



**Ban on Kashmiri political party by India outright fascism: Attique**

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan ex-Premier AJK, President Muslim Conference has strongly condemned vicious ban by India on Kashmiri political party J&K Muslim League in IHK describing it as an outright fascist act and a latest example of specific Indian racism against Muslims in South Asia. (Details on Page 2)



**Pakistan announces Hajj 2024 draw results**

Pakistan's Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed has announced balloting for the upcoming Hajj. According to detail, 69, 438 applications were received under the Regular Hajj Scheme and 63,805 of them remained successful in the balloting. He said that our endeavors to reduce the cost of Hajj package also brought results and we have succeeded in reducing Rs 100,000 from the total expense.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Green Pakistan initiative**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar participates in the National Farmer's Convention as Chief Guest on Friday. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir is also present at the occasion.



Photo: PID

**Agriculture holds immense importance for socio-economic development: PM**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said that agriculture held immense importance for socio-economic development of the country at the grassroots level. The prime minister, addressing the National Convention as the chief guest, appreciated the collaborative work of ministries and departments

for achieving various milestones under the umbrella of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and stressed the need to expedite various initiatives.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir was the Guest of Honour at the occasion.

The event was attended by federal ministers, agricultural experts and senior government officials.

**Army chief vows to strengthen country's agricultural backbone**

**Spokesman Report**

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on Friday expressed the military's commitment to fortify the nation and uplift the country's agricultural backbone.

In his address to the National Farmers Convention, the army chief asserted that agriculture and animal husbandry were professions akin to prophethood, and pledged to crack down on all forms of mafia collaborat-

ing to exploit the nation.

Munir reminisced about Pakistan's rapid progress in the 1960s, acknowledging the country as an Asian trailblazer. However, he lamented the deviation from Quaid-e-Azam's three golden principles of faith, unity and discipline, leading to a decline.

The army chief stated that the Green Pakistan Initiative aimed to prioritise the agriculture sector, allocating a significant portion to the provinces while

reserving the rest for farmers and agricultural research.

Emphasising the virtues — discipline, resilience, growth, and patience — required in these professions, the army chief highlighted the unblemished rewards awaiting those who persevered.

He clarified the military's role in the Green Pakistan Initiative as serving the public and farmers. "Plans include organising agricultural expos across all districts, ensuring farmers have access to various agricul-

tural facilities like easy loans, efficient cold storage and climate-resistant seeds," he added.

He stressed the certainty of providing genetically engineered livestock.

General Munir promised collaborative efforts to suppress mafias, fostering an environment on social media devoid of agitation, despair and chaos, warning against misinformation eroding the state's integrity.

Refuting negative narratives about Pakistan, Munir proud-

ly listed the nation's abundant resources like glaciers, rivers, mountains, fertile lands yielding the finest rice, citrus fruits and treasures like granite, gold and copper.

Throughout the convention, the farmers participating in the event repeatedly chanted slogans of "Long Live Pakistan" and "Long Live the army," resonating with General Munir's commitment to fortify the nation and uplift the country's agricultural backbone.

**JUI-F wanted popular movement against PTI govt: Fazl**

**Bureau Report**

PESHAWAR: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur

Rehman on Friday asserted that his party was against the removal of former prime minister Imran Khan through 'no-confidence motion', noting that he wanted popular movement against the then PTI government.

Talking to journalists, the JUI-F chief castigated the then PTI government for 'destroying' country's economy, morals and foreign relations, saying that the institutions came into action after the political party started weakening the country's defensive position.

**Conspirators want to snatch PTI's electoral symbol, alleges Gohar**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Friday alleged that conspirators wanted to snatch the party's electoral symbol of "bat" and prevent it from participating in the Feb 8 general elections.

During a press conference, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan asserted that PTI's electoral symbol symbolised the expectations of the Pakistani nation and was not merely the symbol of his political group.

On Dec 26, the Peshawar High Court, in a major relief for the PTI, suspended an order of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) that annulled PTI's intra-party elections and revoked its electoral symbol "bat".

The high court instructed the electoral watchdog to publish the certificate of PTI's intra-party polls on its official website "keeping in view the urgency, that a political party has been denuded of its symbol, meaning hereby that aspirants from the



general public who were willing to vote for the petitioners' party were divested of their right to vote as per their choice."

The PTI chief contended that according to the Supreme Court, snatching the electoral symbol [of a political group] was equivalent to dissolving the party itself and that this right only lied with the apex court under Article 17 of the constitution.

The Peshawar High Court's verdict drew criticism from PTI's opponents, including PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

In response to their criticism, Gohar said, "These political leaders have been trying to take [our electo-

ral symbol] 'bat' away from us. They know there will be no gains for them on Feb 8 if free, fair and transparent elections are held. They will all lose their seats."

The PTI chief accused Shehbaz Sharif and Fazlur Rehman of attacking the judiciary.

He also affirmed that he was a representative of the PTI founder who, according to him, would always remain their leader regardless of his whereabouts.

Gohar shared that PTI's election candidates had filed the highest number of nomination papers for the upcoming general elections, and questioned if the electoral symbol was withdrawn, would these election candidates vie as independent candidates.

"And if such a situation arises," he went on to question, "Who will be responsible for the horse-trading?"

Gohar emphasised that derailing the upcoming elections would cause a massive loss to the country.

**Foreign ministry granted permission to appoint envoys**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has granted permission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to appoint ambassadors, citing sources.

The foreign ministry has been granted permission by the election commission to appoint ambassadors, said sources, adding that the ECP sent a letter to the foreign secretary.

The letter stated that the appointment of ambassadors was a routine matter and in interest of the national security. Prior to the development, the ECP raised objections to the appointment of envoys after the issuance of the election schedule and stopped the foreign ministry from executing the planned appointments two days ago.

**Shehbaz conveys Nawaz Sharif's 'important' message to MQM-P**

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: In a much-anticipated meeting, the president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Shehbaz Sharif, conveyed the 'important' message of Nawaz Sharif to the Mutahida Quami Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) leadership in Karachi.

According to the details, the PML-N president, Shehbaz Sharif, along with other party leaders reached the Markaz of MQM-P in Bahadurabad, Karachi.

The MQM-P leadership including Khalid Maqbool, Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal, Aminul Haque, and others welcomed the PML-N leaders in Karachi.

The meeting was attended by prominent leaders of both political

parties including Mustafa Kamal, Dr. Farooq Sattar, Aminul Haque, Nasreen Jalil, Javed Hanif, Anees Qaim Khani, and other provincial committee members.

Sources claimed that the former PM will also hold a separate meeting with the Convenor, Deputy Conveners, and Senior Deputy Conveners later after this meeting.



**Attributable statement**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: In response to media queries regarding India's request to extradite Hafiz Saeed, Spokesperson Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said "Pakistan

has received a request from the Indian authorities, seeking extradition of Hafiz Saeed in a so-called money laundering case.

It is pertinent to note that no bilateral extradition treaty exists between Pakistan and India."

**Does caretaker govt want to derail elections, questions IHC**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Castigating the caretaker govt for running the state affairs appallingly, Islamabad High Court's Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked on Friday that does it want to derail the elections?

Justice Aurangzeb gave these remarks while hearing a petition by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and his legal team seeking court order for a meeting with party founder for consultation on election strategy.

The justice remarked that the caretaker government is running the system terribly.

Justice Aurangzeb ordered that a meeting between the PTI founder and chairman be arranged under the supervision of the superintendent of Adia-

la Jail.

The additional attorney general and the advocate general objected to the admissibility of the application. Justice Aurangzeb expressed indignation and said that "the additional note from the Supreme Court was not enough for you? Do you want me to write a note against you after the Supreme Court?"

The judge observed that consultation for elections is a fundamental right. The caretaker government should conduct the electoral process without prejudice.

But, by opposing to grant permission for consultation between the former and current chairman of PTI raises questions about the impartiality of the caretaker government, Justice Aurangzeb remarked.



# Ban on Kashmiri political party by India outright fascism: Attique

Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan ex-Premier AJK, President Muslim Conference has strongly condemned vicious ban by India on Kashmiri political party J&K Muslim League in IHK describing it as an outright fascist act and a latest example of specific Indian racism against Muslims in South Asia. Reacting on Indian government's Tuesday ban on J&K Muslim League in occupied Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan pointed out that under UN Kashmir resolutions no part of J&K state is Indian territory. Indian presence in occupied Kashmir is via her



one million occupying armed force-

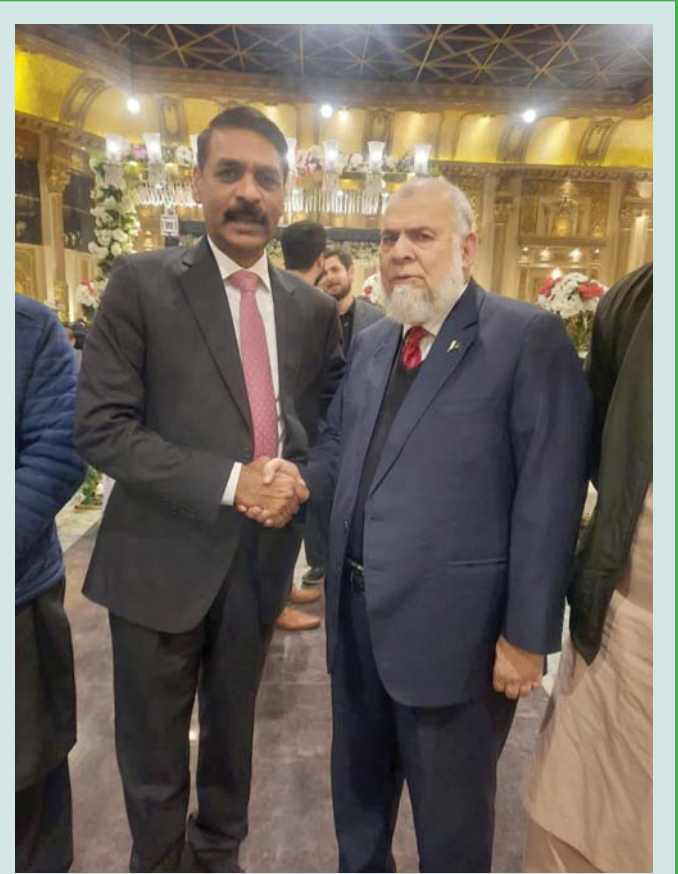
besides other half a million informal forces which it usually names as security forces. The ban, he said, is clear violation of UN Kashmir resolutions and urged Pakistan government to raise the issue in the UN Security Council before whom Kashmir dispute is in debates.

"Ban on political dissent is outright fascism being practiced in India in the garb of so-called democracy. Worst form of intolerance towards socio-religious minorities is being governmentally practiced within India being watched daily on screen media being watched by whole world", he charged.

In the ban notification Indian government said that J&K Muslim

League wanted freedom of J&K from India. Therefore the ban was imposed which is condemned by the Kashmiris across the world. Veteran Kashmir leader Mr Massarrat Alam Bhat imprisoned in Jammu jail is the president of the occupied Kashmir Muslim League. Actually it was in 1946 that a Kashmiri academician Prof. M. A. Aziz had formed Muslim League in Srinagar; later he migrated to Azad Kashmir and is buried in Abbottabad.

Sardar Attique Khan appealed to the UN Secretary General Mr Antonio Guterres to open up an urgent debate on worsening human rights situation in India-occupied Kashmir. Kashmir dispute is UN liability, he reminded.



Nasim Ahmed Usmani, Chairman PQYC and Senior Advisor J7 Group is shaking hands with Lieutenant General Asif Ghaffoor, President of the National Defense University, Islamabad.

## Gas Loadshedding

LAHORE: A worker is busy in cutting the woods at woods stall to meet the customers demand after gas loadshedding during the coldest weather of winters in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Faisal Kundi announces support of ongoing sit-in at Angoor Ada & Toi Khullah in SWL

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Pakistan People's Party Central Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi along with South Waziristan Lower PK 110 Candidate and General Secretary Imran Mukhlis Wazir said in a press conference on Friday, that the protest sit-in regarding their demands is going on in two tehsils of Birmal and Tehsil Toi Khullah of South Waziristan Lower District.



They said, we support his legitimate demands and higher authorities solve the concern demands, and to take notice of the legitimate demands of the

provided, the constitution of Pakistan mentions the basic protection of every citizen, they should be provided basic facilities of life.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that one crore people have

benefited from the Benazir Income Support Program, in the first installment, 7000 was given, now we have increased it to 8500.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that Pakistan People's Party has always spoken for the improvement of the former FATA (merged districts) in the past.

He has talked about the rights of former FATA in every forum, if the central government becomes the government of Pakistan People's Party, so, God willing, the problems of the entire country, especially the merged districts, will be solved.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Bena-

zir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari have always sacrificed for the country.

He said that Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has to take this country forward and old politicians were the past of Pakistan and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is also the future of Pakistan.

He said, If you want to think for the betterment of the area, make a commitment to seal the arrow on February 8.

International businessman, political and social leader and long time worker of Pakistan People's Party Abdul Rasheed Wazir were also present on this occasion.

## PDM government created a storm of inflation throughout the country during 16 months

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Political leader Dr. Rubina Akhtar nomination papers have been accepted from NA-149 constituency of Multan, on this occasion, Dr. Rubina Akhtar said that if the people did not elect him, then they are only solving people's problems through constituencies. doctor Mrs. Rubina Akhtar added that the PDM government created a storm of inflation throughout the country during 16 months due to which the poor and middle class The class was forced to pay inflation. Food and utility bills broke people's backs. Petrol, electricity Smart statement on needle gas prices. The PDM government forced the poor and poor to commit suicide due to inflation and unemployment. Dr. Rubina Akhtar said that the PDM government mortgaged Pakistan and the people of Pakistan by taking loans from the IMF. Dr. Rubina appeals to the people of NA-149 Constituency that they refuse to vote for the wealth of the country in the upcoming general election. Dr. Rubina Akhtar said that A149 is not only going to his place but he is getting higher education and also the team is getting success in his area. 149 people expressed their happiness and congratulated them on the acceptance of their papers.



## A three-day free medical camp organized by Amman Organization



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: A three-day free medical camp organized at Al-Najaf Hospital under the auspices of Aman Welfare Organization, which was inaugurated by Chief Guest Syed Fayyaz Hussain Shah, Syed Abdul Razzaq Shah and Chief Executive Officer Syed Shahbaz Hussain. On this occasion, Dr. Sana Ali, Dr. Huma Batool Khan, Dr. Umair were also present who treated the patients On this occasion, Syed Shahbaz Hussain said that in the camp set up by Aman Organization, various tests were conducted and free medicines were given for the treatment of poor people and the health of mothers and children. He said that in the future, free eye check-ups under the supervision of specialist doctors will be provided at Al-Najaf Hospital And free operations of white pearls will be done. Our aim is to serve humanity, which we will continue to do.

## Commentator Mohammad Idrees passed away at the age of 88

Abdul Majid

He was brother Idris to all of us. With his death, the golden era of Urdu cricket commentary in Pakistan also came to an end. An interesting incident of his is that Idris Sahib was doing the commentary. Manzoor Elahi meanwhile hit a powerful six. Idrees had a habit of getting up from his chair whenever a four or six was struck. As he possessed a red-white complexion, his face would turn red. On that occasion too, he became excited and said that this is God's permission, that he belongs to Sahiwal and that his four chakkas have the strength of the milk of Sahiwal's cows and buffaloes. Hearing this sentence of Idrees, everyone in the commentary box burst into laughter. When our Sri Lankan colleagues saw our condition, they started asking us what happened that you couldn't stop laughing. When he was told about this phrase of Idrees, he too could not be surprised. During the period in which Muhammad Idrees commented, Umar

Qureshi, Chishti Mujahid and Iftikhar Ahmed had a strong hold in the English circle, while there were authentic commentators like Munir Hussain and Hassan Jalil in Urdu commentary, but despite this, Muhammad Idrees used an unconventional and popular style. Because of his distinct identity, Mohammad Idrees freed Urdu commentary from the traditional constraints and gave it such a unique style that whenever he was commenting, the listeners did not imagine leaving the radio set because that was the best way to entertain them and that's what they thought. That they are sitting in the stadium watching all this. Idrees grasp of words was amazing. He would say such a thing on seeing the palace that the listener could not live without being amused by it. Something similar happened in the Faisalabad match between Pakistan and West Indies when Wasim Akram and Saleem Yousuf opened their arms in front of the West Indian bowlers and started hitting boundaries, captain Vivian Richards removed his fielders from slip

and gully positions and Sent them to the boundary, on which Idrees voice echoed on the air. He said it so loudly that his voice was heard far and wide, even beyond the mike. Similarly, when Saeed Anwar scored a century in his typical aggressive style in the tour of Australia, Idrees said that the Australians must be wondering what Imran Khan has brought with him. When cricket commentator Tariq Saeed played his first Test as a commentator in Multan in 2003, Idrees was present in the commentary box with him. Incidentally, when Idrees last commented in the Test match against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi in 2018, Tariq Saeed was also there with him. Tariq Saeed says that Idrees always encouraged his juniors and guided them step by step. It is very difficult to decide whether those commentators were giants or human beings. Tariq Saeed, Idrees narrates an incident. It was Inzamam-ul-Haq's last Test match. I was going to Gaddafi Stadium for commentary with Idrees when we met a person outside who said that he had only come to see Inzamam-ul-Haq batting. At that time,



Inzamam-ul-Haq's form was very bad. Idrees, Azrah Tafnan said to this person, go quickly and see Inzamam-ul-Haq batting in the net, it will be difficult to watch his batting later. Idrees lived a rich life. He was initially associated with Radio Pakistan Peshawar then transferred to Karachi and turned outside broadcast producer to cricket commentator but it all did not come to pass but he had to struggle for it. In 1978, in the Karachi Test between Pakistan and England, he commented for the first time on a Test match. He himself used

to say that Urdu commentary on radio was not easy in those days because the bureaucracy only wanted to listen to English commentary. However, as a result of Munir Hussain's efforts, Urdu commentary also gained importance. It is the result of this that in the coming years Arbab Akhtar also understood the importance of Urdu commentary. Pakistan's historic win in the 1987 Bangalore Test was also narrated by Idrees Sahib. His background is also interesting. The commentary of the last few overs was to be done by Rehan Nawaz in English, but the producer Salman-ul-Mozam, seeing the interesting situation of the match, asked Idrees Sahib to continue the commentary in Urdu.

Idrees Sahib narrated countless matches in his unique style, but he never forgets the Faisalabad Test match between Pakistan and England, in which he narrated the controversy between Shakur Rana and Mike Gatting. Idrees Sahib Hamdard was also a distributor in Faisalabad, Pakistan. He had a long relationship with Hakeem Muhammad Saeed. Hakeem Muhammad Saeed also

loved him very much. Interestingly, he knew Hakimi medicines, whenever anyone in the commentary box complained of cold and cough, he would immediately order effervescent and other medicines through his driver and give them to them. Whenever there was a cricket match in Faisalabad, his house used to be the center of invitation for domestic and foreign commentators and other friends. Foreign guests were always recognized for their hospitality. In recognition of his services, the media center of Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium was named after him. Personally, I had the opportunity of several foreign tours with Idrees Sahib. The first tour of my journalistic career was to Sri Lanka, where on the love and request of Adees Sahib, I also scored the Singer Trophy matches. Apart from this, in 1987, I was a scorer with him in the ODI against England in Karachi. Both times I realized that scoring with him was not easy as he was always active not only himself but also kept the scorer on his toes. In the last moments of the game, his enthusiasm would increase

and he would say that now it is not overs but balls are counted and now you keep telling me the runs needed to win by balls. Although he was unable to do cricket commentary due to declining health, his passion for the game did not diminish and he used to participate in cricket programs on the radio. In his last days, he was confined to his room. Went but used to watch cricket matches on TV. Cricket was everything to him. Whenever there was a cricket match in Faisalabad, his house used to be the center of invitation for domestic and foreign commentators and other friends. Foreign guests were always recognized for their hospitality. In recognition of his services, the media center of Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium was named after him. Although he was unable to do cricket commentary due to declining health, his passion for the game did not diminish and he used to participate in cricket programs on the radio. In his last days, he was confined to his room. Went but used to watch cricket matches on TV. Cricket was everything to him.



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:42 am
Zohr	12:09 pm
Asr	3:30 pm
Maghrib	5:08 pm
Isha	6:37 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	926170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09

**Shura Hamdard Meeting**

# Hypocrisy of powerful nations is now evident to all: Speakers

**PPA**  
KARACHI: Global politics is still influenced by religious, ethnic, and linguistic biases. The international silence on the Gaza atrocities is a recent example of it. The duplicity of the Western countries has dampened two and a half centuries of human consciousness development, human rights, and intellectual progress. The hypocrisy of powerful nations is now evident to all. They have dual standards of humanity when it comes to Israeli terrorism against Palestinians. Dr. Khalida Ghous expressed these views during the monthly Shura Hamdard meeting titled "Respect For Global Peace", held yesterday at Hamdard Corporate Head Office, chaired by Speaker Shura Hamdard General (R) Moinuddin Haider. Former diplomat Hassan Habib was invited as the guest speaker. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, also attended the meeting.

Dr. Khalida Ghous further said: "Various factors, such as identity and socio-economic conditions, fuel motivations behind global conflicts. There is a growing influence of right-wing politics worldwide, observed in countries, particularly in India and Israel, where Muslims and Islam are



often targeted. These right-wing governments, in an attempt to divert attention from their shortcomings, engage in targeting Islam and Muslims for political gain. Consequently, there is a global increase in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments.

Speaker Moinuddin Haider said that China had posed a challenge to American, and by extension, Western dominance. The rapid advancement of human technology is primarily attributed to the defense sector. Many technologies initially designed for defense purposes have subsequently found application in commercial contexts.

Guest speaker Hassan Habib said that claims of upholding humanity and international human rights are often mere rhetoric employed by powerful nations to serve their own interests. Those who advocate for humanity in the Russia/Ukraine conflict tend to remain silent on Israel's crimes against humanity, focusing instead on criticizing Hamas and justifying Israel's barbaric atrocities. Regrettably, the Muslim world faces internal challenges such as corruption, nepotism, and other social issues. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) exhibited disappointing behaviour, as the meeting on Israeli aggression in Gaza concluded without

reaching a decision.

Dr. Rizwana Ansari said that in today's world, only economically prosperous and developed countries can effectively pursue a policy of diplomatic freedom. Development is considered a form of security, and nations that do not progress find themselves marginalized in global conflicts and political dynamics. Muslim societies, as a collective, have faced continuous degradation and intellectual stagnation. Despite the youth in Pakistan forming a significant portion of the population, their potential contribution to global development is hindered by the lack of education and training aligned with contemporary needs.

Colonel (ret'd) Mukhtar Ahmed Butt said that significant and powerful nations bear direct responsibility for the unsettling state of international peace and order. Their approach is evident: initiate destruction through attacks, followed by making the targeted country a colony by offering contracts and loans. Libya, Iraq and Lebanon, once relatively prosperous, have now fallen into misery. The primary instigator of wars between nations is the arms manufacturing industry.

Engr. Anwar-ul-Haq said that the strength of a state is rooted in its political system. A fundamental principle dictates that a state excels and becomes a global leader when it prepares its workforce to pursue national interests and provides justice to its subjects. This involves establishing a robust system and ensuring its execution by devising comprehensive policies aligned with short and long-term national goals. Maintaining a balance of power is essential for countries to safeguard themselves against conflicts, especially foreign aggression against powerful countries.

Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Usman Damohi, Prof. Dr. Hakim Abdul Hanna, Dr. Amjad Jafri and others also spoke on the occasion.

**CAA returns lost bag to passenger at IIA**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The lost bag containing valuables worth Rs 4 million was returned to a passenger at Islamabad International Airport (IIA).

According to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), a lady passenger, after arriving in Islamabad from Karachi, forgot her bag in a baby changing room in domestic arrivals located at level II of the terminal building.

Sobia Asif, a female sanitary attendant visited the baby changing room and found the unattended bag.

Following the SOPs, she took the bag into her custody and handed it over to Tabassum Ara, the Terminal Manager for Arrivals, who deposited the bag in the Civil Aviation Authority's Lost and Found office.

The bag contained valuables including UK pounds 110, Pakistani rupees 22,830, 10 tolas of gold, two mobile phones and one lady's Swiss watch.

The total estimated worth of the items was calculated to be approximately four million Pakistani rupees.

Later, the family paid a visit to the airport and contacted the CAA Lost and Found section inquiring about their lost bag.

The bag, after necessary verification, was returned to the lady passenger in the presence of the Chief Operating Officer/ Airport Manager.

She thanked the CAA management for their efforts and appreciated the honesty of the lady worker who initially found the bag.

Sanitary attendant Sobia Asif was awarded an appreciation certificate and Rs 25,000 in recognition of her honesty and professionalism at the workplace.

**Kashmir Conference**

ISLAMABAD: SPAM to Prime Minister on Human Rights Mishal Hussein Mullick addressing during "International Kashmir Conference" at Kashmir House in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

## Pakistan missed the 2023 global deadline to regulate trans-fats across all foods

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: As 2023 comes to a close, it is apparent that Pakistan has missed the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2023 deadline to eliminate industrially-produced Trans Fats (iTFAs) from all food sources. Despite efforts by the Nutrition Wing of MoNHSR&C earlier this year to regulate iTFAs in specific food sources such as banaspati ghee, bakery wares, and bakery shortenings with the help of Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), public health experts stress that this progress, while a positive step forward, remains insufficient. "Many commonly consumed sources of trans fats such as packed snacks, dairy products, street foods, and several types of ultra-processed foods remain outside the realm of iTFA standards," stated Munawar Hussain, Country Coordinator Pakistan at the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAi) as part of a press statement issued by the TRANSFORM Pakistan Campaign. "It is

imperative that Pakistan does not allow the matter of regulating iTFAs to linger any further, and all efforts should be made to ensure that trans-fats across all dietary sources are regulated in accordance with WHO guidelines at earliest."



Dr. Khawaja Masood Ahmed, National Coordinator Nutrition and NFA at the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) commented on ongoing efforts, stating, "The Ministry of Health is closely collaborating with civil society organizations, and providing technical support to

the PSQCA to regulate Trans-fats to 2% in all food sources and safeguard the health of the Pakistani nation.

Afshar Iqbal, Director of Media and Communications at PYCA, highlighted their efforts, stating, "Through the TRANSFORM Pakistan Campaign, we aim not only to raise mass awareness about the ill effects of iTFAs in our dietary sources but also to work with all relevant stakeholders to expedite the regulation of trans fats across all food items in Pakistan.

Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director of CPDI, shed light on the civil society's role in regulating iTFAs, saying, "Civil society is in close communication with the Ministry of Health, PSQCA, and provincial food regulatory bodies. Dr. Saba Amjad, CEO Heartfile, raised a concern that failure to take decisive action at earliest could lead to further increase in non-communicable diseases, particularly heart diseases and diabetes in Pakistan." The urgency to address this issue is paramount for the well-being of the nation."

**Development of strategy to reduce on non-communicable diseases in Pakistan: President PANAHA**



**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) has formed a think tank comprising health professional, civil society, and policy makers from across Pakistan to reduce NCD mortality and morbidity. An effective strategy can be formulated by taking guidance from the tried and tested methods of the world. The third meeting of this think tank was held today at a local hotel in Islamabad under the chairmanship of President Panah Major General (ret'd) Masoodur Rahman Kiani. The participants in the think tank included health and economic professional, Civil Society, Media and concerned Ministries. Consideration was given to how morbidity and mortality could be reduced by developing a comprehensive strategy to reduce non-communicable diseases in Pakistan.

General Masoodur Rahman Kiani said that the recent increase in heart and related diseases is alarming. In this case, the responsibility of PANAHA has increases to follow the world's proven and effective methods to protect people from these diseases. PANAHA has formed this think tank comprising experts from all fields across Pakistan to tackle this challenge of growing diseases. He told the think tank members that you are experts in your field and with your suggestions we will be able to work more effectively to eradicate these diseases.

Members suggested that our focus should be prevention rather than cure. This requires more effective policy advocacy as well as information on how to prevent these diseases among the public so that the factors that lead to these diseases can be removed from the reach of the public. It was decided to form more sub groups of this think tank who would formulate their own proposals and in the next meeting they would put their proposals before the members and after deliberation, they would be approved

**AKU organizes theatre shows to educate children on the dangers tobacco**



**PNP**

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University's Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) organized 12 theatre shows for school-going children at the Arts Council of Pakistan, where over 4000 students between the ages of 11 to 15 from The Citizen Foundation, Zindagi Trust, and numerous private and government schools eagerly attended the play, accompanied by their teachers and staff.

The act, brought together by the CHS Faculty at AKU, was written and directed by Farhan Alam, faculty at the National Academy of Performing Arts. The performances were a riveting success as the young audiences learned how deeply tobacco consumption could lead to addiction, which could cause severe health problems and prevent them from improving their lives in the future.

The activity was supported by a grant from NIHR, UK, titled "Addressing Smokeless Tobacco Use & Building Research Capacity in South Asia-ASTRA," led by Professor Javaid Ahmed Khan, in the Department of Medicine, and supported by Dr Romaina Iqbal, Associate Professor and Section Head of NCD in the Department of Community Health Sciences.

The storyline revolved around three courageous children who valiantly took a stand against deceptive sellers of tobacco products. The mission of the protagonists was to eradicate such harmful practices from their families and overall society.

## Gomal varsity released newsletter on one-year tenure of VC

**Adam Khan Wazir**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: On Friday, the Public Relations (PR) Department of Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, released a special edition of the newsletter on the one-year tenure of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Shakib Ullah.

The members of the Editorial Board, Director of Tank Campus Dr. Ehsan Ullah Danish, Regional In-charge of Press Information Department (PID) and former Publicity Officer of Gomal University Muhammad Fazal Ur Rehman and PRO Raja Alam Zeb handed over the copy of the one year edition to the Vice-Chancellor and duly issued it.

In this regard, a special ceremony was also organized in the University Senate Hall, in which the heads of administrative and teaching depart-



ments of the university participated.

Dr. Ehsan Ullah Danish, senior member of the editorial board, director of Tank Campus, said that Gomal University Dera has done exemplary work in one year due to team work

under the patronage of the Vice Chancellor in the field of educational administration and co-curricular activities, which has been included in the newsletter but several other such activities will be included in the next publication

and made part of the record.

He also thanked Mohammad Fazal Ur Rehman, in-charge of Press Information Department, Dera Region, for preparing the Gomal University newsletter and his cooperation was declared as the result of his selfless love for mother science.

He said that the zeal with which University PRO Raja Alamzeb prepared this edition in a short time is commendable, media section of Gomal University is playing an excellent role which is appreciated by the whole university

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shakib Ullah congratulated the members of the editorial team of the newsletter for their successful effort and secretary to Vice Chancellor Muhammad Abid Khan was also with him on this occasion.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**  
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**  
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**  
 (mszk786@gmail.com)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.  
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.  
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.  
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.  
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**  
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

# Army Chief Vs Mafias - III

The education system faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a high dropout rate, requiring reforms to ensure quality education. The healthcare system also faces challenges, including insufficient facilities and a shortage of healthcare professionals, highlighting the need to strengthen healthcare infrastructure for improved public health outcomes.

Many countries worldwide grapple with the illicit and coercive influence exerted by powerful criminal organizations. The term "mafia" evokes notions of secrecy, power, and organized criminal endeavors, and these clandestine groups have played a role in global dynamics for centuries, shaping societies, economies, and political landscapes. While commonly associated with Italian-American criminal syndicates like the Sicilian Mafia, various forms of mafias exist across the globe. The origins of the term "mafia" trace back to 19th-century Sicily, where secret societies emerged to resist foreign dominance and safeguard local communities. Over time, these groups morphed into criminal organizations participating in illegal activities such as extortion, racketeering, and smuggling. The concept of the mafia transcended Italy, finding fertile ground in different parts of the world.

Mafias engage in a diverse range of illegal activities to generate revenue and assert control over their territories. Extortion, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and human trafficking are prevalent enterprises. These criminal organizations extend their reach across borders, utilizing international networks to facilitate the flow of illegal goods and

funds. The economic repercussions of mafias are significant, impacting both local and global economies. They often infiltrate legitimate businesses, exploiting them for money laundering or as fronts for their illicit operations. This distortion of competition can impede economic development and adversely affect honest entrepreneurs. Mafias wield influence not only through economic means but also through social and cultural channels. They infiltrate communities, securing support through intimidation and bribery, and may become entangled in local politics. The existence of a "code of silence" within these communities often complicates law enforcement efforts to gather information and dismantle these criminal organizations.

Governments and law enforcement agencies globally continuously strive to combat organized crime and dismantle mafia structures. International cooperation has become imperative, with agencies sharing intelligence and coordinating operations to disrupt global criminal networks. Legal instruments, such as the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act in the United States, have proven instrumental in targeting and prosecuting mafia leaders.

Within the shadowy realms of organized crime, certain criminal syndicates stand out as formidable entities, wielding immense power, influence, and control. These powerful mafias operate on a global scale, engaging in a spectrum of illicit activities that transcend borders.

The Italian Mafia, commonly known

as Cosa Nostra, persists as one of the most legendary and enduring criminal organizations in history. Originating in Sicily, Italy, Cosa Nostra has infiltrated various sectors, extending from legitimate businesses to politics. Renowned for its strict hierarchical structure, the Sicilian Mafia has withstood decades of law enforcement crackdowns, adapting and evolving to maintain its dominance. On the global stage, the Russian Mafia, also called the "Bratva," has ascended to prominence, leveraging connections with the political elite and exploiting the power vacuum following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Engaged in activities ranging from drug trafficking to cyber-

crime, the Russian Mafia has become a formidable force with influence beyond the borders of the former Soviet states.

In Japan, the Yakuza boasts a lengthy and storied history dating back centuries. Comprising various criminal organizations deeply ingrained in Japanese society, the Yakuza adheres to its own codes of conduct and rituals. Involvement in activities such as racketeering, human trafficking, and money laundering has presented a persistent challenge to law enforcement in Japan. While not traditionally labeled as mafias, Mexican drug cartels exhibit characteristics akin to organized crime syndicates. Groups like the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel have gained prominence, controlling vast territories and engaging in drug trafficking, extortion, and violence. The influence of Mexican drug cartels extends beyond national

borders, impacting the United States and neighboring countries.

The Chinese Triads, dating back to the 17th century, are secret societies that have transformed into powerful criminal organizations. Operating globally, the Triads are involved in drug trafficking, human smuggling, and racketeering. Their intricate organizational structure and international reach make them significant players in the world of organized crime. Colombian drug cartels, such as the infamous Medellín and Cali cartels, gained notoriety in the late 20th century for their involvement in the cocaine trade. Despite the dismantling of major cartels, splinter groups and new organizations continue to operate, contributing to ongoing challenges faced by law enforcement in the region.

Turning our attention back to Pakistan, the country faces the persistent challenge of organized crime, with various criminal syndicates operating within its borders. These powerful mafias, deeply entrenched in the social and economic fabric of the nation, pose a complex threat to law enforcement and society at large.

One of the most prominent and powerful mafias in Pakistan is the land mafia, particularly active in the sprawling metropolis of Karachi. With a rapidly growing population and limited urban planning, the demand for land has surged. Exploiting loopholes in property laws and colluding with corrupt officials, the land mafia engages in illegal land grabbing, encroachments, and fraudulent property transactions. This criminal enterprise displaces lawful property owners and fuels a cycle of corruption and violence.

*To be continued*

## Humanitarian crisis worsens in Gaza

Israel's expanding ground offensive across the Gaza Strip is sending new waves of displaced people – at least 100,000 so far – into Rafah, the enclave's overcrowded southern city, where locals are already underfed and desperate under continuing bombardment. UN humanitarian officials said Friday, "A traumatized and exhausted population" is being "cramped into a smaller and smaller sliver of land," UN emergency relief chief Martin Griffiths warned on social platform X on Friday.

Efforts to deliver medical supplies and fuel to the hospitals still functioning in and around Rafah have been increasingly disrupted by hungry people stopping convoys in search of food, the World Health Organization said this week. Twelve weeks into Israel's campaign against Palestinians, more than 21,000 people in Gaza have been killed and there is little relief in sight. According to media reports, talks in Cairo, and an Egyptian ceasefire proposal, appear to be in early stages, and Hamas says it will not return Israeli hostages until the fighting stops. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, visiting Gaza this week, said the war "isn't close to finished". UN calls for urgent aid scale-up amid new mass exodus to Rafah UN humanitarian affairs coordination office OCHA cited reports from Gaza's health authorities that half of all the pregnant women seeking safety in shelters in the Strip suffer from thirst, malnutrition and a lack of health care, there is a lack of vaccinations for newborns and one in every two displaced children faces dehydration, malnutrition and disease. Some 1.9 million Gazans, or 85 per cent of the enclave's population, have been internally displaced since the start of Israel's retaliation following Hamas' attacks in southern Israel on October 7. According to OCHA, the latest wave of displacement was prompted by an intensification of hostilities in the southern town of Khan Younis and central Gaza's Deir al Balah, as well as evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military. Some 10 days ago Rafah was already estimated to be the most densely populated area in Gaza, exceeding 12,000 people per square kilometre, OCHA said, which is more than in New York City. Despite a UN Security Council resolution adopted last week calling for a scale-up in aid deliveries to the enclave, access to people in need has remained overwhelmingly insufficient. Only 76 trucks entered Gaza from Egypt through the Rafah crossing on Thursday, "well below the daily average of 500 truckloads (including fuel and private sector goods) that entered every working day prior to October 7", OCHA noted. "You think getting aid into Gaza is easy? Think again," the UN's Mr Griffiths wrote on X on Friday. He listed the impediments faced by humanitarians working to help people in the Strip, including "three layers of inspections before trucks can even enter", insufficient entry points, "constant bombardment" and damaged roads. "This is an impossible situation for the people of Gaza and for those trying to help them. The fighting must stop," he insisted. Last week UN chief Antonio Guterres said, "An effective aid operation in Gaza requires security; staff who can work in safety; logistical capacity; and the resumption of commercial activity." "These four elements do not exist," he concluded. Despite the challenges, humanitarians have continued doing their utmost to assist desperate Gazans.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



## Kazakhstan's Multivector Foreign Policy: End of Year Assessment

As we approach the end of 2023, Kazakhstan has much to show as the leading country in Central Asia's emergence – some might even say reemergence – onto the global stage.

While many policy analysts in the West might feel compelled to consider Central Asia's geostrategic importance in light of the nearly two-year conflict in Ukraine between Russia and the West, the region was destined to gain attention and importance due to a number of factors that have become clear over the past year.

The first factor is the continued emergence of a multipolar world in which new powers assert their national interests and extend their diplomatic influence to neighboring countries and regions; either alongside or, if necessary, in competition with the United States' longtime global position. For both Kazakhstan in particular and Central Asia in general, Washington never really gave the region the attention afforded to Europe, the Middle East, or East Asia. As a result, Kazakhstan has remained largely within Russia's foreign policy orbit. But despite continued cooperation between Moscow and Astana, China has become a larger trading partner in recent years, and has been a major sponsor in several large infrastructural projects connected with the Belt and Road Initiative. This includes work on modernizing Kazakhstan's road and rail network, energy production, and raw material extraction, all of which will transform the country into a central hub of transit and communication in an integrated Eurasian region.

The United States and the European Union have been frequently described as latecomers to the region in comparison with Russia and China. However, Italy is Kazakhstan's largest exporter, accounting for more than 16% of its overall exports. Trade ties with the larger European Union have accelerated in recent years,

and as a collective bloc, the EU is Kazakhstan's largest trade and investment partner. Particularly noteworthy was the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan this past November as part of a larger initiative in securing contracts in oil, gas, and uranium exports in light of the limited resources due to EU sanctions on Russia following the conflict in Ukraine. These aren't new endeavors, as the EU has enjoyed longstanding ties with Astana for years.

The second factor pointing to Kazakhstan's regional importance is its strategic multi-vector foreign policy, which is due in no small measure to its multifaceted economic relations. This policy signifies that Astana is continuing to build ties and enhance cooperation with all sides, including with its neighbors China and Russia, as well as with the European Union and the United States.

Kazakhstan has not supported Russia's involvement in Ukraine and has not recognized any of the territories Russia has annexed. At the same time, Kazakhstan remains a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and has applied for membership in BRICS, which is scheduled to add at least five new member states to its association on January 1, 2024. Ultimately, Kazakhstan has continued its cooperation with Russia, particularly in the economic and trade sphere while at the same time enhancing its relations with China and the West. Russia has never objected to Kazakhstan pursuing policies, whether economic, political, or diplomatic, that align with its national interests. Kazakhstan's longstanding ties with Russia, a significant ethnic Russian population, and a multilayered partnership across various regional organizations ensure that Russia remains a prime economic partner for Kazakhstan. At the same time, over the past year, Kazakhstan has significantly increased its cooperation with Europe and the United States, exemplified by many visits by Western officials to the Central Asian

nation. Another factor underscoring Kazakhstan's growing regional importance over the past year is its successful effort to dispel the long-held stereotype of being merely "Russia's backyard" – a term historically used to describe Central Asia as the southern peripheral territories of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. This term, often employed in the 1990s and 2000s, broadly painted the region as nothing more than a collection of autocratic regimes led by unchallengeable presidents-for-life. However, this characterization has become outdated, especially considering the recent political reforms in Kazakhstan aimed at further democratization.

The rising interest of the United States and the European Union in Central Asia is often optimistically interpreted, with every new economic deal, academic partnership, and establishment of English-language schools seen as a step towards reducing the region's dependence on Russia. However, Kazakhstan is demonstrating trends of modernization, development, and increased accessibility that depict it as an independent decision-maker, not merely as an actor within Russia's sphere of influence.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, adhering to a 'multivector foreign policy', does not perceive increased partnerships with the West as coming at the expense of relations with Russia or China. This approach illustrates Kazakhstan's nuanced and balanced diplomatic strategy, aimed at maintaining strong ties with all major powers while asserting its own national interests and identity.

With this backdrop, Kazakhstan concludes 2023 with a strong record of growing national confidence in its strategy of a multivector foreign policy. This approach is expected to continue yielding positive results in 2024, as the increasing multipolarity of global politics places the country and the wider Central Asian region in the spotlight of international economic and political importance.

The author is a University Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Rutgers University, USA.

## The Dark Years of Swat - I

Muhammad Zeshan Ali

Swat is known to be one of the most enchanting valleys of Pakistan. Its history dates back to around 2000 years ago. Initially, its name was Udhiana, later on it was changed to Suvastu. The modern State of Swat was established in 1917 by Miangul Abdul Wadood. In 1926 it was recognized by the British as a Princely state and Miangul Abdul Wadood as its first Wali or Ruler. In 1949, Wali handed over the reins of office to his son Miangul Abdul Haq Jehanzeb, the last ruler. Swat was merged into Pakistan in 1969. The total population of this idyllic land which is bedded with beautiful and stunning lakes, green lofty and towering mountains, and splashing and tumbling waterfalls, is approximately 26 lacs. They are known to be the most hospitable people in the region.

Gandhar art is one of the continuous traditions of its ancient civilization. This paradise on Earth attracts visitors and tourists from far and wide. In the first decade of the 21st century, in the name of religion, an attempt was made by a terrorist group named The Tehreek Taliban Pakistan, to terrorize the civilized, kind, hospitable, and enlightened people of Swat. But who were these people? Where did they come from? What was their agenda? and who named them the Taliban? What really surprised the inhabitants of Swat was the way they suddenly appeared and were provided with arms, ammunition, and resources to spread a reign of terror. Who financed, assisted, and helped them is a logical question to ponder upon, as geographically Swat does not share any international border from across which all such

assistance could be provided to the Taliban, such as in erstwhile FATA. With the emergence of the Taliban, a deep sense of fear also emerged in the inhabitants of Swat.

Whereas different sources in the media portrayed the whole scenario as if they have emerged out of the general public and enjoys full support of the locals. The facts on ground were totally opposite, the peaceful and brave people of Swat neither liked nor wanted these terrorists to disturb the peace of Swat, instead they wished to get rid of them by all possible means. Due to direct and open attacks on public servants in general and local police in particular, some of the policemen advertised in the newspaper that they had resigned from their service. Girls were almost banned from going to schools. The future of Swat was scared of wearing school uniforms because the Taliban would sprinkle acid on their faces or kill them. The young ladies had to face many hardships. But they loved their studies and rendered many sacrifices in the most horrific and dark days of Swat. Such cruelties forced the educated population to leave their homeland and live the lives of refugees outside swat. Taliban were misguided folks.

They used to loot houses, kill innocents for no reason, kidnap for ransom and punish for their personal grievances and then they viewed it as jihad. They were never seen working for improving the image of Islam or establishing an exemplary system of administration under the influence of Sharia law. Their commanders were the most corrupt of all and used to do all types of indecent things. They plundered houses and molested girls. In short, they were successful in establishing the law of the jungle, where might was always right.

*To be continued*



# Israeli war on Palestinian people—the reality of genocidal war in plain sight

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Day after day, after 84 days of genocidal war against our people, the reality of the occupation's goals in that war is revealed to those who want to understand the leaders of the world and countries, which are summed up in targeting Palestinian civilians and all of our people in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, whether Killing with the Israeli war machine or striking all components of the existence of the Palestinian people in their homeland, their steadfastness and survival, and pushing them to emigrate and leave in search of a safe place or a stable life for their children and successive generations, as is clear from the reports of the United Nations and its specialized organizations and international institutions of all kinds, legal, humanitarian and media, especially what they document.

Audio and video media outlets that the real goal of this destructive war and the policy of the ruling Israeli right is to empty the land of its indigenous citizens through all forms of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

This is explained by the escalation in the occupation's mass massacres, the demolition of homes over the heads of citizens without prior warning, and the storming and destruction of shelter schools, as happened.

Recently, at the UNRWA-affiliated Al-Bureij Girls Preparatory School and also at the Abu Helu School, the displaced men were arrested and taken to an unknown destination, depriving Palestinian civilians of their most basic needs until now, issuing more evacuation and displacement orders to citizens from the central Gaza Strip, and practicing the ugliest forms of humiliation and disgrace to dignity.

By the occupation soldiers to those who are arrested, including forcing them to take off their clothes, using weapons of enormous destruction that are not commensurate with the nature of the brutal attack, as the occupation army admitted, and as happened in Al-Maghazi camp, and the imposition of starvation and starvation on the lives of Gazans, including children, the sick, and the elderly.

Creating a suitable environment for the spread of epidemics and diseases in light of the highest population density in the world, as is the case in Khan Yunis and Rafah, and putting health centers and hospitals out of service.

This is in light of the escalation in the violations and crimes of the occupation forces and settler militias in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the beginning of copying the forms of genocide that they practice in Gaza and applying them to the West Bank, as is practically happening in Jenin and its camp, Nour Shams



camp, Balata, and all the areas that the occupation forces are storming.

It spreads extrajudicial killings, settler violence, and arbitrary detention in the West Bank, which is what the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has warned about regarding the deteriorating conditions

in the occupied West Bank.

Including what children are exposed to and the numbers of those killed, as Israeli violence against them reached unprecedented levels, and the year 2023 was the bloodiest for them, according to UNICEF, in light of the seizure and confiscation of the majority of the West

Bank area in favor of settlement and the deprivation of citizens from their relationship with their land and benefiting from it, which deepens the creeping gradual annexation and clearly shows new chapters of the apartheid system, all of which are factors planted by the occupying state to forcefully or voluntarily

expel the Palestinians and displace them outside the land of their homeland, in an attempt to solve Israel's strategic crisis, which is represented by the Palestinian people's adherence and survival in the land of their homeland, Meaning that the occupying state continues its illegal unilateral measures and commits crimes of genocide and resolves the future of the negotiated final solution issues unilaterally and with the force of occupation at the sight of the international community and the countries that claim to care for human rights and adhere to the two-state solution, in a crisis-ridden Israeli illusion of getting rid of millions of Palestinian residents.

Therefore, there will be no Palestinians left who deserve a state or the right to self-determination.

In the face of these fascist goals of the occupying state, the Ministry affirms that what is required is international courage in dealing with this truth and confronting it by taking a firm international decision to cease fire immediately, and all countries must realize before it is too late that all their pleas and good calls regarding the protection of civilians are not being listened to. As long as the shooting continues, it will not protect civilians, nor will it provide them with their basic humanitarian needs. Rather, it will provide more time so that Israel can achieve its goals by striking the Palestinian humanitarian presence on the territory of the State of Palestine.

## China, Arab countries hold special operations, counter-terrorism seminar: Spokesperson

### Spokesman Report

BELJING: The Chinese PLA Southern Theatre Command hosted the China-Arab states special operations and counter-terrorism seminar from December 26 to 30 in Guangzhou City of south China's Guangdong Province. Leaders of special operations and counter-terrorism departments and troop commanders from countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman attended the event," said Senior Colonel Wu Qian, spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense, at a regu-



lar press conference.

According to the spokesperson, the seminar is hosted under the theme of "focusing on special operations and counter-terrorism cooperation, building a China-Arab community with a shared future".

Delegates had an in-depth exchange of views on topics

including the new move in regional terrorism and joint response, the establishment, training and real combat of special operations and counter-terrorism forces, urban special operations and counter-terrorism operations, anti-piracy and coping with maritime terrorism, etc. "This event aims to deepen exchanges and cooperation between China and Arab countries in the field of special operations and counter-terrorism, and build a community of a shared future between China and Arab countries," said the spokesperson.

## Russia's manufacturing sector expands

### Reuters

MOSCOW: Activity in Russia's manufacturing sector expanded at its fastest pace in almost seven years in December, a business survey showed on Friday, though new export orders contracted for the second month running.

The S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing rose to 54.6 in December from 53.8 in November, moving further above the 50 mark that separates expansion from contraction. It was the highest reading since January 2017.

Output rose at its fastest pace in seven months and new orders also increased sharply again.

"Greater client demand was largely focused on the domestic market, however, as new export orders fell for the second month running," S&P Global said in a statement.

"Fewer customer requests from clients in key export markets led to the fastest fall in new business from abroad since July."

Moscow is spending heavily on manufacturing, pouring cash into the defence sector to ramp up military production following its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The sector's growth in the almost two years since then has been largely predicated on domestic demand.



Manufacturers are still grappling with logistical upheavals due to Western sanctions and the high cost of imported goods, hampered by the weak rouble and high inflation. The survey showed the rate of inflation was softening, S&P Global said.

Despite labour shortages in Russia, with unemployment at a record low of 2.9%, firms

increased staffing numbers to try to reduce backlogs of work, S&P Global said, though companies remained optimistic about the future.

"Confidence stemmed from planned investment in new products and machinery," S&P Global said. "The level of positive sentiment was historically elevated despite dropping to three-month low."

## North Korea's new reactor at nuclear site likely to be formally operational next summer, Seoul says

### AP

SEOUL: A light-water reactor at North Korea's main nuclear complex will likely be formally operational by next summer, South Korea's defense minister said, amid suspicions that the North may use it as a new source of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Concerns about North Korea's nuclear program deepened recently as the U. N. atomic agency and foreign experts said they've detected signs indicating that North Korea had begun operating its light-water reactor at the Yongbyon nuclear complex.

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said last week that his



agency had observed increased levels of activity at and near the reactor and since mid-October, a strong water outflow from its cooling system. He said the reactor is "a cause for concern"

because it can produce plutonium — one of the two key ingredients used to manufacture nuclear weapons, along with highly enriched uranium.

The South Korean Defense

Ministry said Friday that Defense Minister Shin Wonsik told local reporters a day before that his country had also spotted similar cooling system-related activities associated with the reactor last summer.

Shin said the reactor appears to be in the stage of a trial operation and that it's expected to be officially operational around next summer.

North Korea has long produced weapons-grade plutonium from its widely known 5-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon. The light-water reactor would be an additional source of bomb fuels, and observers say its bigger capacity could allow it to produce more plutonium. Yong-

byon has a uranium enrichment facility as well.

There are questions about the reactor's reported operation, as light-water reactors are best-suited for electricity generation. Shin noted there has been no country that has used light-water reactors to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

"(North Korea's) commissioning of a new light water nuclear power plant raises serious concerns, including safety," the U. S. Mission to the U. N. in Vienna said Saturday in a message posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. "(North Korea's) unlawful nucle-

ar & ballistic missile programs continue to pose a grave threat to international peace & security."

Grossi also noted the North's operation of the light-water reactor violates U. N. Security Council resolutions.

The IAEA and foreign governments rely on satellite imagery and other methods to monitor activities at Yongbyon and other suspected nuclear facilities in North Korea. The North kicked out IAEA inspectors from the country in 2009.

Outside estimates on the size of North Korea's nuclear arsenal vary, ranging from 20-60 to more than 100. Experts say North Korea can add six to 18 bombs each year. Since his diplomacy

with the U. S. collapsed in 2019, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has repeatedly vowed to build more nuclear weapons and introduce high-tech weapons to cope with what he calls intensifying U. S. hostility.

Foreign experts say Kim would ultimately hope to use his expanded nuclear arsenal to win sanctions relief from the U. S. when diplomacy resumes. In response to the North's latest intercontinental ballistic missile test last week, the U. S., South Korea and Japan urged other countries to fully implement U. N. Security Council resolutions that have imposed punishing sanctions on the North for its past banned weapons tests.

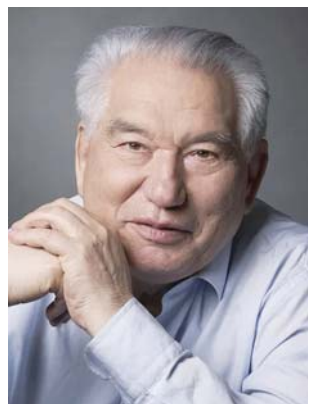
## Astana hosts Conference on Chingiz Aitmatov's 95th Anniversary

### Assem Assaniyaz

ASTANA: The National Academic Library in Astana and Auezov Institute of Literature and Art held an international conference on the 95th anniversary of Chingiz Aitmatov, the Kyrgyz renowned writer and statesman, on Dec. 28 in the Kazakh capital.

Aitmatov's legacy is the national pride for the Kyrgyz Republic and a cultural heritage for Central Asia. The author is known for his diplomatic career, journalistic and translation activities.

Apart from Kazakh academics and creative figures, the cultural event welcomed foreign diplomats of the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, and Azerbaijan, scientists and philologists, the university professors, and students



from Astana. Representatives of the National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian State Library, the National Library of Russia, the Margarita Rudominina All-Russian State Library for Foreign Literature also participated in the conference.

In an interview with The Astana Times, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Kazakhstan Dastan Dyushekeyev underlined the need to carry out more joint initiatives, whether they are humanitarian, economic, or military.

"The Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan have strategic, allied, partnership relations, and, of course, fraternal ties. Most of all, we are united by culture. Our common roots strengthen our spiritual interaction. Therefore, we should organize more conferences, forums, literary and creative evenings in this area," said Dyushekeyev.

In 1990, Aitmatov himself was appointed as the head of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Luxembourg. From 1994 to 2008, he was the Kyrgyz ambas-

sador to the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) and France, the permanent representative to UNESCO and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

He also served as an advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev, the only President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Aitmatov had deep respect for renowned Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov. In addition, he had close friendly relations with Kazakh contemporaries Kaltai Mukhamedzhanov, Mukhtar Shakhonov, Olzhas Suleimenov, Zeynolla Kabdolov, and Sherkan Murtaza.

The library's literature in the Kyrgyz language is constantly updated with new publications from the Kyrgyz embassy and the National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic.





## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

### Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
62,451.04	62,052.23
Day's High	Day's Low
62,644.38	61,807.54
Index Value	Change
15,708,281,796	+398.81
Percentage	Time
+0.64%	29 Dec, 2023 5:00 pm

### Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,733.24	+10.50
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	28 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

### USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
37,596.41	-113.69
Percentage	Time
-0.30%	29 Dec, 11:44 am GMT-5

### Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
33,464.17	-75.45
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	29 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	309	312
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	74.4	75.15
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	76.7	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	358	361.5
US Dollar	281.5	284

## Bankrupt

# It became impossible for many to do any business: Mian Zahid Hussain

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the outgoing year was extremely challenging for the public and businesses.

During this year, the nation frequently verged on bankruptcy, and people's lives deteriorated due to the cost-of-living crisis, while many found it impossible to conduct any business at all, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the country was saved from bankruptcy due to the IMF's loan and the deferral of debt payments by Saudi Arabia, China, and the UAE.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that people were cornered due to inflation, while political instability made it almost impossible for many to do business.

During the current year, the country has suffered the worst economic crisis in its history, while the experiences of economic managers have worsened the situation.

During this time, the rupee became like tissue paper, inflation reached a rate of 39 percent, and the purchasing power of the people was exhausted. Electricity and gas prices and bank markup rates skyrocketed, due to which many businesses closed, while production was badly affected and exports fell.

The GDP rate decreased alarmingly, and the people became disillusioned with the country's future, due to which millions of people started moving to other countries in search of employment, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that due to the measures taken by the previous governments to promote reputation, there was a record increase in circular debt, and people were forced to pay the bills by selling household items to pay bills.



During this year, many people committed suicides due to inflation and inflated power bills; the incidents of terrorism increased; dozens of military personnel were martyred, due to which

relations with neighboring countries deteriorated; and the process of evicting people residing illegally in Pakistan was started, but the security situation remained precarious.

During the same year, the army took commendable steps to improve the economy, including establishing the SIFC. The announcement of the election date, the establishment of a caretaker government, legal measures against PTI, the imprisonment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, and the return of Nawaz Sharif are among the most important political events of this year.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that due to the role of the army in economic matters, things have improved, the possibility of heavy investment from friendly countries has increased, and the situation has started to improve at the end of this painful year.

There is a break in prices, and it is hoped that political and economic affairs will improve, he said.

## Called on

KARACHI: Deputy Governor SBP called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries and Production Dr. Gohar Ejaz at Governor House on Friday.



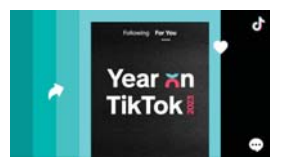
Photo: PID

## Scroll it Back with Year on TikTok 2023

PNP

PAKISTAN: Today TikTok unveils Year on TikTok 2023, its annual year-end report that celebrates its global community as they scroll back to the most memorable trends, creators and moments that made 2023 in Pakistan and the rest of the world.

Saif Mujahid, Head of Content Operations and Marketing for Pakistan at TikTok, said, "As we unveil Year on TikTok 2023, it's a testament to the vibrant creativity of our Pakistani community. From engaging sports content to insightful life hacks, TikTok has been a platform for authentic expression and positive impact. Thank you, Pakistan, for making TikTok a space for connection and



inspiration. Here's to another year of laughter and creativity!"

Stay tuned for more Year on TikTok 2023 celebrations in Pakistan, including the Year on TikTok 2023 event in Lahore coming up soon!

Join us as we stroll down memory lane and look back on an incredible year that saw us learning, laughing, inspiring, imagining, entertaining and exploring. Scroll back to this year's most memorable trends, creators and moments with our community by searching #YearOnTikTok on the app or visiting TikTok Newsroom.

# Scope of national roaming facility to be extended to National Highways, Motorways: Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif, said on Friday that the national roaming facility's scope would be extended to motorways and national highways to facilitate travelers.

During his visit to the headquarters of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Dr. Umar Saif said, "The government is taking all possible steps to promote the telecom sector in the country."

Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeezur Rehman, Member Compliance & Enforcement PTA, Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar, and senior officers of MoIT&T and PTA were present on the occasion.

Senior officers briefed the minister about the functions of PTA, regulatory initiatives, and the overall performance of the telecom sector.

The minister was informed that the PTA has consistently



facilitated the thriving telecom industry in Pakistan, providing state-of-the-art telecom, broadband, and ICT services. The challenges faced by the sector and the regulator's ongoing efforts to address them were

also discussed.

Dr. Umar Saif stressed the importance of taking timely actions to address consumer complaints related to telecom operators. He proposed establishing a mechanism that

enhances the PTA's role in promoting public welfare and social initiatives.

Additionally, Dr. Umar Saif visited PTA's National Telecom Security Operations Center (NTSOC) during his visit.

## TCL offering unparalleled picture quality

PNP

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's No.1 LED TV Brand, is committed to provide its customers with an immersive gaming experience to captivate their senses and emotions, and making them feel deeply connected to the game. TCL is committed to delivering cutting-edge products, exemplified by their latest release, the TCL C755 QD-Mini LED 4K TV, offering unparalleled picture



quality. Boasting characteristics such as Dolby Vision, Dolby Atmos, and a refresh rate of up to 144Hz, the C755 QD Mini LED TV offers an immersive IMAX-enhanced viewing journey.

The former model comes in sizes ranging from 55, 65 and 75 inches.

## Stern warning to those attempting to manipulate FPCCI elections issued

PNP

LAHORE: Zafar Mehmood Ch, Senior Vice President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, delivered a stern warning to those attempting to manipulate the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) elections. The SVP

emphasized the critical importance of conducting impartial, free, and fair elections for the overall growth and development of the country. Mehmood expressed concerns about certain caretaker ministers and other elements allegedly working towards skewing the election results in favour of the United Businessmen Group.

# Businesses more confident about future despite insecurity: Gallup Survey

PPA

KARACHI: Largely negative about their ongoing prospects, the country's business owners have started gaining confidence, and their expectations for a better future have risen 42% from the previous quarter, shows a latest survey.

"Relatively fewer business owners are pessimistic about future conditions and the direction of the country compared to Quarter 2," according to a Gallup Pakistan Survey with business owners in the third quarter of 2023 for the Gallup Business Confidence Index report.

It said business insecurity though persists because of the prevailing economic and political crises, businesses are more upbeat about their future.

"Inflation, utility bills and political instability cause growing concern among the business community, but overall fewer businesses express hopelessness compared to the previous

quarter," it said.

Asked about their expectations for future business conditions, the businesses were surprisingly optimistic and 61% expressed positive expectations while 38% expect things to worsen. The net future business confidence score has improved by 42% since the spring and is now at 22%, according to survey report.

The businessmen's perceptions about the direction of the country have also improved since the previous two quarters with 26% of respondents saying Pakistan is heading in the right direction.

The Direction of the Country score has increased to -47% that is 30 percentage points more than a quarter ago.

The overall confidence of the business community, however, was low since economic crises have been looming since 2022. The economic insecurity in the country has worsened since the beginning of this year, but the business situation score has improved

regardless by 25 percentage points.

Similar to the second quarter survey results, inflation was the problem cited by most of businesses as three out of 10 said they would want the government to solve the issue of price hike.

"Relatively more respondents were concerned about political instability in Q3," according to the survey.



While the devaluation of rupee and fuel prices have taken a backseat in concern relative to the past quarter, the businessmen now are more concerned about the taxes and load-shedding in the country.

Asked whether business conditions induced layoffs in the quarter under review four out of 10 businesses surveyed replied in affirmative saying their workforce had shrunk by 11%

from last quarter.

More than half of the businesses surveyed said to have increased their output prices this quarter. More businesses raised output prices compared to last quarter, and comparatively less businesses reduced their output prices in this quarter.

A majority, 73%, of the businessmen did not express the hope that the caretaker government of Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will address problems of the country's businesses. Twenty-five percent of them were somewhat hopeful. Asked about power outages, 38% of the businesses said 'yes' to load-shedding this quarter, showing a decline of 31% over last quarter.

Bilal Ijaz Gilani, executive director at Gallup Pakistan and chief architect of the Gallup Pakistan Business Confidence Index Pakistan, said that this quarterly report of Gallup Business Confidence brought the positive news that business sentiment was improving in the country after witnessing a

consistent decline.

Both current and future business confidence was on upward trajectory and a significant improvement was seen with respect to business community's view regarding direction of the country, he said.

"We hope that the current momentum in other indicators including stock exchange index, improved current account deficit, positive outcome of IMF loan tranches and relative consistency in policy for example with respect to smuggling are underlying factors leading to improved sentiment is continued in the coming quarter," said Gilani.

This latest survey is the 11th of a quarterly Business Confidence Survey that Gallup Pakistan conducted across the country. The Business Confidence Index is an important barometer capturing the sentiments of business community in any country and used across the world by policy makers. The survey was conducted with around 530 businesses across Pakistan.

## Pakistan Railways to digitalise locomotive records in 2 months

PPA

LAHORE: The Ministry of Railways has decided to digitalise all records of the locomotives and shift on Fuel Management System.

Caretaker Minister for Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar directed railway officials to ensure the latest facilities at Railways hospitals, across the country.

He gave these directions while chairing a meeting at Railways Headquarters in Lahore today, Radio Pakistan reported.

The minister also instructed the officials to shift the usage of fuel on Fuel Management System within two weeks.

The meeting decided to open all railways hospitals to the general public from next month. It was also decided to transfer all electricity meters in Railways colonies to distribution companies.

Tarar also instructed the officials to shift the usage of fuel on Fuel Management System within two weeks.

The meeting concluded with the decision to digitize all record of railway engines within two months.

Earlier, the railway management decided to expand the network of its express trains to 96 by December 25, running all over the country to better felicitate the commuters.

"Before completing the network of 96 trains over the entire railway network, the last year the figure of trains is 86 which will be improved after the concentrated efforts of the department," an official in the Ministry told the state news agency.

He said the facilities being provided to the passengers at railway stations include waiting rooms, vending stalls, station restaurants, wheelchairs, an information desk, computer reservation facilities, a public address system to inform the public about the arrival and departure of trains, provision of paramedics and 1st aid facility, online reservation facility, passenger insurance service and revival of help desks at stations facilities in trains.

To a question, he said the overall punctuality ratio of trains has improved from 76 to 93 per cent in three months owing to close monitoring and stern measures taken by Pakistan Railways at the divisional and ministry levels.



# Media Advisory for Pakistan U19 Men's World Cup Camp

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan U19 World Cup pre-departure camp for the players will commence tomorrow at the National Cricket Academy and Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The camp is scheduled to run from December 29 to January 6, with the team set to depart for Johannesburg, South Africa from Lahore on January 6.

Camp schedule (all activities at the NCA and Gaddafi Stadium):

29 and 30 December – The players will train from 2:30 pm till 5 pm at the NCA. The PCB will provide videos and photos of the session.

31 December to 3 January – The players will have batting and bowling sessions at the NCA and fielding session at the GSL from 2:30 pm to 5 pm. The PCB will provide videos and photos from both sessions.

4 January – The players will participate in a scenario-based practice match

at the GSL from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Afterwards, squad member will be available for media interaction. Media is invited to cover the match.

5 January – Rest Day  
6 January – Pakistan team will depart for South Africa from Lahore.

Four players will be available for the media mixed zone activity at the GSL; the date and time will be announced later.

Pakistan U19 squad – Saad Baig



(captain and wicketkeeper), Ali Asfand (vice-captain), Ali Raza, Ahmad Hassan, Amir Hassan, Arifat Minhas, Azan Awais, Haroon Arshad, Khubaib Khalil, Mohammad Zeeshan, Naveed Ahmed Khan, Shahzaib Khan, Shamyl Hussain, Muhammad Riazullah and Ubaid Shah.

# Klopp expects Liverpool to maintain title bid without Mohamed Salah

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Jurgen Klopp is adamant Liverpool will be able to maintain their Premier League title charge despite the imminent loss of Mohamed Salah to African Cup of Nations duty.

Salah will leave to play for Egypt at the African Cup of Nations after Liverpool host Newcastle in the Premier League on Monday.

Liverpool sit two points clear of Arsenal at the top as they chase a first title since 2020.

They also take on Arsenal in the FA Cup third round and Fulham in the League Cup semi-finals in January, meaning Salah's absence could not come at a worse time.

Mohamed Salah is Liverpool's top scorer with 16 goals this term and his absence in the Ivory Coast, for potentially over a month if Egypt go deep into the tournament, leaves Klopp with a major void to fill.

"It is not the first time, it is a really at least very average situation that you lose your goalscorer but we had it even worse in the past when Sadio (Mane) and Mo left," Klopp told reporters on Friday.

"We came somehow through it and traditionally one of them went pretty far in the tournament, which made it worse."

Jurgen Klopp will also be without Japan midfielder Wataru Endo while he plays at the Asia Cup at the same time as Salah departs.

"We knew the Africa Cup of Nations from time to time appears and Mo has



to go and we have Endo as a participant of the Asia Cup as well, so it is like it is. We have to deal with it and we will," Klopp said.

"Each long-term plan I could have had depends massively on who is available. We would have solutions today, I hope we have that after the Newcastle game as well."

The return of Diogo Jota after a month out injured is a boost as the Portugal international scored a comeback goal against Burnley on Boxing Day.

Jota's versatility means he can operate across the forward line, as can Cody Gakpo, while Harvey Elliott has played in Mohamed Salah's position even though he is more of a midfielder in Klopp's system.

"The return of each of the boys is

super-important but Diogo especially. Everybody was quite positive about our five options, but I don't think we had it that often to be honest," Klopp said.

"Especially with the amount of games we play it is so important these boys can rotate and now with Mo leaving and Endo leaving we need everyone to get back."

However, Liverpool left-back Andy Robertson's recovery from a dislocated shoulder is now likely to keep him out now for the whole of January.

The Scotland captain, sidelined since October, was expected to return next month.

"Robbo still needs more range in his shoulder. Obviously it was a big surgery, still not even close to team training or whatever," Klopp said.

# Gurbaz's ton lifts Afghanistan to thump UAE in first T20I

A Sports

SHARJAH: Rahmanullah Gurbaz's quickfire century, followed by a tight bowling display propelled Afghanistan to thump the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the first T20I here on Friday.

Put into bat first, Afghanistan piled up a massive total of 203/3 in the allotted 20 overs, courtesy of a huge second-wicket partnership between Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran.

The touring side, however, got off to a dismal start to their innings as they lost their returning opener Hazratullah Zazai in the fourth over with 31 runs on the board.

The left-handed opener, known for his aggressive batting

approach, failed to live up to the expectations and could score a mere 13 off 16 deliveries with the help of one boundary and a six.

Skipper Zadran then joined Gurbaz in the middle and anchored the innings with a well-crafted partnership.

The duo launched a baton charge on the UAE bowlers and added 137 runs in just 77 deliveries before Rahmanullah Gurbaz perished in the 17th over.

He remained the top-scorer for Afghanistan with a 52-ball 100 which featured seven boundaries and as many sixes.

Zadran, on the other hand, stood his ground firm before finally perishing on the penultimate delivery of the innings.

He scored an anchoring 59 in 43 deliveries, laced up with four



boundaries and two sixes.

All-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai added valuable runs at the backend with his 19-run cameo which came off just eight deliveries and was peppered with two boundaries and a six.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel Chasing a mammoth 204, the

UAE could only score 131 runs in response and thus succumbed to a hammering defeat in the series opener.

The home side had a disastrous start to the run chase as they were reduced to 56/4 in 10 overs, forcing them to sport a defensive approach.

Vriitya Aravind offered some resistance with his half-century but his cautious knock was not enough to sail his side over the line.

He top-scored for the UAE with a 64-ball 70 which included seven boundaries and a six.

Fazalhaq Farooqi led the bowling attack for Afghanistan in the first T20I against the UAE with 2/19 while Naveen-ul-Haq and Qais Ahmed made one scalp each.

# Cristiano Ronaldo to end 2023 as leading goal scorer

A Sports

LAHORE: Star Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo is all set to end the year 2023 as the leading goal-scorer, leaving behind the likes of Kylian Mbappe, Harry Kane and Erling Haaland.

Ronaldo became the highest goal scorer of 2023 on Tuesday during his side Al-Nassr's Saudi Pro League fixture against Al-Ittihad.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored a decisive brace in his side's 5-2 victory over Al-Ittihad which also propelled him to the top of the goal-scoring charts.

Ronaldo converted two crucial penalties in the game, lifting his tally to 53 goals and 15 assists in 58 matches.

This achievement took Cristiano Ronaldo past the 52 goals scored by Harry Kane (57 matches) and Kylian Mbappe (53 matches) while playing for Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain, respectively.

Notably, it's a fact that neither Kane nor Mbappe can reclaim the top spot, as their clubs are unequivocally set



to resume official competitions only in 2024.

Whereas, the only other potential contender Erling Haaland scored 50 goals in 60 matches for Manchester United.

However, the injuries got the better of the Norwegian forward this year and also kept him out of the Club

World Cup.

He is all set to miss his side's last fixture of 2023 when the City take on Sheffield United on Saturday.

List of top goal-scorers in 2023

Cristiano Ronaldo (Al-Nassr) – 53 goals (58 matches)  
Kylian Mbappe (PSG) – 52 goals (53 matches)  
Harry Kane (Bayern Munich) – 52 goals (57 matches)  
Erling Haaland (Manchester City) – 50 goals (60 matches)  
Garbhan Coughlan (Cashmere Technical) – 41 goals (27 matches)  
Denis Bouanga (Los Angeles FC) – 40 goals (53 matches)

German Cano (Fluminense) – 40 goals (61 matches)  
Romelu Lukaku (Roma) – 40 goals (61 matches)  
Barnabas Varga (Ferencváros) – 39 goals (45 matches)

Santiago Gimenez (Feyenoord) – 39 goals (63 matches)

# Sana Bahadur Clinches McDonald's Women's Open Squash Championship title



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Sanabahadur won the second PSA McDonald's Junior Open and Satellite Women's Squash Championship, defeated Anam Mustafa in the final while Boys U-15 title went to Haris Zahid. The finals of the championship with prize money worth 1000 dollars were played at the PSF Jahangir Khan Squash Complex PSB Karachi Center. The chief guest of the closing ceremony was Amin Lakhani, CEO of McDonald's Pakistan, who distributed the prizes. Provincial Caretaker Sports Minister Dr. Junaid Ali Shah, COO McDonald's Pakistan Jameel Mughal, Director of Sindh Squash Association Mustafa Kamal, President of Sindh Squash Association Adnan Asad, Ghulam Nabi Morai, Secretary of Sindh Squash Association Muhammad Amir and Others were also present. The special guest said that McDonald's will continue to play its role in bringing back the lost past of Pakistan in squash. Sindh Squash Association President Adnan Asad said that they are establishing continuity of squash events in the province, international players are also coming from Sindh which is the success of our policy. Sana Bahadur Defeated Anam Mustafa and clinch the event by 3-1, the game score of their victory was 11-2, 11-9, 9-11 and 11-3 in their favor. The final of Boys U-15 was an interesting affair in which Haris Zahid defeated Ryan Bahadur by 3-1. The game score was 9-11, 11-3, 11-4 and 11-9 in favor of the winner Haris Zahid. In the boys under-13 final, Army's Faizan Ali beat Punjab's M Bin Atif 11-5, 11 in 23 minutes. – Won the championship by defeating them by, 11-5, 11-6, 7-11 and 12-10. The boys under-9 final was one-sided in which M Asim easily defeated M Bin Naseem in 15 minutes by 11-1, 11-5 and 11-8 to win the final.

# Michael Vaughan criticizes 'underachieving' India after South Africa Test debacle



A Sports

LAHORE: Former England captain Michael Vaughan took a jibe at India following the side's humiliating defeat to South Africa in the first Test at Centurion's Supersport Park.

India lost their series opener by an innings and 32 runs inside three days. Rohit Sharma's side scored 245 in their first innings on the back of KL Rahul's century.

In reply, South Africa managed 408 as Dean Elgar top-scored with 185 and Marco Jansen and David Bedingham scored 84 and 56 respectively.

India, that were already trailing by 163, were dismissed for just 131 as Nandre Burger returned with a four-wicket haul. Star batter Virat Kohli was the lone ranger as he top-scored with his 76.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel Michael Vaughan, who is covering the ongoing three-match Test series between Australia and Pakistan, shared his views on dismal India's performance. He called them an "underachieving" team who are nowhere near winning a major ICC tournament.

"I think they are, yeah," Michael Vaughan said while answering a question whether if India are an underachieving team. "Well, they don't win anything. When was the last time they won something? With all the talent they have, all the skillsets... they won here (Australia) twice, magnificent but the last few World Cups, been nowhere, T20 World Cups, nowhere."

"You go so South Africa, who are, you know, useful in Test match cricket and to produce a performance like that... I mean, with all the talent they have, and the resources they have, I don't think they win anything."

India's latest heartbreak in a global cricketing tournament came in the final of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 at home turf. Rohit Sharma's side, who were unbeaten before the finale, were outplayed by six wickets by Australia.

# Pak vs Aus: Unhappy Pakistan fans question Rizwan's dismissal in second Test



Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan's controversial dismissal in the second Test against Australia disappointed fans as they raised questions over the umpire's decision on Friday.

During the 61st over of Pakistan's second innings, Australia's captain Pat Cummins appealed for a caught behind but the umpire gave it not out.

However, Cummins did not agree with the decision and decided to review it as he thought Rizwan might have gloved it.

The third umpire then overruled the appeal from different angles and reckoned that there was a spike as the ball passed the wristband, hence, the on-field umpire was asked to change his decision.

However, the hotspot showed no mark as Rizwan looked away from the ball at the last second. Rizwan, who was sure that he didn't get anything on it, went back to the hut in utter disbelief.



## Efficiency Shield

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf giving away efficiency shield to the winning unit of Pakistan Navy for best performance during Fleet Efficiency Competition Parade on Friday.



# Pakistan Navy conducts fleet annual efficiency competition parade

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Fleet Annual Efficiency Competition Parade was held here at Pakistan Navy Dockyard upon the culmination of the operational year. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest that marked the culmination of a rewarding and eventful operational year for Pakistan Navy ships, submarines and aircrafts, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

Upon arrival at the venue, the chief guest was received by Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi and a smartly turned-out contingent presented the Guard of Honour. The Chief of the Naval Staff expressed complete satisfaction and confidence over the operational preparedness of the Pakistan Navy Fleet. He acknowledged and praised the dedication and professionalism of officers and men in successfully achieving operational objectives and milestones for the year 2023.

The Admiral commended PN Fleet's efforts and contributions towards maritime security. The chief guest also mentioned the modernization plan of the Pakistan Navy wherein various platforms are being inducted in the Fleet. He underscored that induction of these platforms will immensely contribute towards capability enhancement of the Fleet.

He also dilated upon the evolving maritime security environment in the region which requires the Pakistan Navy to remain ever-vigilant and fully prepared to safeguard national maritime interests. The Admiral urged all the participants to be fully cognizant of the latest technologies and work with utmost dedication and honesty.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi highlighted PN Fleet's operational achievements during last year. He further highlighted that PN Fleet maintained high level of combat readiness throughout the year while Fleet units participated in various Bilateral and Multilateral exercises in home and foreign waters besides undertaking Regional Maritime Security Patrols and Overseas Deployments. During the ceremony, the Chief of the Naval Staff gave away efficiency trophies to units adjudged best in their respective squadrons and interacted with Officers and CPOs/ Sailors of Pakistan Navy Fleet.

# PTA, HEC agree to raise awareness for preventing blasphemous activity on social media

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) have agreed to coordinate their efforts for raising awareness among masses to prevent blasphemous activities on internet and social media.

During a meeting, Chairman PTA Major General (Retd) Hafeez ur Rehman and Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed also concurred on disseminating the message among administration, faculty, and students of all universities.

The aim is to encourage them to play an effective role in the noble cause of eradicating this menace from society. According to a press release, both sides expressed strong enthusiasm for deep collaboration and maximising outcome through joint academic ventures. Major General (Retd) Hafeez ur Rehman highly appreciated the initiative of HEC and said that PTA is fully committed to address the challenges related to responsible use of cyberspace.



In this regard, PTA has held consultative meetings with esteemed religious scholars of the country and is engaged

with multiple international organizations like UNICEF, TikTok and Telenor Pakistan for the purpose. The collaboration between HEC and PTA will pave the way to reduce circulation of unlawful content, activities over the internet and engaging youngsters in utilizing cyberspace for productive online activities.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed appreciated the multiple steps taken by the PTA especially promoting safe, responsible and productive use of the internet. Recently received SAMENA international LEAD award acknowledges PTA's commitment in ensuring child and youth safety online.

## Defence minister convenes maiden meeting of inter-ministerial committee on AfJK

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Lieutenant General (R) Anwar Ali Hyder on Friday convened the first meeting of Inter-Ministerial Committee on Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The meeting was co-chaired by Prime Minister of AJK, Ch Anwar ul Haq, whereas Minister for Water Resources, Ahmed Irfan Aslam and members from relevant federal ministries also participated in the meeting, a news release said.

Matters pertaining to AJK government in consultation with the relevant ministries and divisions in the Federal Government came under discussion.

Minister for S&GAD, AJK, Minister for Energy and Water Resources AJK and Minister for Law

## Senate body on petroleum discusses suspension of gas supply of Sindh industrial sector

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum, chaired by Senator Mohammad Abdul Qadir, on Friday discussed the issue regarding the suspension of gas supply of Sindh industrial sector, resulting in a substantial 28% production loss. Officials from the Ministry for Energy (Petroleum Division) while briefing the committee said that each year the country was witnessing a depletion of more than 10% of gas reserves at various gas fields, with a simultaneous increase in its demand.

This year, Sui Southern Gas Limited (SSGC) was grappling with a reduction of approximately 90 MMCFD compared to the previous year. Secretary of the Ministry for Energy (Petroleum Division), Mohsin Agha, highlighted the sustained decline over the past 8 to 10 years, emphasizing the need

for a comprehensive plan to scrutinize the policymaking. The committee members conducted an in-depth analysis of supply statistics and gas depletion over the years, urging Ministry for Energy officers (Petroleum Division) to address discrepancies for conclusive results. Furthermore, ministry officials provided insights into LPG rates, clarifying that OGRA (Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority) determines prices for producers, the margin of Marketing Companies (MCs), and consumers.

The Secretary of the Ministry for Energy (Petroleum Division) added that active exploration of indigenous sources is underway, addressing infrastructure constraints in efforts to stabilize gas prices. Chairman of OGRA, Masroor Khan, provided the committee members with insights into the reasons behind the increase in oil and gas prices. Senator Saadia Abbasi

## Caretaker govt introducing 'Contract Base Smartphones Policy' from Jan 15: Minister

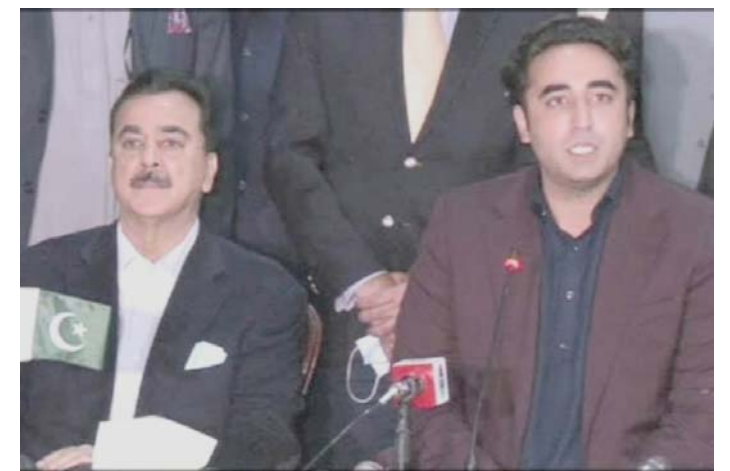


### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker IT and Telecommunication Minister Dr. Umar Saif Friday disclosed that his ministry with the coordination of all other stakeholders of telecom companies from January 15, 2024 will launch a 'Contract based smart phone policy' in which people travelling to other countries will get latest model phones on easy installments, which will benefit economy.

Talking to a private news channel, IT minister said that our aim to incentive responsible financial behavior and ensure that smart phone accessibility continues to expand, adding, we need a robust mechanism to protect investors from defaults, suggesting measures such as blocking mobile phones and, potentially, national identity cards of defaulters.

## Bilawal & Gilani condemn 'police' treatment of Shah Mehmood Qureshi



### Asim Tanveer

MULTAN/LARKANA: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and former Prime Minister and Senator Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani expressed their condemnation of Shah Mehmood Qureshi's mistreatment by police and Rawalpindi administration.

Such behavior with any politician including Shah Mehmood Qureshi is regrettable, Yusuf Raza Gilani.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Pakistan People's Party has always fought state oppression, but we never believe in oppression and violence.

If even after bail, Shah Mehmood Qureshi was wanted by the police in another case, then the arrest should have been made while maintaining moral values, the administration should take notice of this attitude, Yusuf Raza Gilani.

## UNWTO Recognizes Pakistan as Top Tourist Destination in 2023

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has acknowledged Pakistan's outstanding performance in tourism, marking a remarkable 92% recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2023. The country experienced a 115% surge in foreign tourist arrivals compared to the previous year, signaling a robust comeback post-Covid-19.

Attributing this success to concerted efforts in tourism promotion, Managing Director-PTDC Aftab Rana said that the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) last year actively engaged in six major global events such as World Travel Mart London, ITB Berlin, New



York Travel and Adventure Show, Arabian Travel Mart Dubai, Seoul Travel Mart Korea and Travel Mart in Vietnam, fostering essential B2B connections with foreign tour operators. A strategic online outreach, along with launching of the 'Salam Pakistan' tourism brand in August 2023, contributed significantly to attracting a diverse range of visitors from across the globe.

## MQM's Raza Haroon, Anis Advocate join forces with PPP



### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Politicians formerly associated with Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Raza Haroon and Anees Advocate on Friday joined the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

The news came after the duo met former president and party's co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari in Karachi.

Haroon, who also served as a provincial minister, earlier joined former Karachi mayor Mustafa Kamal's Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP)

in 2016, but later left this faction as well. On the other hand, Anees was also an MQM dissident who joined PSP in 2016.

The PPP on this occasion said Zardari welcomed both the new entrants, who were former members of MQM's Rabita Committee, to the party.

Former president Asif Ali Zardari said the PPP's Charter of Karachi would have a far-reaching impact on the future of the city.

He added the PPP was the party of the people of Karachi.

## Ulema, Mashaykh observe 'Children's Protection Day' nationwide

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Religious scholars and leaders representing various schools of thought, on the call of Pakistan Ulema Council, on Friday observed 'Children's Protection Day' nationwide. The Ulema and Mashaykh, in their Friday sermons, urged the public to ensure administration of polio vaccine their children, thereby safeguarding them from potential life-long disabilities.

PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Allama Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Pir Naqibur Rahman, and others, in their sermons,



said it was imperative to emphasize that the administration of polio drops was entirely lawful as they had no adverse impact on human structure and did not induce weakness in children. They said, "Islamic Shariah also advocates avoiding risks to oneself and one's children."