



**Tech-savvy workforce is essential for the country's standing in the rapidly evolving global economy: Mushaal**

Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has said that the active involvement of youth in innovation, investment, and the overall economy is crucial for driving progress of the country. She was addressing Future-Fest 2024, an innovation Expo in Lahore. (Details on Page 3)



**Update: Xi receives credentials of new ambassadors to China**

Chinese President Xi Jinping received the credentials of 42 ambassadors to China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday afternoon. The ambassadors are Tan Hai Chuan from Singapore, Massimo Ambrosetti from Italy, Hussain Alhammedi from the United Arab Emirates, Michael Campbell from Nicaragua, Pavlo Riabikin from Ukraine, Mohsen Bakhtiar from Iran, Ian J. Marshall from Grenada... (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Petroleum Conference**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the participants of Petroleum Conference 2024 on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

**PM for concerted efforts to explore oil & gas reserves**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday, while pointing to the abundant natural resources in the country, underlined the need for concerted efforts to explore onshore and offshore oil and gas reserves. He was addressing the Petroleum Conference 2024 as the chief guest. Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir was the guest of honour. The prime minister affirmed the government's readiness to contribute in infrastructure development, logistics, and security to bolster exploration and production efforts. He further stated that the conference reflected a collective commitment to fully utilise the immense mineral potential so as to ensure energy self-sufficiency and transform Paki-

stan into a regional exporter of energy. He appreciated the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Federal Ministry of Energy for fostering an investor-friendly environment by streamlining regulations and procedures. Country Manager, Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company Ali Taha Al-Temimi appreciated unremitting efforts of the Government of Pakistan in bringing the stakeholders together for formulating policy recommendations and boosting investment in the petroleum sector. Provincial chief ministers, minister for energy, secretary petroleum, government representatives, policy makers, foreign and domestic investors from the energy and petroleum (E&P) sector and international delegates also attended the conference.

*Israel to shift some troops north as negotiators push for Gaza ceasefire*



AFP

GAZA: The Israeli army was preparing to shift some of its forces from the Gaza Strip to the Lebanese border, as international mediators pushed for a new deal to halt its war with Hamas. With Gazans already facing dire humanitarian conditions, the United Nations chief was set to meet on Tuesday with key donors who paused funding after members of the UN's Palestinian refugee agency were accused of taking part in the October 7 attack that sparked the war. Fears of a widening regional conflict were compounded after Israel's top ally Washington vowed to respond to an attack that killed three US troops in Jordan. Israeli ground forces backed by tanks have been focused on Khan Yunis, the hometown of Hamas's Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar, where the Palestine Red Crescent Society reported artillery fire around the Al-Amal hospital overnight. Sinwar's office, military sites and "a significant rocket manufacturing facility" were raided by troops, the Israeli military claimed. Israeli strikes across the besieged Gaza Strip killed 128 people overnight, the health ministry in the Hamas-run Palestinian territory said early on Tuesday. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said late Monday that some units in Gaza were "moving up to the north and preparing for what's to come" — a reference to the Israeli-Lebanese border, where there have been almost daily exchanges of fire with Hezbollah militants aligned with Hamas.

**PTI founder 'attacked' Pakistan's integrity to save his rule: Nawaz**

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday castigated PTI founder Imran Khan for 'attacking' Pakistan's integrity to save his rule, saying that he never compromised national security despite being "subjugated".



Addressing a public gathering in Haroonabad, the PML-N supremo noted that he had neither compromised the national security nor revealed any state secret to save his rulership — referring to PTI founder's cipher controversy. "He [Imran Khan] hatched conspiracy and compromised the national security by revealing state's secret," Nawaz Sharif said, adding that he "attacked" the country's integrity to save his rule. Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif pointed out that his government had control inflation, fuel rates, loadshedding, the US dollar fluctuations and got rid of

International Monetary Fund (IMF). "On the other hand, the former PTI government kept begging before foreign countries," he claimed. He mentioned that the latest ranking of the global corruption index, saying: "Transparency International declared the PTI founder's era most corrupt. Corruption was decreased during our tenure but the country's corruption index had risen during the PTI government." Pakistan's ranking on Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has improved by seven places and is now ranked 133rd among 180 countries in comparison to its 140th place last year.

**PTI founder, Qureshi handed 10-year jail term in cipher case**

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: A special court hearing cipher case on Tuesday handed a 10-year jail term, each, to former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

The former prime minister and the former foreign minister were facing trial in cipher case in Adiala Jail from last year for 'distorting' the facts of the diplomatic cipher.

Both the PTI leaders were accused of conspiracy to misuse the contents of the cipher to fulfill nefarious purposes.

Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain announced the verdict in cipher case soon after recording the statements of the two accused under Section 342 during the hearing today (Tuesday).

The court in its verdict said the prosecution had enough evidence to prove the charges against the former prime minister and ex-foreign minister.

On Friday, Raja Rizwan Abbasi — the FIA prosecutor — had requested the special court established under the Official Secrets Act to close the defence counsel's right of cross-examination, saying the defence was applying to



delay tactics to prolong the trial.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced to challenge cipher case verdict in Islamabad High Court (IHC).

We will challenge the punishment awarded to PTI founder and ex-foreign minister after receiving a detailed verdict in the cipher case, Barrister Ali Zafar said while exclusively talking to ARY News after the special court announced its verdict.

Zafar criticized the verdict and termed the sentence to PTI leaders 'mockery' of justice. Jail trial in the cipher case was against Article 10-A, he claimed.

The first information report (FIR) was registered on August 15 under the Official Secrets Act. It was registered on the complaint of the Home Secretary.

Former prime minister and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi were nominated in the report, while names of former principal secretary Azam Khan and former planning minister Asad Umar were also mentioned.

According to the report, action also will be taken against Azam Khan and Asad Umar after the authorities reached the conclusion that they were also involved in misusing the classified documents.

**SC adjourns case regarding FIA's notices to journalists till March**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday granted time to journalists till after the general elections to appear before FIA's inquiry in matter pertaining to a malicious campaign against the judiciary on social media.

The court also sought report regarding an incident of attack on Journalist Absar Alam and adjourned the case till first week of March.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice, Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali heard a suo-motu case against the FIA's notices to journalists.

During the course of proceeding, the chief justice inquired that whether any application was filed to the top court.



The president Press Association adopted the stance that it could not be moved because the FIA yet to provide the list.

The CJP remarked that they were expecting that a written application would be filed.

The court could not pass an order until the matter firstly go to the three-member judges committee.

He said that it could only request the attorney general of Pakistan without a written material.

In its order, the court said that the attorney general had stated that he forgot to mention

the incident of attack on Journalist Absar Alam.

The court also sought investigation report from the government regarding the incident.

The court allowed to make Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) as respondent in the case.

It said that the press association wanted to submit an application regarding the current situation and freedom of media.

The court has directed the registrar office to allot a number to the petition immediately once it is filed and raised it to the judges committee.

The court said that the AGP had assured to postpone the actions on FIA notices till after the general elections.

The court adjourned further hearing of the case till first week of March.

**PTI vehemently rejects court's judgment, announces to challenge it**

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vehemently rejected the Special Court's unlawful and cruel ruling awarding 10 years' sentence each to PTI Chairman-for-life Imran Khan and Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the fake, baseless, fraudulent and fabricated cipher case. In his strongly-worded reaction over the kangaroo court's flawed and illegal judgement in frivolous cipher case, PTI Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan said that the mockery and murder of justice had been committed to target

Imran Khan and Qureshi of political revenge.

Raouf Hasan strongly condemned the hurried conclusion of sham trial conducted by a visibly partisan and prejudiced judge in a stifling and intimidating environment inside the jail by violating all norms and principles relating to conducting a fair trial as enshrined in the statute book to punish the innocent leaders of the people. "We will pursue all constitutional and legal means to secure justice for PTI Founding Chairman and Vice Chairman," he vowed. He said that PTI would move the High Court against the biased and flawed verdict

without any loss of time.

He made it clear that like the arrests made in the aftermath of the attack on the IHC on May 9 and the verdict of Judge Humayun Dilawar, the judgement of Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain was also devoid of the very principles of law and justice, thus it will not stand in any court of justice.

Raouf Hasan pointed out that the elements, who were petrified of the rising popularity of PTI Founding Chairman and PTI, had ruined the entire fabric of justice system after murder of the constitution and fundamental rights in the country.

**Six terrorists killed in Machh clearance operation: Achakzai**

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The security forces have killed six terrorists in a clearance operation in Machh, citing Balochistan's information minister.

Caretaker minister Jan Achakzai disclosed the identities of two dead terrorists as Doda Baloch and Pardan Baloch.

Security agencies thwarted three-pronged coordinated attack carried out by terrorists in Balochistan's Machh area, interim information minister Jan Achakzai earlier said.

Talking to X (formerly Twitter), the minister claimed that the coordinated attacks were carried out by militants affiliated with the Aslam

Achoo group.

"Fortunately, no damage made to any installations, and no casualties sustained by our security forces," Jan Achakzai said.

The forces launched clearance operation after 15 rockets fired, Balochistan minister said.

The rocket impact shattered windowpanes of several houses, police said. Two persons sustained injuries in rocket attack.

Trains coming from Quetta have been halted at Jacobabad railway station. The Quetta to Peshawar bound Jaffar Express, Quetta to Karachi Bolan Mail and Sibbi to Harnai passenger service has been suspended.

# Tech-savvy workforce is essential for the country's standing in the rapidly evolving global economy: Mushaal

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has said that the active involvement of youth in innovation, investment, and the overall economy is crucial for driving progress of the country. She was addressing Future-Fest 2024, an innovation Expo in Lahore. Special Assistant to Prime Minister was accompanied by Focal Person to SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick and Advisor to SAPM on Communication Waqas Banorie. At the Expo, a mix of entrepreneurs and exhibitors displayed a wide variety of innovative ideas spanning different industries and services.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick was apprised about Future-Fest achievements of \$200 million direct investment which resulted in 30,000 direct jobs and the organization of innovation road show. She said that Future-Fest had achieved commendable milestones. She noted that Future-Fest's efforts to secure over \$200 million in direct investment would be a boost in developing cutting-edge technologies, startups, and projects across various industries in the country. She appreciated the innovation road show organized by Future-Fest which brought together entrepreneurs, cutting-edge startups, industry leaders, and technology enthusiasts from 40 cities and 80 universities.



Mushaal Hussein Mullick was also apprised about His Royal Highness, Prince Fahad bin Mansour extraordinary contribution to the technological

landscape of Pakistan. She said that the prince's announcement of investment of \$100 million for the establishment of a tech house marked a significant milestone in the promotion of innovation and economic development in our country.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister said that the role of youth in technological innovation and overall economic progress could not be overstated. She underscored the role of innovative technology in propelling the progress of nation. She said that a tech-savvy workforce was essential for the country's position in the rapidly evolving global economy. She praised the Future-Fest for recognizing and harnessing the potential of the young-

er generation. She lauded Future-Fest's commitment to providing free online IT training to one million youth. She said the initiative would not only empower the youth with valuable skills but would also contribute significantly to the overall technological advancement of the country.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick visited different stalls, conversed with the innovators and entrepreneurs, and witnessed the innovative ideas and technological products showcased in the Expo. She also extended her appreciation to Future-Fest for organizing the Expo which inspired creativity, promoted collaboration, and was a beacon towards a brighter, more innovative future of the country.

## Independent candidates for PP218 announce support for Qureshi

**Quratul Ain Asim**

MULTAN: With the efforts of former Federal Minister of State Malik Amir Dogar, PP218 Constituency independent candidates Malik Ijaz Dogar, Mohammad Shahazib Afshar Mirza, Tehreek-e-Insaf candidate Malik Zahoor Bhutta have announced to give full support and campaign in favor of candidate PP218. That our party policy is the decision of Tehreek-e-Insaf welcome the party that will decide, we are with you on this occasion representing Tehreek-e-Insaf NA150 candidate Zain Qureshi. Malik Amir Dogar, Mehr



Banu Qureshi, Malik Zahoor Bhutta said that Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood in the cipher case. Qureshi is strongly condemned for ten years of uncommitted sins being punished, whatever they want, they

cannot destroy the love of Tehreek-e-Insaf and Imran Khan from the hearts of the people. By stamping the mark of the brush, they will succeed with an overwhelming majority. Malik Zahoor Bhutta further said

that I am extremely grateful to him for stepping down in my favor and announcing his full support and running the campaign. In the end, he prayed for the success of Zain Qureshi and Malik Zahoor Bhutta.

## Multan Crescent Lions Club Organize Free Medical Camp in Garden Town

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: A free medical camp was organized by Multan Crescent Lions Club in Garden Town Multan Cantt in connection with dental diseases. Professor Amjad Ramey inaugurated the camp. There are many things to know about mouth and teeth are important because nothing is possible to eat without the use of teeth, so we need to fast with mouth to protect teeth from decay.



tant role in keeping the face youthful by providing a strong support to the delicate muscles of the cheeks. While physician Dr. Ijaz Hussain said that every part of the mouth, especial-

ly the teeth, should be free from germs, the teeth may get infected. Not only does it affect the body's immune system, but it also increases the risk of heart disease. Medicines were also provided

to the patients along with dental treatment in the camp. While Prof. Azam Hussain and members of Love Club were also doing facilitation duties in the camp.

## Mian Shahbaz Sharif says Muslim League, Muslim Conference are one and the same



**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: Mian Shahbaz Sharif has said that Muslim League and Muslim Conference are one and the same. This relationship is not of today but of the past forty years. He said Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, Sardar Attique Ahmad

Khan and their entire team, we all continued to walk together in politics. The same relationship has to be restored over the years and this move will have a very good impact on the Kashmir issue along with Pakistan and Azad Kashmir's politics. Mian Shahbaz Sharif while talking with the delegation of Muslim Conference led by

Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan and welcomed all the participants on this occasion and thanked everyone.

On this occasion, former Federal Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq, PML-N President AJK Shah Ghulam Qadir, Secretary General Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, Senior Vice president Raja Mushtaq Ahmad Minhas,

Secretary General Muslim Conference Madam Mehrul Nasa, Raja Saqib Majeed, Major Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Zulfiqar Malik, Chaudhry Azim Bakhsh, Sajid Qureshi were present. Advocate, Asim Zahid Abbasi, Syed Yasir Gilani, Raja Abdul Jabbar Khan and others were also present on the Occasion

## VC Women University visits Examination Hall of both campuses

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Final semester examinations of different departments are ongoing at Women University Multan. In this regard Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Kalsoom Pracha, visited the examination hall at Katchery & Matital Campus and reviewed the

examination process carefully. During the visit, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Kalsoom Pracha interacted with the students participating in the examination and also checked the question papers.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kalsoom Paracha said that discipline should

be strictly maintained during the examinations as the examinations are a reflection of the intelligence of the students, which the students acquire during their studies.



## Istahkam Party will lead the country towards development and prosperity: Jahangir Tareen



**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Jahangir Khan Tareen, the Chairman of Istahkam Pakistan Party (IPP) has said that Istahkam Pakistan Party will lead the country towards development and prosperity. Our manifesto is also the economic security of the common man and correct the country. If we are not going in the right direction, our country needs sincere and honest leadership for

this. Whether we are in power or not, we are ready to give relief to the people under you. These thoughts were expressed by Malik Nisar Hussain Siddiqui and Shaf Nisar Siddiqui under the administration of the stability of Pakistan in UC 82 Alamdar Chowk Suraj Miyani. Party and MPA candidate Shahid Mehmood Khan's central election office inauguration. What did you do while addressing the ceremony?

## Anila Iftikhar announces support for Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani



**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Pakistan Muslim League (Q) Constituency NA148 ticket holder Mrs. Anila Iftikhar has announced her withdrawal in favor of Pakistan Peoples Party candidate NA148 Senator Yousuf Raza Gilani along with her husband Pirzada Mian Qamar Abbas Bhatta and her entire party organization. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in Constituency 148 and PP in PP214 Barrister Syed Mudassar Shah has

announced his support in the election.

On this occasion, Mrs. Anila Iftikhar has said that the sun of February 8 will be the sun of Pakistan People's Party's victory. Pakistan People's Party has always given importance to women. Nazir Bhutto Shaheed was also a woman. Always struggle for rights, today the fruit of their struggle is that today women stand side by side with men and participate in elections and struggle for the development of Pakistan.

## Jammu and Kashmir PM hails late Soraya Khurshid for her selfless services

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has expressed his profound grief and sorrow over the death of Ms. Soraya Khurshid, the widow of former AJK President K H Khurshid. In his condolence message, the prime minister paid rich tribute to Ms. Khurshid for her selfless services for the nation as first lady and member of Legislative Assembly. The PM said that Ms. Khurshid played an effective role in the development and prosperity of Azad Kashmir and strengthening of democratic institutions. He said that

during her stay in Muzaffarabad, she played a key role in women's development projects. Ms. Khurshid, he said, was also an activist of Tehreek Pakistan. "She also had the honor of meeting the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah", the PM said, adding that the deceased had also spent several years of her life in the company of mother of the nation Ms. Fatima Jinnah when K H Khurshid was working with Quaid-e-Azam as a private secretary. Terming death of Ms. Khurshid as a great loss for the Kashmiri nation, the PM prayed to Allah the almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace.

## RPO Dera conducts farewell function for outgoing Behishti

**Adam Khan Wazir**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A farewell ceremony was held in the honor of Behishti Attallah who retired from the police department at Range Police Office Dera Ismail Khan on Tuesday.

will be remembered.

The Regional Police Officer paid tribute to the outgoing Beheshti and expressed his best wishes



During this farewell ceremony, Regional Police Officer Nasir Mehmood Sati said while presenting the honorary shield that the services of Beheshti who retired from the department after completing their tenure

es for him and reiterated his commitment to continue support and encouragement on every platform, and sent them off with traditional honor and dignity

## People to elect honest and trustworthy leader in Feb 8 election: Allama Tahir

**Abdul Majid**

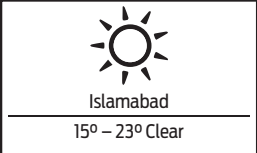
FAISALABAD: The people should choose an honest and trustworthy leader for the security of the country in the February 8 election.

The people should not elect those who treat politics as a business and fill their pockets.

Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan Central Deputy General Secretary Pakistan Ulama Council said this in his special

statement and added that there is a golden opportunity for the nation to decide its future carefully and choose those who will improve the security and economic situation of Pakistan and the people. They reduced the difficulties and could fight their full struggle for economic stability. For 75 years, politicians have made fun of the country and many politicians have turned their politics into a business after being elected. Today, they are living a peaceful

life. People can change their situation with the power of their vote and today people have a golden opportunity to hold accountable every candidate who has stayed away from people and has not played any role in solving public problems. Reached, but even today we are weakening Pakistan with political and sectarian differences, at this time there is an important need for unity and sincere leadership is needed for the development of Pakistan.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:40 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	3:58 pm
Maghrib	5:36 pm
Isha	7:02 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	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**SMAP seeks inclusion of salt industry in faster system for timely sales tax refunds**

PNP



KARACHI: The Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SMAP) has raised serious concerns over the exclusion of the salt industry from the automatic Faster System for sales tax refunds. This exclusion has resulted in a deadlock for several months, leaving billions of rupees of salt exporters stuck in financial distress. SMAP Acting Chairman, Qasim Yaqoob Paracha, appealed to the government to rectify this situation by incorporating the salt industry into the Faster System, similar to five other export sectors.

In an appeal, Mr. Paracha highlighted that the Faster System ceased receiving sales tax refund claims from the salt industry since August 2023. This abrupt discontinuation is based on the system's refusal to accept sales tax refund claims, citing Rule 39B of the Sales Tax Rules. Consequently, salt exporters are compelled to file claims manually, exacerbating the financial crisis as payments have been pending for the last six months.

Qasim Yaqoob Paracha urged the government to promptly address SMAP's request and expedite the release of sales tax refunds pending for the last six months.

**Iqra University Convocation**

**Educated youth is Pakistan's most valuable asset: Naval Chief**

PPA

KARACHI: Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff, stated that educated youth is Pakistan's most valuable asset which holds the future of this country. He expressed his confidence in the capabilities of youth in steering their country from present challenges and navigating to a bright future. Speaking at Iqra University's 21st Convocation as the Chief Guest, he congratulated the graduates and their families, emphasizing that graduates should adopt professionalism and excellence in their future assignments.

As many as 1100 students got their degrees upon completing their academic programmes at the 21st Convocation of Iqra University (IU) on Monday, January 29, 2024, at the PAF Museum, Karachi. The university awarded several

gold medals to PhD scholars, Master's and Bachelor's students in the fields of computer science, engineering and business administration for their outstanding performances. Mr. Naveed Lakhani, the chairman of Hussain Lakhani Group, Ms. Erum Asad, the chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nassar Ikram, the vice-chancellor, Members BOG, academicians, industry professionals, parents of the graduands, Deans, Directors, and faculty members were also present at the event.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief of Naval Staff congratulated the graduating students and the gold medalists of Iqra University. He appreciated Iqra University for contributing significantly to the higher education landscape of the country since its inception. Admiral Naveed Ashraf complimented the University for investing in its faculty in pursuit of achieving teaching excellence,



highlighting the diploma of HE UK.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the

honourable chief guest for his presence at the Convocation. "Your presence here is a source of great encouragement and inspiration for the graduates, parents, and staff of Iqra University," said Dr. Ikram. According to Dr. Ikram, this year marks the 26th anniversary of Iqra University. "I am proud of the fact that Iqra University has achieved unprecedented success in academics, research, and innovation in a very short span of time. We have recently been ranked among the top 75 universities in South Asia and the number 1 university in Pakistan with respect to research paper citations by the QS World University Rankings," he said.

The Vice-Chancellor also paid tribute to the late Hunaid Lakhani for establishing a place of learning that had been providing quality education to students for many years.

**Carpets**

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is displaying carpets attraction for customers alongside a road in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

**CBD Punjab and Genesis Properties Announce Soft Launch Festival for Lahore Global Village**

PNP

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business Development Authority, known as CBD Punjab, proudly declares the commencement of commercial activities at Lahore Global Village. In collaboration with Genesis Properties, a soft launch festival is scheduled from February 2 to 4, marking a significant milestone in the revival of the project.

Formerly known as LDA Walk-and-Shop Arena, this dormant space has been revitalized after nine years of strategic efforts by CBD Punjab,



acting on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi. Genesis Properties secured the bid for Lahore Global Village with the highest price.

Expressing his enthusiasm, CBD Punjab CEO, Imran Amin, stated, "This initiative will give a new direction to the convergence of commerce and culture

in Lahore. The active support and guidance of Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi have been instrumental in kickstarting commercial activities."

To celebrate this achievement and raise awareness among the people of Lahore, Genesis Properties and CBD Punjab are jointly organizing a festival during the soft launch from February 2 to February 4.

Genesis properties Chairman, Habib Nawaz, invites the community to actively participate in this event, showcasing the promising future of Lahore Global Village.

**AIOU to hold convocation today**

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will be held today (Wednesday, January 31) at Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad. The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, who is also the Chancellor of the University, will confer degrees and gold medals to students. Many distinguished guests, including federal ministers, secretaries, senior officials of HEC, vice chancellors of various universities, rectors, renowned journalists, and eminent social personalities will participate in the convocation. The full-dress rehearsal was held yesterday, the students showed great discipline and the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood expressed his satisfaction with the preparations for the convocation.

**Signature Studio organizes star-studded Ramadan Exhibition**

PPA

DUBAI: As Dubai continues its ascent as a leading global fashion destination, it proudly establishes itself as the epicenter for Pakistani fashion. Anna Shoaib, the dynamic Managing Director of Signature Studio Dubai, a revered Pakistani multi-designer boutique with a 12-year legacy in Dubai, is set to captivate fashion aficionados with a spectacular showcase at the Ramadan Exhibition on 3rd February 2024 from 10am to 8pm at Sofitel Downtown Dubai.



The Ramadan Exhibition promises to be a grand celebration of Pakistani fashion, featuring the latest Ramadan collections from Pakistan's top designers. Attendees can look forward to experiencing a curated selection of exquisite ensembles, ranging from traditional attire to contemporary designs, reflecting the diverse and dynamic fashion landscape of Pakistan.

The Ramadan Exhibition will feature an illustrious lineup of Pakistan's top fashion designers, each bringing their unique creative vision to the forefront. Renowned designers showcasing their exquisite Ramadan collections include HSY, Fahad Hussayn, Mumib Nawaz, Humayun Alangir, SammyK, Sumaira Khanani, Mia & Mila, Manto, Ayesha Omar, Farah Zubair, Komal Lakhani, Peach Republic, Uzma & Ashfeen, Hafsa Malik, Beyond East, Wajjecha Ansari, Anam Ikhtlaq, Threads & Motifs, Mehak Adil, Ambreen Farrukh, SNL by Sofia Naveed Lari, Anna Iqbal and many more.

**Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) appoints Kazim Saeed as Chairman of the Board**

PPA



ISLAMABAD: Idara e Taleem o Aagahi (ITA, Center of Education and Consciousness) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Kazim Saeed as the Chairman of its Board of Trustees.

ITA founder and CEO Baela Jamil said: "We are delighted to welcome Kazim as ITA's Chairman given his extensive work in multiple sectors of the economy with leading public and private institutions, as well as his commitment to evidence-based policy making and public service."

Kazim Saeed is a policy and strategy professional focusing on economic development. For twenty-five years, he has provided energy policy advice to governments with the World Bank. Over the past decade, he has built new business models for growth in agriculture with Pakistan's largest business groups, the ADB, USAID, FAO, etc., through Pakistan Agricultural Coalition, a non-profit he co-founded. Kazim serves on the boards of pioneering companies: Naymat Collateral, Khushhaal Kissan, and Indus Acres.

ITA CEO Baela Jamil noted "We believe Kazim brings new enthusiasm towards our mission of building a national-wide social movement for progressive education, learning and skills for all children, adolescents, and youth." The current directors of ITA include Dr. Afshan Huma, Mr. Rashid Jehangir, Ms. Sara Khan, Mr. Kazim Saeed, Dr. Farrukh Seir, Ms. Salaina Haroon, Ms. Azra Naseem, and Ms. Rubina Tariq.

**Former MNA urged supporters to vote for 'Fridge' in Attock**

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Former member national assembly Zain Ellahi has urged the supporters and voters of Major (ret'd) Tahir Sadiq group to vote for "fridge" in upcoming general elections as Pakistan Tehreek Insaf candidate for provincial assembly seat PP-3, Attock-III is Ijaz Boukhari advocate.

Mr. Ellahi-son of former member national assembly from Attock has said that the symbols which were allotted to 'PTI candidates' through a 'conspiracy' to confuse the party voters, have become irrelevant as the name of Imran Khan has turned into a "brand" and an election symbol for masses. Mr Zain said that the PTI ticket holder was allotted the election symbol of "fridge" and this election symbol is strong enough to defeat the political arch rivals who are contesting election with their symbols especially lion, arrow and crane. He alleged that institutions were facilitating pre-poll rigging. But results of the February 8 elections would be the same "as are evident" and that's why efforts were under way to rig the poll. He claimed that PTI's mandate was being stolen because it was going to win in the Feb 8 elections.

**Fertilizer industry urges nationwide dealers to ensure Urea sales at announced market retail prices (MRPs)**

PPA

LAHORE: In a groundbreaking move, leading fertilizer manufacturing companies in Pakistan, including Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC), Fauji Fertilizer Bin-Qasim Limited (FFBL), Engro Fertilizers Limited, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, and Agritech Limited, jointly hosted a convention with nationwide dealers on January 29, 2024, at Faletti Hotel, Lahore. The primary objective of this convention was to engage the fertilizer dealers in a constructive dialogue and formulate immediate strategies aimed at reducing nationwide urea prices to benefit the farmers.

Attended by major fertilizer dealers from across the country, the convention facilitated a strategic discourse on vital topics such as fertilizer demand and supply situation, urea imports by the Government of Pakistan to fill the demand-supply gap, and the development of effective strategies to ensure the availability of urea and other ferti-



lizers at manufacturer-recommended prices.

Representatives from the fertilizer industry, including Mr. Ather Javed, Group General Manager Marketing, Fauji Fertilizer Company Ltd; Mr. Shakeel Ahmad, Advisor Fauji Fertilizer Bin-Qasim Limited, Ms. Rabel Sadozai, Director Marketing & Sales, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited; Mr. Atif Muhammad Ali, Vice President Marketing, Engro Fertilizers Limited; Mr. Tanweer Raza, Head of Marketing, Agritech Limited, along

with other senior management officials participated in the convention and interacted with the dealers.

All fertilizer companies expressed their commitment in ensuring nationwide availability of fertilizers. Simultaneously, they also shared the Government's resolve to ensure national food security amidst the rising population. Mr. Ather Javed shared a comprehensive update on the current status of the fertilizer market, distribution, and supply dynamics. He also highlighted the significant improvement in stock

positions following the import of urea by the Government, which implied that substantial volumes of urea supply can be expected in the coming days.

All stakeholders were urged to align with the government's initiatives aimed at bolstering crop productivity and farmer profitability. Acknowledging the essential role of urea in wheat production, it was stressed that concerted efforts from all stakeholders are crucial to achieving the government's wheat production target of 32 million tons for the current season. This target aims to reduce dependency on wheat imports, contributing to domestic food, feed, and seed requirements.

Fertilizer companies urged dealers to join the efforts for the smooth supply of fertilizers and contribute to stabilizing the current industry challenges. The convention concluded with an optimistic outlook, as all parties pledged mutual cooperation to ensure fertilizer supply at controlled rates, while maintaining a balance between supply and demand.

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# Army Chief interacting with general public - III

In an address at a seminar on agriculture and food security few weeks ago, Gen Asim Munir, serving as the guest of honor, commended the talents of the Pakistani nation. He emphasized the collective need for people to contribute to the country's progress. The seminar marked the continuation of the inaugurated Land Information Management System - Centre of Excellence (LIMS-COE), part of the 'Green Pakistan initiative' aimed at enhancing food security, boosting exports, and reducing agriculture-related imports. Gen Munir expressed determination to make Pakistan green again and assured full support for the nation's economic development. Encouraging unity and dedication, he asserted that Pakistan will progress, facing no impediments on its path to advancement. Referring to a verse from the Holy Quran, he urged the nation not to despair, emphasizing the values of patience and gratitude in the face of challenges.

On another occasion, a daughter of a martyred soldier lodged a complaint with Army Chief General Asim Munir, leading him to assure resolution and offer full cooperation. The video of Martyrs' Day, where the daughter shared her concerns, garnered widespread attention on social media. She reported a recurring issue of floodwater being diverted toward her house by a feudal in Dera Murad Jamali. In response, the Army Chief reassured her and pledged not to release water toward

her property in the future. During the incident, he directed staff to convey a message to the feudal, cautioning against such actions or else 'your water will reach somewhere else.'

Beyond the military realm, the role of Army Chief General Asim Munir extends to inspiring and guiding civilians towards discipline, service, and national pride. As a prominent figure with the capacity to shape perceptions and instill values, the army chief plays a crucial role in boosting the morale of the civilian population. Serving as a role model, he influences and inspires the people of Pakistan. Exemplifying qualities such as discipline, dedication, and a robust work ethic, the chief serves as a positive role model for the people. This demonstration of commendable attributes has the potential to inspire individuals to pursue excellence in their chosen paths, whether within the mili-

tary or other fields. Army Chief General Asim Munir consistently underscores the values of service, patriotism, and commitment to a greater cause. By consistently emphasizing the significance of contributing to the nation's well-being, he instills a sense of duty and responsibility among the populace. This promotion of civic values encourages active participation in community service and positive contributions to society.

Actively engaging with civilian communities serves as a powerful method for the army chief to uplift morale among the people. Through community outreach programs, public talks, and participation in civic events, opportunities for direct interaction are created. This engagement not only allows civilians to connect with military leaders but also fosters a sense of unity and shared responsibility for the nation's future. An essential aspect of the army chief's

role involves recognizing the achievements and contributions of the civilian population. By celebrating academic accomplishments, community service initiatives, and leadership achievements, the chief reinforces the importance of individual efforts in building a stronger and more prosperous nation. This positive reinforcement serves as motivation for people to strive for excellence in their pursuits.

General Asim Munir holds the opportunity to promote diversity and inclusivity, encouraging civilian youth from all backgrounds to consider military service. Through active support for initiatives that promote equal opportunities, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, the army chief contributes to building a more inclusive and representative armed forces that resonates positively with the people.

Readers, the Army chief's interaction with the general public is highly appreciated, not only by the youth but also by individuals of all genders and age groups. General Asim Munir, belonging to a middle-class family and being a self-made person, possesses a profound understanding of middle-class issues. His earnest efforts to address economic and developmental concerns are yielding positive results, with reduced dollar and fuel prices and increased foreign investment in the country. The nation acknowledges the remarkable role played by Army Chief General Asim Munir in contributing to the betterment of the country.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Actively engaging with civilian communities serves as a powerful method for the army chief to uplift morale among the people. Through community outreach programs, public talks, and participation in civic events, opportunities for direct interaction are created.



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

# Foreign direct investment and Debt Trap Diplomacy: a case study of CPEC - II

According to James Schwenlein report "Strategic implications of CPEC" which said that From 2014 to 2019, projects under CPEC proceeded in step with the 2017 master plan. According to data collected by the World Bank, in these first five years of implementation, approximately \$32 billion in Chinese investments were under construction, completed, or operational, and feasibility studies had been conducted on an additional \$14 billion in projects. Approximately 70 percent of CPEC projects implemented or completed up to date have been in the energy sector, with nearly all of the remainder in the transportation sector (Schwenlein, 2019). How ever it has great challenges and hurdles to face. Many concerns have been raised regarding "Debt Trap Diplomacy" (Chellaney, B, 2017) associated with Chinese investments which shows that these investments may lead to large number of debt burdened and compromise on economic sovereignty. According to Uzair Younas (senior policy Analyst for S. A program at USIP) the China, s influence in Pakistan during last eight years has increased. Pakistan total external debt stood \$ 44.35bn in June 2013, just 9.3 percent was owed to china. By April 2021 it ballooned up to \$90.12 billion with Pakistan owing 27.4 percent to China that is \$24.7 billion of its total external debt according to IMF ( Younas 26th may, 2021). More over This can be seen in case of Sri Lanka, Maldives, Tajikistan etc, all these and

many other countries are affected by debt trap diplomacy where they have accumulated huge amount of debt owed to china due to BRI projects. The Term "Debt Trap diplomacy" was first coined by western policy makers in 2017 to describe the Chinese take over of Sri Lanka, s " Hambantota Port " on 99 years lease after the island nation failed to honour its debt commitments (Chellaney, B, Dec 2017). Since the term is illegally applied to BRI including CPEC. According to Pakistan institute of development economics (PIDE) report China, s debt to Pakistan has witnessed significant increase over the years. In 2017 it was \$7.2 billion which increased to \$19 billion in 2018. While in 2021 it increased up to \$24.7 billion (PIDE nd). Similarly the project budget is \$62 billion but according to Hassan Abbas (Pak-American scholar in south Asian and Middle East studies) the delay in the project will increase the cost up to \$98 billion. it will take more than 40 years to pay back debt to china and all these increase in debt raises the concerns about Pakistan ability to manage and repay the loan. Potentially this increase the risks associated with debt trap diplomacy. The issue of Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and its potential role in leading host countries into a debt trap is multifaceted. Beyond Uzair Younas' study, various other factors, especially local and national social and political dynamics, contribute to countries' susceptibility to debt traps amidst Chinese FDI. Governance and Institutional Factors: A book



Analysis

Sohail Ahmad Baber

Written by Deborah Brautigam in ("The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa,") emphasize that weak governance structures, institutional deficiencies, and corruption within host countries significantly contribute to their vulnerability to debt traps. This is observed in cases across Africa, where inadequate regulatory frameworks and governance issues have amplified debt challenges despite Chinese investments. Policy Implementation and Transparency: another example of domestic impact is Kevin P. Gallagher's work on Chinese finance in Latin America in his book:(new bank in the town); highlights how changes in political leadership and policy priorities can impact a country's debt sustainability. In instances where transparency and accountability are lacking in policy implementation related to Chinese-funded projects, countries may face higher risks of debt distress. In the context of Pakistan's experience with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), local social and political dynamics have played a crucial role (Zafar, A,2021). Challenges related to transparency, local stakeholder engagement, and uneven distribution of benefits have fueled concerns. Reports from institutions like the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and independent analyses has highlighted these concerns. Concerns about governance, project selection, transparency, and the concentration of projects in certain regions have been raised. These issues have led to debates within Pakistan regarding the long-term impact of CPEC on the country's economy and debt burden. Writer is Mphill I. R and he can be reached at [sohail.baber@conceptschoools.edu.pk](mailto:sohail.baber@conceptschoools.edu.pk)

# Electoral System of Pakistan

Muhammad Sufyan

The electoral system of a country encompasses a range of key ingredients including how votes are cast, counted, and are translated into representation as well as on the basis of voting methods. Various types of voting and choosing the representatives have been introduced like, first-past-the-post and proportional representation, the former voting system is based on obtaining majority votes to get the representation in the legislative assembly and the latter describe about how much percentage of votes a political party get during election and on the basis of percentage that political party secure seats in the legislative assembly. Soon after the inception of Pakistan, the political leaders inculcated the democracy into the electoral process for choosing the representatives among the people. But it has been witnessing various loopholes in this system since that time. In democracy, people express their choice for electing their representatives through their votes and then their votes are translated into representation. But there is a dilemma in the developing countries that all the political elites resort to political tactics including illicit means to manipulate the people at greater level. In Pakistan, all the elections have been denounced by the opposition parties as rigged, raising concerns about the fairness and the transparency in the elections. There are many loopholes in our electoral process which need to be overhauled for the fairness and the transparency in the elections. The political parties which are holding power seek to make amendments in electoral process which move towards their own advantage, causing the disarray among the people and other

political parties and making people compel to storm the streets for the change in the electoral process. There are two key examples of changes in the electoral process: Kenya and Mexico, in 1990 and 2000 substandard elections led to revolutionize the electoral system which led towards the overthrow of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, had held power for over 70 years in Mexico. Since then, election commission has been working within its domain to maintain fairness and transparency in general elections. Political parties in power make specific appointments in the election commission. How fairness and transparency are expected from a commission that itself created on favouritism and partiality? Can a political party nominate members of ECP to conduct fair elections? The Representative of Peoples' Act allows candidate to spend minimum 1.5m rupees in provincial elections and 2m in general elections which only hereditary rich candidate can afford. This predicament which once affected the more developed political system of the UK, George Orwell wrote that "The English electoral system is all but open fraud in a dozen obvious ways, it is gerrymandered in the interest of the moneyed class." The transparency of the election is based on the electoral laws of the country. ECP is obliged to conduct fair and transparent election without partiality and favouritism, leading towards increased confidence of the people on the ECP. It is required for ECP to oversee the fairness and transparency in elections, which will ensure impartiality, strengthen democracy in true meaning, and foster plurality and inclusiveness in political affairs which are the bedrocks of a robust democracy. Writer is Student at Quaid e Azam University Islamabad and he can be reached at [sufyanahmad2239@gmail.com](mailto:sufyanahmad2239@gmail.com)

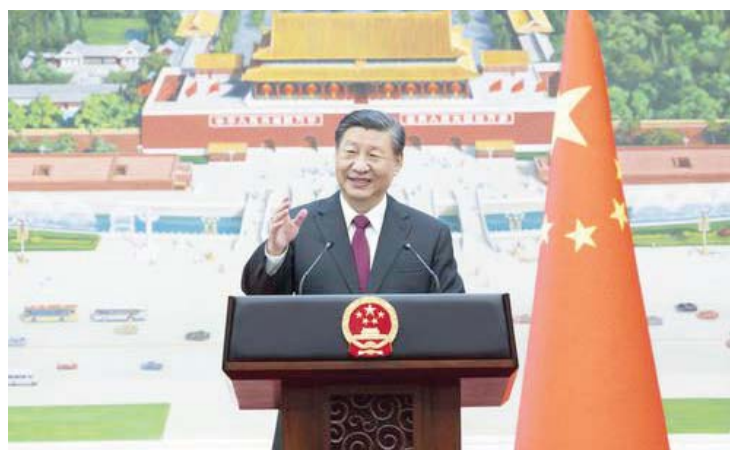
# Update: Xi receives credentials of new ambassadors to China

Xinhua

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping received the credentials of 42 ambassadors to China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday afternoon.

The ambassadors are Tan Hai Chuan from Singapore, Massimo Ambrosetti from Italy, Hussain Alhamadi from the United Arab Emirates, Michael Campbell from Nicaragua, Pavlo Riabikin from Ukraine, Mohsen Bakhtiar from Iran, Ian J. Marshall from Grenada, Adel Elarbi from Tunisia, Alberto Blanco Silva from Cuba, Bruno Angelet from Belgium, Iven Zyuulu from Zambia, Per Augustsson from Sweden, Sinisa Berjan from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jakub Kumoch from Poland, Jasem Ibrahim Alnajem from Kuwait, Mauricio Epkua Obama from Equatorial Guinea,

Roland Reiland from Luxembourg, Maria Soledad Cordova from Ecuador, Salvador Moncada from Honduras, Bunyad Huseynov from Azerbaijan, Khamis M Omar from Tanzania, Willy Bett from Kenya, Alfredo Ortuño Viçtory from Costa Rica, Arthur Williams from Jamaica, Kaid Slimane Lahcene from Algeria, Dan-Horia Maxim from Romania, Norman Bin Muhamad from Malaysia, Khalil Ur Rahmani Hashimi from Pakistan, Abu Bakarr Karim from Sierra Leone, Loro Da Silva Horta from Timor-Leste, Charviakou Aliksandr from Belarus, Asadullah Bilal Karimi from Afghanistan, Somphone Sichaleune from Laos, Hugo Siles from Bolivia, Kanasugi Kenji from Japan, Andrey Tehov from Bulgaria, Barrett Salato from Solomon Islands, Robert Lee from Fiji, Daouda Bitie from Burkina Faso, Martin Tomco from the Czech Republic, Scott Dewar from Australia,



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a speech after receiving the credentials of 42 ambassadors to China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, Jan. 30, 2024. (Xinhua/Huang Jingwen)

and Vahe Gevorgyan from Armenia. After the ceremony, Xi delivered a speech to the ambassadors. Xi asked the ambassadors to convey

his cordial greetings and best wishes to their state leaders and the peoples. Noting that China cherishes friendship with people of other countries, Xi said China is willing to deepen friendship and expand mutually beneficial cooperation with people of other countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, and to push forward bilateral relations.

It is hoped that ambassadors will have a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of China and serve to strengthen the bond of cooperation and build a bridge of communication for bilateral relations. The Chinese government will provide support and convenience for ambassadors to perform their duties, Xi said.

"This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China," Xi stressed, adding that China is advancing the building of a strong and prosperous country and

national rejuvenation in all respects through Chinese modernization. The mission and objective of Chinese modernization are to enable the over 1.4 billion Chinese people to live a better life. For the world, this means a broader market and unprecedented development opportunities, which will inject strong impetus into the modernization of countries around the world.

Xi said the world today is not peaceful. With the future of mankind and the well-being of its people in mind, China, as always, endeavours to contribute its wisdom and solutions to the cause of peace and development of mankind, advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, and work together to build a better world. Wang Yi was present at the events.

## Germany-Nuremberg-Toy Fair

NUREMBERG: People talk behind panda models at the Nuremberg International Toy Fair (Spielwarenmesse) in Nuremberg, Germany,



Photo: Xinhua

## Kashmir solidarity campaign will start from 1st February: PeH

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir has announced the commencement of "Jammu and Kashmir Solidarity" campaign from February 1st.

According to details, rallies will be held in Neelum Valley, Jhelum Valley including the capital till Kashmir Solidarity day.

Speakers said that campaign will be started from February 1 to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K).

They maintained that they will march in the various towns of Athmaqam, Kundal Shahi, Jura, Barian Bazar, Chilhana, Nussada, Devlian and Patehka in Neelum district.

The leaders said that on February 3, a protest will be held in Chakothi, Chinari, Hattian Balan, Saran, Chathiyar and Ghari Dupatta.

Speakers said that when our brothers and sisters in IIOJ&K are victims of the worst atrocities, they will not be left alone at this difficult time.

"In these situations, every citizen of Azad Kashmir is a part of the self deter-



mination movement against India for the freedom of IIOJ&K" they added.

Leaders also said that India cannot change the status of the disputed Kashmir by military force, war crimes, illegal acts, the cruel actions of the Lok Sabha on August 5, 2019, and the political and biased decisions of the Supreme Court on December 11, 2023.

They stated that on February 5, at 10:00 AM, the "Jammu and Kashmir Solidarity" rally will be held from Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk to Bank

Road. They appealed to people of Azad Kashmir to suspend their activities and show solidarity with the people of Occupied Kashmir.

Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, Vice Chairman International Forum for Justice and Human Rights Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Vice Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Usman Ali Hashim, Faisal Farooq Sheikh, Moham-mad Fayyaz Khan and Liaquat Ali Rana were also present on the occasion.

## US and Pakistan sign agreement to protect Pakistan's Cultural Heritage

PPA

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome and Pakistan Secretary of National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed signed an agreement on cultural property protection in Islamabad on January 30, 2024.

The agreement establishes import restrictions on certain types of archaeological and ethnological materials originating from Pakistan and entering the United States. The agreement facilitates the return of these cultural objects to the people of Pakistan. The cultural property agreement demonstrates the strong U.S. and Pakistani commitment to disrupt the theft and trafficking of cultural objects and our shared goal of protecting Pakistan's rich and diverse cultural heritage. This agreement commits



both parties to work together to counter looting and trafficking of objects, promote a clean market for Pakistani art and antiquities in the United States, and increase opportunities for U.S. museums and the American public to learn about and experience Pakistan's history and culture.

"This agreement protects unique and historically significant artifacts for future generations... It also demonstrates U.S. support for the

principles of tolerance and respect for diversity - principles of which the people of this region have lived for centuries," said Ambassador Blome.

Today's signing underscores the United States' global commitment to cultural heritage protection and preservation. The United States has been unwavering in its commitment to protect and preserve cultural heritage around the world and to restrict trafficking in

cultural property, which may be used to fund terrorist and criminal networks. To date, the United States has returned over 175 cultural objects to Pakistan, and this agreement simplifies the process.

Since 2001, the United States government has supported 35 cultural heritage preservation projects across Pakistan with more than \$8.4 million USD. U.S.-funded preservation projects include the conservation of Gandhara archaeological treasures and Mughal architectural heritage, documentation of historic manuscripts, the digitization of museums, and the restoration of historically significant Sufi shrines and Hindu monuments, among other projects. This new bilateral cultural agreement highlights the diversity of the Pakistani people and sets the stage for further bilateral cooperation.

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC), a subsidiary of Barrick Gold Corporation here on Tuesday signed a MoU with The Hunar Foundation (THF) signaling the start of RDMC's first CSR initiative in vocational training and capacity building for local youth in Chagai, its district of operation.

RDMC operates in Pakistan under a Joint Venture agreement with the provincial Government of Balochistan and the federal Government of Pakistan.

The THF is a non-profit organization established in 2008 to empower and enable the marginalized youth of Pakistan with vocational and technical skills.

THF's objective is to act as a facilitator in the field of education for catalytic action to increase the number of talent-



ed young persons engaged in productive work, consequently alleviating poverty and making them contributing members of society.

This partnership between RDMC and THF intends to pave the way for a vocational training and capacity-building project that will facilitate income generation and enterprise amongst local youth.

It is a social investment project that promises sustainable development and seeks to build a harmonious partnership amongst the communities in and around the project

amongst unemployed youth is a powerful lever for the achievement of the company's sustainability strategy and long-term vision.

Tariq Mian attended the event and signed on behalf of THF while RDMC was represented by country manager Ali Ehsan Rind, and other team members.

Speaking at the event, Ali Ehsan Rind said: "This project was conceived to bridge the skill-gap prevalent once we realized the consistent demand for employment and lack of skills-development in the local population. Through this partnership with THF we will create a cadre of skilled workers from Chagai who will then be able to work independently through the creation of small businesses and enhanced employment opportunities at small and medium size companies."

## IWMB Saving Wildlife without Funds from Ministry

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Animals are equal owners of this land and human beings are supposed to share the land with them rather eliminate them or imprison them in cages where they are deprived of their natural habitat. This was the message or appeal sent to all by Chairperson Islamabad Wild Life Management Board (IWMB) Rina Saeed Khan on 30th Jan 2024 in an interaction with media persons. IWMB arranged a media tour to Rescue and Rehabilitation Center at old Islamabad Zoo to share the work done so far on the rehabilitation of different animals. The animals included a young Bengal tiger "Baboo", 7 black bears, many kites, monkeys especially.

Second Chance Wildlife NGO is sponsoring IWMB partially, in

the rehabilitation at the center but they seem to have full control of this facility taking advantage of the lack of funds in IWMB. This NGO was outsourced in Nov 2023 only after two month of its creation in Sep 2023.

The representative of Second Chance Mr. Ludo Van Vooren briefed the media in detail about the environment, food, habitat the animals need for their natural growth and health.

Ms Rina Saeed Khan shared with media, "IWMB has converted the site of Zoo into wildlife rescue center that is providing assistance to all species of wild animals in distress. Since Aug 2021 the Center has rescued and rehabilitated approximately 381 animals including mammals, birds and reptiles. The center was outsourced to Second Chance NGO in Nov 2023. Current-

ly the center is rehabilitating 51 animals. IWMB has housed here 7 Black bears, Rhesus monkeys and Pangulins 15 of which have been released in their wilderness so far. The monkeys will also be set free in their natural environment in Margalla hills when rehabilitated completely.

Anila Umair and Sana Raja are renown volunteers having remarkable contributions to rehabilitation of animals in and around twin cities Rawalpindi Islamabad were also present.

The Bengal tiger was saved and brought back to life by these two young ladies. Tiger was 4 months old when they came to know about its miserable condition in a private house. They approached the family and took over the rare specie to conserve it. Now the tiger is 16 months old, healthy and energetic to live his full life

ahead. Ms Rina Saeed proudly shared, "IWMB's most famous rescue has been of a leopard from Defence Housing Authority Islamabad area who was successfully rescued and released back into the wilderness of Margalla Hills in 2022."

IWMB seeks cooperation from law enforcing agencies to check and stop animal trafficking. Ms Rina Saeed Khan briefed the media about Leopard cats recovered during trafficking in Karachi. They were later released in Margallah Hills National Park along with several rehabilitated Porcupines, Foxes, Golden Jackals, Civet cats and bird species like Kites and Spotted Owls.

Second Chance Wildlife is currently conducting limited guided tours of the center for students and animal lovers. But regarding media persons, the attitude of the representatives was not welcoming. They were hardly allowing media to take pictures and videos of the animals they were presenting as rescued and rehabilitated.



A lady in the team of Second Chance was most of the time negative to all media approaches to her. She even did not allow media to take shorts of the tiger with two ladies Anila and Sana

as both of them were appreciated in the presser for their contribution to save the tiger. The lady, a foreigner was posing extra possessive about the animals in the center.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
61,841.74	62,773.72
Day's High	Day's Low
63,074.50	61,637.62
Index Value	Change
11,762,007,472	-931.98
Percentage	Time
-1.48%	30 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

**Europe: FTSE 100 Index**

Index Value	Change
7,666.31	+33.57
Percentage	Time
+0.44%	30 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

**USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average**

Index Value	Change
38,386.83	+53.38
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	30 Jan, 11:59 am GMT-5

**Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average**

Index Value	Change
36,065.86	+38.92
Percentage	Time
+0.11%	30 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	183.8
Bahrain Dinar	736.74	744.74
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	38.67	39.07
Danish Krone	40.71	41.11
Euro	302	305
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.36	3.47
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	899.75	908.75
Malaysian Ringgit	58.52	59.12
New Zealand \$	170.33	172.33
Norwegians Krone	26.76	27.06
Omani Riyal	719.48	727.48
Qatari Riyal	76.83	77.53
Saudi Riyal	74.5	75.5
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.74	27.04
Swiss Franc	320.59	323.09
Thai Bhat	7.85	8
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.4
UK Pound Sterling	355	358
US Dollar	279.8	281.5

# Pakistan-Korea collaboration will boost potato seed production in Pakistan: Korean Envoy

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Republic of Korea are collaborating on Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP), notably focusing on seed potato production using aeroponic technology—a flagship endeavor of their partnership. The dynamic partnership between KOPIA and PARC in pioneering the Aeroponic Potato Seed Production System is set to revolutionize agricultural productivity. This groundbreaking initiative promises to unlock a plethora of job opportunities, ushering in a new era of agricultural innovation. A prestigious ceremony celebrating the harvest of potato seeds unfolded at the National Agricultural Research Center. The ceremony was graced by the presence of the Honorable Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Dr. Kausar Abdulla Malik, His Excellency Park Ki Jun, the Korean Ambassador, and Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman of PARC.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Kausar Abdulla Malik, Federal Minister for the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, high-



lighted the remarkable growth in potato cultivation and production witnessed in Pakistan over the past two decades. He emphasized that the adoption of Aeroponic technology will not only boost potato production but also ensure the availability of virus-free seeds, thus contributing significantly to the agricultural sector's improvement.

In his address, H. E. Park Ki Jun, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, underscored the collaborative strides between Pakistan and Korea, notably emphasizing the swift progress of the joint potato seed production project. He unveiled plans for numerous forthcoming projects poised for launch, signaling a robust pipeline of initiatives. Additionally, he re-

affirmed his dedication to bolstering bilateral cooperation by extending training opportunities in agriculture to Pakistani professionals, aimed at enriching their expertise and capabilities.

Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, emphasized the significance of establishing first potato seed production facility in Pakistan utilizing aeroponic technology. Dr. Ali, at the harvest event, highlighted the power of aeroponic technology, which can yield 50 to 60 potato seeds per plant compared to just five from conventional methods.

Dr. Cho Gyoungae, Director of KOPIA-Pakistan Center, shared plans to provide 160,000 tons of certified seed potatoes over five years. This involves constructing four aeroponic greenhouses, 32 screenhouses, and supplying a cold store and 100 KW solar systems to meet goals. Dr. Cho assured KOPIA's full support. Dr. Aish Muhammad, the Project Coordinator, highlighted the project's goal of cutting potato production costs, boosting yields with quality seed potatoes, aiming for self-sufficiency. The initiative will establish a sustainable system with aeroponic technology and trained staff.

## Gas loadshedding

ISLAMABAD: A street vendor carrying traditional food items on his head walk past in front of LPG gas cylinders at sector G-11 road in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

## Master Changan hits 40,000 vehicle milestone

**PPA**

KARACHI: Master Changan Motors Limited has marked another significant breakthrough by achieving the production milestone of 40,000 vehicles made in Pakistan. This accomplishment stands as a testament to the brand's growing influence in the Pakistani market.

The milestone was celebrated at a ceremony on Changan's plant in Karachi. The state-of-the-art plant at Bin Qasim is presently the leading Chinese automaker's only RHD facility and serves as an integral part of Changan's global supply chain. Master Changan has previously commemorated export milestones from the same plant as well.

The 40,000 units include vehicles from Changan's diverse portfolio of SUV, Sedan, MPV and Pickup. The achievement was made possible due to Master Changan's nationwide presence in 18 cities with 29 dealers, a strong after sales and spare parts



network, progressive localization efforts and robust supply chain collaboration with the principals in China. Master Changan was formed in 2018

with an investment of USD 136 million. The company is a JV between Master Group and China's #1 domestic automaker.

## ACCA celebrates the induction of new members in Pakistan

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) proudly announces the successful conclusion of its New Member's Ceremonies held in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. These events marked a significant milestone, celebrating the induction of a significant number of new members into ACCA's global network, reflecting ACCA's growing influence and commitment to nurturing accounting talent in Pakistan.

The events celebrated over xxx newly inducted ACCA members and fellow members who come from diverse backgrounds but follow the same journey as their peers globally. The events also recognised ACCA's prizewinning students, newly awarded approved employers, Practical

Experience Supervisors, and winners of ACCA advocacy awards.

ACCA Director of Asia Pacific, Pulkit Abrol, expressed his enthusiasm for the future of the new members, stating, "As we welcome our new members, we are not just celebrating their achievements but also invigorating the future of the accountancy profession in Pakistan. Their skills, dedication, and ethical commitment are crucial in navigating the complex economic landscapes of today's world. They are the vanguard in our mission to foster a sustainable and transparent business environment."

Adding to the significance of the events, the ceremonies were honoured by the attendance of prominent national personalities including Walid Iqbal, Senator, Government of Pakistan and Sajid Hussain, CEO,



SKANS School of Accountancy who joined in Lahore as Chief Guest and Guest of Honour respectively; former Federal Minister and Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, DR. Ishrat Husain in Karachi; and Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Former Minister of State for Investment / Founder, Nutshell Group, in Islamabad; Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq, Founder & Chairman,

The Millennium Education & TMUC, in Islamabad. Their presence and insights provided invaluable perspectives, highlighting the importance of collaboration between the accounting profession and various sectors in shaping a robust economic future for Pakistan.

Our proud Strategic Partners: Mobilink Microfinance Bank Ltd,

InfraZamin Pakistan. Platinum Partners: SKANS Education Pvt Ltd., S&P Global, TMUC, Kalsoom International Hospital, Dawlance, Engro Energy, Telenor Global Shared Services, Pakistan Mercantile Exchange. Our Gold Partners: Adroit/Obox Accounting, PAC - Lahore, Gadoon Textile Mills Limited, TSA. Our Supporting Partners: ICMA Pakistan, Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA), P@SHA, Pakistan Business Council (PBC), Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business (CERB), Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance (PICG), Punjab Board of Investment & Trade (PBIT), Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB), CFA Society, Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), Punjab Revenue Authority. Our knowledge Partners: Nutshell Group and KPMG.

## KalPay and UCP collaborate to provide students with instalment facilities for education financing

LAHORE: KalPay has partnered up with University of Central Punjab (UCP) to offer convenient instalment plans to their students to help manage their educational expenses efficiently.

KalPay, co-founded by Mr. Shershah Hassan in 2021, is a consumer lending fintech startup that offers buy now, pay later (BNPL) solutions on various e-commerce platforms, and for the purchase of productive assets like smartphones and fee payments for education and skill development services.

This collaboration between KalPay and UCP will enable UCP students to study now and pay later with the ease of interest-free monthly instalments, which are customizable as per their individual needs.

At the MoU Signing Ceremony, Mr. Shershah Hassan,

CEO KalPay, commented, "We launched our initiative of KalPay Taleem back in September of 2022 with the motivation to make education more affordable for students. This partnership is one step further in breaking financial barriers and increasing financial inclusion within the underbanked population".

Mr. Muhammad Ali Aizaz, Head Alumni Relations UCP, added, "This collaboration is more than just a partnership; it's a catalyst for social good. By facilitating students to shape their future, we're paving the way for a more equitable and prosperous Pakistan".

In the near future, KalPay will continue working to broaden the scope of their collaboration across Pakistan's institutions and help build the foundations of a financially prosperous nation.

## Sindh Bank and Avanza Solutions paving way towards digital transformation

**PPA**

KARACHI: Sindh Bank, a prominent commercial bank in Pakistan known for its rapid growth, collaborates with Avanza Solutions (Pvt.) Ltd., a top-tier provider of cutting-edge digital platforms, solutions, and services. This collaboration aims to accelerate the pace of digital transformation in Pakistan's banking sector, with a focus on customer-centricity. Together, they strive to revolutionize the banking industry by introducing innovative solutions and services that cater to customers' evolving needs.

With this collaboration, Sindh Bank has aimed to improve its customers' experience by prioritizing digital

security, customer onboarding, and customer-centricity. The bank intends to offer its customers personalized and secure experiences across all touchpoints, leveraging advanced and next-gen innovations.

'Avanza Solutions' CEO—Mr. Omer Ahmed Khan, expressed his views on this partnership: "Avanza's state-of-the-art digital platforms and solutions are transforming financial institutions' operations on a global scale. With Avanza's cutting-edge tools and technologies, institutions can offer unparalleled convenience and customer-centricity, enabling their customers to enjoy financial freedom and a personalized premium experience."

## Chairman PTA assures support to promote ICT sector



**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: PTA is taking many collaborative efforts to promote ease of doing business and attract foreign investment. These collaborations would help address industry challenges and facilitate more favorable business environment. PTA would support the business community in promoting ICT sector. This was said by Maj. Gen. (R) Hafeez ur Rehman, Chairman, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority while talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry that called on him led by President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari.

PTA Chairman said that Pakistan's telecommunications and digital technology sectors are undergoing transformative changes, driven by development of comprehensive regulatory frameworks. He said that PTA is working to provide customers with affordable and high quality services and ensure reasonable returns to investors. He said that the mobile phone sector has achieved a remarkable growth of 29% during the last 5 years due to which mobile services are available to 90% of the country's population while the broadband subscribers have soared to over 130 million. He assured that PTA would continue to focus on improving coverage, access and quality of services to promote ease of doing business and attract more investment.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that in this competitive business environment, availability of affordable telecommunication services and digital technology is very important for businesses and PTA should focus on this to promote ease of doing business. He said that suspension of mobile broadband services badly affects the digital transactions of businesses and causes them significant losses and stressed that the PTA should address this issue to save businesses from losses.

# Mooney regains top spot in ICC Rankings

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Australia opener Beth Mooney has reclaimed the number one position in the ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings after a match-winning knock in the first T20I of their three-match home series against South Africa.

The left-handed opener, who first attained number one position in March 2020 and was most recently at the top in December 2022, struck a fine 72 not out off 57 deliveries with 11 fours and a six to help world champions Australia score an eight-wicket win and go one up in the series, said a press release.

South Africa star Laura Wolvaardt, who helped restore parity with a 53-ball 58 not out in the second match, has reached a career-best 731 rating points while remaining number three after the weekly update to the women's rankings that considers performances in the first two Australia-South Africa matches in Canberra and the first two matches of the Zimbabwe-Ireland series in Harare.

South Africa opener Tazmin Brits is another one to make notable progress in the batting rankings, moving up three places to a career-best sixth position after scoring 100 runs in two innings. Fast bowlers Annabel Sutherland of Australia (up six places to 34th) and Marizanne Kapp of South Africa (up five places to 40th) have also advanced.

Ireland opening batter Amy Hunter has made huge progress after unbeaten



innings of 101 and 71 helped her team take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series. The wicketkeeper-batter is now the highest ranked batter from Ireland, gaining 21 slots to reach a career-best 18th position, five positions above Gaby Lewis (up three places to 23rd).

Ireland all-rounder Orla Prendergast (up five places to 46th) and the Zimbabwe pair of Mary-Anne Musonda (up four places to 47th) and Kelis Ndhlovu (up 20 places to 59th) have also moved up the batting rankings.

Ireland captain Laura Delaney's

match-winning haul of four for 12 in the second match has lifted her four places to 56th among bowlers while her teammate Cara Murray has progressed from 58th to joint-49th after grabbing three wickets in two matches with her leg-spin bowling.

# SL beat Pakistan in Women's U19 Tri-Nation T20 Series 5th match

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Sri Lanka outplayed Pakistan by 31 runs in the fifth match of the Women's U19 Tri-Nation T20 Series at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium.

Sri Lanka Women U19 won the toss and elected to bat first. Zaib-un-Nisa Niaz provided an early breakthrough, as she removed Dewmi Wijerathne for a second-ball duck.

Nethmi Senarathna and Vishmi Gunarathna built a 66-run second-wicket stand to bring momentum to the innings.

Maham Anees dismissed

Senarathna (35, 45b, 3x4s) to break the partnership. Gunarathna remained unbeaten at 71 from 55, including 11 boundaries.

Captain Manudi Dulansa Nanayakkara also chipped in with an unbeaten 17 off 18, with one boundary.

Sri Lanka Women U19 finished at 134-2 in 20 overs. Maham and Zaib-un-Nisa were the only two wicket-takers for Pakistan Women U19.

Eyman Fatima and Samiya Afsar provided Pakistan Women U19 a solid start to the chase, courtesy of a 42-run opening stand.

Rashmika Sewwandi brought an end to the part-

nership as she dismissed Samiya (26, 21b, 5x4s) in the last over of the powerplay.

Soon after, Maham Anees (6, 15b) was stumped off Yasanthi Herath. Eyman's bat produced 38 from 40, with five boundaries and one maximum, before she fell victim to the Sri Lanka captain Nanayakkara.

Wicketkeeper-batter Komal Khan added 17 from 36, including one four, before she was caught on Sewwandi's bowling in the last over.

Zoofishan Ayyaz contributed an unbeaten eight from seven, as Pakistan Women U19 managed to get to 103-4 in the stipulated 20

overs.

Sewwandi was the pick of Sri Lankan bowlers, accounting for two wickets. Herath and Nanayakkara returned with a wicket each.

Pakistan Women U19 next play against hosts Bangladesh Women U19 on Wednesday.

Scores in brief: Sri Lanka Women U19 134-2, 20 overs (Vishmi Gunarathna 71 not out, Nethmi Poorna Senarathna 35, Manudi Dulansa Nanayakkara 17 not out; Maham Anees 1-13, Zaib-un-Nisa Niaz 1-32).

Pakistan Women U19 103-4, 20 overs (Eyman Fatima 38, Samiya Afsar 26; Rashmika Sewwandi 2-16).

# Rising Punjab Games 3rd phase competitions begin

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Rising Punjab Games 2024 3rd phase table tennis and athletics competitions started at Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) sports venues under the auspices of Sports Board Punjab (SBP) on Tuesday. Rising Punjab Games table tennis competitions are being organized at NPSC Gymnasium Hall while Punjab Stadium is hosting athletics events.

DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail in a statement on Tuesday said that the Rising Punjab Games provided a great opportunity for athletes to showcase their skills. The promotion of sports is our mission. "Sports Board Punjab is taking all possible measures for the development of sports across the province. We are quite upbeat that several talented players will emerge from this platform and these players will serve the national team in future".

Following are the day 1 results:

**400m race Girls:**  
1. Sunaina (Rwp) 1.01.00, 2. Rida (Fsb) 1.02.04, 3. Musarrat Saheen (Srg) 1.04.19

**Long Jump Girls:**  
1. Amtul Rehman (Fsb) 5.35, 2. Faiqa (Lhr) 5.08, 3. Ramzan Bibi (Mul) 4.98.

**High Jump Girls:**  
1. Noreen Fatima (Fsb), 2. Arooj Ayub (Bwp), 3. Ghazala Ramzan (Lhr)

**Shot Put Girls:**  
1. Mahnoor Dogar (Fsb) 11.71, 2. Remsha Khan (Mul) 9.74, 3. Ghazala Ramzan (Lhr) 7.58

**3000m race Girls**  
1. Farhat Bano (Fsb), 2. Maryam Ismael (DGK), 3. Kainat (Guj)

**5000m race Boys**  
1. Sohail Amir (Shwl), 2. Atteeq ur Rehman (Guj), 3. Kaleem Akhtar (Bwp).

**Table tennis Women's Team Event results:**  
Rawalpindi beat Sargodha 3-0  
Saba beat Areej by 3-0 (11-2, 11-6, 11-3)  
Laila beat Esha by 3-0 (11-3 11-5 11-2)  
Huma Arshad beat Sawera by 3-0 (11-2, 11-1, 11-3)  
Gujranwala beat Multan by 3-0  
Addan beat Sadiya by 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-6)  
Saher beat Mehwish (11-9, 12-14, 11-9, 11-4, 14-16)  
Zaryab beat Saba (11-5, 11-8, 13-11, 11-4)  
Sahival beat Bahawalpur by 3-0  
Tania beat Noor by 3-0 (11-3, 11-4, 11-1)  
Zillay Huma beat Anum by 3-0 (11-13, 11-4, 11-4)  
Esha beat Nimra by 3-0 (11-1, 11-4, 11-5).

# Zone-VII Whites & Zone-IV Whites in A. S. Natural Stone U-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament quarter-finals

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Zone-VII Whites moved into Quarter Final after beating their respective opponents Zone-IV Whites by 166 runs in their last Group Match of Group B in the A. S. Natural Stone Under-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-VII top of the Group B and Zone-IV also secured 2nd Position to Qualify for the Quarter Final. The tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Scores in Brief:  
Zone-VII Whites beat Zone-IV by 166 runs at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-VII Whites 235/9 in 40 overs. Ansar 40, Fahad Hussain 34, Ismail 31, Musab Ali 25. Iqrar (sla) 4/25, Bilal 2/35.  
Zone-IV Whites 69 all out 21.5 overs. Owais Khan 23, M. Shahban 21. Junaid (rlb) 4/19, Farhan Zaman (sla) 3/10, Inam 2/15.

# All Pakistan Inter Board Girls Handball Championship Faisalabad beats Mardan



**Sports Desk**

MULTAN: Faisalabad beat Mardan seven-one in the opening match of the All Pakistan Inter Board Girls Handball Championship held on Tuesday.

According to Malik Nisar, the In-charge of Sports for the Multan Board, the match was played on a single-league basis. All four teams will compete against each other, and the team with the highest points on the table will be declared the champion.

Naemullah, Nadeem Bhutta, Ghazanfar Raan, and Muhammad Qaisar, who served as match officials, were present during the match. Congratulations to Faisalabad on their victory, and we look forward to the upcoming matches in the championship."

# Pakistan beat Australia in FIH Hockey5s WC



**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan defeated Australia by 11-3 goals in a one-sided encounter in the FIH Hockey5s World Cup at Muscat, Oman. According to the details, for Pakistan Captain Rana Abdul Waheed Ashraf scored five goals including a hat-trick while Ghazanfar Ali and Zakaria Hayat scored two goals each. Murtaza Yaqub and Arshad Liaquat scored one goal each.

Pakistan Hockey Team Management includes Head Coach Olympian Shakeel Abbasi, Manager Dilwar Hussain while Waqas Mahmood as Physiotherapist and Junaid Akhtar as Video Operator. Pakistan team would play the 9th and 10th position match of the event on Wednesday against the winner from teams of Switzerland and New Zealand.

# Zone-VII Whites beats Zone-IV Whites, reaches quarter finals

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Zone-VII Whites moved into Quarter Final after beating its opponent Zone-IV Whites by 166 runs in their last group match in the A. S. Natural Stone Under-19 Inter Zonal Cricket tournament at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-VII top of the Group B and Zone-IV also secured 2nd Position to Qualify for the Quarter Final, a communique said on Tuesday.

The tournament was being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Scores in Brief:  
Zone-VII Whites beat Zone-IV by 166 runs at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-VII Whites 235/9 in 40 overs. Ansar 40, Fahad Hussain 34, Ismail 31, Musab Ali 25. Iqrar (sla) 4/25, Bilal 2/35.  
Zone-IV Whites 69 all out 21.5 overs. Owais Khan 23, M. Shahban 21. Junaid (rlb) 4/19, Farhan Zaman (sla) 3/10, Inam 2/15.

# Sports Gala

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed distributing prizes among the players during Sports Gala-2024 at The University of Faisalabad (TUF).



Photo: Spokesman

# Karachi, Lahore qualify for National Women's T20 Tournament final

**A Sports**

Lahore and Karachi have qualified for the final of the National Women's T20 Tournament 2023-24, after securing the top two spots on the points table following ten rounds of matches.

Rawalpindi missed out on the qualification based on net run rate (NRR) as they fell short of Karachi's NRR despite having the same number of wins.

The final is scheduled to be played on 31 January at Pindi Cricket Stadium. The first ball is likely to be bowled at 1100 PKT, with the toss expected to take place at 1030 PKT.

The last round of the National Women's T20 Tournament 2023-24 saw Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi emerge on top after all six teams participated in games played

across three venues in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

In a rain-impacted game at Ayub Park Ground, Karachi scored 100-5 in 15 overs in reply to Multan's 114-5 in 20 overs, winning the game by 20 runs as per the DLS. Multan scored 114-5 in 20 overs after being put to bat first by Karachi. Aiman Anwar provided the first breakthrough for Karachi, as Samina Aftab was caught on just four off 21.

Multan captain Gull Feroza and Saïqa Riaz stitched up a 74-run second-wicket partnership, countering the earlier setback.

Gull Feroza hit her fifth half-century of the tournament, producing 67 from 57 on the back of 10 boundaries before she fell to the opposing captain Fatima Sana in the 18th over.

Huraina Sajjad ran out Saïqa

as she departed for 26 off 28, with one boundary. Warda Yousaf and Noor-ul-Iman could only contribute a run each before they had to walk back to the pavilion.

Fatima, Aimen and Rameen Shamim accounted for a wicket each. Ayesha Bilal found success early on as Muneeba Ali was caught for just four runs.

Javeria Khan and Omaira Sohail recuperated with a 49-run second-wicket stand until the latter fell to Rehmat Noreen for 24 on 22, with three boundaries.

Javeria added 40 from 41, with two fours, before she was run out. Yusra Amir (20 not out, 18b, 1x4) was the other contributor with the bat.

The Fatima Sana-led side was awarded the game by 20 runs, as per DLS calculations after rain interrupted the game soon after

Karachi got to 100-5 in 15 overs.

Gull Feroza was adjudged player of the match for her well-fought knock. Following their win, Karachi secured their spot in the final, as they finished second on the points table. At Diamond Cricket Ground in Islamabad, Lahore's Nashra Sundhu registered the first five-wicket haul of the tournament as she helped Lahore to a dominating 10-wicket win over Peshawar in the last round of the National Women's T20 Tournament.

Peshawar could not capitalize on their decision to bat first as they were bundled over for a paltry total of 50 in 16.4 overs. Lahore struck early as left-arm spinner Nashra Sundhu removed Shabnam Hayat for a run in the second over.

In the last over of the powerplay, captain Aleena Shah (4, 15b) was stumped off Nashra. Momina



Riasat (16, 24b, 1x4) and Nayab Ishaq (0, 1b) fell to Ghulam Fatima on consecutive balls to bring Peshawar to 35-4 in 9.5 overs.

Salwa Raheem (5, 4b, 1x4) was caught by Areesha Noor to give Ghulam Fatima her third wicket of the day. Shortly after, Raahima

Syed (17, 24b, 3x4s) was caught behind, awarding Nashra her third scalp as well.

Zunish Abdul Satar sent Ayesha Afridi (0, 12b) and Javeria Qamar (1, 2b) walking back cheaply as Quetta was worryingly reduced to 46-8 in 15 overs. Nashra then

dismissed Sumbal Liaquat and Seema Gul for ducks on consecutive deliveries, registering the first five-wicket of the tournament.

Nashra was supported by her fellow spinners; Zunish returned with two wickets, and Ghulam Fatima had three to her name.

Lahore cruised to the target effortlessly in just eight overs, winning the game by 10 wickets. Sidra Amin, continuing her impeccable form with the bat, added an undefeated 41 from 33 including eight boundaries. Fatima Shahid contributed an unbeaten eight from 16, with one four.

For her outstanding spell that yielded five wickets for two runs, Nashra was adjudged player of the match. Lahore finished top of the table, remaining undefeated in all ten rounds of the National Women's T20 Tournament.

## Group photo

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi and the First Lady Begum Samina Alvi being photographed with the organisers and staff at Society for Children in Need of Special Attention (SCINOSA), on Tuesday.

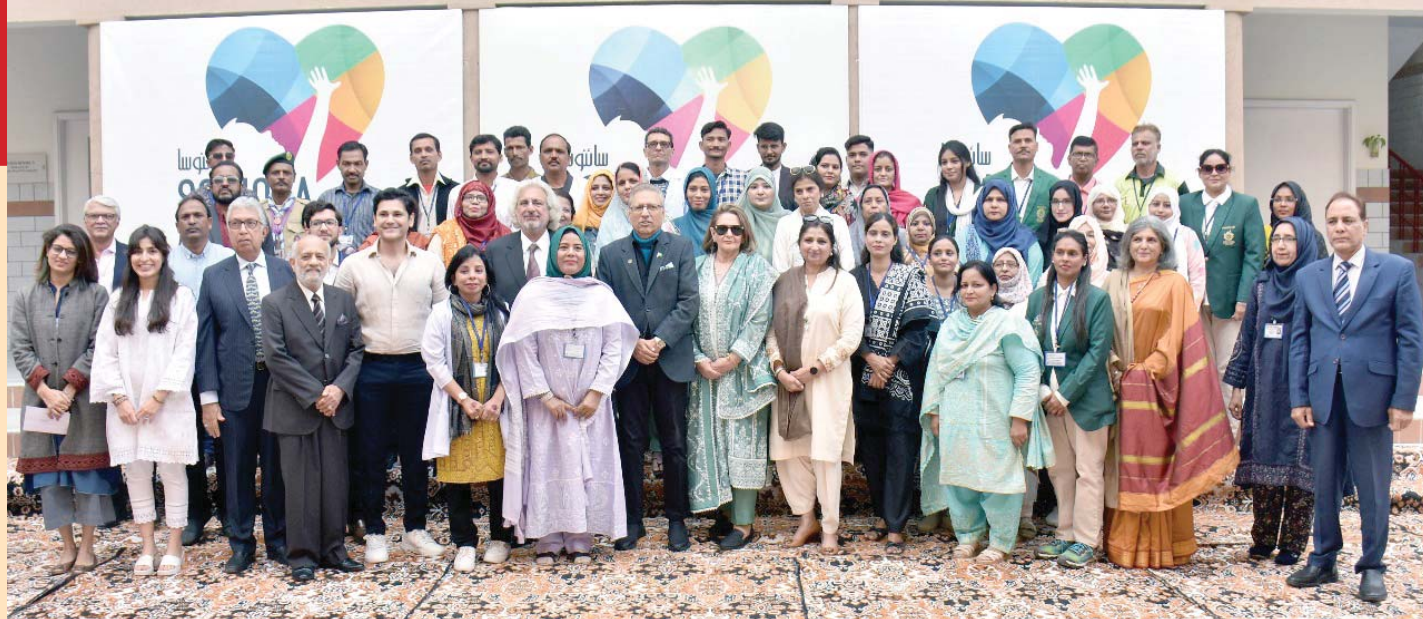


Photo: PID

## Awareness, training, life skills vital for integration of special children in society: President Alvi

City Desk

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi, Tuesday, underscored the significance of imparting awareness about special needs of person with different abilities and equipping them with education and living skills for their meaningful integration in the society.

The president was speaking during visit of Society for Children in Need Of Special Assistance (SCINOSA) Day Home- an institute for indi-

viduals with Down syndrome and other mental challenges - along with the First Lady Samina Arif Alvi.

The president emphasized that children with different abilities were part of the society and equipping them with living skills could enable them to live their life and perform daily chores by their own.

He also stressed on the need of creating special employment opportunities for differently able persons in accordance with their capabil-

ities and teaching them the specific skills required for those jobs.

Approach towards children with different abilities has been changing across the globe with emphasis on their enrollment in routine schools and we in Pakistan as well need to step forward and work together for breaking the taboos and social stigma attached with mental and physical challenges, he noted.

Federal and Sindh governments has made a laudable

progress in the regard by reserving special quota for differently able persons in public sector jobs while banking sector was also inducting special persons, Dr. Alvi observed adding that Governor SBP and heads of different banks also assured of further steps in the regard in a recent meeting on inclusion and empowerment of special persons and women.

Honorary secretary SCINOSA Zulfiqar Ali Ramzi speaking at the occasion said

that realizing the fact that with special care and awareness children with different abilities can live their lives SCINOSA Day Home was imparting all necessary skills to them.

Principal SDH, Rizwana Khanum briefed that major objective of the society was to establish a platform for teaching and training of children with different types of difficulties, to help them become self-sufficient and value-adding members of the society.

## Omar Ayub urges people to remain calm, vote for Khan on Feb 8

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan strongly rejected the kangaroo court's decision awarding 10-year imprisonment to former prime minister Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, calling upon all PTI members and Pakistanis to remain calm and vote Imran Khan's nominated candidates to bring PTI back to the assemblies with a thumping majority.

Reacting to the special court's ruling in cypher case, PTI Secretary General urged all the people to stay calm and peaceful following the decision by this kangaroo court against PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan and PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and did not indulge in any activity that undermined their traditional stance of a peaceful struggle.

He asked that the people should concentrate on coming out in large numbers on February 8, 2024 to ensure a high voter turnout and vote

for PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan's nominated candidates whose names have been posted on PTI's website and social media channels.

"PTI has always espoused the principle of 'Rule of Law'. The current kangaroo court ruling will not deter us from foregoing this principle come what may," he maintained.

Omar stated that PTI workers should remain calm and not indulge in any activity that undermines our traditional stance of a peaceful struggle.

"We will appeal against this decision in the High Court and continue our legal battle," he added.

"We should harness and channel these energies for the polling day on February 8, 2024 to ensure that Khan's nominated candidates are returned to the assemblies with a thumping majority," Omar contended.

He vowed that PTI would continue its struggle to put Pakistan on a democratic path so that the supremacy of law and constitution is ensured.

## US says it is not seeking war with Iran after Jordan attack

Reuters

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Monday vowed the US would take "all necessary actions" to defend its troops after a deadly drone attack in Jordan, even as President Joe Biden's administration stressed it was not seeking a war with Iran.

The attack on Sunday killed three US soldiers and wounded more than 40 troops. It was the first deadly strike against US troops since the Israel-Hamas war erupted in October and marks a major escalation in tensions that have engulfed the Middle East.

"Let me start with my outrage and sorrow (for) the deaths of three brave US troops in Jordan and for the other troops who were wounded," Austin said at the Pentagon.

"The president and I will not tolerate attacks on US forces and we will take all necessary actions to defend the US and our troops," Austin added at the start of

meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Pentagon.

"As the president said yesterday, we will respond and that response could be multi-leveled, come in stages and be sustained over time," US Secretary



of State Antony Blinken said.

But officials across the Biden administration said they did not want the situation to escalate. The Pentagon suggested Iran didn't want a war either.

"We certainly don't seek a war and frankly we don't see Iran wanting to seek a war with the United States," Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh told reporters. She added that the Pentagon believed Iran did not want a war either.

## Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurates PAFDA Complex

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi accomplished the revival of a stalled project spanning seven years, inaugurating the Punjab Agriculture Food and Drug Authority (PAFDA) Complex. During the visit to various departments and the auditorium of PAFDA, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi commended the Secretary Communication and Works and the team for their swift and quality completion of the project.

The Chief Minister received a briefing on PAFDA, revealing that the project initiated in 2017 was successfully completed within a few months. The PAFDA laboratory, a first of its kind in Pakistan, will conduct tests on specific drugs for



humans and animals, quality control of agricultural inputs, pesticides, fertilizers, cardiac stents, orthopedic implants, cosmetic products, canned food, and micro-level chemical content.

Addressing the media after

the inauguration, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi highlighted the project's history, originally estimated at Rs 6.7 billion, with a cost escalation to Rs 15 billion due to delays. He announced HR recruitment with Election Commission

permission and emphasized the importance of following former DG Ashraf Tahir's standards for PAFDA.

Regarding election matters, Mohsin Naqvi stressed impartiality, stating that no government employee has been

instructed to attend any party's gathering. He affirmed swift action against election rule violations and discussed the coordination between the Election Commission, Home Department, and Police for transparent elections. The Chief Minister mentioned the signing of an essential MoU in Canada to benefit the youth. He assured that all projects would be operational by February 7.

Present at the occasion were Provincial Minister Primary and Secondary Health Dr. Jamal Nasir, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, Secretary Interior, Communication and Works, Information, Livestock, Food, Agriculture, CCPO, Commissioner Lahore, DG PAFDA, and relevant officials.

## Saudi Ambassador meets Interior Minister



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malki on Tuesday met with Minister of Interior and Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz to discuss issues of mutual interest. Secretaries for interior and commerce and other high officials were also present in the meeting.

The meeting agreed to further develop Pak-Saudi business-to-business relations. The interior minister said that a delegation of 10 of Pakistan's top industrialists is expected to lead to Riyadh soon where Saudi

industrialists can benefit from investment opportunities in the steel and petrochemical industry in Pakistan. He said that the government is taking steps to increase cooperation in the IT sector between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The northern regions of Pakistan are rich in natural beauty, said the interior minister adding that Investing in luxury resorts in these areas can be beneficial for both countries. He said that the government is working on setting up 'Brand Pakistan' stores globally to market Pakistani products.

## Airm-e Jamaat-e-Islami 'deep regret' over 10-year sentence in cipher case

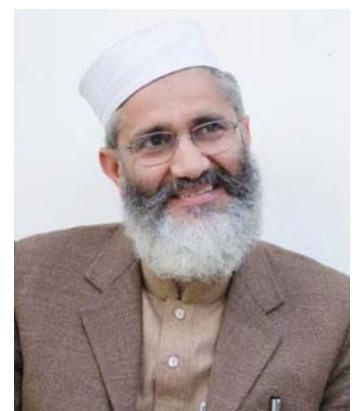
Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Amer-e Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq has expressed his deep regret over the 10-year sentence given to PTI founder chairman Imran Khan and vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case.

Amir Jamaat-e-Islami has expressed his reaction to the decision of the special court and said that the hearing of the case should have been held in an open court so that the prevailing methods of justice and fairness would be fulfilled. He has demanded an independent and impartial commission on the cipher case and said that the facts should come before the entire nation.

Siraj-ul-Haq says that American interference in domestic affairs has been going on for the past seventy-six years.

However, this is the first time that the US intervention has been



discussed in our official circles. PTI leaders have the right to appeal against the decision.

He said that the decisions should be in accordance with the constitution, prevailing laws and rules and regulations. Jamaat-e-Islami will continue to struggle for the true supremacy of the constitution and law in the country.

## Pakistan reaffirms commitment to Afghanistan's peace, prosperity

News Desk

KABUL: Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to peace and prosperity in Afghanistan at a conference titled 'Afghanistan's Regional Cooperation Initiative' held at capital of the war-torn country.

The Afghan caretaker government hosted the regional countries conference with also Pakistan attending it. The international event was attended by diplomats from Pakistan, Russia, China, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Indonesia.

Ambassador of Pakistan in Kabul Ubaid Nizamani, who represented Pakistan in the moot, wrote on X that he reiterated his country's commitment to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

He emphasized that the region must work together to harness mutually beneficial connectivity potential and address shared concerns.

"Represented Pakistan in Regional

Countries conference on Afghanistan in Kabul. Reiterated our commitment to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. Region must work together to harness mutually beneficial connectivity potential and address shared concerns," the ambassador wrote on the social media platform.

Relations between the Taliban government and Pakistan have seen a rapid deterioration after an increase in terrorist attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mostly claimed by outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Islamabad has stated that the TTP and other groups use Afghan soil against Pakistan - a claim denied by Afghan Taliban government.

The interim Afghan government stated they will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil to be used against the neighbour. But authorities remain unconvinced and have demanded action against the TTP, its sanctuaries and the handover of its leaders.

## Bilawal vows to bring agricultural revolution if voted to power

Bureau Report

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has pledged to bring 'agricultural revolution' by facilitating the farmers, if the party voted to power.

Addressing a public gathering in Dera Ismail Khan in connection with the General Elections 2024, Bilawal said that the farmers will be given direct aid through Kisan Card. He also promised to abolish the Rs15 billion subsidy being given to 'elites'

every year, if the people of Pakistan voted the party to power.

The PPP chief said that the amount being given to the elites would be spent on welfare of the public. He said that instead of subsidizing the rich, the PPP would issue 'Kisan Card'.

Bilawal said that if the people support the PPP on February 8, no can halt the party from coming into power. "The 8th February is the day to decide how the next five years will pass. If you want politics of hatred and division then vote for anyone," the PPP chief said.