of living for all.

Civic engagement and democracy are interconnected pillars that empower individuals to actively participate in the decision-making processes of their society. A civilized society values open discourse, encourages citizen involvement in governance, and upholds democratic principles through transparent and accountable institutions.

Cultural and social cohesion form the fabric that binds individuals together, regardless of their diverse backgrounds. A civilized society celebrates cultural richness, promotes tolerance, and embraces diversity, fostering a sense of belonging, strengthening social bonds, and creating an environment where mutual respect thrives.

In the framework of a just and equitable society, the intertwined principles of merit and justice play pivotal roles in shaping the destiny of individuals and the collective as a whole. Merit, rooted in the concept of rewarding competence and accomplishment, and justice, grounded in fairness and impartiality, serve as the cornerstones for cultivating a thriving and harmonious community.

Meritocracy ensures that individuals receive recognition based on their skills and

accomplishments rather than familial or personal connections. This fosters a culture of equitable competition and equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of background or social status. Justice, in its purest form, strives to eliminate discrimination and bias, ensuring fair treatment for each person. This commitment to fairness in legal, economic, and social matters is essential for creating a society where everyone has an equal chance to succeed. Meritocracy encourages the development and utilization of talent, promoting innovation and societal progress. When individuals are acknowledged and rewarded for their abilities, it creates an environment where new ideas flourish, ultimately contributing to societal and economic advancement.

Economic justice ensures the equitable distribution of wealth and resources. A just economic system promotes inclusive growth, minimizing the wealth gap and creating a more stable and sustainable economy. Merit-based systems unite people based on shared goals and achievements. By celebrating merit, societies can break down artificial barriers and build a collective identity rooted in shared accomplishments and aspirations. A commitment to justice involves recognizing and addressing historical and systemic inequalities, fostering inclusivity to ensure marginalized groups have equal access to opportunities and representation.

Recognition based on merit provides individuals with a sense of accomplishment and pride. This intrinsic motivation drives people to strive for excellence and

contribute meaningfully to their communities. A just society upholds the dignity of each person, irrespective of their background, contributing to a sense of security and belonging that enables individuals to pursue their goals without fear of discrimination.

In the context of our country internally, unfortunately, the situation has been quite disappointing. Pakistan, a nation with a rich cultural heritage and history, grapples with a spectrum of internal challenges impacting its social, economic, and political landscape. While progress has been made in various areas, persistent issues require careful attention and strategic solutions.

Pakistan faces a significant challenge in providing employment opportunities for its growing population, contributing to social unrest and hindering economic growth. Inflationary pressures have increased the cost of living for many, making it difficult to afford basic necessities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. Energy shortages and an unreliable power supply impede industrial growth and economic development, necessitating solutions to address these challenges.

Corruption remains pervasive in various sectors, hindering trust in public institutions and promoting good governance. Ethnic and sectarian divisions occasionally escalate into violence, threatening national unity and requiring efforts to foster social cohesion. Terrorism poses a persistent threat, necessitating ongoing efforts to combat extremism and improve intelligence coordination. Gender inequality continues to be a significant challenge, impacting women's access to education, employment, and healthcare.

To be continued

Gaza aid

The United Nations has appointed a senior Dutch politician and seasoned diplomat on Tuesday to oversee crucial aid cargo entering into war-ravaged Gaza, filling a crucial role called for in a Security Council resolution adopted last week. In a statement released on Tuesday, U. N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres said he had selected Sigrid Kaag, the Dutch finance minister and a deputy prime minister, to be the senior humanitarian and reconstruction coordinator for Gaza.

The Security Council resolution called for the coordinator to be responsible for "consulting all relevant parties" on aid shipments and for "facilitating, coordinating, monitoring and verifying" that aid cargo entering Gaza is humanitarian in nature. In this role she will facilitate, coordinate, monitor and verify humanitarian relief consignments for Gaza," the U. N. chief said.

She will also establish a "mechanism" to accelerate aid into Gaza through countries not involved with the conflict. A veteran U. N. diplomat, Kaag previously headed an international team of weapons experts charged with overseeing the elimination of Syria's chemical stockpile. In July she announced she would leave government because of the increasingly "toxic" environment for politicians in the Netherlands. "We look forward to coordinating closely with Ms. Kaag and the UN Office for Project Services on efforts to accelerate and streamline the delivery of live-saving humanitarian relief to Palestinian civilians in Gaza," U. S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a written statement.

Friday's Security Council resolution stopped short of calling for a ceasefire after a week of vote delays and intense negotiations to avoid a United States veto. It calls for "urgent steps to immediately allow safe, unhindered, and expanded humanitarian access and to create the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities."

Amid global outrage over a rising death toll in 11 weeks of deadly Israeli bombardments of Gaza, the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian enclave, the U. S. abstained to allow the 15-member council to adopt a resolution drafted by the United Arab Emirates.

The Israeli invasion has caused the deaths of more than 20,000 people, most of them women and children; displaced over 1.2 million; and destroyed or damaged about half the buildings in the territory. The U. S. and Israel oppose a ceasefire, claiming it would only benefit Hamas. Washington instead supports pauses in fighting to protect civilians and free hostages taken by Hamas.



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

Benazir Bhutto's legacy of courage and compassion lives on

Salman Khan

Dec 27, 2023 marks the 16th death anniversary of Benazir Bhutto. A lot has been written about the PPP leader-country's first woman prime minister—who was eliminated from political scene.

As the country is drawing close to the general election, it is time to observe the solemn occasion and pay tribute to Benazir Bhutto by reviving her memories. What a sad day it was when the life of a remarkable person was cut down in the prime of her political career after she returned from an almost eight-year exile to take active part in politics.

Her detractors launched a vilification campaign against her and besmeared her name with all kinds of derogatory labels but a large number of people including her party workers and camp-followers mourned the tragedy they bitterly felt.

On the fateful evening of Dec 27, 2007, the bullet that pierced through her neck left indelible scars in the hearts and minds of millions who were either associated with her or even those who distantly knew her. It was the land to which she belonged that bled most profusely.

"I pray to Allah that I do not die abroad but in my own country," was what she had uttered a few days before her death.

How prophetic these words turned out to be as those who were close to her could bear testimony to the fact that she somehow had premonition about her death. It's under such circumstances she had written her will and eventually embraced death.

Writing about Ms Bhutto requires much more than employing high-sounding adjectives and clichés. She was considered by her supporters an astute and charismatic leader who stood for the 'politics of reconciliation' and championed the cause of democracy.

What set her apart from the politicians of her time and many of those before her was her

care for the poor and downtrodden.

To quote Irfan Hussain, "one thing she shared with her father was his genuine concern for the poor. Unlike those who practised their politics in drawing rooms and military establishments, both Bhuttos spent much time with the dispossessed and the vulnerable. Neither achieved as much for them as they would have liked, as they were not given enough time by their many enemies. While the rich hate the Bhuttos, the poor love them. This is the legacy Benazir Bhutto is leaving behind."

How far she was pragmatic in her approach could be gauged from her willingness to be among her people no matter how grave the threat was. She neither restricted herself to well-guarded mansions nor did she choose for herself the comfort far-off climes could provide.

"I decided not to be holed up in my home, a virtual prisoner. I went to my ancestral village of Larkana to pray at my father's grave. Everywhere, the people rallied around me in a frenzy of joy. I feel humbled by their love and trust." She was truly a people's leader, of those who loved and trusted her.

Just hours before her tragic assassination she was quoted to have told the Afghan president, "life and death is in the hands of Allah, and that is why I have the courage to stare in the eyes of death without any fear."

No one is above reproach particularly in politics which has assumed a disgusting meaning in this part of the world. Ms Bhutto might have had her failings and shortcomings but she stood out among the politicians as an intelligent and courageous figure. She led the Pakistan Peoples Party march of events following the death of her father.

Even her niece Fatima Bhutto (whose book 'Songs of Blood and Sword' contains copious examples of feelings against her) could not help cry: "I mourn because my family has had enough. I mourn for Bilawal, Bakhtawar, and Asifa. I mourn for them because I too lost a parent. I know what it feels like to be lost and left at sea, unanchored and afraid. I mourn

for the workers of the party, those who have been bereaved of their own loved ones in this tragedy."

Noted columnist the late Khalid Hasan probably had the legions of Ms Bhutto's critics in mind when he wrote these lines: "When the American people wept at the assassination of John F Kennedy, it was not they were unaware of his personal failings, including his profligacy. And yet at that moment of supreme sorrow and unspeakable loss, they chose to leave all that aside."

"Perhaps history does not really care about, much less record, the compromises great public figures make or the errors of judgment they commit. What lives on is what they have accomplished and what they have left behind."

Benazir Bhutto accomplished what most couldn't in the field and left behind a rich legacy. One can't forget the wave of resentment that followed her assassination. The public outcry and catharsis found expression in acts of violence. At the same time unscrupulous elements got an opportunity to set their own home ablaze.

Incidents of hooliganism and loot hit the headlines; the most alarming of all the reports was the one that said Karachi and other parts of Sindh mostly endured the wrath of destruction and wild abandon, with armed boys terrorising people and pillaging.

The most moving episode was one of the children, orphans and mentally-challenged people at the Edhi Foundation's village off Karachi's Super Highway. A day after Ms Bhutto's death, as went the report, some 150 or so armed hooligans stormed the village and thrashed the inmates and vandalised equipment.

"The attackers torched 16 ambulances destined for the interior of Sindh and then proceeded to smash the equipment. They did not demand anything, nor did they identify themselves. They just resorted to wanton violence," the reporter quoted an Edhi village spokesman as having said.

Dying book culture in Pakistan-I

Jalal Uddin Kakar

It is a gigantic task to encompass in words, the decline in reading culture, which has not only left society arid, provocative, biased, subjective, and myopic, but also put our society in the throes of ignorance, illiteracy and more exasperatingly have stifled our sense of questioning. What snatched my complacency is that book culture has been put on the back burner, and the state-sponsored curriculum has been indoctrinated into our already fragile education system.

It ought to be remembered that "a reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. A man who never reads has only one life." George R. R. Martin

What shocked me is that instead of fostering critical thinking, and a conceptually oriented thought process, it encourages copy culture, rote learning, queries that lack logic, and even the mind had gone into a sleeping position, where it couldn't process the cells of questioning, and consequently, the mind gets quite. Once your mind stops questioning, the authorities will enjoy their privileges, as it is well known saying of Leonardo that "nothing can strengthen the authorities as silence." So, The indoctrination done by the state had prompted an empty mind, where questioning is a crime and reading a book out of the syllabus is considered a sin.

Yuval Noah Harari unequivocally unmasked that "Questions you cannot answer are usually far better than answers you cannot question." It is pivotal to mention that we mostly live in a suffocating society, where people can memorize the Quran without its understanding and interpretation, but can't even read a single book in his career. Every coming day is a caricature of the previous day in this context. As Joseph Addison turned the sky blue, saying, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." The Joseph Addison quotation highlights the importance of reading. Reading and exercise are comparable in that Reading is good for the mind, just as exercise is for the body. Unfortunately, The younger generation now regards his remarks as humorous. The human mind experiences cognitive dissonance and cognitive

faculty damage due to the diminished interest in reading.

Concomitantly, it will not be futile to argue that as long as we don't promote book culture in our society, we will have to believe in myths and fantasies. Our one-step forward and two-step backward approach towards reading books will intricate our endeavor for the curious and creative thoughts. What complicates the matter is that we have left no stone unturned to discourage rational thoughts. The truth indeed lies on the other side of the mirror; that state is always in a constant tug of war to indoctrinate a sponsored curriculum to sabotage the thought-provoking sources like libraries, which pave the way for creative and rational thoughts. More strikingly, the Holy Quran emphasizes the value of reading and the necessity of obtaining information. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have stated in one of the Hadith that "seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim." The first word of our Holy Quran to Come down from above to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the word "Iqra," which means to read.

One piece of good news is that we had never made a confession to think out of the box and always be directed to painstakingly work for marks and GPA. If I talk in apocalyptic terms, the schooling system from Primary to higher levels prompt students to endeavor for degrees instead to lose their brain cells in questioning and exercising their skills and dexterity. In our education system, much ink has been spilled on highlighting the Pandora box of the curriculum, but what I find more fascinating is that the same curriculum is hijacked by the authorities through their hedge-podge stories and deliberately nurtured illusions. On cue, it is a double standard game to capture the mind. A 2009 study from the University of Sussex found that reading improves brain function and can lower stress by as much as 68%.

To air my view, I will advocate that students have little agency in what they learn. On university campuses, 70% of students are facing the problem of reading books. Attention span is the key to effective learning.

To be continued

Nihao China! 你好! 中国2024 China Ice & Snow Tourism Overseas Promotion Season launched in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Winter is here. Nihao China!你好! 中国 2024 China Ice & Snow Tourism Overseas Promotion Season has been launched in Pakistan by China Cultural Center in Pakistan in collaboration with Culture office of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan as well as the Network of International Culturallink Entities, the cultural and tourism departments (bureaus) from Beijing, Tianjin, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Hebei, Shanxi, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia.

The event along with Nihao China!你好! 中国 has already launched in Pakistan in December 2023 and will

go through the end of January 2024. Numerous promotional videos, documentaries, and exhibitions will be aired on China Cultural Center in Pakistan's official Facebook page(https://www.facebook.com/cccenterinpak), as well as Official WeChat Account, Twitter Account of Cultural Counselor and the Center's Director H. E Zhang Heqing(https://twitter.com/zhang_heqing) and other platforms.

In this Ice and Snow promotional season China's national tourist image, together with the ice and snow cultural riches of each area, are promoted through many carefully selected series of videos, documentaries, virtual exhibitions and photography exhibitions.



Xinjiang, Liaoning and Heilongjiang Overseas promotion week will include theme videos, exhibitions focusing on unique ice and snow resources and

culture, presenting the beautiful scenery and cultural charm of these provinces. Beside this Ice and Snow culture of Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Jilin will also be the part of this Ice and Snow Promotion season.

The "Building Dreams in Ice and Snow" theme activities are designed to embody the development concept of "Ice and Snow, Golden and Silver Mountains."The project uses the "cool" resources of ice and snow to boost the "hot" economy of culture and tourism, taking use of China's advantages in these areas. It emphasizes China's unique ice and snow tourism abroad, encouraging cultural interchange, and supports high-quality, environmentally friendly

development.

All these activities aim to help Pakistani audiences and netizens from around the world to have a deeper appreciation for China's ice and snow culture and tourism, which will encourage them to visit China and experience this beauty by themselves.

China Cultural Center in Pakistan cordially invites you to participate in our Nihao! China 你好! 中国2024 China Ice and Snow Overseas Promotion Season and let's continue the stories of snow and ice together as they formally usher in winter!

Please stay tune and follow our accounts to get latest updates on the event.

UNOPS enhancing government's capacity on Green, Resilient & Affordable Housing

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has launched GHAR: Green Housing Affordable Resilient—an initiative aimed to enhance the technical capacity of the relevant Government institutes at different provinces of Pakistan and renowned academia to design, construct and manage climate resilient housing, through research and development, interactive dialogue between institutes and academia, training and communication on passive techniques improving the building performance.

There are three components of UNOPS Pakistan's work under climate resilient housing: communication, training and demonstration strategies. All these components are required to achieve



progress in implementation of green building codes for climate resilient, sustainable and inclusive housing.

Under GHAR, UNOPS held over 8 seminars in engineering universities in Islamabad, Sindh, Punjab and KP to orient 1,086 students and over 556 professionals from different institutes about

green infrastructure.

Special training sessions for over 190 government officials of Planning and Development (P&D) Department and Urban Planning Units of Sindh, Punjab and KP were also conducted. As part of the initiative, UNOPS also trained over 100 semi-skilled masons in Sindh on

the importance of climate resilient housing in the aftermath of devastating floods of 2022. The training focuses on climate resilient building methods with practical exercises about site selection, building layouts, quality checks and design.

Ms Jennifer Ankhrom-Khan, UNOPS Coun-

try Manager for Pakistan said "Guidance in Green Building Codes is helpful for engineers, architects & quantity surveyors, but is more effective when communicated through training on how to apply green building principles in design & construction exercises and examples.

Ms Huma Shahzada, GIS Specialist Urban Policy Unit from P&D Department said "I would like to extend my gratitude to UNOPS for such a practical and thorough session about Affordable Green housing and climate change adaptation.

Mr. Minar Thapa Magar, coordinator for SHRRP said "UNOPS, as the convener of the resilient housing working group of Sindh Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (SHRRP), played a vital role in post flood housing reconstruction.

Ambassador holds Virtual Khuli Katchery with Pakistani Community residing in Belgium and Luxembourg

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: The Ambassador of Pakistan to the European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg, Amna Baloch, held monthly Khuli Katchery in a virtual format with Pakistani diaspora residing in Belgium and Luxembourg.



Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Amna Baloch underscored that Khuli Katchery sessions have provided a forum for direct interaction between the Embassy and Pakistani community which has contributed towards improved service delivery. She emphasized that the Embassy will continue to remain closely engaged with the community to extend the best possible services by incorporating their inputs.

Ambassador further stated that the main purpose of this virtual interactive session is to maintain close engagement with the Pakistani diaspora and to provide seamless services to them.

The virtual interaction was attended by a large number of diaspora members from different walks of life, including students, business, social services, and media.

The community members appreciated the Embassy's outreach efforts and hailed its prompt service delivery

Michigan supreme court rejects bid to disqualify Trump from primary ballot

In a pivotal development for Donald Trump's political aspirations, Michigan's Supreme Court has declined to hear a case challenging his eligibility for the state's presidential primary ballot, Reuters reported.



The court's decision comes in response to four voters seeking to disqualify the former president based on his alleged role in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

The voters argued that Trump's involvement in the insurrection violated a constitutional provision preventing individuals from holding office if engaged in "insurrection or rebellion" after taking a US oath.

The Michigan Supreme Court, in a brief order, stated, "We are not persuaded that the questions presented should be reviewed by this Court." This decision contrasts with Colorado's top court, which recently disqualified Trump under the same constitutional provision.

However, it's noteworthy that the Michigan court did not assess the merits of whether Trump engaged in insurrection, instead upholding lower court rulings asserting that such matters should not be decided by the judiciary.

Trump, the leading contender for the 2024 Republican nomination, hailed the Michigan court's decision on his Truth Social platform, characterizing it as a rejection of a "desperate Democrat attempt" to remove him from the ballot.

While the Michigan ruling maintains Trump's eligibility for the state's primary, the legal battles surrounding his potential disqualification underscore the complex interplay between constitutional interpretations and political ambitions.

The decision also marks a departure from Colorado's stance, setting the stage for potential appeals to higher courts, including the US Supreme Court.

Unlike some other states, Michigan holds strategic significance as a key swing state that could influence the outcome of the November 2024 general election.

The legal battles over Trump's eligibility highlight the broader implications of constitutional interpretations in the context of electoral processes and political controversies.

As Trump navigates these legal challenges, the political landscape remains dynamic, with the former president positioning himself for a potential return to the White House.

Christmas days marked by storms, travel disruptions in US

Wintry weather wreaked havoc across several regions in the United States, particularly in the Great Plains, with icy conditions and blizzard warnings affecting swathes of the population.

The National Weather Service issued alerts impacting approximately 720,000 people, spanning from northwestern Kansas and Colorado to extensive areas of South Dakota. While some rejoiced in the picturesque snowfall, others grappled with hazardous situations caused by ice and sleet in different parts of the region.

North Platte, Nebraska, woke up to around 2 inches of snow on Christmas morning, marking its first white Christmas since 2017. However, the joyous occasion was marred by storm-related issues, leading to problematic situations highlighted by the Nebraska State Patrol. Tractor-trailers slid partially off roads, and the storm led to blockages on Interstate 80 due to blowing snow over icy surfaces.

Authorities advised residents to avoid unnecessary travel, stressing the severity of the conditions. Central and north South Dakota braced for snow and blizzard conditions, while the northeastern part faced freezing rain and ice, prompting warnings for drivers to carry winter survival kits.

Terrorism on Foreign Soil, Int'l Law & Role of Int'l Community

Terrorism is condemnable. Terrorism sponsored by a UN Member on the soil of another UN sovereign member is a punishable crime, whether it is seen under domestic law or International. When these terrorist acts are committed by a UN Member state on a community discriminated against for their belief, religion or culture with the aim of exterminating or terrorizing to deter or suppress them, or for causing displacement or mass exodus or crush their right to self-determination, then it falls in the domain of Crimes Against Humanity for which there are International Laws, Conventions and Judicial Mechanisms to call the perpetrators to account, irrespective of whether the sponsors are states or individual perpetrators.

India, the so-called world's largest democracy (mockery racy) has history of wars against people of various ethnic, religious and culture orientations including the Nasal-Maoist people, Sikh Community, peoples of the Seven states namely; Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland.

Successive Indian Governments have been endeavouring to suppress and terrorise these communities. Persecution of the people belonging to the identified states and Jammu & Kashmir have been going on during successive Indian governments but it became more pronounced making headlines in the international media constantly ever since BJP Government under Modi's leadership assumed the helm.

Extrajudicial killings, public lynchings, Enforced disappearances, and demographic changes are the hallmarks of PM Modi's regime.

International Community's apathy, particularly the criminal silence maintained by the United States of America, which is nurturing India as a counterweight to China, and the double standards of the world's champions of democracy and human rights, have encouraged India so much that it has started carrying out assassinations of the leaders of the Sikh community on foreign soils.

Assassination of Canadian Sikh Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, in June this year sent shock waves across the globe.

Early this month, the US Department of Justice announced that it had foiled an alleged plot by an Indian official to assassinate a Sikh Activist and American Citizen in New York City.

It is important to assess the reactions of both the US and Canada following the assassination in Canada of its citizen and the unearthing of assassination plot in the US.

Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) submitted a report in 2017 to warn the Canadian Government that Indian Intelligence Agency RAW's networks in Canada were planning attacks on Sikhs in Canada and influence elections in Canada with Indian diplomatic mission's facilitation. The Report identified two diplomats. CSIS had irrefutable evidence of Indian maneuvering in 2016 elections. But vested interest refrained Canadian Government from taking action. The Indian activities continued while the Canadian Government looked the other way.

However, the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar compelled PM Justin Trudeau to reveal before the parliament that at G-20 he had told US President Joe Biden and PM Modi of India that India had killed Nijjar. Trudeau then went public.

US Government's reaction to the Indian involvement in the killing of Nijjar has been a muted one. Even after US Justice Department's unearthing of assassination plot and US Canada close working under 5 Eye Intelligence Mechanism, there had not been any reaction of consequence to India. USA had always envisioned India as a lynchpin of its policy towards Asia Pacific to counter the China's exponential economic rise as a challenger to the US dominance and Russian assertion of its military might. The USA's vested interest to court India as its proxy in the region of its two historical Great Game Adversaries and challengers, United States has crossed all limits to favour India.

It did not sanction India over purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia while it sanctioned the others for the same breach of the US sanctions Act called 'Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) of 2017'. The US also did not object to Indian overtures with Iran despite the US sanctions against Iran. The US has been massively assisting India to build its arms with technology transfer. The US has signed three foundational and strategically very sensitive

agreements during 2016-2020, called LEMOA, COMCASA and BECA. The USA exercises double standards selectively. Besides India in Asia-Pacific, USA courts relations with Israel in view of its strategic interests in the oil rich Middle East. Currently, a case in point is American cruel bias against Palestine in the face of ongoing genocide by Israel in Gaza.

Given the US influence over Australia and its practical demonstration on a number of occasions, it can't be ruled out that Australian discrimination against the Sikhs whereby it did not allow the Referendum for Khalistan, recently, could be under pressure of the US.

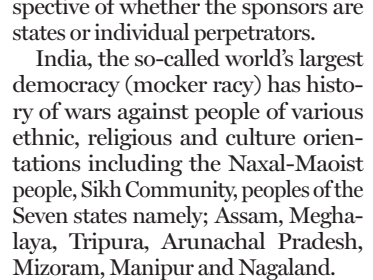
Indian condemnable act of assassination of Hardeep Singh achieved two objectives. One, messaging to the Sikhs pursuing Khalistan movement that they were not beyond India's reach regardless of their location. Two, embarrass Canada for rejecting Indian objections to allowing Khalistan Referendum in Canada in September 2022 and issuing adverse travel advisory for visitors to India. It was a message for the Canadian leadership that India could kill its citizens at will and couldn't do damn about it.

Even though India conspired to kill a Canadian citizen in their sovereign territory, the reaction was not close to what any other sovereign state would have taken. Lack of warranted reaction damaged Canada's reputation among its own citizens and expatriates' community.

Canada remains massively under the USA influence given Canada's economic and commercial dependence on the US to the extent of 80%. There is no doubt India mastered the art of staging terrorist attacks not just on its own soil while blaming others but also on foreign soils.

Use of foreign soil for perpetrating terrorism by India is not a new phenomenon. A person none other than the US Secretary of Defence, Chuck Hagel, said in 2011 that: "India Finances Trouble in Afghanistan's neighbouring country using Afghan soil.

His statement was later authenticated by the voluntary statements made by Ehsanullah Ehsan, who was first the spokesperson for the terrorist organ-



Analysis Dr. Mohammed Nafees Zakaria

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
60,863.62	59,170.97
Day's High	Day's Low
61,009.87	58,758.48
Index Value	Change
11,973,685,161	+1692.65
Percentage	Time
+2.86%	27 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,724.95	+27.44
Percentage	Time
+0.36%	27 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,624.41	+79.08
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	27 Dec, 12:31 pm GMT-5
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,681.24	+375.39
Percentage	Time
+1.13%	27 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	190	191.9
Bahrain Dinar	752.47	760.47
Canadian Dollar	210	212
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Danish Krone	41.82	42.22
Euro	309.5	312.5
Hong Kong Dollar	36.17	36.52
Indian Rupee	3.4	3.51
Japanese Yen	1.45	1.53
Kuwaiti Dinar	921.09	930.09
Malaysian Ringgit	61.04	61.64
New Zealand \$	177.84	179.84
Norwegians Krone	27.7	28
Omani Riyal	735.67	743.67
Qatari Riyal	77.73	78.43
Saudi Riyal	75	75.8
Singapore Dollar	210	212
Swedish Korona	28.26	28.56
Swiss Franc	330.35	332.85
Thai Bhat	8.17	8.32
U.A.E Dirham	77	77.8
UK Pound Sterling	358	361.5
US Dollar	282	284.5

ICCI demands affordable credit to private sector for reviving the economy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the record high interest rate has made it very difficult for the private sector to get credit from banks for the expansion of existing businesses and make new investments due to which the business activities are suffering badly. He stressed that the government should make a significant cut in the policy interest rate to provide affordable credit to the private sector that would accelerate the pace of business activities and help revive the economy. He said that the bank advances to the private sector have declined to just Rs.208 billion in the financial year 2023 compared to over Rs.1329 billion in the financial year 2022 due to which the GDP of the country has contracted significantly. He said that this dangerous trend can only be reversed by providing enhanced credit at an affordable rate to the private sector. He said this while addressing a meeting of the business community.

Zubair Ahmed Malik, former President



FPCCI and ICCI said that the government has set an economic growth target of 2-3 percent, which can only be possible by providing an easy credit facility to the private sector. He said that the production of all major industries of large scale manufacturing sector including textile, paper board, iron and steel products, electrical equipment, automobiles, and furniture have shown a reduction of over 4 percent in October and if this trend continues, it would not

be possible for the government to achieve its set growth target.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI, and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that the World Bank has already cautioned Pakistan about the risks of reversals of critical policy reforms after the February elections due to the influence of some vested interests. He stressed that the incoming government should ensure policy consistency to improve the confidence

of the private sector in making long-term business and investment plans for the country.

Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice President ICCI, and others also spoke on the occasion and stressed that the government should promote ease of doing business to facilitate the growth of business and economic activities.

Carelessness

ISLAMABAD: A view of the under construction pipe line of the Rawal Interchange for evacuation rainy water after the several month of the completion of under pass, which needs the investigation by high authorities to find out the suspect of wasting tax spares money of the nation.



Photo: Online

Ruling group all set to sweep fourth time as FPCCI holds polls on 30th



PPA

ISLAMABAD: As the country's apex trade body is going to hold its annual elections on 30th of Dec 2023, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's ruling group of Businessmen Panel (BMP) is going to make the history of winning FPCCI's polls 2024 for the fourth consecutive time and defeat its rival group of UBG, maintaining continuity of success and services of the business community. The Businessmen Panel (BMP) is the true representative of the business community of the whole country and would participate in the next elections to the best of its ability, ensuring the success of the group, as many strong groups of several chambers have joined the BMP.

These views were expressed by the PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol, expressing the hope that the BMP would win apex trade body's elections for the fourth consecutive time with a big margin on the basis of its excellent performance amidst worst economic crisis in the country.

Addressing a meeting, held here on Wednesday in connection with the FPCCI's election campaign, Faheemur Rehman Saigol observed that a large number of chambers of various cities, trade groups and industrial associations from across the country have so far announced their support for the Businessmen Panel (BMP) for the upcoming FPCCI elections 2024.

SBP declares BOK as E-Stamping Agent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PNP

PESHAWAR: Bank of Khyber (BoK) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) signed an Agency Agreement in Peshawar to initiate the revolutionary e-Stamping project and designated BoK as collecting Agent for e-Stamping in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). This initiative aligns with the Government of KP's vision of promoting digital services and ensuring ease of doing business in the province. Embracing the power of technology, citizens of KP can now obtain stamp papers effortlessly within minutes, at the click of a button, thanks to a seamless process offered by BoK. The e-Stamping project will be rolled out across the province phase wise and will enhance revenue collection while providing complete data reconciliation.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Ahmed Rasool Bangash, Minister for Finance, Revenue, Excise, Taxation & Narcotics Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Mr. Qadir Bakhsh, Director Finance State Bank of Pakistan; Mr. Aamir Tareen, Secretary Finance Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;



Sahibzada Ali Muhammad, Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Information Technology; Mr. Irfan Saleem Awan, acting Managing Director / CEO Bank of Khyber; Mr. Sher Muhammad, Group Head Conventional Banking BoK; Mr. Ihsan Ullah Ihsan, Group Head Remedial Assets Management BoK; Mr. Asim Bashir, Group Head Digital Banking BoK;

senior officials from KP Government, State Bank of Pakistan, KP-IT Board, Board of Revenue and Bank of Khyber.

The process is very simple. Citizens generate Challan through web portal and then visit BOK branches to pay the relevant duty mentioned on Challan and get E-Stamp certificate on spot from the same branch.

Ufone 4G, Huawei launch world's first Microwave Super Hub solution at large traffic hub sites

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking collaboration, Ufone 4G and Huawei have unveiled commercial deployment of world's first Microwave Super Hub solution, showcasing Huawei's innovative feature of intelligent dynamic power control at large traffic hub sites.

The genesis of the Super Hub stems from the challenges associated with the dense link deployment at hub sites driven by ever growing cellular backhaul demands, the scarcity of existing spectrum resources and the complexities involved

in acquiring & maintaining new frequency bands / equipment, all of which led to challenges in high degree of spectrum reuse and scalability.

This cutting-edge solution significantly enhances spectral efficiency by allowing for the reuse of the same frequency at a remarkable 20° separation: a phenomenal improvement over the existing industry standard of 90° separation. With this closer spatial reuse of same frequency channel, Super Hub drastically improves spectrum efficiency more than 4 times at aggregation sites.

Through meticulous joint testing

and verification, Ufone 4G and its strategic partner Huawei achieved outstanding results. Notably, the Super Hub solution saved 50% of the spectrum, optimizing link interference at Hub sites by 100%, meanwhile all the KPIs were observed stable as per the design requirements.

Jafar Khalid, Group Chief Technology and Information Officer,

PTCL & Ufone 4G expressed confidence in the Super Hub's capabilities, stating: "We are proud to have successfully deployed the world's first Super Hub solution in our mobile network and having achieved excellent results. We believe this innovative solution will help Ufone 4G release more capacity from existing spectrum resources to meet the expo-

stantial increase in mobile backhaul demand triggered by the data explosion our industry is embracing"

This strategic deployment of the Super Hub aligns seamlessly with Ufone 4G's commitment to continually pursue pushing the boundaries of technological innovation, ensuring that it stays at the forefront of delivering unparalleled services to its ever-growing customer base. As the telecommunications landscape evolves, the Super Hub stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation, propelling the industry towards new heights of efficiency and performance.

Salt Industry in Peril

Manufacturers seek urgent govt's intervention amid high freight costs and Red Sea crisis

PPA

KARACHI: The salt export industry in Pakistan is teetering on the brink of collapse, casting a daunting shadow over businesses, particularly within the salt sector. The Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SMAP) urgently calls for immediate government action to avert an impending disaster that could have far-reaching consequences for the industry.

Acting Chairman of SMAP, Qasim Yaqoob Paracha, addressed the critical situation, expressing, "Our salt exporters are navigating through an unprecedented crisis." Disruptions in the Red Sea have compelled significant rerouting of vessels, resulting in an alarming surge in shipping costs, imposing an overwhelming burden on businesses. The economic impact is dire, jeopardizing the livelihoods of thousands



and the stability of the salt export sector.

In light of the current global challenges, the SMAP statement concluded with a heartfelt plea for swift government action, recognizing the broader impact on livelihoods, the economy, and Pakistan's resilience. Paracha called upon the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, and other relevant authorities to grasp the gravity of the situation and act promptly. The future of the salt export industry is at stake, and decisive action is imperative for its survival.

NTDC installs shunt reactor on 500 kV Guddu-Rahim Yar Khan transmission line

PPA

LAHORE: The teams of National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) have installed a shunt reactor on 500 kV Guddu-Rahim Yar Khan Transmission Line to enhance power system stability. The Shunt Reactor was installed on Bay-02 of Guddu-RYK transmission line and after all testing, the shunt reactor was energized successfully.

NTDC is vigorously working on stability of the power transmission system, especially in the south region. The

newly installed shunt reactor will help to control power system voltage more efficiently and would enhance the overall power system stability of the NTDC network.

Energization of the shunt reactor will not only improve the voltage profile of the system in the region but also enhance the operational performance of the system. It will also help improvement in the voltage profile of 500 kV Guddu-Rahim Yar Khan, 500 kV Guddu-Muzaffargarh transmission lines and the power evacuated from 747 MW Guddu power station.



16th death anniversary

LARKANA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering on the occasion of 16th death anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.



Photo: APP

Pakistan attaches significance to fraternal ties with Muslim world: PM Kakar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday underscored the significance attached by Pakistan to fraternal ties with the Muslim world, particularly with countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. He said these ties were anchored in mutual trust, common understanding and close cooperation on bilateral as well as regional matters of common interest.

The prime minister met the resident Ambassadors of Muslim countries from the MENA region over lunch earlier in the day. The meeting was attended by the ambassadors of Bahrain, Egypt,



Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The caretaker foreign

minister, secretary to the PM and the foreign secretary were also present, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Pakistan attaches significance

to fraternal ties with Muslim world: PM Kakar The caretaker prime minister shared Pakistan's perspective on a number of issues, particularly

the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Other challenges confronting the Muslim world such as Islamophobia were also discussed. Prime Minister Kakar emphasized the need for the Muslim Ummah to continue to work closely and collectively, especially through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to deal with these complex issues. He also praised the ambassadors for their efforts to forge stronger ties between Islamabad and their respective capitals. The ambassadors thanked the prime minister and reiterated their support towards advancing bilateral relations with Pakistan, which played a key role in the Muslim world.

Bilawal outlines PPP election agenda

Nazir Channa

GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari launched his party's election drive for the Feb 8 elections by unveiling a comprehensive 10-point agenda focused on welfare initiatives.

Speaking at a gathering in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh on the 16th death anniversary of his mother, Benazir Bhutto, Bilawal outlined the party's electoral goals.

Bilawal Bhutto said, "The time has come to form a government of the Pakistan Peoples Party in the country. The solution to inflation, poverty, and unemployment is present in the manifesto of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. We are ready to contest the elections. It is our demand to hold fair elections. We won't be like those who manipulate election dates and snatch nomination papers. This time, too, we will stand firm and fight till we win."

He stated that this is the message for the other political parties to come and contest the elections. "We will bury the politics of hatred," said the PPP chairman.

"We are not running away from any challenge. There is a need for seriousness for the difficulties Pakistan is facing today. If we have to tackle inflation and counter terrorism, we have to leave behind our internal disputes," said Bilawal.

Here are the key pledges Bilawal made regarding his

party's commitments if elected: Doubling salaries within five years.

Providing 300 units of free solar energy for the impoverished and establishing green energy parks in every district.

Initiating educational projects to ensure universal access to education.

Implementing free health-care nationwide.

Constructing three million homes for flood victims and underprivileged individuals. Expanding the reach of

BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) and introducing additional welfare initiatives.

Introducing a program similar to BISP for farmers along with the 'Hari Card'.

Strengthening support for labourers through the Benazir Mazdoor Card.

Launching a 'Youth Card' to assist unemployed young people and establishing 'Youth Markaz'.

Implementing the 'Bhook Mitao Programme' to alleviate hunger.

Turkey tells US to keep promises on F-16 sale: source



Reuters

ANKARA: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told his U. S. counterpart Antony Blinken in a call on Wednesday that Turkey expected the United States to act in line with their NATO alliance and keep its promises on the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Ankara, a Turkish diplomatic source said.

The call came at the request of the U. S. side, a day after a Turkish parliamentary commission voted to approve Sweden's NATO membership bid, the source added. The parliament's general assembly must also approve the bid for it to be ratified.

"Fidan stated that, regarding the sale of F-16s, we expect the U. S. administration and U. S. Congress to act in line with the spirit of alliance and keep the promises made," the source said.

Russia, India closer to joint military equipment production—minister

Reuters

MOSCOW: Russia and India have made tangible progress in talks on plans to jointly produce military equipment, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday, after talks with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Moscow.

Speaking at a news conference, Lavrov said such cooperation was of a strategic nature and was in both countries' interests and would help ensure security on the Eurasian continent.

He said Moscow respected India's desire to diversify its military hardware suppliers and was ready too to support New Delhi's desire to manufacture things needed by India in India.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin would meet Jaishankar later on Wednesday.

Jaishankar said he expected Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to meet next year.

Jaishankar said he and Lavrov had discussed the conflicts in Ukraine and



Gaza, as well as bilateral trade and investment.

India has become one of Russia's core economic partners since the West in 2022 imposed sweeping sanctions on Moscow over the war in Ukraine.

Russia has diverted much of its oil exports to India and stepped up diplomacy within the BRICS group of nations, a grouping of which both countries are founding members.

According to Jaishankar, Indian-Russian trade is expected to top \$50 billion this year.

He said New Delhi was keen to sign a bilateral investment treaty with Russia as well as a free trade agreement with the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union.

CDA to Auction More Plots in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to conduct an auction of plots in January 2024, alleviating the budgetary constraints faced by civic body.

According to the CDA official, the plot auction is set to take place from the 10th to the 12th of January at the F9 Park in Gandhara Hall.

Plots located on Blue Area, Centers, and Park Road will be included in the auction.

The auction list includes petrol pumps, Class Three shopping centres, agro farms, and apartment plots, along with fruit and vegetable shops, IT centres, and hostel plots.

A substantial 10 percent discount will be applicable for complete payments made within one month of bid acceptance. Furthermore, approval for construction plans will be granted upon the first instalment payment.

President Alvi directs inquiry over delay in student's degree attestation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has expressed displeasure over the delay by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for not attesting the degree of a former student on flimsy grounds and upheld the orders of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing HEC to attest her degree within seven days.

The president also instructed for initiating an inquiry against delinquent official responsible for wasting precious months of the student.

He gave these directions while rejecting a representation filed by HEC against a decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to attest a female student's BA degree within seven days.

As per details, Savera Afridi (the complainant) had applied to HEC for attestation of her BA degree and



DMC but she was informed that since the session of her degree was 2020, it could not be attested as HEC had phased out two-year conventional B. A/B. Sc. program and the universities were not allowed to enrol students in conventional B. A/B. Sc. program after the academic year 2019.

Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib who passed the orders in her favour. The HEC then filed a representation as well as a review petition with the Mohtasib, which were rejected.

Commerce minister to address status of SEZs in Karachi



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries, Dr. Gohar Ejaz here on Wednesday chaired high-level meeting to address the status of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Karachi for creating investment friendly environment the country and to assess the current status of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Karachi.

The meeting was attended by key officials including Sauleh Ahmed Farooqui, Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Rashid Langrial, Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production and Sohail Rajput, Secretary Board of Investment.

The meeting focused on the operational status of the Port Qasim SEZ, which is now ready for prospective investors.

The Port Qasim SEZ boasts comprehensive utility services, creating an ideal environment for businesses to thrive.

During the discussions, the minister highlighted the importance of diversification and growth, specifically addressing the establishment of a SEZ dedicated to the Information Technology (IT) sector.

The IT SEZ is poised to play a crucial role in fostering innovation and technological advancement in Pakistan.

A key agenda item centered on initiatives to enhance the skill set of the labor force in Pakistan.

The Ministry of Commerce, in collaboration with other relevant authorities, plans to implement programs to improve the overall skill level of the workforce, with a particular emphasis on IT skills.

Qureshi's daughter moves ECP for release of her father



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Meher Bano Qureshi, daughter of PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, submitted a petition to the Election Commission, denouncing the alleged mistreatment and arrest of her father.

Expressing concerns, Meher Bano claimed that Shah Mahmood Qureshi was being unlawfully detained, without information about his whereabouts, and referred to it as abduction.

Stressing the need for transparent measures, she urged the chief election commissioner to interfere in the issue.

Meher Bano underlined Shah Mahmood Qureshi's former role as the foreign minister, asserting his widespread respect, and noted the condemnation of his treatment across Pakistan.

Over two dozen seminary students fall ill after taking unhealthy food

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: As many as 26 seminary students fainted in Islamabad's Barakahu area after taking unhealthy food.

According to police, the seminary students fell unconscious as they ate stale food on Tuesday night.

The students were taken to the PIMS hospital for treatment.

Later, they were sent back to the seminary after treatment at the hospital.

All the students are now out of danger but police are investigating the administration of seminary.

PTI founder, Fawad could not be indicted in contempt of ECP case

PPA

RAWALPINDI: The Election Commission (ECP) did not indict PTI founder and Fawad Chaudhry as the counsel for the former failed to appear before the bench.

Advocate Shoaib Shaheen could not attend proceedings as he appeared before returning officer for scrutiny of his nomination papers. However, Fawad's counsel Faisal Farid Chaudhary appeared before the four-member court.

The bench adjourned hearing until January 3.

Earlier, a four-member bench of the ECP heard the case in Adiala Jail. Headed by Nisar Durrani, the bench includes ECP members Shah Mehmood Jatoi, Babar Hussain Bhawan and Justice (retired) Ikramullah.