



President congratulates defense team over successful Fatah II missile test

President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday congratulated Pakistan's defense team on the successful test of the Fatah II missile. "Congratulations to our brilliant defense team on the successful test of Fatah II missile," the president wrote on social media platform X.



UNGA unanimously adopted a resolution put forward by Uzbekistan on environmental challenges in Central Asia

The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution initiated by Uzbekistan "Central Asia in the face of environmental challenges: strengthening regional solidarity for the sake of sustainable development and prosperity". (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Conference

RAWALPINDI: Gen Asim Munir presides over 261st Corps Commanders' Conference at GHQ.



Photo: ISPR

Military leadership assures ECP of providing support for elections 2024

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) presided over the two days long 261st Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ, today. Forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Citizens who laid their lives for ensuring peace and stability in the country. Participants also offered Fateha for the Shuhadas including those of DI Khan attack. Forum reiterated Pakistan Army's resolve to defend the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan against direct and indirect threats. Forum expressed serious concern over continued repression and reprehensible human rights violations by Indian military forces in IIOJK. The recent acts of abduction, torture and killing of civilians by the Indian Army were unequivocally condemned by the participants. Such acts constitute grave crimes against humanity and cannot dampen the spirit of the brave Kashmiris who are struggling for their lawful right of self-determination. Pakistan would keep supporting its Kashmiri brethren with all political, moral and diplomatic support

for resolution of Kashmir issue according to international law and relevant UNSC resolutions. Forum was briefed on prevalent geo-strategic environment, challenges to national security and own strategy in response to evolving threat. The sanctuaries and liberty of action available to the terrorists of proscribed TTP and other groups of that ilk in a neighboring country and availability of latest weapons to the terrorists were noted as serious points of concern impacting security of Pakistan. Forum resolved that all terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on the behest of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan will be dealt with full

might of the state. The forum expressed full solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned serious human rights violations and war crimes being perpetrated in Gaza while reiterating Government's stance of demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict. Forum reiterated its support for ongoing efforts to promote socioeconomic growth and encouraging foreign investment under the umbrella of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Forum also took holistic review of the ongoing actions being taken against smuggling,

money laundering, power theft and hoarding of essential items amongst other illegal economic activities. Pakistan Army will continue to provide all out support to relevant government institutions and LEAs to curb such crimes. The Forum also noted that requisite and necessary support will also be extended to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for forthcoming general elections. The forum was briefed on operational preparedness of the formations. COAS stressed the need for continuously maintaining operational excellence in cognitive and physical realms and pursuit of high standards of motivation and training.

Govt bans New Year celebrations in solidarity with oppressed Palestinians: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday announced that in view of the shocking situation in Palestine, the Government of Pakistan had completely banned all kinds of events regarding the New Year celebrations to express solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians. He also urged the general public to show solidarity with the oppressed people of Gaza and observe simplicity at the beginning of the New Year. The prime minister, in a special televised message, said that the entire Pakistani nation and the Muslim Ummah were deeply saddened by the genocide of the oppressed Palestinians, especially the massacre of innocent children, in Gaza and the West Bank. "Since October 7, 2023, more than 21,000 innocent Palestinians have been martyred by the brutal Israeli forces, including a large number of innocent children - around 9,000," the prime minister remarked. He said to stop the Israeli bloodshed, Pakistan had raised its voice



for the oppressed Palestinians at every world forum and it would always continue to do so in future as well. PM Kakar pointed out that Pakistan had sent two consignments of relief goods for the Palestinian brothers and sisters, while the third one would be dispatched soon. Likewise, he said, the Government of Pakistan was in close contact with Egypt and Jordan for the provision of timely relief to the Palestinians, besides evacuation of the injured from Gaza and their treatment. The prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty that the New Year might dawn with the message of peace, prosperity and harmony for Pakistan and rest of the world.

MoFA committed to promote Pakistan's interests at global level: FM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani on Thursday said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Pakistan's missions abroad would continue to promote the country's external relations and protect its interests at the global level. The foreign minister expressed these views in a year-end interaction with the beat reporters held here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FM Jilani gave a round-up of the achievements made by Pakistan in the domain of global foreign policy and highlighted the high-level visits of



the leadership that led to the strengthening of ties with key States. A fateha was offered for the soul of former foreign secretary Riaz Khokhar who passed away in Islamabad on Wednesday. Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch, media persons from newspapers and television, foreign correspondents, and officials of the ministry attended the interaction.

Court set Jan 4 to indict PTI founder in Toshakhana reference

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Accountability Court on Thursday decided to indict the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's founder chairman and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana reference case on January 4. Judge Muhammad Bashir heard the Toshakhana reference case at Adiala jail. During the course of hearing, copies of the reference and relevant information were provided to the accused. Former PTI chairman and his wife have been named in the list of accused for possessing gifts received from international dignitaries, which they were obligated to deposit in the Toshakhana.

Iran-Russia will trade in their local currencies

Reuters

DUBAI: Iran and Russia have finalised an agreement to trade in their local currencies instead of the US dollar, Iran's state media reported on Wednesday. The agreement was finalised during a meeting between the governors of the two countries' central banks in Russia, it said. Both Iran and Russia are subject to US sanctions. "Banks and economic actors can now use infrastructures including non-SWIFT interbank systems to deal in local currencies," state media said. Members of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) signed a fully-fledged free trade agreement with Iran on Dec. 25. Iran has become increasingly important for the Kremlin after Western sanctions over Moscow's conflict in Ukraine limited Russia's foreign trade routes and forced it to look for markets outside Europe. Iranian authorities have said military cooperation with Russia is expanding. Iran said in November it had finalized arrangements for Russia to provide it with Su-35 fighter jets, Mi-28 attack helicopters and Yak-130 pilot training aircraft.

Quetta ATC releases Khadija Shah on bail

Bureau Report

QUETTA: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Quetta has released Khadija Shah on bail. As per details, PTI activist and renowned fashion designer Khadija Shah was presented before Quetta ATC after the completion of her 14-day physical remand. However, ATC judge heard the case and ordered release of PTI activist release due to lack of evidence in the case. It is pertinent to mention here that an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore approved the transit remand of Khadija Shah was transferred from Lahore to Quetta. Last month, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporter challenged her 30-day detention in the Lahore High Court. The Lahore administration had ordered the detention of PTI activist for 30 days under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance. DC Rafia Haider issued the order after an anti-terrorism court (ATC) granted post-arrest bail to PTI activist yesterday in the final case linked to the May 9 riots.



Court sends beleaguered Qureshi to Adiala Jail on judicial remand in GHQ case

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: A Rawalpindi court on Thursday rejected a request seeking physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi in GHQ attack and other cases. The court sent Qureshi to Adiala Jail on judicial remand in 12 cases. Earlier, the court had reserved judgement after hearing arguments. Duty Magistrate Syed Jahangir Ali conducted hearing of attack on GHQ case against Qureshi. The prosecution demanded 30-day physical remand of the senior PTI leader.

Torturing Qureshi in detention deplorable: PTI spokesperson

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson strongly condemned the unconstitutional, illegal and unrepresentative caretaker government for physical and psychological torture of PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi during his unlawful detention, demanding strict accountability of those involved in the brutal act. PTI spokesperson demanded that cases should be registered against IG Punjab, IG Jail, Chief Secretary Punjab, Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi and police personnel involved in the violence. He stated that Qureshi had been elected as a member of the parliament five times and remained foreign minister in different periods, who fought the case of Pakistan in a befitting manner at global stage. PTI spokesperson pointed out that Qureshi was one of the most reliable and seasoned politicians of the country who was also the vice chairman of the country's largest political party, adding that he was being targeted of political revenge for his unwavering and unflinching commitment with PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan and the political philosophy and program of PTI. He went on to say that PTI Vice Chairman was deliberately insulted, ridiculed and tortured after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the false, baseless, frivolous and politically-motivated case of Cipher. PTI spokesperson said that the government of thugs have caused irreparable damage to the image and prestige of Pakistan in the world due to the ill-treatment meted to Qureshi during his re-arrest after his release from jail and subsequently in the detention, making Pakistan a laughing stock in the world.

N. Korea's Kim calls for 'accelerated' war preparations

AFP

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged his party to "accelerate" war preparations including its nuclear programme, state media said Thursday. The comments came just a week after Kim warned Pyongyang would not hesitate to launch a nuclear attack if "provoked" with nukes.

Kim made the comments at the North's ongoing year-end party meeting, where he is expected to unveil key policy decisions for 2024. Kim asked the party to "further accelerate the war preparations" across sectors, including nuclear weapons and civil defense. Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency reported. He also stressed that the "military situation" on the Korean peninsula had become "extreme" due to "unprecedented" anti-North confrontations with Washington. Seoul, Tokyo and Washington have ramped up defence cooperation in the face of a record-breaking series of weapons tests by Pyongyang this year and recently activated a system to share real-time data on North Korean missile launches.



Former PM Yousaf Raza Gillani inaugurates People's Party Secretariat

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister Senator Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, former MPA Syed Ahmed Mujtaba Gilani and former Provincial Minister Syed Ali Haider Gilani Constituency NA148 and PP213 Union Council Jhok Wains arrival candidate for National Assembly NA148 Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and candidate for Provincial Assembly PP213 Syed Ali Haider Gilani Union Council of his constituency Gilani People's Secretariat was inaugurated in Jhok Wains, upon arrival in Jhok Venice, local residents and Malik Sajjad Ahmed Venice General Counsel, Malik Hassan Bari Venice, Malik Muhammad Shahbaz Venice, Mehr Rizwan Hansla, Malik Uzair Altaf Venice, Malik Rashid Akbar Chan, Malik Naeem Akram Venice.



Youth Counsellor, Maher Aqib Haraj, Maher Daniyal Haraj, Malik Muzmal Raan, Maher Bilal Haraj, Malik Haji Ramzan Vance, Rana Muhammad Hamza, Malik Imran Vance Personal

Secretary Makhdoom Syed Ali Haider Geelani, former provincial minister, others gave a warm welcome, showered flower petals on the caravan, and garlanded the guests. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Syed Ahmed Mujtaba Gilani and Syed Ali Hyder Gilani inaugurated the People's Secretariat, prayers were offered before cutting the ribbon. Done by, Malik Hasan Bari Vancerecited, after that Shabbir Swagi presented Naat-e-Maqbool and Pir Syed Fayyaz Ahmad Bukhari also prayed for success. Athangal Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Nasir Khan Baduzai Chairman, Rao Sajid Ali General Secretary Pakistan Peoples Party Multan, Malik Sufi Ghulam Akbar Venice Chairman, Malik Saeed Venice, Malik Haji Akram Venice, Malik Naheed Darharala, Malik Qaiser Mahota, Malik Kashif Hans, Rai Akram Kharl Malik Ghulam Akbar

Venus Daduwale, Malik Asif Atta Venus, Malik Allah Dutta Vance, Malik Abdul Rehman Vance, Malik Ajmal Vance, Wale, Malik Hajiullah Baksh Venus Khiladi, Malik Haji Khizr Khad-al, Malik Mohsin Khadal, Rai Saeed Ahmed Kharl, Farhan Khan, Malik Ahmad Ran, Malik Ajmal Obhaya General Counselor, Mehr Abdul Rauf Chaon, Maher Akram Chaon, Malik Yasir Ijaz Venus, Malik Nasir Venus, Maher Ghulam. Abbas Hansla, Mehr Arshad Ali Hansla, Mehr Sajjad Ahmed Hansla, Muhammad Shan Mohana were also present. After the inauguration, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Syed Ali Haider Gilani addressed the participants of the opening ceremony as special guests, and finally Malik Sajjad Vance also addressed the participants and thanked them for making the event more exciting. Gilani shouted slogans:

Poultry sector 'second biggest export industry' in Pakistan: FCCI

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Poultry sector in Pakistan has attained international standards and now progressive government policies could pave the way to make poultry the second biggest export industry after



textile, said Dr Sajjad Arshad Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He was addressing an international conference on "Poultry Health- Challenges in Pakistan" organized by World Poultry Science Association (WPSA) in collaboration with the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). He expressed satisfaction that Pakistani poultry products are accepted across the globe because of its high quality; however, to ensure its sustained export, we must focus on its supply chain. He stressed the need to develop indigenous species of parent flock, layers and broilers in addition to strengthening poultry feed and pharma industry to meet our domestic needs. He particularly appreciated the efforts of President Dr Hanif Nazir, Secretary General Dr Kashif Saleemi of WPSA and Madam Dr Farzana for organizing this international event in a most befitting manner. He also appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Poultry Association and said that we must produce skilled manpower to enhance production of eggs and chicken on scientific lines.

South Punjab chief inspects new emergency block of Children Hospital



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Saqib Zafar along with Secretary South Punjab Afzal Nasir visited the new emergency block of Children Hospital Multan and reviewed the ongoing construction work in detail. Dean Children's Complex Professor Dr. Kashif Chishti told the Additional Chief Secretary that on experimental basis the children have been admitted to New Emergency and their treatment is ongoing, which was also reviewed by the Secretary. The Additional Chief Secretary also inspected the newly constructed medical wards and OPD department along with Dean Children's Complex Professor Dr. Kashif Chishti and MS Dr. Kamran Asif and instructed the senior officials of the building department to complete all the works as soon as possible. And complete it in the given time.

Commissioner inspect under construction flyover

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Commissioner Faisalabad Silwat Saeed visited Tariqabad Jhumra Road and inspected the construction progress of the under construction Abdullahpur Jhumra Road flyover. The commissioner reviewed the various constructions from Tariqabad to Jhumra Road and issued necessary instructions. While inspecting the tower, he expressed satisfaction over the construction activities and said that Abdullahpur Jhumra Road Flyover is a project of great importance and utility in terms of urban development and traffic management. All administrative and technical capabilities should be used for the completion of the project before the scheduled period. She said that the speedy completion of this mega project is among the priorities of the caretaker government of Punjab, so all the relevant officers, engineers, contractors and related institutions should coordinate. Ensure implementation and strict monitoring should be continued for sustainable and long-lasting construction of the project. The commissioner said that urban life should not be affected by the construction activities of the project. The divisional administration will fully support the speedy completion of this mega project. Director General FDA Muhammad Asif Chaudhry, while giving a briefing, said that all obstacles including the acquisition of private property for the mega project of Abdullahpur Jhumra Road Flyover have been removed. In the construction stages of the flyover, more than 40 piles, 22 girders and the retaining wall of the west side have been completed so far.

Majid Khan says Pakistan Army chief failed Indian propaganda during U.S. visit

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that Pakistan Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir failed Indian propaganda during his visit to America. India is punishing the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir for demanding their UN-recognised right to self-determination. India has illegally amended laws and allowed non-Kashmiris to buy state citizenship, land and property. Have violated the resolutions. He said India is using state terrorism as an official policy in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. After abrogating Article 370 and 35A, India is pursuing a dangerous plan to promote Hindutva agenda in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The issue will be resolved according to the resolutions approved by the Kashmir Security Council. We pay homage to the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. India will stop dreaming and will not allow India to occupy even an inch of Occupied Kashmir. Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said in a statement that after the recent decision of the Indian Supreme Court, the Indian evil army has started using terrible tactics to crush the freedom movement in Occupied Kashmir. After the aggression of constitutional amendments, India has now started subjecting the youth to the worst atrocities and cruelty in torture sales. Indian notorious intelligence agencies are killing youth in torture cells. He said that the government of Pakistan has played a great role to highlight Indian atrocities in the world. The recent Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir also reiterated Pakistan's long standing position on Occupied Jammu and Kashmir during his visit to America. He said that Pakistan Army and especially Army Chief Syed Asim Munir are thankful for taking a firm stand on the Kashmir issue on behalf of Army Chief Syed Asim Munir. He stated that India will not be allowed to occupy even an inch of Kashmir. They will destroy the Hindutva agenda.



Flower exhibition

KARACHI: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami (Karachi) Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman visits flowers exhibition at a park in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

PM steps up push for good governance in Azad Kashmir

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq has said that punctuality and attendance of employees across the hierarchy was imperative to establish good governance in the state.

Addressing a meeting of divisional administration and police officers here today, the PM directed the authorities at the helm of affairs to ensure full attendance of employees in their offices.

"There will be no compromise on biometric attendance of officers and employees", he said, adding that civil servants who don't obey the rules and regulations should go home.

The officers, he said, must observe discipline and rules, stay on duty and check the



attendance of their subordinates by themselves three times a day.

"If the officers fulfill their responsibilities, their subordinates will never dare to be absent from work", he said. He said that the officers and employees who get salaries from the public exchequer must devote their full time and energy to serve the people of the state.

About introducing e-governance in the state, he said

e-governance has been instrumental in ensuring transparency in government matters. "The government has saved 3 billion rupees by introducing e-tendering in the Highways department alone", the PM said, adding that the amount would be spent on the welfare of public.

He said that after the biometric system, the government was planning to introduce an e-filing system.

Government Ministers, including Col. Retired Waqar Ahmad Noor, Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Mian Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Yasir Sultan, Nisar Ansar Abdali and other government officials were also present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, during his visit to lakeside city, the Prime Minister met members of different delegations that called on him and listened their grievances patiently.

The PM, on the occasion, assured the visiting delegations that the government would use all available resources for the welfare of people.

Resolving the problems being faced by the people, he said, was his government's top priority.

AIOU to hold next convocation in Islamabad on Jan 31

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Regional Director Rawalpindi Allama Iqbal Open University Mrs. Nasreen Hameed Khan said that convocation will be held in Islamabad on January 31. Teachers and students who have completed their degree with 70% or more then marks in BED, MED or any other subject. The last date of registration for them to participate in the convocation has been fixed as 5 January 2024. In her important statement, Regional Director Rawalpindi Allama Iqbal Open University Mrs. Nasreen Hameed Khan said that the convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University will be held in Islamabad on January 31. To participate in the convocation, the details and advertisements of all other regions including Rawalpindi region are available on the website. All those teachers and students who have obtained degree in BED, MED or any other subject from Allama Iqbal Open University and their marks are 70% or more then, they are eligible for registration.

Rehana Khan calls for urgent action to end gender violence

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairperson Women's Commission Ms. Rehana Khan has said that immediate and effective measures must be taken to reduce gender violence against women so that how many victims of brutality can be saved and whose lives are at risk. The judicial system and speedy justice can be the salve for women and their families who are victims of oppression in such cases. Such cases should be heard on priority basis and the culprits should be punished so that the raising of women in the society will be safe. Opinions can be changed. These views were expressed at the 21st Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) meeting in Lahore, organized by the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW)



in collaboration with UN Women and the United States, representing Azad Kashmir. The meeting focused on leveraging data for gender equality in Pakistan. Stakeholders demonstrated commitment to empowering women by envisioning an inclusive society. In the meeting Chairperson and Women Commission Mrs. Rehana Khan repre-

sented from all over Azad Kashmir and specially participated in the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Nilufar Bakhtiar, Chairperson, NCSW said, "This assembly serves as an important platform. Promotes collaboration and initiates positive change on the path to gender equality and women empowerment in Pakistan. Let's unite together to build a society where every woman's voice is heard, and her rights and contributions are valued," said Ms. Sharmila Rasool, UN Women Country Representative, IPMG. Acts as an innovation platform to design tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of Pakistan. A prime example of this is the National Gender Data Portal. Recognizing the critical role of data, we recognize its importance in identifying policy gaps and empowering officials to make informed decisions. US

Consul General, Lahore, Ms. Kristen Hawkins added, "The National Gender Data Portal, funded by the United States, is a reliable and comprehensive source of gender-related data. Better data collection, analysis and reporting paves the way for more informed decision-making by both the Government of Pakistan and donors working to end gender-based violence and empower women. President Pakistan Hindu Mandir Management Committee Government of Pakistan Hindu Mandir Management Committee President Krishan Sharma presented a detailed overview of minority family laws. Dr. Arif Laghari, Director, Ministry of Human Rights, updated the audience on the Pakistan CEDAW report. Dr. Rana Malik presented a detailed review of women's property and land rights in Pakistan.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:42 am
Zohr12:09 pm
Asr3:29 pm
Maghrib5:07 pm
Isha6:36 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan

Pakistan launches knowledge sharing symposium on Gender Justice and Equality

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) and Oxfam in Pakistan collaborated under the Global Affairs Canada funded project Women's Voice & Leadership - Pakistan (WVL-P) to organize a knowledge sharing symposium in Islamabad today. The symposium titled "Promoting Shared Knowledge for Continued Actions to Support Gender Justice and Equality" launched 03 knowledge products which were carried out by academia and local organizations including Fatima Jinnah Women University, Dewa Organization of Lower Deir and InterAct Consulting respectively.

During the discussion Ms. Fajar Rabia Pasha, Advisor on Girls education, Ministry of Human Rights, Mr. Ali Kemal Chief SDG, Mr Raza Ali- Chief Peace and Justice organization shared their valuable thoughts and shared the way forward for taking the data and recommendation to NCSW, planning division for furtherance of Gender Justice and equality.

Senator Fauzia Arshad while responding to the Women inclusion strategies, shared that it is not only the responsibilities of political parties but also our collective efforts as citizen of Pakistan to promote women inclusion at the local level as well as at political level.

Sindh indus festival to be held

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Meeting of Sindh Educational Welfare Association (SEWA) team with Abdul Hameed Abro Commissioner FBR At gymkhana Hyderabad, Pattern of Sewa Sawai Khan Chhalgri, Syed Mehboob Ali Shah chairman, Syed Shahzad Ali Shah vice chairman, Amna Memon vice chairman female wing, Abdul Qayoom sarohi General secretary, Mushtaque Ahmed khahrik chairman Management committee, Aqsa Khanzad Legal head And others was participate. During the Meeting was discussed about upcoming event of Sewa Indus festival Hyderabad at Sindh Museum.

Radio Pakistan launches special programmes for upcoming general elections: Solangi

PPA

Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation launched a series of special programmes in connection with forthcoming general elections 2024.

The special programme, namely "Elections City 2024" jointly produced by News and Current Affairs Channel and Programme Wing, was broadcast live at News and Current Affairs Channel from Islamabad.

Speaking in the programme, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said that Radio Pakistan has a long history of providing timely and accurate information to the masses.

Appreciating the historical role of Radio Pakistan during all the previous and forthcoming general elections, he expressed the hope that all regional and local stations will also follow the National



Hook-up Program and plan their transmission accordingly.

Speaking in the programme, Director General Elections, Election Commission of Pakistan, Syed Nadeem Haider said conducting elections is a massive exercise in which about one million election staff will be deputed in the entire country. He said about 92,000 polling stations will be set up across the country, while special security plan will be chalked out for about 47,000 sensitive and extremely sensitive polling stations to ensure law and order.

He said Election Monitoring and Complaint Cell has also been established which will monitor the election process round the clock. Lauding the role of Radio Pakistan, the DG Elections ECP, said Radio Pakistan has an edge over other medium of communication due to its access to the far flung areas of the country. He also appealed to the

political parties to extend cooperation to the Election Commission of Pakistan in conducting peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections.

In his remarks, Spokesperson of the Election Commission of Pakistan Haroon Shinwari said registered voters can check their vote and polling station by sending their CNIC number via SMS to 8300.

It is pertinent to mention that Radio Pakistan is broadcasting special program of the election transmission namely "Elections City 2024" from News and Current Affairs Channel daily at 4:05 pm.

Meanwhile, Director General of Radio Pakistan Saeed Ahmed Sheikh says in a special broadcast regarding the election, Radio Pakistan will fulfill its national responsibility and all the verified information will be provided to the people in time.

Preparation

ISLAMABAD: Workers of CDA are busy in gardening on greenbelt along the Express Way in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid



ISLAMABAD: Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed presenting a Pakistan Mountain Festival memento to PPAF chief Nadir Gul Barech on Thursday. (December 28, 2023)

'Smile for a While 2024' campaign for SOS Village Children



PNP

ISLAMABAD: In a Heartwarming Collaboration, Cheezious and Ideas Foundation Join Forces to Bring Joy and Laughter to SOS Village Children with the "Smile for a While 2024" Campaign. The event aims to raise funds for the children of SOS village.

Ideas Foundation has long been at the forefront of advocating for the well-being of children and inspiring positive actions within society. By teaming up with Cheezious, a brand known for its commitment to social responsibility, the two entities aimed to spread 'cheezy khushiyar' among the young residents of SOS Village.

Zohaib Hassan, Head of Marketing at Cheezious, expressed that, "Service to humanity is a virtue that will be surely rewarded, and we must put our step forward in doing well for society. Happiness is doubled when it is shared, and spreading these 'cheezy khushiyar' among the kids of SOS is a joy to watch. Our collaboration with Ideas Foundation reflects our shared commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those who need it the most."

Letter to the Editor

Civic Education

Dear Editor, I hope this letter finds you well. I write to shed light on a matter of paramount importance in our educational landscape - the pressing need for an enriched and comprehensive civic education program in our schools.

In an era characterized by rapid societal evolution and complex global challenges, it is essential that we equip our youth with the tools and knowledge to navigate the intricacies of civic life. Beyond the traditional emphasis on subjects like mathematics and science, civic education plays a pivotal role in shaping responsible, engaged, and informed citizens.

Civic education goes beyond the mere dissemination of historical facts and governmental structures; it cultivates critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and a deep understanding of the rights and responsibilities inherent in a democratic society. By providing students with a robust civic education, we empower them to actively participate in civic affairs, fostering a sense of duty and commitment to the greater good.

Moreover, a comprehensive civic education program serves as a bulwark against the rising tide of misinformation and polarization. In an age where digital media can be both a powerful tool and a breeding ground for misinformation, teaching students how to critically evaluate information, discern fact from fiction, and engage in constructive dialogue is imperative.

By integrating civic education into our curriculum, we not only prepare students to be active participants in the democratic process but also nurture a sense of empathy and respect for diverse perspectives. In doing so, we lay the foundation for a society where individuals appreciate the value of civic engagement and collaboration, transcending ideological divisions.

It is time for policymakers and educators to recognize the pivotal role that civic education plays in shaping the future of our society. Adequate resources and attention must be allocated to ensure that civic education is not a peripheral aspect of our educational system but an integral component that molds the character and civic consciousness of our future leaders.

In conclusion, let us envision a future where every graduate emerges not only with academic prowess but also with a profound understanding of their role as responsible citizens. By investing in comprehensive civic education, we invest in the vitality and resilience of our democratic ideals.

Nimra, E/11-I Islamabad

Int'l Iqbal conference concluded at AIOU

PNP

ISLAMABAD: A two-day international conference on "Iqbal's Thought in the Perspective of the 21st Century and Two Great Poets of Islam: Iqbal and Akif" has concluded at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). The conference resulted in a roadmap of joint efforts and initiatives to promote the ideas of the two great poets of the Muslim Ummah, Iqbal and Akif. Yunus Emre Institute and Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will organize seminars, conferences and other academic activities to convey the ideas



of Iqbal and Akif to the new generation. The closing ceremony was presided over by the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, and distinguished teacher and scholar of Urdu language, Dr. Tanzeem ul-Firdos, was the chief guest. Dr. Tanzeem, Dr. Fatima Hasan and other speakers congratulated Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Department of Iqbaliyat, Yunus Emre Institute and Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir

for successfully organizing such an important event. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir recited poetry by Allama Iqbal and emphasized that this poetry carries a special message for all of us. Dr. Sahir expressed his gratitude to the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Dr. Arshad Mehmood Nashad and the conference secretary, Dr. Shiraz Ali Zaidi, who worked tirelessly day and night to make this conference a success. Director of Yunus Emre Institute, Dr. Halil Tokar, stated that the conference aimed to convey and explain the message of both Iqbal and Akif, who have guided the Muslim Ummah.

RPO Dera awarded cash prize to cops who repelled terrorist attack

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Terrorists attacked Aba Shaheed Police Check post established in Dera Town police station last night in Dera Ismail Khan.

In response to which, the policemen bravely fought back their attack and forced the terrorists to flee and crushed their evil ambitions.

In this regard, Regional Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Nasir Mehmood Satti



along with SP City Ishaq Khan visited Aba Shaheed Check Post on Thursday. On this occasion, SHO Police Station Dera Town and in-charge check post

gave a complete briefing to RPO Dera.

The RPO said that the police have made eternal sacrifices by always playing the role of frontline against terrorists for the establishment of peace, due to these sacrifices, the morale of the terrorists is low, while our morale is high for the protection of this motherland.

On this occasion, RPO Dera also distributed cash prizes to the policemen who bravely fought against the terrorists.

IESCO Attock allegedly 'spent' Rs2.60m on off road vehicle

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A scam of alleged misappropriation of funds amounting to Rs 2.60 million has been detected in Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Jand sub division of Attock circle detected as officials withdraw the amount from national kitty allegedly on fake expenditure on a on the road and condemned vehicle.

According to inside sources, the mis-appropriation of funds was

detected by the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) audit authorities of the sub division by examining official record of fiscal year 2022-2023.

According to official record (which is available with correspondent) the officials of the sub division withdraw a sum of Rs 2016675 for fuel, Rs 450500 on lubricants and Rs 193000 as maintenance expenditure on the said out of road vehicle from national kitty through claiming fake and bogus bills for the

official pick up Mazada bearing number AKA-1460 under use of the IESCO Jand Sub division during July 2022 to June 2023.

Moreover the report revealed shocking state of affairs in the IESCO under which a fake log book was maintained in the record in which per month mileage and running of the vehicle was recorded which was lying in unserviceable and unmovable condition in the courtyard of the office. The report states "During the audit

of Jand Sub division for the period under audit, it revealed that the vehicle bearing number AKA-1460 Mazda Pick-up lying in deteriorated condition in the courtyard of Jand sub division from last two years. Meanwhile checking of POL register and log books of said vehicle, it was shocking to find out that the below mentioned bogus payments were made against said vehicle in the form of POL, oil lubricants and maintenance expenditure.

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Army Chief Vs Mafias - II

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



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Gaza is a Public Health Disaster in the Making

Hospitals are barely functioning in Gaza, according to the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths.

The United Nations relief chief, Martin Griffiths, has warned that Gaza is a public health disaster in the making, with the World Health Organization (WHO) urging the Security Council to turn its recent humanitarian resolution into reality.

"Hospitals are barely functioning," said Griffiths, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

"Infectious diseases are rife and spreading fast in overcrowded shelters," he added, while "hundreds of people with war injuries are unable to receive care."

"Gaza is a public health disaster in the making," the relief coordinator stressed.

Meanwhile, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, repeated his call on the international community "to take urgent to alleviate the grave peril facing the population of Gaza and jeopardizing the ability of humanitarian workers to help people with terrible injuries, acute hunger, and at severe risk of disease."

"Day after day, the needs of Gaza's war-ravaged war-ravaged people grow. Peril, ill-health, hunger, thirst, lack of shelter—these should not be the norm for millions of people. But sadly, they are," Ghebreyesus stressed.

He said the WHO and its partners undertook high-risk missions to deliver supplies to hospitals in northern and southern Gaza on Tuesday, December 26.

Missions visited Al-Shifa Hospital in the north and Al-Amal Palestine Red Crescent in the south.

Both hospitals also serve as shelters for displaced people seeking relative safety. At Al-Shifa Hospital, a reported 50,000 people are sheltering, while in Al-Amal there are 14,000, the WHO said in a statement.

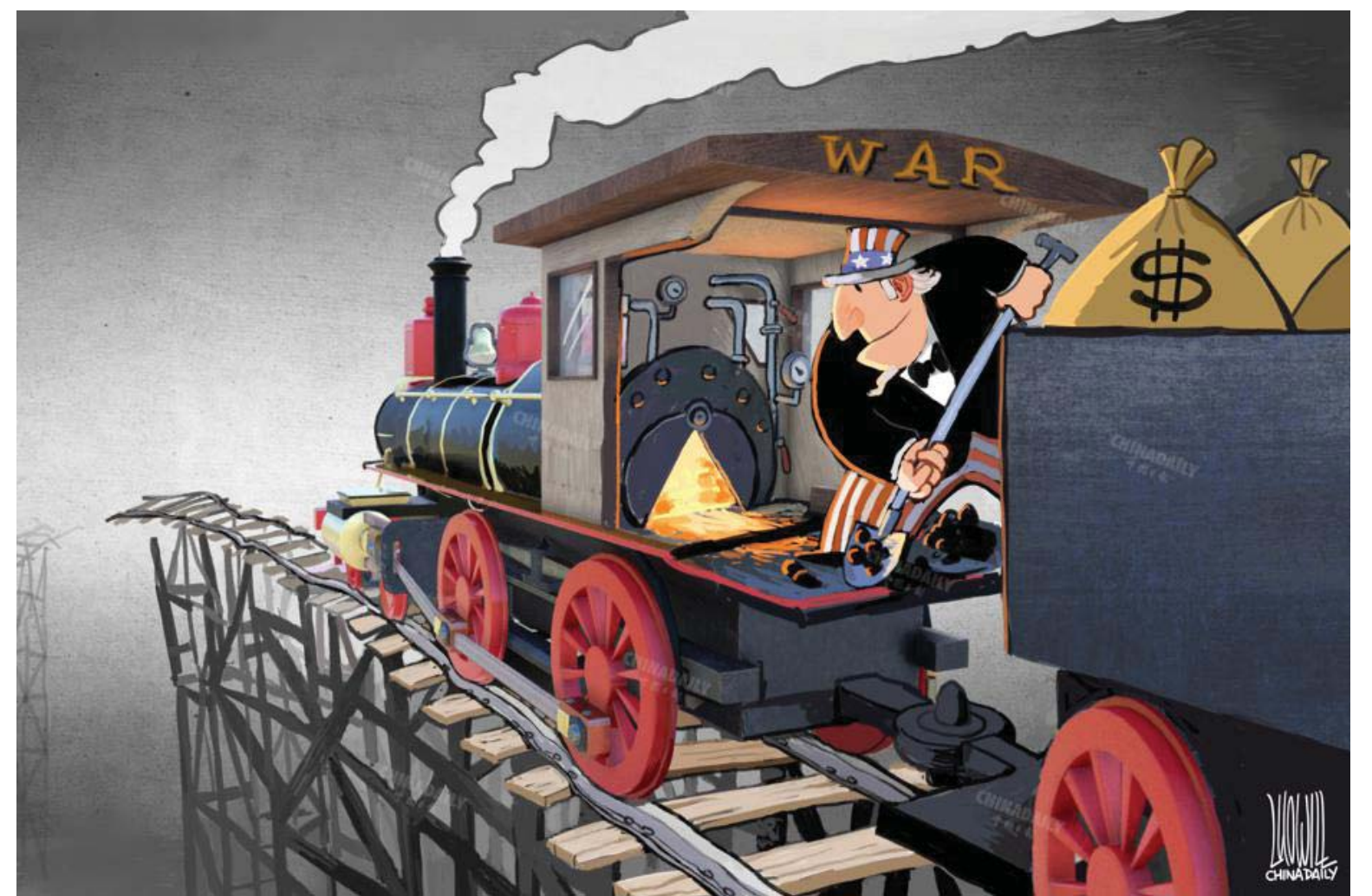
According to the latest WHO assessments, Gaza has 13 partially functioning hospitals, 2 minimally functioning ones, and 21 that are not functioning at all.

Among these is Nasser Medical Complex, which is the most important referral hospital in Southern Gaza, and is partially functioning.

The WHO said recent reports of residential areas being ordered to evacuate around the hospital are extremely concerning.

"When military activities intensify near the hospital, ambulances, patients, staff, and WHO and partners will be unable to reach the complex, and this key hospital will quickly become barely functional," said Dr Peeperkorn.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, 21,320 Palestinians have been killed, and 55,603 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.



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

Professional networking: The art of crafting your success story

Asif Aziz Khan

In the fast-paced and interconnected world of business, professional networking is more than just a buzzword. It is an essential skill that can unlock countless opportunities, collaborations, and personal growth. Professional networking is not about collecting contacts or sending requests on social media. It is about building and nurturing meaningful relationships with people who share your vision, values, and goals. Professional networking transcends the cliché of "it's not what you know, but who you know." It is a powerful catalyst for career advancement and business success.

As Robert Kiyosaki, author and founder of Rich Global LLC and the Rich Dad Company, said, "The richest people in the world look for and build networks, everyone else looks for work. Marinate on that for a minute." Networking can help you find work, but more importantly, it can help you create work that matters to you and others.

A strong professional network can be your greatest ally in navigating the twists and turns of your career. By connecting with mentors, colleagues, and industry experts, you gain access to a wealth of knowledge, advice, and diverse perspectives. You can learn from their experiences, challenges, and successes, and apply them to your own situation. You can also benefit from their feedback, support, and encouragement, which can boost your confidence and motivation. Your network is a reflection of your brand. By engaging positively and productively with your professional community, you enhance

your reputation and credibility. You also create a valuable resource pool where you can tap into expertise, information, and assistance whenever needed.

To make the most of professional networking, you need to have a clear vision of what you want to achieve and how you can add value to others. Whether you seek collaboration, career guidance, or business expansion, you need to define your objectives and align them with your actions. This will help you focus your networking efforts and ensure that they are purposeful and effective.

If you are looking for career advice, you need to



be specific about the areas where you need help. Do you want to switch careers, overcome obstacles, or plan for long-term growth? Identify the people who can offer you relevant and reliable guidance, and reach out to them with clear and respectful requests. If you want to gain industry insights, you need to connect with professionals who have a deep and current understanding of the trends, challenges, and opportunities in your field. Ask them thoughtful and insightful questions that will help you learn from their perspective and experience. To enhance your brand and visibility, you need to highlight your unique strengths and achievements. Showcase

your skills, projects, or accomplishments that set you apart, and use your networking platforms to amplify your voice and reach.

According to a survey by The Manifest, 64% of small businesses market via social media, while 34% network at events. Social media can help you reach a wider audience, but events can help you build deeper connections. You need to balance both online and offline networking to maximize your impact.

For entrepreneurs and business professionals, networking can be a key driver for business growth. You need to identify your target market, potential partners, or investors, and tailor your networking strategy to attract and engage them. You also need to communicate your value proposition clearly and convincingly and demonstrate how you can solve their problems or meet their needs.

Networking is not about selling yourself or your products, but about helping others achieve their goals and aspirations. By doing so, you will also achieve yours.

Professional networking is not a one-time event or a transactional exchange. It is an ongoing process that requires commitment, consistency, and reciprocity. It is about building trust, rapport, and mutual benefit with the people who can help you shape your success story. So, embark on this journey with a clear vision, a strategic approach, and a genuine interest in others. And let the art of professional networking sculpt your masterpiece.

Author is Deputy Director of the Employability Center and Alumni Office at Superior University, Lahore, has 16 years of experience in bridging academia and industry.

Dying book culture in Pakistan II

A typical student's attention span is about 10 to 15 minutes long, yet most classes can last for 30 minutes to an hour. In 2023, the average attention span of a human has decreased from 12 seconds to 8.25 seconds. Loss of focus can happen for many reasons. They include mental and physical health problems, stress, and the use of some medication, lack of sleep, or an inadequate diet.

An interesting thought pops up in my mind here: until we don't depict history through the factual spectrum, we even can't predict about our future, and in turn, we will erode society's potential to think rationally. What leaves deeper marks on the mind is that a person who die without any faith might be forgotten, but when he died without reading a single book in life, his apologetic petition will not be honored at Dooms Day.

In order to give strength to my argument, I would spare a thought on the importance of book reading through western eyes. In Italy, reading a "book in jail" reduces 3 days of imprisonment. This is only allowed for 48 days in one year, amounting to a total of 16 books in 12 months.

By reading, they change the minds of criminals. What excites me to stress that even prisoners are directed to read a book to change their mind, but in the Pakistani context, the students have prompted to lose their half-thought on the state-nurtured myths of the curriculum. Sadly, it would not be platitude

to exaggerated that such paranoid conviction and sheer stupidity is penetrated and injected in our youth's minds for to toe the curriculum's line and must not go beyond their capacity to rationalize their thoughts.

In Denmark and France, human libraries come to exist for the well-being of society, but we strikingly fell short of the physical infrastructure of the library. From the very outset, our black slate Mentality is fed with empty thoughts through specific arguments to strike down our sense of questioning.

It's disheartening to jot down my thoughts in such a pessimistic terms, but it is pertinent to be addressed. It is crystal clear that until the reading culture is promoted, we have to meet our apocalyptic future with a very devastating consequences. It would be prudent for the education department to get the gravity

of the situation, where we don't need university graduates along with degrees, but scholars along with an ideological and intellectual thoughts to intellectually attack the authority because Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth. To pulled no punches that how a state, where 25 million boys are out of the school will get access to the libraries to provide a safe haven for their thoughts. To cap it all, as long as we heed our intentions and inclination only towards the contrived and confounded curriculum and put the book reading culture on the back burner, it is our fatal blow to suffer.

The writer is a student at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.



Analysis

Jalal Uddin Kakar

UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution put forward by Uzbekistan on environmental challenges in Central Asia

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution initiated by Uzbekistan “Central Asia in the face of environmental challenges: strengthening regional solidarity for the sake of sustainable development and prosperity”.

The intergovernmental negotiation process to develop and agree on the text of the resolution took place over two months, namely in October-November at the UN headquarters in New York. Experts from countries from all continents of the world, including the USA, Russia, China, France, Great Britain, Germany, Canada, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and others, actively participated in the consultations. As a result, representatives of more than 100 countries made numerous proposals to fill the text with specific content and achieve universal consensus.

The text specifically mentions a

number of initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan, including the “Green Agenda for Central Asia” and its role in promoting sustainable development in the region. In the resolution, member states welcome the initiative of Uzbekistan to hold the International Climate Forum in Samarkand in 2024. Particular attention is paid to efforts to mitigate the consequences of the drying up of the Aral Sea, with special emphasis on the activities of the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Human Security for the Aral Sea region, created on the initiative of the head of Uzbekistan. An appeal was made to the international community to continue to support this fund. The document notes the importance of introducing innovative methods and new technologies in the fight against desertification and land degradation. Contains greetings to the successful holding for the first time in Central Asia of the 21st session of the Committee to Review the Implementation of the UN Convention to Combat



Desertification and a high-level meeting on combating sand and dust storms on November 13-17 in Samarkand. The resolution contains specific tasks to effectively counter climate and environmental threats in Central Asia, including through the development of sustainable agriculture, landscaping, rational use of water resources, energy efficiency, waste recycling, develop-

ment of sustainable tourism, creation of “smart cities” and sustainable transport.

The General Assembly recommended that the UN system, international and financial institutions, the private sector, investors and donors continue to mobilize resources, build capacity and provide assistance to address environmental problems in Central Asia.

The resolution also sets out the initiatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in the field of environmental protection.

The document was presented on behalf of all Central Asian countries. The co-sponsors of the resolution also included countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, China, Singapore, Hungary, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan, Paraguay (covering representatives of all UN regional groups).

Following the adoption of the resolution, the UN News Service published an article entitled “The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to

combat environmental problems in Central Asia.” It notes that climate change is one of the most complex problems of our time and creates serious difficulties for the sustainable development of all countries. As stated in the publication, speaking at the UN in September, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that over the past thirty years the air temperature in the region has increased by one and a half degrees. “This is twice the global average warming,” the portal quotes the head of Uzbekistan. “As a result, about a third of the total area of glaciers has disappeared.” The article also quotes the words of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev that if this trend continues, then in the next twenty years the flow of two large rivers in the region—the Amu Darya and the Syrdarya—may decrease by 15 percent. “Per capita water availability is expected to decline by 25 percent and crop yields by 40 percent,” he added at the time, calling on the international community to take action.

CPEC promotes economic transformation and regional integration

PPA

ISLAMABAD: 28 December 2023: CPEC has played a pivotal role in fostering a community for a shared future between China and Pakistan, significantly transforming Pakistan’s economic landscape and contributing to poverty reduction. The implementation of connectivity projects, particularly in farm-to-market initiatives, has brought revolutionary changes to agriculture and industrial development in Pakistan. Collaborative efforts in energy projects and advancements in digital technologies underscore the depth of cooperation between Pakistan and China.

These sentiments were echoed by speakers during the Webinar on A Decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, organized by the Centre for BRI and China Studies, Institute of Peace and

Diplomatic Studies, and Pakistan Research Center, Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences, China, in collaboration with the Alliance of China Pakistan Research Centres. Dr. Farhat Asif, President of IPDS, emphasized the significance of the webinar, introducing the forthcoming book, “CPEC: A Decade of Transformation across Pakistan-Regional Impacts and Progress,” a collaborative effort of both institutes. Richer Tang Jun, Director of the Pakistan Research Center, offered insights into the book, focusing on the developmental strides made over the decade. Dr. Xiaqing Xie, Director of the CPEC Research Centre, highlighted the poverty reduction impacts of CPEC in Pakistan through energy projects.

Dr. Liaqat Ali Shah, Head of Policy, Centre of Excellence for CPEC, emphasized the role of academia and think tanks in

formulating actionable policies. Prof. Dr. Sun Hongqi, Director of the Pakistan Center for Educational and Cultural Studies, Jiangsu Normal University, emphasized the close ties between China and Pakistan, drawing global attention to CPEC. Dr. Tahir Mumtaz, Director of the China Study Centre, stressed the importance of people-to-people exchange and scientific innovation. The webinar featured discussions on digital interconnectivity by Xiang Yang Scarlet, Director of China Study Centre, and the cultural bonding potential of aesthetic truck art by Prof. Jin Qiang, Deputy Director of OIC Research Centre. Dr. Kausar Takrim, Director of the China Study Centre at the University of Peshawar, highlighted CPEC’s regional impact. At the same time, Dr. Abdul Sattar, Director of China Study Centre,



BUTTEMS, Balochistan, reflected on the achievements and challenges of CPEC. Zhao Zhiling, Assistant Director of the Paki-

stan Research Center of Baize Institute for Strategy Studies, and Dr. Zhang Jaiamei, Associate Professor at Peking University,

emphasized the deep-rooted friendship and mutual benefit exemplified by CPEC. The webinar successfully gathered distin-

guished scholars and researchers from China and Pakistan, offering valuable insights into the ten years of CPEC progress.



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPEC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a round table on “Pakistan’s Relations with Central Asia and Azerbaijan:

Imperatives of Regional Connectivity.” The distinguished experts included Dr. Najam Abbas, Senior Fellow (Central Asia and Eurasia) East West Institute, Brussels, Belgium; Professor Shabbir Ahmad Khan, Director Area Study Centre, University

of Peshawar; Dr. Farhat Asif, Founder President of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS); Mr. Khalid Khan, Chairman Central Asia Cellular Forum; Ms. Reema Shaukat, Communication Strategist, Institute of Regional Studies.

ISSI holds Round Table on ‘Pakistan’s Relations with Central Asia and Azerbaijan’

In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood shared insights into Pakistan’s relations with the region. He highlighted the multifaceted cooperation within the framework of ‘Vision Central Asia’ — encompassing five tracks, including political and diplomatic engagement; trade and investment ties; energy and connectivity; security and defence; and people-to-people exchanges.

Earlier in his introductory remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir set the stage by elucidating the deep cultural and historical affinities shared by Pakistan with Central Asia and Azerbaijan. His emphasis on increasing collaboration across sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, trade, energy, transport,

agriculture, and culture underscored the comprehensive nature of bilateral relations.

Dr. Najam Abbas’s keynote address focused on connectivity’s imperative, identifying trends and priorities for the next five years, emphasizing global freight potential, alternative routes, and regional corridors. Dr. Abbas, known for his expertise in Central Asian and South Asian affairs, highlighted the imperative of regional connectivity in its multiple dimensions.

Dr. Najam Abbas drew attention to the potential of global freight and logistics, pointing to alternative routes and corridors such as the ‘Middle Corridor’ and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INTC).

Professor Shabbir Ahmed Khan highlighted global shifts towards regional structures, emphasizing Pakistan’s strategic position and proposing regional connectivity as a vital transit hub. He expressed views on the Middle Corridor and the International North-South Transport Corridor and dilated in detail on feasibility of Pakistan-Afghanistan-CAR corridor.

Dr. Farhat Asif provided valuable insights from a practical perspective. She discussed the initiatives undertaken by her institute, focusing on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and establishing trade links with Central Asian countries.

Mr. Khalid Khan said that connectivity sector promises a lot

of opportunities. He noted that Azerbaijan has become a vibrant state and is producing skilled resource base of IT professionals. He added that Central Asia is a pivotal region with untapped potential.

Ms. Reema Shaukat said Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan provide a promising opportunity for engagement. Currently, China and Central Asian republics trade surpasses 70 billion USD, a promising opportunity for Pakistan.

The discussion concluded with a consensus on practical implementation, engagement with traders, and fostering strong diplomatic ties to realize regional connectivity’s full potential with Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

Experts call for anticipatory climate adaptation to cope crisis in the region

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a high-level roundtable called upon yesterday, the government and policy makers to come up with an inclusive and holistic approach to meet the exacerbating climate crisis through anticipatory adaptation.

The roundtable titled “Foresight and futures thinking for Anticipatory Adaptation in Pakistan” was organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to address how vari-

ous stakeholders are thinking of future risks, and how these risks could be integrated into existing plans and policies.

In his opening remarks, Dr Babar Shahbaz, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Agricultural Extension Education and Rural Development, set the ground for the participants to deliberate on pertinent and relevant issues precisely. To become future-fit, he said, it is important to understand future risks and take anticipatory actions. Amina Maharjan, Senior Specialist Livelihoods and Migration, ICIMOD briefed the participants on the foresight and futures thinking for anticipatory

adaptation in the region, methods to explore future pathway in terms of foresight, scenario development, development of efficient strategies and understanding foresight beyond predictions.

Sultan Mehmood, the World Food Programme (WFP) representative, mentioned the climate adaptation related interventions being implemented through the WFP collaboration particularly the Living Indus Initiative.

Muhammad Farooq, Senior Joint Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, briefed the roundtable about the steps taken by the Ministry in the aftermath

of rising magnitude of climate catastrophes. He shed light on the development of the baseline data based on modern techniques, MHVRA being done for high resolution data work underway on climate on mapping and prediction by 2090.

Mr Farooq also pointed out lacunas in existing strategies particularly no linkage between adaptation and NDCs which has been done by developed countries. Pakistan has submitted its National Adaptation Plan to UNFCCC and is the 40th country to do it.

Dr Shafiqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI informed the forum that amid discourse



on anticipatory approaches, it is required to have systems capable to work out disaster risk reduction and climate change anticipatory adaptation and foresight models.

United Nations Environment Programme representative Arshad Samad Khan presented a brief view of climate vulnerability of the region and mentioned glacial melt in the north and sea level rise at the coasts in the south among the major climate crises faced by the country.

Obaidur Rehman Zia from SDPI proposed the roundtable to shift from deterministic to probabilistic approach.

Shameen Raza, UNDP-Pakistan briefed the forum about the success of GLOF project that significantly reduced losses of human lives and infrastructure in the glacial lake outburst flood prone areas. She mentioned that it was a promising intervention because of its localized nature and approach.

Dr Farrukh Rashid from Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) informed the participants about the measures taken by the PMD for strengthening its hydro meteorological infrastructure across the country.

He suggested addressing the demographic issues of countries like Pakistan in the region that were having bulging sizes of population churning up most of the natural resources which was unsustainable.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
62,052.23	60,863.62	
Day's High	Day's Low	
62,750.77	61,092.27	
Index Value	Change	
15,708,281,796	+ 1188.61	
Percentage	Time	
+1.95%	28 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,722.74	-2.21	
Percentage	Time	
-0.029%	28 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
37,736.95	+80.43	
Percentage	Time	
+0.21%	28 Dec, 12:53 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,539.62	-141.62	
Percentage	Time	
-0.42%	28 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	190	191.9
Bahrain Dinar	749.87	757.87
Canadian Dollar	211	213
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Danish Krone	41.82	42.22
Euro	310	313
Hong Kong Dollar	36.1	36.45
Indian Rupee	3.4	3.51
Japanese Yen	1.45	1.53
Kuwaiti Dinar	917.31	926.31
Malaysian Ringgit	61.04	61.64
New Zealand \$	177.84	179.84
Norwegians Krone	27.7	28
Omani Riyal	732.58	740.58
Qatari Riyal	77.73	78.43
Saudi Riyal	74.5	75.25
Singapore Dollar	211	213
Swedish Korona	28.26	28.56
Swiss Franc	329.69	332.19
Thai Bhat	8.17	8.32
U.A.E Dirham	76.8	77.6
UK Pound Sterling	358.5	362
US Dollar	281.9	284.4

SIFC initiatives to start new phase of industrialization in Pakistan: Gohar Ejaz

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries and Production Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Thursday, reiterating the government's commitment to economic revival said that measures envisaged by the Special Investment Facilitation Council would start a new phase of industrialization in the country.

The minister was chairing a meeting with a delegation of the business community having representation of agriculture, textile, engineering and other sectors, said a press release issued here.

The delegation was informed about the priorities of the government and the role and efforts of SIFC for the economic revival of the country.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz speaking at the occasion said that SIFC was working vigorously with countries of Gulf Cooperation Council and China and inflow of huge foreign investment was expected in Pakistan that would promote industry and exports and bolster employment opportunities in the country.

Pakistan possess a vast potential of trade at regional and global level but despite of popu-



lation of 250 million volume of its economy is \$ 350 billion while trade volume is near \$ 100 billion, he noted and stressed on the need of enhancing trade to strengthen the economy on sustainable basis and taking prompt and comprehensive measures for the purpose.

China is not only our iron friend but also a major trade partner and Pakistani businessmen needed to explore trade opportunities in China and further promote bilateral trade, he added.

The minister said that Karachi is the economic hub of the country that drives the national economy while China, Saudi Arabia,

Kuwait and many other countries expressed keen interest in making investments in Karachi.

He said that the government has planned to open the Garment City and a new industrial estate and also to set up a new

Special Economic Zone and an Export Processing Zone in the metropolis with a vision of instituting innovative trends of industrialization through the promotion of small industries.

SIFC has become a continuous and progressive institution and it will work with new assemblies and government following upcom-

ing general elections to ensure sustainability and continuity of the policies, Dr. Gohar Ejaz assured.

Referring to energy costs for industries the minister said that currently electricity tariff in Pakistan was higher than the world while the gas tariff was lower than the global prices.

"We are working to rationalize the energy prices in the country to ensure uniformity in electricity tariff," he said adding that the country's natural gas deposits were depleting fast and LNG mix has become vital to meet the demand for natural gas.

Hardwork

ISLAMABAD: Welders are busy in welding the Iron rods for installing barbed wires surround the Diplomatic Enclave as it is the 2nd attempt after construction of wall and its eradication with known reason but whatever, it was the wastage of funds, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Zong 4G and HANDS initiate a collaborative effort to make Digital Education Accessible for Youth

PPA

KARACHI: Zong 4G, Pakistan's Leading Telecommunication Company has partnered with the Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS) to set up a revolutionary Digital Lab at the FAS School in Noor Muhammad Goth near Karachi.

As a part of Zong 4G's Sustainability Program, this partnership aims to provide students in marginalized areas with top-notch technological systems to empower their digital skills and provide access to the digital world. The school previously faced challenges in delivering digital access to children but is now optimistic regarding the positive impact of the newly established digital lab in facilitating a more seamless and enjoyable educational experience for students.

education for more students.

HANDS is a non-profit organization working tirelessly to improve healthcare and education systems, alleviate poverty, and build infrastructure in Pakistan. Both Zong 4G and HANDS are motivated to bridge the digital gap in Pakistan by providing students with unrestricted digital access to foster knowledge imperatives and help them excel in the digital world. The school previously faced challenges in delivering digital access to children but is now optimistic regarding the positive impact of the newly established digital lab in facilitating a more seamless and enjoyable educational experience for students.

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves rise to \$ 12.855 billion

PPA

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan increased to US\$ 12,855.7 million while the reserves held by the central bank reached at \$ 7,757.1 million in the week ended on December 22, 2023.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves increased by \$ 852 million to \$ 7,757.1 million mainly due to receipt of official Government of Pakistan inflows during the week under review.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$ 5,098.6 million, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on December 15, 2023, were \$ 12,068.4 million. Among them foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 6,904.8 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$ 5,163.6 million.

ICCI asks MCI to consider affordable signboard tax rate for traders

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, visited the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and held a meeting with Yasir Farhad, Director Municipal Administration MCI to discuss the issue of the signboard tax rate for the traders. Ajmal Baloch President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran, Khalid Chaudhry former Senior Vice President ICCI, and others were in the delegation.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI said that the business community is not against the payment of taxes, however, MCI should finalize all taxes in consultation with the stakeholders to save the traders from unnecessary tax burden. He proposed that the MCI should consider a fixed signboard tax rate of Rs.20/per sq. ft. for small traders or make it affordable for them. He further said that MCI



should take the stakeholders into confidence about the property tax, water and sanitation charges as well as solid waste management fees to make them affordable for the taxpayers.

Ajmal Baloch President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Khalid Chaudhry former Senior Vice President ICCI also shared the concerns of the traders about the increase in taxes of MCI and said that high tax rates should be rationalized to

reduce the tax burden on traders and facilitate the growth of trade activities.

Addressing the delegation, Yasir Farhad, Director Municipal Administration MCI said that the proposals of ICCI delegation would be given due consideration. He said that MCI wants signboard tax @ Rs.60/per sq. ft. He said that the main reason for increasing taxes is to reduce the gap between the revenue and expenses of MCI to provide better services to the citizens.

China aims to build more than half the world's cleaner-fuel ships by 2025

Reuters

SINGAPORE: China has set itself the goal of producing more than half of the world's ships powered by cleaner fuels by 2025, in guidelines published by the industry ministry on Thursday.

It did not give any estimates of the number of ships involved. But the guidelines said China would build more vessels powered by lower-carbon fuels such as methanol and liquefied natural gas, part of Beijing's push to become carbon neutral by 2060.

"Implement innovation in ship engines, improve the efficiency of traditional fuel and LNG marine engines, and steadily increase the use of LNG in marine engines at scale," the document issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said.

National Spice Summit 2023

National Foods Limited leads the way for Red Chili Ecosystem Development

PPA

ISLAMABAD: National Foods Limited, a leader in the food industry, hosted the National Spice Summit 2023 on December in Karachi. This successful event brought together key stakeholders and players in the red chili value chain for a day of insightful round table discussions.

"The National Spice Summit 2023 reflects our commitment to taking a multi-stakeholder approach to strengthen localization, and enhancing the quality of red chili in Pakistan which will unlock access to export markets. As we embark on this journey, we will prioritize the wellbeing of our farmers, beneficiaries, and key stakeholders," stated Abrar Hasan, CEO of National Foods Limited.

The summit witnessed the active participation

of esteemed stakeholders, including Ministry of Commerce, USDA (Winrock International), Corteva Agrisciences, Engro Corp, HBL, and LITEC International Agriculture Development Company. Their diverse expertise enriched the discussions, providing a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities within the red chili value chain.

The participants were of the view that addressing this gap is crucial for Pakistan to fully capitalize on the potential of red chili exports. "By focusing on enhancing the quality of locally grown red chilies, Pakistan can seize the opportunity to become a significant player in the global red chili market of approx. USD 1.4 billion," they added.

Currently, the country produces approximately 144,000 tons of red chilies annually, with this figure steadily increasing each year. Only around



10% of this locally grown red chili quantity is exported while the rest is consumed domestically. Furthermore, there is a need to import around 20,000 tons of red chili per year to meet specific

industry requirements, by developing this ecosystem not only can we omit our reliance on these imports but produce red chilies suitable for the export market

Aisam, Aqeel through to semifinal of Serena Hotels Tennis C'ships

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD, DEC 28 (APP): Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan advanced to the men's doubles semifinals of the 8th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Championships 2023 after registering wins in the quarterfinals at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Thursday.

The seasoned pair pulled off a comfortable win against M. Salar and M. Hamza Aasim 6-0, 6-1.

Meanwhile, Aqeel also reached the men's singles semifinals as he got past Barkatullah 6-2, 6-3.

The fixtures in other categories also took place on Thursday. Following are the results:

Men's Singles Quarterfinals: Muhammad Shoaib bt Yousaf Khalil 6-2, 6-4; Muzammil Murtaza bt Mudassar Murtaza 6-2, 6-2; Muhammad Abid bt



Abdullah Adnan 6-4, 6-1; Aqeel Khan bt Barkatullah 6-2, 6-3.

Ladies Singles Quarterfinals: Meheq Khokhar bt Zara Khan 6-0, 6-0; Soha

Ali bt Natalia Zaman 6-4, 6-3

Ladies Singles 1st Round: Labika Durab bt Sandana Rabi 6-1, 6-0; Amna Ali Qayum w/o Amna Saqib; Mahrukh

Sajid bt Lalarukh Sajid 7-6(3), 7-6(6)

Men's Doubles Quarterfinals: Aisam ul Haq Qureshi / Aqeel Khan bt M. Salar / M. Hamza Aasim 6-0, 6-1; Muzammil Murtaza / M. Shoaib bt Mudassar Murtaza / Abdullah Adnan 6-3, 6-10(7); M. Abid / Shahzad Khan w/o Sami Zeb / M. Zaryab; Yousaf Khalil / Barkatullah bt Hamid Israr / Asadullah 6-2, 6-2

Boys 18& Under Quarterfinals: Hamza Roman bt Ahtesham Humatyun 6-2, 6-3; Hamza Aasim bt Haamid Israr 6-4, 6-2; Asad Zaman bt M. Salar 6-1, 6-4; Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Mahatir Muhammad 7-5, 6-2

Boys 14& Under 2nd Round: Sameer Zaman bt Junaid Meher 4-1, 4-0; Amir Mazari bt Hassan Usmani 4-2, 4-2; Razik Sultan bt Mahd Mehmood 4-1, 4-0; Ruhaab Faisal bt M. Yahya 4-1, 4-2; Abdul Basit bt Zohaib Amjad 4-1, 4-0; Haziq Areejo bt Saqib Ali 4-1, 4-1; Ansarullah bt Laraib Shamsi 4-1, 4-0; M. Haziq Aasim bt Orhan Sohail 4-0, 4-0

Table Tennis trial begins in Bannu

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Trials of male and female table tennis players got under way at Qazi Mohib-ur-Rehman Sports Complex Bannu under the Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Program on Thursday.



International Cricketer Khushdil Shah officially opened the trial while he was accompanied by Director Sports Islamia College Peshawar Ali Hoti, RSO Bannu Shafqatullah, Senior Vice President of Provincial Table Tennis Association Kifayat Ullah Orakzai, DSO Bannu Adil Shah, Sports Complex Administrator Ehsanullah, International hockey player Nazir Gul of Bannu University and members of Trials Committee of Pakistan Table Tennis Federation including Nadeem Saleem, Masood Ali, Shazia.

A large number of sports personalities and players were also present on the occasion.

The two-day trials were organized by Islamia College Peshawar under the Higher Education Commission.

Addressing the ceremony International Cricketer Khushdil Shah said that promoting sports in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is vital step for youth. He said KPK had made efforts to create a leading sportsmen and women.

He expressed the hope that trials under the Prime Minister Talent Hunt program will gain results and best players will be born in table tennis too who will earn the name for this country and nation at national and international level.

On this occasion, Ali Hoti said that our main aim is to provide sports activity to boys and girls. He further stated that sports is the right of every child, and this right is being given by the Prime Minister under the Talent Hunt Youth Program.

He said that the trials of male and female players are being conducted at different places which will continue for two days.

PT display

A spectacular view of Mass PT display performed during 61st Parents Day Cadet College Petaro on Thursday.



36th Federal Cup Tennis C'ships from Jan 1

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 36th Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships will be held from January 1-7 at Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF)-SDA Tennis Complex, Garden Avenue, Islamabad. The event will see top-notch national players vying for top honours in different categories of Men, Women, Boys 18& Under, Boys 14&U and Boys and girls 10, said a statement issued here.

Elite players of the country including Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, Barkatullah and many other national players and those of all affiliated units of PTF - Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, WAPDA, Railways, HEC, SNGPL, POF Wah, Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Balochistan, Islamabad, AJK & Gilgit-Baltistan, have been invited to participate and show their prowess at the tennis extravaganza.

Shaheen Afridi, Mir Hamza impress with ball on day three of MCG Test

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Left-arm fast bowling duo of Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mir Hamza succeeded against the experienced Australia batting line-up as both registered three wickets to push the opposition on the back foot. At stumps, Australia's scorecard read 187-6 after they had earlier dismissed Pakistan for 264, according to information made available here by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Pakistan resumed from their overnight score of 194-6 with Mohammad Rizwan and Aamir Jamal at the crease. The 45-run stand between the two was the second-highest partnership for Pakistan. Rizwan (42, 51b, 1x4, 1x6) was the first batter to walk back on Day Three when Australia captain Pat Cummins struck early to break the seventh-wicket partnership. A 25-run eighth-wicket partnership between Shaheen and Aamir further helped reduce the deficit. Then, Shaheen (21, 28b, 4x4s) was trapped LBW by Nathan Lyon, with Pakistan slumping to 240-8 in the 70th over.

Cummins later dismissed Hasan Ali to complete his 10th five-wicket haul in Test cricket. Mir Hamza (2, 3b) was the last



batter to fall in the innings. Lyon, who bagged four wickets, closed the innings as Pakistan were dismissed for 264 in 73.5 overs. In turn, Shaheen produced magic with the new ball as opening batter Usman Khawaja was caught behind in just the first over and Marnus Labuschagne fell in the same manner on the last ball of the third over.

Hamza bowled a double wicket maiden soon after lunch and Australia were reduced to 16-4. The left-arm pacer

rattled David Warner's stumps on the first ball of the over and then castled Travis Head for a duck on the next delivery.

Steven Smith and Mitchell Marsh stitched a perfect recovery for their side. The two batted together to add 153 runs to the total, ensuring Australia remain in the game after the early setback. Hamza ended the partnership when Salman Ali Agha caught Marsh during the third session of Day Three. The Australian

all-rounder was denied a century, falling for a 130-ball 96 studded with 13 boundaries.

Smith completed a gritty half-century (50, 176b, 3x4s) before he gloved it to Salman fielding at gully, falling to the trap set by Shaheen. Smith's dismissal proved to be the final ball of the day.

Wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey (16 not out, 42b, 2x4s) remained unbeaten on the crease as Australia ended Day Three at 187-6 in 62.3 overs, leading by 241.

Action will resume on day four at the Melbourne Cricket Ground at 04:30 PKT. Scores in brief:

Australia 318 all out, 96.5 overs (Marnus Labuschagne 63, Usman Khawaja 42, Mitchell Marsh 41; Aamir Jamal 3-64, Mir Hamza 2-51, Hasan Ali 2-61, Shaheen Shah Afridi 2-85, Salman Ali Agha 1-22) and 187-6, 62.3 overs (Mitchell Marsh 96, Steven Smith 50; Mir Hamza 3-27, Shaheen Shah Afridi 3-58)

Pakistan 264 all out, 73.5 overs (Abdullah Shafiq 62, Shan Masood 54, Mohammad Rizwan 42; Pat Cummins 5-48, Nathan Lyon 4-73, Josh Hazlewood 1-43)

Is Cristiano Ronaldo secretly planning to lead Portugal in FIFA World Cup 2026?



Cristiano Ronaldo, initially expected to conclude his World Cup journey in 2022, now harbours aspirations for the 2026 edition.

Following Portugal's exit in the 2022 quarterfinals, where emotions ran high for Ronaldo, the football icon expressed a desire to extend his international career.

Portugal's coach, Roberto Martinez, revealed the possibility of Ronaldo's participation in 2026, driven by his ambitious goal of achieving 250 national team appearances.

Currently holding 205 caps and 128 goals, Ronaldo aims to play for at least another three years.

Additionally, he inches closer to the remarkable milestone of 1000 career goals, with 872 goals to his name, facilitated by his presence in Saudi Arabia.

He completed 200 matches for the national side in a Euro 2024 qualifier match against Liechtenstein — the highest by any player at the international level — is "interested" in reaching the 250-matches mark, Sportskeeda reported, citing Martinez's interview with former Arsenal winger Freddie Ljungberg.

"I said [to Ronaldo] is 200 caps something that interests you or not? He said, '250 interests me,'" Martinez said citing his conversation with the star footballer. The previous record for the most international appearances was held by Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa who featured in 196 games.

Pak vs Aus: PCB decides to impose \$500 fine on 'ill-disciplined' cricketers

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to enforce strict discipline among the cricketers and fine those found 'sleeping' in the dressing room during the ongoing Test series against Australia, sources told Geo News.

The decision to keep a close eye on players not playing the match came after it was revealed that some players were found sleeping in the dressing room, the sources aware of the development shared. "The players have been warned and informed about the development. It is done on the instructions of Team Director Mohammad Hafeez." Any player found violating the code of conduct will be fined \$500, the sources said, adding that it will take time to change old habits.

According to the sources, the players used to sleep in the dressing room during the previous management who have now been communicated that it won't be allowed any further.

Pakistan are currently playing the second Test of the three-match series in Melbourne. Green Shirts lost the first match in Perth while the third Test will be played in Sydney from January 3. It is important to note that Hafeez has replaced Mickey Arthur as team director following the World Cup 2023 shake-up which saw the whole management removed by the PCB Management Committee headed by Zaka Ashraf.

The support staff including batting and bowling coaches have also been changed by the board.

Regeneration of Pakistan Hockey

Dr Adnan Khalid

In medical science a human tissue lacking any blood supply is faced with only one circumstance, it starts to die out. Pakistan hockey over the past 13 years has faced a similar fate, with choking up of its finances and lack of funds to support up and coming players. Since 2008 Pakistan hockey has seen a dramatic fall by missing out in participation of the world cup twice and similarly at the Olympics. I will not reminisce the rich history which everyone associates with Pakistan hockey.

At this point I forgot to add that once a tissue dies out, it needs to be surgically removed to prevent the rest of the body from getting infected and going into shock. The shock for Pakistan had already been too great

and unbearable, added in part by the mismanagement that is Pakistan Hockey Federation. The same Olympians who had helped Pakistan reach the zenith in terms of success were responsible for its undoing and for politicizing the whole structure resulting in office bearers and those outside the administration fighting each other for control of the management.

Case In point is the FIH taking back an earlier awarded Olympic qualification tournament which was to be held in Lahore because of undue interference in the management of affairs at the Pakistan Hockey federation. This meant that Pakistan was unable to hold an FIH sanctioned tournament in Pakistan for first time since 2004.

While all this was running in the background, a regeneration was taking place silently with

in the Junior Pakistan hockey team against all odds. I say this because in the past 5 years alone there have been numerous different coaches who have come and gone, with the hockey teams both at senior and junior levels falling in the rankings. The players have had only a handful of opportunities to play against other top international teams. So, when the junior hockey team reached the Asia cup earlier this year, no one fancied them to even reach semifinals. These group of players were able to not only reach the final where they only lost narrowly to India but also in the process gained qualification to the Junior hockey world cup currently being played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The role played by Adnan Zakir an ex-hockey player was immense, he returned from England to coach the team. He spent a good enough time with

the team before the Asia cup to be able to deploy modern hockey techniques and have players included on merit. He again had to resign due to interference and move out because he could not compromise on principles of having deserving players in team on merit. Adnan is currently resident in England and playing a key role in development of juniors at local clubs. His departure saw the arrival of Rolent Oltmann, who has been a coach of senior Pakistan hockey teams in the past but is only with the team during tournaments and not during the entirety of training camps for lack of funds.

They further enhanced their performance during the invitational Sultan of Johor cup, where they finished fourth but not before reaching the semifinals and fighting a close match with Australians. The world



was starting to take notice of this change coming out of Pakistan hockey. The next role they had to play was at the Junior world cup itself where they found themselves in the group of death because it contained Netherlands and Belgium both much higher ranked teams at 4th and 5th as well as the New Zealand. Coming into the world cup no one had given them the

chance to progress out of the group for quarter finals. In face of such strong adversaries the 12th ranked Junior team played through sheer grit and determination to win over New Zealand and hold both the far superior Dutch and Belgians to draws and in the process qualify for the quarter finals of the world cup on better goal average coming second in their group.

These are players who without any investment, financial reward or benefit and lack of proper domestic structure have been able to match the performance of the best hockey teams in the world, with a hundred times better infrastructure and investment in domestic hockey in their respective countries. The regeneration I mentioned is ready to take hold but only if the Pakistan hockey federation can nurture these young talented players and groom their skills further. Unfortunately, Pakistan hockey needs investment and a public private partnership sponsoring these players future endeavors is the need of the hour. For now, the dream run continues and they face Spain in the quarter finals of the Junior world cup on December 12th.

The writer is a doctor and enthusiastic supporter of Pakistan hockey over many years.

Group photo

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo with faculty members after 61st Parents Day of Cadet College Petaro on Thursday.



Role of Ulema inevitable to eradicate polio, save future generation: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday calling the anti-vaxxers ill-fated people, urged the Ulema to stand against those spreading negative propaganda on the polio vaccine to make Pakistan achieve the goal of becoming a polio-free nation.

"The people, who call polio vaccine un-Islamic are ill-fated. You have to stand with us against such people. This is our collective fight. We owe it to our future generation," the prime minister said addressing the National Ulema Conference on Polio Eradication here.

Attended by the Ulema from different schools of

thought, cabinet members, diplomats and donors, the conference featured the adoption of a declaration that rejected the baseless propaganda against the polio vaccine and assured the Ulema's all-out support to the government in its fights against the crippling virus.

He urged the Ulema to follow the guiding Islamic principle of probing before believing any notion in the case of polio vaccine as well as it would enhance the effectiveness of their message from the pulpit.

"Don't our children have a right to live a healthy life and enjoy Allah's blessings as others do? This is their fundamental human right. Their right is our responsibility,"



Prime Minister Kakar said.

He said the real challenge was to convey the message to pulpits in the remote areas and at the grassroots level.

Coming to the Gaza situation and the killing of around 9,000 children by Israeli forces, he called it a sheer failure of

humanity as instead of being declared a criminal, the killer was claiming to be a leader.

In his address, Caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan said at the conference, the Ulema agreed and resolved to keep supporting the government's efforts in polio eradication besides promoting the messages on other health issues.

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi read out the declaration of the conference in which the Ulema unanimously declared the polio vaccine as permissible for children's safe future as it carried no harmful ingredients thus having no adverse impact on health.

Highlighting the Ulema's role, he said they should guide the masses about the essentiality of the polio vaccine as it was crucial to counter the negative propaganda for making Pakistan a polio-free nation by 2024.

Cadet College Petaro celebrates 61st Parents' Day

Bureau Report

KARACHI: An impressive ceremony of 61st parents' day was held at Cadet College Petaro. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

While addressing the gathering Chief Guest appreciated the quality of infrastructure, facilities, faculty and learning environment at Cadet College Petaro. He emphasised that such efforts will surely contribute in prosperity and progress of country as education is the only way out to progress. He also commended the collaborative efforts of Govt of Sindh, Commander Karachi, college administration and faculty for all out efforts to augment educational standards at the college. Furthermore, he advised the cadets that besides education they should also focus on character building.

Principal Cadet College Petaro, Commodore (Retd) Mushtaq Ahmed welcomed the guests and presented the annual college report. In his address, the principal highlighted the remarkable performance achieved by the cadets in academics, sports and co-curricular activities. He also mentioned about some of the development works completed during this year and progress on undergoing works at Cadet College Petaro.

Later, Chief Guest gave away the prizes to the award winners and congratulated them for their outstanding performance. Moreover, he appreciated cadets for immaculate turn out during annual parade, horse-riding, tent-pegging, gymnastic, P. T show, physical fitness and their skills displayed in exhibition.

A large number of civil and military officials, parents and other dignitaries attended the ceremony.

PTI chairman urges SC to ensure justice in election process

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan hoped that the courts, particularly the Supreme Court, would ensure justice by taking suo motu notice to address concerns about the election process.

He advised PTI candidates to remain calm, highlighting their substantial submission of nomination papers despite challenging circumstances.

More to read: Shah Mehmood Qureshi detained for 15 days under MPO3

Gohar Ali Khan said Nawaz Sharif's influence in hindering fair

contests and stressed the need for adherence to the principles.

He underscored the importance of peaceful conduct among PTI workers and warned against potential economic repercussions if the elections lacked transparency.

Additionally, he asserted PTI's commitment to fielding candidates in every constituency without forming alliances, blaming Nawaz Sharif's planned return who didn't like PTI's participation in general elections.

Gohar Ali Khan called for the Election Commission to ensure transparency and address any electoral misconduct.

Solangi, Iranian envoy emphasize importance of mutual cooperation in diverse sectors

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Thursday emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation in trade and economic sectors, especially in the scope of ECO organization, corridor from East to West, bilateral cooperation on the ports and expansion of relations between two brotherly countries. During a meeting between Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi and Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam, multiple important issues, including cooperation in the fields of media, exchange of cultural delegations, bilateral trade relations, Iran Expo 2024, were discussed.

The minister and Amba-



sador expressed the willingness on the part of both countries to explore opportunities for promoting bilateral relations. Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi said that Pakistan valued the brotherly relations with Iran as both were bound by deep religious, cultural and linguistic relations. "Cooperation between the two countries in the fields of media is the need of the hour," Murtaza Solangi said

adding Pakistan was keen to promote cooperation with Iran in the fields of film and drama. He said a memorandum of understanding has already been signed between the Associated Press of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). Additionally, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and Iran's Audio Visual Media Regula-

tory Authority (SATRA) and the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications,

Pakistan Television and Iran's audiovisual and cinema sector, had been working on the MoUs to promote bilateral cooperation, he added. They agreed to expedite the process of agreement between Pakistan Television Corporation and Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

Mortaza Solangi said several such agreements were under discussion to enhance cooperation between television, films, cinema, literary and linguistic institutions with Iran. "These agreements will help to present our culture and traditions in true light", he added. The Minister also informed the Iranian Ambassador about the steps regarding the upcoming elections in Pakistan. The primary mandate

of the caretaker government, he added, was to assist in the electoral process. Conducting fair, transparent and impartial elections was the priority of the government which was providing all possible facilities to the Election Commission of Pakistan in this regard. The Iranian ambassador appreciated the caretaker government's resolve to hold fair, transparent and impartial elections in Pakistan. Discussion regarding Iran Expo 2024 was also held in the meeting. Iran Expo 2024 is an important opportunity to promote trade relations between the two countries as Pakistan was determined to work with Iran to promote mutual economic relations. Iran Expo 2024 will provide a dynamic platform for businesses from both countries, the Iranian ambassador said.

FO regrets 'interference' by foreign missions commenting over Baloch protests

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Thursday regretted the "interference" by some foreign missions in Pakistan for commenting on the Baloch protesters, saying the country was fully capable of handling its internal matters. Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch at a weekly press briefing said the constitution of Pakistan guaranteed freedom of expression to its citizens and the laws were in place to deal with such cases internally.

The spokesperson's statement came in response to a question over the recent tweets by Norway's embassy and the European Union Ambassa-

dor in Pakistan who expressed "concerns" over the alleged mistreatment of the Baloch protesters in Islamabad. "The interference of foreign embassies in Pakistan is regrettable," she said, adding that the country was committed to protecting the rights of its people. She said the country's courts were independent and had taken decisions in this regard on several occasions. Asked if the coming year held any prospects of resumption of ties with India, the spokesperson said India needed to take steps to create an environment for a dialogue. She, however, categorically pointed out that the dialogue with India could only take place based on "equality, respect and



with discussion on Jammu and Kashmir as the priority issue". On relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), she said Pakistan and GCC were on the verge of concluding a Free Trade Agreement soon, the first of such kind by the GCC with any country.

She said negotiations in this regard were taking place, which would culminate in the signing of agreements "shortly". The FO spokesperson dismissed the report about India demanding Pakistan to hand over the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hafiz Saeed in connection with

the Pulwama incident. "This is based on speculative reporting," she said when asked if India had sent an official request to Pakistan to extradite Saeed. Mumtaz Baloch said Indian occupation forces in Jammu and Kashmir continued to put curbs on the residents and the Kashmiri leaders. She said Pakistan strongly condemned the decision of the Indian authorities to ban the Muslim League Jammu & Kashmir Masarat Alam faction for five years. "Putting restrictions on Kashmiri leaders is India's disrespect for international norms," she said, adding that India must lift the ban and release the incarcerated political prisoners.

The FO spokesperson gave

Mansoor Qadir addresses sexual harassment concerns in higher education department meeting

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Stringent measures will be implemented to combat incidents of sexual harassment in universities, as announced by Provincial Education Minister Punjab, Mansoor Qadir. Presiding over a meeting of the Higher Education Department at the Secretariat's S&GAD committee room, Minister Mansoor Qadir emphasized the organization of seminars and special lectures on this sensitive topic across all universities.

A team comprising academics will formulate comprehensive rules based on guidelines for universities, underlining the necessity to build new educational institutions

on a robust foundation. The aim is to empower the new generation to contribute to the development of a prosperous Pakistan aligned with modern requirements.

During the meeting, affairs of the University of Chakwal were reviewed, attended by Vice Chancellor Dr. Bilal Khan, Registrar Ishtiaq Ahmed, representatives from HEC, and officers from the Law and Finance Department. Minister Mansoor Qadir addressed several issues concerning universities, advocating against the recruitment of male employees in girls' hostels.

He stressed that incidents of sexual harassment would not be tolerated, with severe consequences for those responsible.