



China's BRI project appreciated by world as progress possible by working together: Solangi

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said that China's Belt and Road Initiative was appreciated by the world as progress was possible only by working together. In an exclusive interview with China Radio International, the minister said... (Details on Page 8)



Most powerful means must be mobilized to destroy US: Kim Jong Un

North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un told the country's military commanders the most powerful means must be mobilized to destroy the United States and South Korea if they choose military confrontation, state media reported on Monday. Kim said the danger of an armed confrontation on the Korean peninsula is fast becoming a reality because of hostile maneuvers by the enemies including the United States, ... (Details on Page 12)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on Afghan Transit Trade and Anti-smuggling on Monday.



Photo: PID

Message of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Exercise Barracuda-XII

Oceans play a vital role in providing sustenance, livelihoods, regulating climate patterns and nurturing unparalleled biodiversity. As a responsible member of global maritime fraternity, Pakistan has fostered collaboration with regional countries and engaged in global partnerships to safeguard marine conservation initiatives. As part of its commitment to international maritime regulatory framework, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMS), being sole maritime law enforcement agency in the country ensures safety of life at sea and preserves nation's marine resources. Pakistan Navy being the premier stakeholder of national maritime defence extends all out support to PMSA and augments Maritime Domain Awareness for preservation of sea-based resources and enduring ecological balance.



contingent SAR requirements in collaboration with international partners.

Exercise BARRACUDA-XII will provide opportunity to review and align our response procedures to attain shared objective of pristine marine environment and safety of life at sea. The Exercise will also provide a forum in the shape of maritime seminar to deliberate on contemporary technological advancements and global best practices in the field of marine pollution control. The Exercise is set to reaffirm our national resolve and acknowledge the importance of oceans in our collective wellbeing and the need to protect and preserve them for our future generations.

In the mix of contemporary maritime challenges, environmental complexities have added another layer to maritime security. These challenges not only jeopardize marine biodiversity but also have cascading effects on global climate patterns and livelihood of coastal communities. Among these environmental challenges, the looming specter of oil spills pose a critical concern and necessitate coordinated response by international and national stakeholders. In pursuit of these objectives, Pakistan Navy & PMSA have embarked on conducting international series of exercises code named 'BARRACUDA' under the overall ambit of National Marine Disaster Contingency Plan. The aim of these exercises is to crystallize national response mechanism against oil spill disasters and

I am sure PMSA through Exercise BARRACUDA-XII will afford a valuable platform for the participants to exchange best practices, share experiences and learn from each other. The conduct of Exercise is a testament to our unwavering commitment and cooperation for enhancing maritime security, stream line SAR procedures and preserve marine environment in the North Arabian Sea. I wish PMSA and international/ national participants a worthy and rewarding outcome of the Exercise and a pleasant stay at Karachi.

PM Kakar directs enhancement of Afghan Transit Trade tracking system

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday directed for taking of further steps at enhancement and foolproof tracking system concerning Afghan Transit Trade. Chairing a review meeting over Afghan Transit Trade and anti-smuggling measures, he also asked for the formulation of an immediate mechanism for the establishment of an integrated transit trade management system.

The meeting was attended by Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamsad Akhtar, Caretaker Minister for Trade Ejaz Gohar, senior officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, representatives of the sensitive departments and other relevant officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Addressing the participants, the prime minister said that one of the major reasons affecting the country's economy was smuggling and

the illegal movement of goods. Taking notice of negligence over the smuggling issue, he directed the chief secretary Balochistan to completely change the administrative machinery of District Chaghi. He directed for initiation of criminal proceedings against any personnel found involved in smuggling leading to exemplary punishment besides, advising intelligence clearance of any officer before his or her deployment on sensitive posts of customs. The caretaker

prime minister further directed that checking system should be further strengthened at the Chaman, Torkham, Ghulam Khan check posts besides, at the border areas of Balochistan. Cargo checking should be improved and the number of customs staff at Chaman border be increased, he added. He opined that the people in Balochistan province should work for the enhancement of businesses and employment. A briefing over a progress report

compiled by an inquiry committee on Afghan Transit Trade was also given to the prime minister. Appreciating the performance of the committee so far, he directed it to earnestly compile its recommendations. The meeting was informed that due to the steps of the government, the smuggling of petroleum products from Iran had been reduced to a huge extent whereas cargo tracking system started functioning from Taftan to Quetta.

Pakistan, India exchange lists of nuclear installations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India on Monday exchanged the lists of their nuclear installations and facilities as part of an annual practice of the new year. The list of Pakistan's nuclear installations was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Office said in a statement.

Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of its nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. The list is exchanged between the two countries under the 'Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India.' The agreement provides

SC to take up lifetime disqualification case tomorrow

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday fixed a lifetime disqualification case for hearing.

A seven-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa will take up the case of lifetime disqualification of lawmakers today (Tuesday).

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali will be the other members of the bench. Last week, the Supreme Court (SC) released an advertisement to seek candidates' input before taking up the lifetime disqualification matter of lawmakers.

The advertisement released in the different newspapers invited inputs from the candidates willing to contest general elections in the matter of lifetime disqualification. "Interested candidates can submit detailed written replies to SC if they want," the ad read.

The lifetime disqualification matter
In 2018, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court unanimously held that disqualification handed down under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution is for life. Under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution of Pakistan, which sets the precondition for a member of parliament to be 'sadiq and ameen' (honest and righteous), former prime minister and PMLN chief Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the SC bench on July 28, 2017, in references about the Panama Papers. Similarly, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder was also disqualified under the same article in the Toshakhana case earlier this year. However, in June, the then-coalition government passed an amendment to the Elections Act 2017, which limited the disqualification of lawmakers to five years.

General elections: ECP plans to establish over 92,500 polling stations

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has planned to establish over 92,500 polling stations nationwide, with the official polling scheme to be revealed 15 days before the scheduled February 8 general elections. For the upcoming general elections, it has been determined that Punjab will have 51,821 polling stations across 438 national and provincial constituencies, while Sindh will have 19,236 polling stations for its 191 seats.

For the election of 66 seats in Balochistan, 5,015 polling stations will be set up, and for the 160 seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 15,737 polling stations will be established. Additionally, 990 polling stations will be set up for three constituencies in Islamabad.

Pakistan condemns banning of another Kashmiri political party

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condemns the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir (TeH) as an "unlawful association", for a period of five years.

The TeH is the second Kashmiri party banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in less than a week's time. With its banning, the total number of outlawed Kashmiri political parties increases to six.

The party was founded by iconic Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who



passed away in 2021 during a protracted house arrest. His dead body was ruthlessly snatched by the occupation authorities, and his near and dear ones were not allowed to attend his funeral.

Five countries formally join BRICS



Spokesman Report

BEIJING: The BRICS memberships of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia officially took effect on Monday.

The countries were invited to join the group in August 2023 after the 15th BRICS

Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, CGTN reported. Originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, BRICS, an important platform for cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries, has received numerous membership requests in recent years.

Pakistan review on IMF Executive Board agenda on January 11

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is scheduled to consider the first review of Pakistan's \$ 3 billion stand-by arrangement (SBA) on January 11.

The executive board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will meet on January 11 to consider the final approval to disburse the next \$700 million tranche from its current loan programme with Pakistan. According to the updated

calendar of the executive board, the Board would take the agenda of the first review of Pakistan under the SBA on January 11, 2024. The current IMF program of \$3 billion is scheduled to end in the second week of April

2024, with around \$1.8 billion remaining un-disbursed. The Fund had released \$ 1.2 billion first tranche in July. The IMF said in November it had reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the first review of a \$3 billion bailout,

which will unlock \$700 million in funding for the country.

The Fund will decide about disbursement of remaining \$1.1 billion after completion of the next review of the bailout package.



Kashmiri expatriate community can play vital role in highlighting India's human rights violations: President

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that Kashmiri expatriate community should play its much needed role to highlight the human rights violations committed by India in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir at international level. Talking to a delegation of Kashmiri expatriate community, which was led by Lord Mayor of Manchester Yasmin Dar, here today the president said that the diaspora community should become voice of the oppressed Kashmiri people who have been reeling under the Indian barbarism and brutality in the occupied territory

of Jammu and Kashmir. Barrister Chaudhry, on the occasion, praised the Kashmiri expatriate community's role and its valuable contribution to the Kashmir cause.

Barrister Chaudhry said that the mission and focus of his whole life has been to mobilize the diaspora community and highlight the freedom movement on the diplomatic front. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said that the Kashmiri community settled in the UK and other parts of the world can play vital role to sensitize the world about early solution of the Kashmir dispute.

He said that elected representatives, councilors, community leaders can play an important role in mobilizing the British parliamentarians and human rights organizations regarding the Kashmir issue. The delegation was comprised of Councilor Majid Khan, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Self-determination Movement Raja Najabat Hussain and Kanwal Hayat and others.



ing the British parliamentarians and human rights organizations regarding the Kashmir issue. The delegation was comprised of Councilor Majid Khan, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Self-determination Movement Raja Najabat Hussain and Kanwal Hayat and others.

Upgradation of National Special Education Center in Muzaffarabad

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir government's first gift of the new year, National Special Education Center Muzaffarabad has been upgraded by providing inter-college posts/staff. A check of Rs.01 lakh for special children and Rs.05 lakh for vehicle repair was given to the principal of the institution. Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar Haq had announced the upgradation of the National Special Education Center Muzaffarabad on the occasion of the International Day of Disabled Persons, which has been formally upgraded. In this regard, a grand ceremony was held at the Special Education Complex Muzaffarabad on the beginning of the new year, in which



Minister of Social Welfare Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi was the special guest. Secretary Social Welfare Arshad Qureshi, Director Social Welfare

Abdul Wahid, Principal National Special Education Center Muzaffarabad and others participated in the event. Addressing the ceremony, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Minister of Social Welfare Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi has said that on New Year, the prime minister of Azad Kashmir has announced the upgradation of the best educational institute for special children and to meet the needs of the teaching staff.

The government is grateful to Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq for approving more posts at secondary and intermediate level besides upgrading the National Education Center Muzaffarabad at the intermediate level by taking practical steps. He said that the Prime Minister wants to make special children the most important members of the society. The present government will take all possible measures for the welfare of special children.

Indian move on Kashmir 'unlawful': PM AJK

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the Indian government's 5th August move and its endorsement by the supreme court of India has no moral or legal standing. Talking to a private TV program, the PM said that the Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC have rejected this unlawful move that violates the sanctity of the UN resolutions. Referring to the historic resolution, which was adopted by the Kashmiri leaders on 19th July 1947, the PM said that the Kashmiri nation had decided to join Pakistan even months before its creation. Appreciating the Army chief, Gen. Asim Munir's bold stance on the issue of Kashmir, he said, the Army chief's statements have boosted the morale of the Kashmiri people on both sides of the dividing line (LoC).

He said that in response to the Indian Supreme Court's verdict, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Anwar ul Haq Kakar, delivered a powerful speech in the AJK Legislative Assembly. He said that despite using its brute force, India has miserably failed in its attempts to suppress the freedom movement of the Kashmiris.

The PM said that his sole mission was to serve his countrymen. In response to a query, he said that after the eighteenth amendment, the federal government has done a lot to solve the problems of all the entities of the federation, but individual incompetence cannot be blamed on others.

Protest March against Punjab's motorcycle rickshaw ban in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Against the ban on the business of motorcycle rickshaw dealers, showrooms and body makers, a protest demonstration was held in front of the press club in Faisalabad, like across Punjab, on the call of President Mian Ejaz Hussain of Pasban Rickshaw Drivers, Dealers and Body Makers Union Punjab. Which is led by Central President Mian Ejaz Hussain, Muhammad Ilyas, Muhammad Iqbal, Rana Nadeem, Osman Gul, Rana Hassan, Rana Omar, Muhammad Shakeel, Ghulam Murtaza, Muhammad Tariq, Ali Sher, Rana Jameel, Arshad Jat, Malik Murad Ali, Qayyum Awan, Sunny, Vicky Shah and others. The leaders while addressing said that doing business is everyone's right, we should not be deprived of this right. The government will implement the legislation. 33 years ago the government gave us this business and we are working accordingly. The current government will make a system and do business accordingly. We are ready to pay taxes to the government. He said that motorcycle rickshaw is the most popular ride in Asia which is cheap and fast. It is the only public transport capable of delivering people at their doorsteps.

Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan contesting for Faisalabad assembly seat on peoples' demand

Abdul Majid



FAISALABAD: Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan Central Deputy General Secretary of Pakistan Ulama Council while talking to the media said that they are contesting the election on the secret demand of the people, the trust of the people is a great success for us and effective measures to end the problems of the people of the constituency; poverty and unemployment. Karinge and will raise his voice at every level for the provision of dowry and free treatment for the unemployed youth and for the poor girl child and for the PP 118 constituency. Because the people still trust us, they will ensure their success with the love of the people and the people of the constituency cannot be fooled by the capital's bill. The new year is the year of development and prosperity of Pakistan and it is the year of the end of terrorism and sabotage from Pakistan. The whole nation stands with its state and will bury the terrorism coming from India and Afghanistan forever. Pakistan is an Islamic and it is a welfare state, it will defeat every conspiracy against it and considers the trust of its people as its success.

A Special Birthday Celebration for Dean Children's Hospital Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the occasion of the birthday of Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti, Dean of Children's Hospital Multan, Senior Faculty of Children's Hospital, MS Children's Hospital Prof. Dr. Kamran Asif, Surgery Department, Admin Staff, OT Staff and other young doctors specially. Organized the event.

The senior faculty especially Prof. Dr. Waqas Imran, Prof. Dr. Sohail Arshad, Prof. Dr. Rana Zulfikar presented flowers and cut the cake while wishing the dean well.

On this occasion, Dean Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti said that he is extremely grateful to all the people.



Region Faisalabad arrests 11528 proclaimed offenders in 2023

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: RPO Faisalabad Dr Muhammad Abid Khan released performance of 2023 with the resolve to deliver better service delivery in the year 2024. Reports revealed that Region Faisalabad traced out total 21,948 cases including 458 murder, 32 cases of Dacoity with murder, 11 cases of kidnapping for ransom, 2 Bank Dacoity and 3 robbery with

rape cases. Moreover, recovered the stolen property amounting 1234 million rupees, furthermore, as many as 1373 members of 465 notorious gangs were arrested and recovered almost 458 million rupees.

Moreover, crackdown against proclaimed offenders was done and 11,513 Pos were arrested and 15 Pos were arrested through the intervention of Interpol. Special endeavour was done to combat against the drug

dealers and arrested 7165 narcotic dealers, recovering narcotics worth millions rupees.

In order to facilitate people and promoting citizen-centric policies Meesaq centers, protection centers, driving schools were established. As many as 670 complaints were redressed in Meesaq centers and 63,1040 complaints were addressed through 09 Khidmat Marakaz and 04 Tahafaz centers.

Strenuous campaigns were launched against underage and without license drivers and chalaned 55130 violators. In order to maintain law and order especially durign Jaranwala incident and 9th May Incident, effective judicious measures were exercised to avert any human loss. Fool proof security and impeccable arrangement were done during ATTA points, flash floods and religious festivities.

Maulana Maududi: A visionary Islamic scholar and political leader

Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979) was a prolific Islamic scholar, theologian, and political thinker who profoundly influenced Muslim political thought in the 20th century. He dedicated his life to promoting the idea of an Islamic state based on the principles of the Quran and the Sunnah.

Born in Aurangabad, India, Maulana Maududi received a traditional Islamic education and was well-versed in classical Islamic texts by his teens. He became a journalist and writer, advocating for Islamic revivalism amid the declining influence of Muslim empires. Syed Maududi founded Jamaat-e-Islami in 1941, a socio-political Islamic organiza-

tion aiming to revive Islamic teachings and values in society. He envisioned an Islamic state governed by Sharia law, emphasizing the role of Islam in every aspect of life, including politics, economics, and social affairs.

Maulana Maududi's notable political achievement was his conceptualization of an Islamic state as a theocratic entity guided by Islamic principles. He articulated this vision in his book "The Islamic Law and Constitution," outlining the framework for governance in an Islamic state.

He tirelessly advocated for the implementation of Sharia as the legal system in Muslim-majority countries. His writings emphasized the compatibility of Sharia with modern governance and societal structures. Maududi authored over

120 books and pamphlets, expounding on various aspects of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and social issues. His most famous works include "Tafheem-ul-Quran," an exegesis of the Quran the most read Tafseer in the world, and "al-jihad fil islam" discussing the true concept of Jihad in Islam. Thousands of non Muslims turned to Islam by reading his literature. He played a pivotal role in reviving Islamic thought by addressing contemporary challenges faced by Muslims, reconciling Islamic teachings with modernity, and emphasizing the application of Islamic principles in a

changing world.

Maulana Maududi's ideas inspired numerous Islamic revival movements worldwide. His emphasis on Islamic education, social justice, and political activism resonated with Muslims seeking a return to Islamic values amid rapid societal changes.

Even after his death, Syed Maududi's ideas remain influential. His works continue to be studied, debated, and cited by scholars, activists, and Islamist movements, shaping discussions on the role of Islam in governance and society.

Maulana Maududi's legacy lies in

his profound contributions to Islamic thought, his vision for an Islamic state guided by Sharia principles, and his relentless efforts to revive Islamic teachings in the modern world. Despite controversy and varying interpretations of his ideas, his impact on shaping contemporary Islamic political and religious discourse remains undeniable.

Syed Maududi's enduring influence underscores his position as a seminal figure in Islamic intellectual history, whose ideas continue to shape discussions on the relationship between religion, politics, and society in the Muslim world. Maududi's teachings continue to influence the ideology and policies of jamat e islami and have inspired various Islamic movements worldwide.

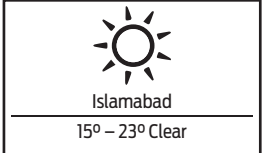
Maulana Maududi's ideas and writings have sparked debates and discussions within both Islamic and academic circles. While his contributions to Islamic political thought and emphasis on the revival of Islamic principles have been appreciated by some, others have criticized certain aspects of his vision, particularly concerning the governance structure and treatment of minorities in an Islamic state.

As with any influential figure, opinions about Maulana Maududi are diverse, reflecting a range of perspectives on his contributions to Islamic political thought and the implications of his ideas on contemporary society. In short I would say that he was the scholar of the century and His ideas and writings have had a significant impact on Islamic political thought in the 20th century.



Analysis

Sohail Ahmad Baber



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:43 am
Zohr12:11 pm
Asr3:32 pm
Maghrib5:10 pm
Isha6:39 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Pakistan saw over 115% increase in tourism in 2023: Wasi Shah



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Tourism Wasi Shah Monday said that in the year 2023 Pakistan saw a 115% increase in foreign tourism which has helped the country earn \$1.3 billion in foreign exchange revenue.

In an exclusive talk with a private news channel, minister mentioned that according to the 'World Tourism Barometer' published by the World Tourism Organisation of the United Nations, Pakistan made a remarkable 92 per cent recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2023, as the country experienced a 115 per cent surge in tourist arrivals compared to the previous year.

Minister hoped that the year 2024 will bring more tourist travel landscape in changing the country as a powerhouse in the tourism sector.

He said that Pakistan is promoting tourism and would identify more unexplored tourism destinations of Sindh and Balochistan comprising adventure, religious, nature, weekend, rural and tribal tourism.

Wasi added that our country enriched by beaches, cliffs, forests, hills, valleys, and rivers, and the beauty of the natural landscapes that you find all around the world, but it has them in one gorgeous, beautiful place.

"These places are mostly unspoiled, and they are mostly undiscovered where new elected government need to focus, adding, we are showcasing Pakistan's tourism opportunities at the global market shows like WTM which would help attract more tourists to Pakistan."

Jamal Shah lays foundation stone of Shah Allah Ditta Caves preservation & development project

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Jamal Shah, Interim Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture on Monday laid the foundation stone of Shah Alla Ditta Caves development, conservation, preservation and restoration.

Federal Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Humaira Ahmed, Director General Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) Dr Abdul Azeem and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) Islamabad has declared the site as "Protected Antiquity" under Antiquities Act 1975 on

13-08-2016.

He said that DOAM, National Heritage & Culture Division, has started conservation, preservation, restoration & development of the caves during the current financial year.

He said that the work includes Archaeological excavation, complete documentation of the site, geotechnical study of binding materials, construction of drainage works as well as Soft & Hard landscaping.

Shah Allah Ditta caves are situated on southern side of the Margalla hills in a small picturesque valley, 14 kilometers northwest of the capital city of Islamabad. Caves consist of two natural rock shelters of Kanjur stone situated on either side of a natural

spring of hot water.

Front side of the eastern cave is covered with a wall of undressed kanjur stone laid in mud mortar. Facade of the cave is covered with mud plaster having many coatings red color.

It may be mentioned here that Jamal Shah, Interim Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture recently inaugurated preservation and development of Mai Qamro Mosque and Muqarab Khan Tomb located at a small village 'Bagh Jogian' in the vicinity of Islamabad.

The minister has ordered Department of Archaeology and Museum to expedite pace of work to restore the Mosque and Muqarab Khan Tomb in its original form besides enhance its outlook.



Carelessness

ISLAMABAD: People are crossing the busy Kernal Sher Khan Road instead of using overhead pedestrian bridge, which may cause any incident any time.



Photo: Online by by Raj Farid

Jammediat Ulema-e-Islam workers' convention held in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Worker Convention of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam organized by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam was held at Hotel in Tehsil Attock. Attock and Umidwar Constituency PP 3 Syed Zarghan Shah, Tehsil General Secretary Tree Muhammad Ibrahim Fani, Maulana Khalil Ahmed Shakardara, Maulana Naserullah, Qari Umar Ahmed, Maulana Tahir, Candidate for Constituency NA 50 Maulana Fakhruddin Razi, Ali Apart from Asghar, a large number of other scholars and activists were also present. On this occasion, Acting District Amir Syed Amir Zaman Haqqani said that the murderous attack on Jamiat leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman, we strongly condemn it. and they demand an investigation and

they also demand that fair elections are the responsibility of the government, but a peaceful environment for the elections is also the responsibility of the government and the property of the people. And the protection of life and dignity is also the responsibility of the government, when Jamiat leader Maulana Fazlur Rahman expressed his concerns regarding KPK and Balochistan, people taunted us regarding this election. That we are taking the way to escape from the election, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam is a great religious and political party, on this occasion the leader of constituency PP 3 Syed Zarghan Shah said in his address that the purpose of organizing this convention is to organize its workers and candidates. We have to keep them in touch with us, just as all the two religious congrega-

tions are engaged for worldly purposes, our purpose is only religion, we consider politics as worship, like our Madras, mosques, preaching work and all the affairs are a part of politics and this is the most difficult area, earlier in KPK when we got the government, there was a debt of 16 billion rupees when MM When A's government ended, they paid 8 billion rupees and only 8 billion rupees were left. Needle gas was delivered to the villages. If the people give us a chance to serve, we will serve the people in the whole of Pakistan. They will try to solve the problem at the threshold, NA 50 Constituency candidate Maulana Fakhruddin Razi, District General Secretary Tree Syed Bilal Ba Dashah and Tehsil Secretary Tree Attock Muhammad Ibrahim Fani also addressed the worker convention.

Karim Aziz Malik Nominated Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram President FPCCI has entrusted the charge of Chairman FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad to Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, former Vice President FPCCI & CEO Barkat Rice Mills (PVT) Islamabad. Who has taken over the charge of his office today. Mr. Karim Aziz Malik expressed that the election of FPCCI has now over and the entire business community of Pakistan will be united under one roof of FPCCI without any grouping for the revival of Pakistan's economy.



On the occasion, Special Prayers were held for the solidarity, Safety and Security of Pakistan and economic revival and progress of the country. He stressed on need of aggressive and untiring sincere efforts to bring out the country from the existing economic crises. The new Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad expressed his gratitude and congratulated the newly elected President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram and the Senior Vice President Mr. Saqib Fayaz Maggon and other Vice Presidents. He appreciated the efforts of the business leaders of United Business Group (UBG) SM Tanvir, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Akram Farid, Zubair Tufail, Khalid Javeed, Mian Shokat Masood, Amir Waheed, Sohail Malik, Mr. Momin Shehzad on winning the entire elections and build up a capable team of office bearers to work together for the betterment of entire business community of Pakistan without any discrimination.

Mr. Karim Aziz Malik congratulates Chairman UBG SM Tanveer, Petron Chief Iftikhar Ali Malik, Secretary General Zaffar Bakhtawari, and other Leaders of UBG and Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, newly elected President FPCCI, Mr. Saqib Fayaz Maggo, Newly Elected Senior Vice President FPCCI, Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination Capital office, and others newly elected Vice Presidents FPCCI.

Women's Chamber's Media Committee Visited Mux Institute Multan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Women's Chamber's Media Committee visited Mux Institute Multan, briefed the students about Blue Fair and distributed certificates and inspected various departments of the institute. The delegation visited Mux Institute under the leadership of Tahira Najam, Sirat Fatima, Farah Farhan, Nosheen Qureshi, Shahnaz Nasir, Rubina Rauf, Abeda Arshad were among them while welcoming the media committee on their arrival at Mux Institute. CEO Ahmed Ali Bhatti and MD Miss Rizwana welcomed them to Mux Institute. Briefed about and made them visit various departments including classes and on this occasion. But they also distributed certificates to the successful students. Mrs. Fariha Munir thanked her on behalf of President Women's Chamber Mahnaz Amir for her support and sponsorship for the Blue Fair under the Women's Chamber of Mux Institute and said that the Women's Chamber from the Blue Fair exhibition And the partnership at Mux Institute led to that both institutions have benefited and Mux Institute is helping to develop skilled workforce in the region which is also providing employment opportunities to the youth.

Peace education in New Year 2024: From Efforts to Implementations

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

As we welcome the start of a new year 2024, it is crucial to reflect upon our efforts to promote peace education and examine the progress made towards implementing its ideals. The pursuit of peace has always been at the core of human aspirations, and education plays a vital role in fostering a culture of peace, understanding, and cooperation. The year 2023 witnessed significant strides in this field, but moving into the New Year, it is imperative to transform efforts into concrete actions. Over the past year, numerous initiatives and programs have launched worldwide to promote peace education.

Governments, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions collaborated to develop curricula that emphasize conflict resolution, empathy, and global citizenship. These initiatives recognize the importance of inculcating peaceful values and skills in our youth, who will shape the future of our societies. One such initiative is the Global Peace Education Network (GPEN), which experienced remarkable growth in 2023. GPEN organized international conferences, workshops, and online forums, bringing together

er educators and experts from diverse cultural backgrounds. These platforms facilitated the exchange of knowledge and best practices, encouraging educators adopt innovative teaching methods that promote peace.

In pursuit of making peace education accessible all, governments introduced policies to integrate education into curricula. They recognized that education should go beyond teaching traditional subjects but also equip with the necessary tools to navigate conflicts, appreciate diversity, and develop a global responsibility. By implementing these policies, governments acknowledged the transformative power of education in shaping attitudes and behaviours, thus planting the peace in early childhood. Another significant development in peace education was the integration of technology into methodologies. The advancements virtual reality (VR) presented unprecedented opportunities for immersive and interactive learning experiences. These technologies create simulated environments that allow students to witness and understand the consequences of violence and conflict. This experiential learning approach enabled students to develop empathy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, all essential for building peaceful societies. In recent years, the importance of peace educa-

tion has gained widespread recognition. Governments across the world have realized that promoting peace and understanding among individuals is crucial in order to build a harmonious society. To ensure that peace education reaches every corner of society, governments have introduced policies to integrate this important discipline into school curricula.

Peace education aims to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to understand and resolve conflicts peacefully. It promotes tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity, fostering a culture of peace within communities. By making peace education accessible to all, governments hope to create generations of individuals who possess the tools to break the cycle of violence and build a more peaceful future. Integrating peace education into curricula allows for a comprehensive and holistic approach to cultivating peace. It provides a structured framework in which students can develop an understanding of peace building, conflict management, and the importance of dialogue. It also encourages students to critically analyze and reflect upon the causes of violence, inequality, and discrimination. Through this integrated approach, peace education becomes

more than just a standalone subject, but rather a fundamental aspect of a well-rounded education.

Moving on a 2024, it is vital to ensure the practical implementation of peace education initiatives. Efforts will be made to train teachers in effective peace education strategies and to equip them with the necessary resources and support. Professional development programs and workshops will be conducted to enhance educators' understanding of peace concepts and their ability to integrate them into their teaching practices. In addition, partnerships will be formed with universities and research institutions to conduct comprehensive evaluations of peace education programs. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation will allow educators to continuously improve their methodologies and tailor their approaches to specific contexts.

New year 2024 one imperative aspect that needs to emphasize is the practical implementation of peace education initiatives. In a world that is consistently plagued by conflict, violence, and intolerance, it becomes crucial to equip individuals with the tools and knowledge necessary to promote peace and understanding. Peace education initiatives aim to foster a culture of peace by teaching individuals how to resolve conflicts peacefully, respect diversity, and develop empathy

towards others. By ensuring the practical implementation of such programs, we can pave the way for a more peaceful and harmonious future.

First, the practical implementation of peace education initiatives can help in addressing the root causes of conflicts. By imparting the necessary skills and knowledge, individuals are better equipped to handle challenging situations and resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner. Conflict resolution techniques, such as active listening and mediation, can be instrumental in deescalating tensions and finding common ground. Also peace education can provide individuals with the tools to analyze the root causes of violence and identify ways to address them effectively. By understanding the underlying issues that lead to conflicts, we can work towards finding long-term and sustainable solutions.

Furthermore, practical implementation of peace education initiatives can foster the development of empathy and understanding of different perspectives. By exposing individuals to diverse cultures, beliefs, and experiences, peace education enables them to appreciate the value of diversity and promotes inclusive societies. Through interactive activities, dialogue, and experiential learning, individuals can develop a more empathetic

and compassionate approach towards others. This, in turn, helps in breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, as well as promoting mutual respect.

Moreover, collaboration across borders and cultural boundaries is essential for creating a global movement for peace education. International organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will play a crucial role in fostering cooperation and guidance to member states. Sharing best practices, resources, and curricula on a global scale can enrich local initiatives and a collective vision of education. At last as we step the New Year, must build upon the made in the year and transform them into tangible implementations. Peace Education will embrace as a fundamental aspect of our educational systems, promoting empathy, conflict resolution skills, and global citizenship. In future investing in training, technology, and fostering international collaboration, it will ensure that the ideals of peace are firmly rooted in hearts and minds of our future generations. By doing so, we will be sowing the seeds of a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Writer is postdoctoral fellow in international Islamic university Islamabad, Pakistan

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

Atrocities in Occupied Kashmir and Propaganda against Pak Army - II

It was expected that a strong condemnation would be voiced against the atrocities committed by India. However, a specific faction in Azad Kashmir is actively involved in propagating negative campaigns against the Pakistan Army to achieve its malicious objectives, disregarding the services and sacrifices of the army. An individual with a particular mindset attempted to tarnish the reputation of the Pakistan Army deployed in the Neelum Valley by spreading false claims that soldiers had brandished weapons and threatened him. Contrary to these allegations, sources reveal that on the morning of December 20, a lawyer named Fazal Mehmood was stopped for a routine check at a joint check post. Rather than complying, he drove away and was subsequently halted at the next check post at Tejiyan. After an ID card check, he was allowed to proceed. Feeling insulted, Fazal Mehmood made accusations against the Pakistan Army on social media. It is reported that this individual has a history of spreading lies against the army and security agencies and has been exposed on multiple occasions. The local community and the Bar Council are urged to identify and eliminate such disruptive elements. Individuals who mislead the public through false propaganda against security agencies, thereby advancing the enemy's cause, should be singled out to prevent the defamatory of the noble and responsible profession of law.

Barely a day passes without news of an officer or soldier of the Pakistan Army sacrificing themselves for the security of the country and its people while combating terrorists in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and across Pakistan. Enemy elements have persistently engaged in anti-army propaganda to demoralize the Pakistan Army, despite its remarkable and unforgettable services and sacrifices for the nation.

A small faction in our country has opposed the Pakistan Army since the partition of India, displaying relentless animosity. Initially aligned with Lenin and Marx, they opposed the Pakistan Army and supported Greater Pakhtoonstan in opposition to the two-nation theory. They were even prepared to take up arms against the Pakistan Army. Today, these same elements are pursuing the enemy's agenda by drawing comparisons between free Kashmir and occupied Kashmir in the name of freedom and human rights. Addressing this, Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir emphasized unity and solidarity to counter the efforts of the enemies using religious, ethnic, and political vulnerabilities. To emerge as a determined and strong nation, unity is paramount.

The armed forces of a country are intrinsically linked to its history, security, and prosperity. Recognizing the services of the army is not merely a ceremonial

gesture; it is a fundamental necessity for fostering national unity, safeguarding sovereignty, and ensuring the well-being of citizens. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a self-governing administrative region under Pakistan's jurisdiction, has garnered attention due to its strategic location and historical significance. The Pakistan Army has played a pivotal role in securing the region's development, welfare, and security. Beyond its defense functions, the army has been actively engaged in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance efforts in

healthcare facilities to areas with restricted winter access and helicopter support for critical patients exemplify the army's dedication to the well-being of AJK residents.

The demanding topography and vulnerability to natural disasters in AJK often necessitate specialized search and rescue operations. The Pakistan Army, with its proficient personnel and resources, has played a crucial role in executing successful operations during emergencies, ensuring the safety of the local population. Moreover, the presence of the Pakistan Army in AJK contributes significantly to fostering national integration. Through active engagement with the local population, the army works to bridge cultural and regional gaps, promoting unity and a shared national identity.

The connection between Pakistan and AJK is deeply embedded in history. Following the partition of British India in 1947, the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir had the option to accede to either India or Pakistan. In light of the predominantly Muslim population and the leadership's desire to join Pakistan, the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir found a natural ally in their eastern neighbor. The subsequent conflict and territorial disputes over the region further strengthened the historical bonds between Pakistan and AJK. Pakistan has consistently extended political support and solidarity to Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

To be continued



Abdul Basit Alvi

BRI, CPEC practical manifestation of win-win cooperation

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi has said that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project – China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is a practical manifestation of win-win cooperation and shared prosperity for both China and Pakistan and the countries participating in the initiative. Sharing his vision for collaboration between China and Pakistan in the upcoming decade, he told CGTN in an interview that there is an excellent foundation that already exists in the last 10 years or before. "So, going forward, we have the essential constituents, which is the infrastructure and energy in place."

Expressing a need to intensify focus on industrial cooperation, he said, it means special economic zones, enhanced trade and investment and cooperation in Information Technology and agriculture, adding there are also areas within these bigger fields. Expressing his resolve to deepen the economic relationship between the two countries, he said, Pakistan and China have signed a free trade agreement. They have signed five protocols on agriculture this year. Pakistan's exports to China have increased. Trade volume between the two countries has increased. On connectivity projects from the Karakoram Highway to the Gwadar port to enhance ties between the two countries, he said, these projects are essentially about connectivity and infrastructure development. But more than that it is a vehicle or a means for people-centred development to use it as a platform to enhance livelihoods for people. He said the Silk Road is an ancient connection for the people and in the 1960s, the two countries jointly built Karakoram Highway. With the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor coming into play in the last 10 years, we are going into a new high gear which is Phase II of the Karakoram Highway. Gwadar port is functional and that is also a great example of Pakistan and China working together to build means of transport and livelihood. In his remarks on the role of infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to enhance people's livelihoods, he said, that in the last 10 years, 236,000 jobs have been created. More than 8,000 megawatts of electricity have been added to our national grid. More than 800 kilometres of highways have been built. Nearly, 900 kilometres of electricity transmission lines have been upgraded. "I think this is a huge contribution in terms of direct contribution to the creation of jobs but also laying the foundation for people to enjoy the benefits of development on a more longer term and more sustained basis," he added. About his priorities as the newly appointed ambassador of Pakistan to China, he vowed to help implement the consensus and decisions reached between the leadership of the two countries. To deepen the very high level of trust that we have between our governments, people and institutions, we will also promote people-to-people connections more specifically in the area of art, culture and tourism, he added. He said that this year, the Pakistan embassy organized a visit of 15 Chinese tour operators to Pakistan to explore the possibilities of more Chinese tourists going to Pakistan. And then this year in November, eight Pakistani tour operators arrived in China and participated for the first time in the Beijing outbound travel and tourism fair. "We have a very unique time-tested, ironclad partnership between our two countries. And this is rooted in the hearts of the people. So, these excellent political and diplomatic relations, I think are also a basis to further promote and deepen our economic and our people-to-people relations. So that would be my priorities," he added.



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

'The unemployment crisis: strategies for job seekers and policy makers'

Noor Javed

Each month, the federal government's Bureau of Labour Statistics randomly surveys sixty thousand individuals around the nation. If respondents say they are both out of work and seeking employment, they are counted as unemployed members of the labour force. Jobless respondents who have chosen not to continue looking for work are considered out of the labour force and therefore are not counted as unemployed.

Unemployed. Almost half of all unemployment spells end because people leave the labour force. Ironically, those who drop out of the labour force—because they are discouraged, have household responsibilities, or are sick—actually make unemployment rates look better; the unemployment rate includes only people within the labour force who are out of work. Not all unemployment is the same. Unemployment can be long term or short term. It can be frictional, meaning someone is between jobs; or it may be structural, as when someone's skills are no longer demanded because of a change in technology or an industry downturn.

And even if most unemployment spells are short, most weeks of unemployment are experienced by people who are out of work for a long time. To see why, consider the following example. Suppose that each week, twenty spells of unemployment lasting 1 week begin, and only one begins that lasts 20 weeks. Then the average duration of a completed spell of unemployment would be only 1.05 weeks. But half of all unemployment (half of the total of 40 weeks that the twenty-one people are out of work) would be accounted for by spells lasting 20 weeks. Every day thousands of Pakistanis are losing jobs as the ongoing economic crisis deepens further. Just

how many millions will become jobless in 2023? Nobody can say for sure. But let's rephrase the question: What will be the total number of unemployed people by the end of this year, including those that couldn't find work even before 2023?

Unemployment Rate in Pakistan decreased to 6.30 percent in 2021 from 6.90 percent in 2019. Unemployment Rate in Pakistan averaged 5.72 percent from 1986 until 2021, reaching an all-time high of 8.30 percent in 2003 and a record low of 3.10. Pakistan is facing a multitude of challenges that are taking a heavy toll on its labour market while driving greater informality and out-migration. The ILO, through its Fourth Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), is dedicated to addressing the plight of workers and struggling enterprises and to finding solutions that will help to increase the security of their livelihoods through these difficult times," said Geir Tønstøl, ILO Country Director for Pakistan.

The Pakistani rate of unemployment increased by 6.5 percent, and we can say that one out of every 10 persons in the country are experiencing unemployment. The statistics from the urban areas for the unemployment rate were taken and it increased by 2 percent to 10.1 percent and in rural areas it increased from 4.3 percent to 5 percent. In the year 2020, when the unemployment rate in Pakistan was approximately 4.45 percent, a minor decrease from 4.65 percent the previous year. According to the Trading Economics Global Macro Model and Analysts expectations, the unemployment rate is likely to reach 5.0 percent by the end of 2021. According to official information, the predicted growth of the economy has almost eliminated the informal sector in which three of every four people lost their livelihoods between April and July the previous year. According to a report, "Special Survey for Evaluating Socioeconomic Impact of COVID-19 on Well-being of People", the labour market of Pakistan dropped by 13 percent in the April-June quarter

of 2020, leaving 20.7 million people out of work and due to that those workers, who mostly affected by this were the low-skilled young workers.

Students after studying for many years still not able to achieve a better place in society. Our youth is jobless that increases depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia like pathetic problems among society. When they realize that after studying for many years still they are not able to achieve a better place in society they become hopeless. And then create other means for their income. Unemployment is a significant issue for any economy. It creates adverse impacts on the unemployed as they are jobless and suffer from worse chances to find a new job, and those who are employed feel less secure about keeping their jobs in future. It is the job of the government to strictly monitor the implementation of laws. The people of the country should help the government to fight against unemployment. Therefore, every citizen should follow the rules and regulations in their true spirit and should maintain discipline. To make our country successful, along with the government, every individual should do their part of the job.

However, by taking the necessary steps, the government can help to reduce unemployment and create a more prosperous future for all people. Joblessness has a number of negative impacts on society as it can lead to poverty, crime, and social unrest. It can also have a negative impact on the mental and physical health of individuals and families. Social scientists say unemployment can also lead to a loss of social status and self-esteem. It can make it difficult for people to afford basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter. It can also make it difficult for people to save for the future or to invest in their education or skills.

The government has a responsibility to address the unemployment crisis and to create a more just and equitable society.

The author is a student at National Defence University Islamabad

Role of 'Chamber and Commerce' in Trade & Society - I

A few days ago, a statement by the president of the Chamber of Commerce Multan came out that due to the lack of technology, we are suffering in every sector. He said this while meeting Director Upgradation Technology and Skill Development Committee Lahore Sadia Masood.

Beyond personalism and criticism, there is no shame in writing that till now every department of ours has neglected its basic responsibilities, due to which we are mired in problems. At the Chamber of Commerce platform in Multan, there is currently a notable absence of workshops specifically dedicated to information technology (IT) and commerce technology. This deficiency may impact the local business community's ability to stay updated on the latest technological advancements crucial for modern commerce.

To address this gap, it is recommended to consider organizing workshops that delve into various aspects of IT and commerce technology. These sessions could cover topics such as e-commerce platforms, digital marketing strategies, cybersecurity measures for businesses, and the integration of technology into traditional commerce practices.

By incorporating these workshops, the Chamber of Commerce in Multan can play a pivotal role in enhancing the digital literacy and competitiveness of local businesses in Janoobi Punjab. It would also serve as a valuable platform for networking and knowledge exchange, fostering a more technologically adept business community in the region. We know that Chambers of Commerce play a crucial role in supporting and fostering the growth of industries. Their functions extend beyond mere networking and include various aspects that contribute to the overall develop-

ment of businesses. Some key roles of Chambers of Commerce in industry are:

- 1. Advocacy and Representation:** Chambers advocate for the interests of industries at local, regional, and national levels. They serve as a collective voice, representing the concerns and needs of businesses to government bodies, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.
- 2. Policy Influence:** Chambers actively engage in shaping economic policies that impact industries. They provide valuable insights, feedback, and recommendations to policymakers, influencing decisions that can affect the business environment.
- 3. Networking and Collaboration:** Chambers facilitate networking opportunities for businesses within an industry. These connections enable companies to collaborate, share knowledge, and explore potential partnerships, fostering a supportive business ecosystem.
- 4. Information Dissemination:** Chambers of Commerce act as information hubs, keeping industries informed about market trends, regulatory changes, and emerging technologies. This helps businesses adapt to the evolving landscape and stay competitive.
- 5. Skill Development and Training:** Many Chambers organize workshops, seminars, and training programs to enhance the skills of industry professionals. This focus on continuous learning ensures that businesses have access to the latest knowledge and expertise.
- 6. International Trade Support:** Chambers facilitate international trade by providing assistance to businesses looking to expand globally. They offer guidance on export-import regulations, market entry strategies, and connect businesses with international partners.

To be continued



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Nepal-Britain Treaty: The Centennial



Nandan Prasad Adhikari

The Nepal-Britain Treaty was nationally celebrated with festivities while the Nepal-India Treaty continues to be disputed.

The year 2023 marks the centenary of the Nepal-Britain Peace and Friendship Treaty that had formally recognized the sovereignty and independence of Nepal in black and white. Since 1923, the world has witnessed profound political changes but the special friendship between the two countries remains intact as they mark a hundred years of old diplomatic history of mutual esteem, respect and cooperation.

In his coronation ceremony speech, the last Rana Prime Minister, Mohan Shumsher (1885-1967) had vouched for "having a cordial relationship" with India, and also mentioned the signing of the 1923 Treaty with Great Britain. He also talked about the exchange of envoys with the United States of America in 1947 and efforts of keeping harmonious relations with China, France, the Netherlands and Belgium. Nevertheless, Nepal was forced to sign a separate treaty with Independent India within 24 years of signing the Nepal-Britain Treaty.

The 'Nepal-Britain Peace and Friendship Treaty 1923' is the pillar on which the 'Nepal-India Peace and Friendship Treaty 1950' stands. Though the Nepal-India Treaty has replaced the Nepal-Britain Treaty, the latter is yet considered an instrumental tool for necessary diplomatic citations. Prithvi Narayan Shah's unification campaign of turning independent Nepal as one single sovereign entity had led it ultimately to the Nepal-Britain Treaty. In manifesting the glorious history of Nepal and the United Kingdom, evidential proof of the historic document of 'undivided, sovereign and independent nation' lies as the legal basis of the Nepal-Britain Treaty. Not surprisingly, all countries of the world including neighbouring India and China have appreciated the sovereign status of Nepal as an independent nation.

A treaty signed by any independent nation is viewed as a continuous process of national existence. As the Nepal-India Treaty sticks upon the Nepal-Britain Treaty, it was just as appropriate to recognize Nepal as an 'independent and sovereign nation' and dismiss, among others, Nepal's earlier treaties, agreements, articles, documents and engagements. The section 2 of the Nepal-India Treaty rejects Nepal's past treaties of December 21, 1792 treaty with British Government, March 24, 1856 treaty with Tibet (Thapathali Treaty), December 2, 1815 treaty with the East-India Company Government (Sugauli Treaty) and October 2, 1792 treaty with Tibet-China (Betrawati Treaty) and June 2, 1789 treaty with Tibet (Kerung Treaty).

In view of the existing geo-political mess and the wake of democracy, the Nepal-India Treaty was signed by Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher with glimpses of the Nepal-Britain Treaty. Among others, though seven sections of both treaties look similar in nature, the introduction of the Nepal-India Treaty plus other disputed articles have led to controversies including persistent demands for timely replacement of unequal sections, especially in the changing context of the fast changing world. For settling such disputes, the Eminent Persons' Group was quickly established by both countries to review various aspects of Nepal-India ties including timely amendment of the Nepal-India Treaty but the unanimous report that was finalised in July, 2018 continues to gather dust in the absence of due attention.

The Nepal-Britain Treaty was nationally celebrated with festivities while the Nepal-India Treaty continues to be disputed. The Treaty of Sugauli and the Nepal-India Treaty were made under pressures of British-India and Independent-India, respectively. But the Nepal-Britain Treaty had not faced any pressures and/or influences from

India, China and Britain, which was solely achieved by valour and efforts of decades' long Nepal's own diplomatic pursuits.

The Nepal-Britain Treaty was initiated in course of Nepal's valour and courage of Nepalis and its credit largely goes to Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher (1901-1929). Chandra Shumsher's single minded pursuit for recognition of Nepal as a sovereign and independent nation is to be credited for the signing of the Treaty with England in 1923. Nepal's international image was atop under the rule of Chandra Shumsher despite contradictions in national politics. By diplomatically confirming Nepal as a sovereign and independent nation in the world map, Chandra Shumsher had secured a concomitant title of 'His Majesty' to the King, established the Gurkha Recruitment Center for Nepal Army to be used as soldiers to serve the British Emperor and appointment of ambassadors, instead of

visit to India in 1903 was no less interesting. He had initially sent words of not accepting Delhi's invitation if Nepal was not kept on par with the King of Kashmir and Nawab of Hyderabad at Delhi Palace. As the invitation had to be accepted for geo-political compulsions under British rule, he moved diplomatically. Meanwhile the legendary ruler focused himself in making a separate identity of Nepal at the Delhi Palace.

Lord Curzon (1859-1905), a royal notable of high promise had been invited early on for hunting expeditions in Nepal and Chandra Shumsher had worked hard for establishing a close rapport. After being informed of Nepal's ranking at third in protocol, he focused himself on making a diplomatic impression of a different kind. The allotted ten minutes for an audience with Curzon got extended by over an hour once Chandra Shumsher raised the issue of ongoing Russian overtures to Nepal,

from one to two million Indian rupees, which was being collected through the State Bank of Bengal. Chandra Shumsher had not only issued commercials to increase the number of military for the British Emperor but also deposited around 14.1 million Indian rupees including tangible substances in the war fund, which was highly praised by the Governor General by sending a letter of influence for Nepal's assistance and artistry of Nepali soldiers. When the number of Nepali soldiers in the British Army continuously increased, a separate brigade was established, the 'Brigade of Gurkha.'

Nepal's contribution was matchless to the Allies in the First World-War. Almost 24,000 Gurkha casualties in Gallipoli of Turkey, trenches of Belgium and France were reported, the heavy price of Nepali blood was to be rewarded sooner rather than later. With the English Allies victorious in 1918, the valor of Gurkha and goodwill of

dually translated in English in 1910 from Sylvain Levi's French edition and officially published in two volumes from England in 1928 under the title, 'NEPAL' by Perceval Landon. The book had not only boosted Nepal's glory in the international arena but also highlighted the everlasting relations between England and Nepal. The book was also later on submitted in the process of applying Nepal's membership to the United Nations.

Sati, a late practice in which a widow sacrifices herself by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre, which absolutely diminished the rights of women, was not yet ended. Queen Victoria was said to be shocked after hearing news of three queens going as Sati along with Janga Bahadur's dead body, the abolition of wrong tradition was necessarily to be scrapped sooner rather than later. Chandra Shumsher had finally abolished the Sati tradition on July 8, 1920, which was also an attempt to please the

ly affirmed sovereign and independent status stating "the Government of Nepal has never considered that either the Sugauli Treaty and/or any other treaties, agreements or engagements impaired its independence and sovereignty." On behalf of the Nepal-Britain Treaty, Nepal's application of membership was unanimously confirmed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14, 1955.

Time has witnessed many royalties from London to Kathmandu and vice-versa. King Mahendra and Queen Ratna in October 18, 1960, King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya in November 18, 1980, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in March 1961 and February 17, 1986, the Duke of Edinburgh, Princes Diana, King Charles III and other high dignitaries had paid their state and official visits. Prince Harry had famously served alongside the 1st Battalion of the Royal Gurkha Rifles during his tour of Afghanistan in 2007-08, which was an honour to both Nepal and the UK. Time and again, Nepal's head of the government and people of both countries had also made multiple wonderful trips in both counties.

It is recorded that around 47,902 Gurkha soldiers were killed, wounded and/or went missing as on August 15, 1947 in the first and second World Wars. The Gurkha soldiers had not only fought bravely with communist guerrilla warfare in Malaysia but also won the war of the Falklands island against Argentina. As the valour of Gurkha is unmatched till date, the Nepalese Army is presently contributing as the second largest troops in some twelve worldwide missions for peace and stability under the United Nations.

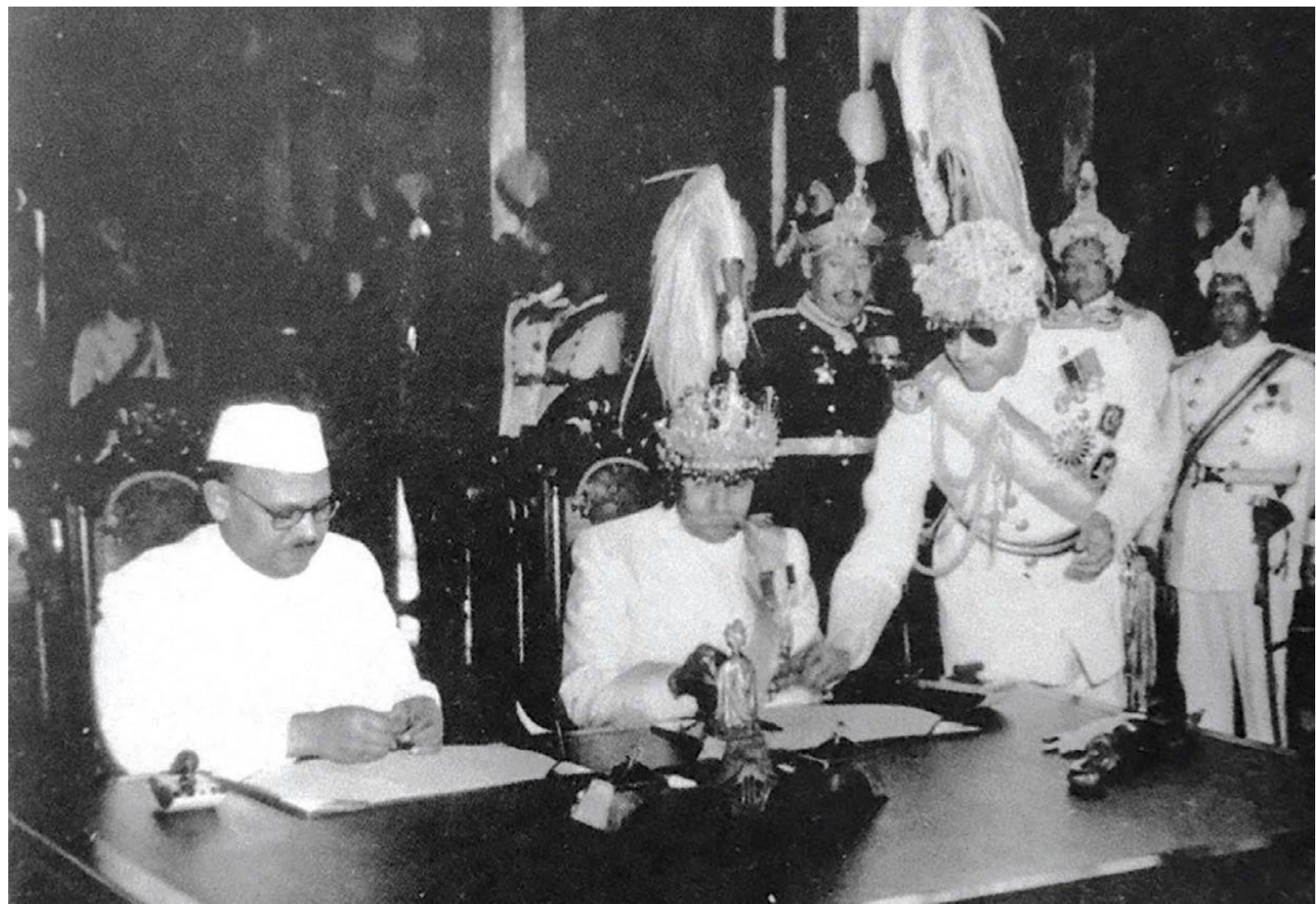
As the breadth of people to people connections touch on all segments of society, the Department for International Development (DFID-Nepal) is performing activities on behalf of the British Embassy in promoting education, health, economic developments, militaries, human rights and society. The Britain-Nepal Society, Britain-Nepal Medical Trust and Nepal-Britain Chamber of Commerce and Industry are also active to promote goodwill of both countries. Though Nepal and the UK had also signed an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement on March 2, 1993, Nepal has not been able to get benefits in export of quality goods even if there exists provision of zero tariff interest rate for certain goods. The irony is that Nepal is continuously facing a financial loss with the UK and could not achieve a business of one billion rupees in the last fiscal year.

In short, Nepal has also lost its due respect and dignity that Nepalis had once rightfully earned and maintained in the international arena. Nepal's foreign policy is always degraded and disturbed nationally as well as globally. The ability of Nepalis to conduct diplomacy has been fragile and has eroded over the years. The recent election of the World Health Organization Regional Director for the South-East Asia Region is the latest evidence. Similarly, Nepal's image is also vanishing as many Nepalis are now fighting as soldiers in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine on their own.

Presently, Nepal is one of the poorest countries in Asia, which has dangerously affected Nepal's economy. Among others, political instability, bad governance, corruption, unemployment and inflation have been the major reasons that have forced many Nepalis to leave the country.

Finally, for re-establishing Nepal's lost status, policy of non-alignment, neutrality and equilibrium between countries of diplomatic orders through the theory of Panchsheel must be cautiously readdressed. From possible geo-political danger to protect Nepal's independent and sovereign existence, statesmen like Chandra Shumsher are the need of the hour. For establishing Nepal's deep friendship with the UK, the Nepal-Britain Treaty deserves national tributes in postage stamps and minted coins. As Nepal has yet to learn many diplomatic lessons from the UK, there must be a perpetual friendship between Nepal and the UK where both must look forward to the next century of togetherness.

(Curtsey Republica)
The author is Kathmandu-based scholar. He can be reached at news@mjgpublica.com



British Resident in Kathmandu and London.

Chandra Shumsher was a brilliant and avowed reader of English newspapers ever since his student days in Kolkata leading to his matriculation in the English medium. At that time, newspapers published from Britain took almost a month to reach Kolkata by ships from London via the Cape of Good Hope of Africa. In contrast, the English newspapers started to reach Kolkata within a week after the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt. Serious reading of newspapers helped Chandra Shumsher to trace the strength and weaknesses of the English Empire, not to mention the ways to deal with Englishmen.

Muluki Ain, a legal code of governance, was chartered by Political Statesman Junga Bahadur Rana (1846-1877) after acquiring Naya Muluk lost by the Treaty of Sugauli signed during Bhimsen Thapa's Prime Ministership earlier. The Naya Muluk comprises four districts namely Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur. Prime Minister Junga Bahadur had also been successful to acquire close attention of no less a person than Britain's Queen Victoria herself during his earlier sojourn to England, not to mention close rapport with Lord Curzon, later the Viceroy of India. But a hardcore nationalist Chandra Shumsher worked hard to realise the same by the means of a legal treaty.

In the process of consolidation, when much of South Asia was quickly established by both countries to review various aspects of Nepal-India ties including timely amendment of the Nepal-India Treaty but the unanimous report that was finalised in July, 2018 continues to gather dust in the absence of due attention.

Chandra Shumsher's official

now that they had already been successful in sending a mission to Lhasa.

Chandra Shumsher's initial entry at the Delhi palace was equally dramatic. Riding a 16-horse carriage and carrying horsewhip, Chandra Shumsher had amazingly reached the invitation site of the Viceroy's residence at Delhi's Rajpath. All, no less the guests were surprised to see Chandra Shumsher seated on par with the King of Kashmir and Nawab of Hyderabad. In 1904, Chandra Shumsher was duly thanked by Great Britain for directly helping to send a special military mission to Tibet under Sir Francis Edberg Young Husband, historically called the 'Young Husband Mission.'

In 1908, Chandra Shumsher visited Britain and received a 19-cannon salute along with high state honours as an envoy of the King of Nepal. At that time, the newly appointed Viceroy was Lord Minto (1905-1910). Chandra Shumsher succeeded in making a distinct impression on the Brits as he had himself adopted English ways and working styles. He was awarded an honorary 'Doctor of Civil Law' at the University of Oxford. The UK Herald Tribune had also published the news item of Chandra Shumsher's donation of five hundred pounds to the poor of Edinburgh during his stay of some eleven weeks in England. At the same time, Chandra Shumsher also visited France and acquainted himself with the famous French legal system, the 'Napoleon Code.' Almost 57 years after Junga Bahadur's Europe visit, Chandra Shumsher also used the same route and was said to have climbed the Eiffel Tower two days after he reached Paris.

In 1911, during a hunting expedition of King Gorge (V) of Britain in the Tarai region of southern Nepal, Chandra Shumsher requested him to recognize Nepal as an independent country. Chandra Shumsher was also to assist the British Emperor with an offer of a 20-battalion of the Gurkha Recruitment Center during the First World-War (1914-18). With Nepali soldiers reaching almost 250,000, a royalty to Nepal was doubled

Nepal was much to be appreciated. In spite of letters written among others by the German Imperial Chancellor during the First World-War inciting Nepal against the British Emperor, Nepal remained intact with Britain and Britain outrightly rejected wrong information. Such military assistance to the Brits was viewed by some to save powers, while others saw it in a way to the Treaty of 1923. Not surprisingly, the organiser of frightening experiences, Germany's last King Kaiser Wilhelm II said at the time of the Great-War, "I'll not be afraid to counter my dearest army against any military in the world, but my heart trembles as soon as being said Gurkha Army."

In 1921, Britain's Prince of Wales (King Edward VIII) came for a hunting expedition in the Chitwan region at the invitation of Chandra Shumsher. A high-level Russian delegation had earlier visited Tibet. Chandra Shumsher had quietly informed the Brits about the Russian overture. As Britain had a bitter relation with Russia at that juncture, Chandra Shumsher had masterfully conveyed to Britain about the treaty's benefits by highlighting geo-political tensions Nepal had to face in danger of the Russians entering British-India via Nepal. For removing confusions in Edberg's mind about the Russians and payment for Nepal's assistance, Great Britain appears to have ultimately reached a conclusion in having a treaty with Nepal as a part and parcel of the package designed to reward Nepal for its help in the First World-War. Also, the British Government had no other option left than to honour the Barcelona Convention of 1921, which provided transit freedom for land-locked countries. Ultimately, Chandra Shumsher's tactful endeavours paid dividends in the form of the Treaty of 1923. And, London finally sent a draft proposal of the treaty to Kathmandu.

When the draft proposal arrived, Chandra Shumsher had ordered Yagnamani Acharya Dixit to study the draft. As Yagnamani was the first Nepali conferred with a master's degree in political science from Presi-

(1948-1953).

London finally accepted Nepal's modified version of the draft of the proposed treaty, resulting in a signing ceremony organised in style at the Gallery Hall of Singha Durbar, Kathmandu. By hosting toasts with full military honours and 31-gun salutes, the treaty of peace and friendship between Nepal and Britain was signed on 21st December, 1923 by Chandra Shumsher and the British Resident, Sir Lieutenant-Colonel William Fredrick O'Connor. Both delivered their speeches in English, which were translated by Marichiman in Nepali. At once, Great Britain had recognized Nepal as a "unified, sovereign and independent nation."

"A magnificent dome crowning the whole" was vouched by Chandra Shumsher on the occasion. High level celebrations were made by illuminated lightning throughout the capital, authorising a 2-day national holiday, pardon of 3-month sentences to prisoners and, permitting a 2-day gambling at Kathmandu and Patan. The news was published in the Gorkhapatra on December 24, 1923.

The Nepal-Britain Treaty ensured the establishment of friendly ties, guarantee sovereignty, reaffirm the Treaty of Sugauli, inform problems and disallow the use of the territory against each other, address security guarantee, open for importing weapons and remove customs duty and/or tariff barriers for bilateral trade of imports and exports.

On August 7, 1925, when the Nepal-Britain Treaty was kept in records at the League of Nations, Nepal was no longer a new country to the world community. Consequently, Nepal could not be merged in India immediately after its independence in 1947 like other soft Indian states like Hyderabad, Gwalior, Baroda and Junagadh.

Chandra Shumsher's life story was written by Rammani Acharya Dixit in Nepali, translated in English by TN Roy of Kolkata and corrected by Yagnamani and Chandra Shumsher's son Keshar Shumsher, which was first published in 1905, formal-

British Emperor in the course of making the Treaty of 1923.

As the League of Nations had already praised Chandra Shumsher for redemption of slavery in Nepal earlier than Europe in November, 1924, signing of the Nepal-Britain Treaty got diplomatic benefits as well. After publishing Chandra Shumsher's works in the European newspapers, it was reported that some American universities wanted to award him as well. For making Nepal's interest alike England's at the end of Chandra Shumsher's rule, a pioneer report was presented before him, which was a step forward in making a constitution that properly suits to Nepal after studying constitutions of America, England and Japan by experts duo in English and French, Deepakraj Tuladhar and Yagnamani respectively.

As Chandra Shumsher had enormously contributed to legally making Nepal recognized as an independent and sovereign nation, he must be added in the list of 'national personality' on the occasion of a centenary of the Nepal-British Treaty. Though basic needs of the Nepalis were not fulfilled under the autocratic Rana rule of over a hundred years, the Ranas did not ever lose in promoting Nepal's national interests especially in foreign policies.

In 1934, with the establishment of the Royal Nepal Embassy, Nepal became the first South Asian country to appoint its ambassador in London's prime location, 12A Kensington Palace Gardens. Nepal's first Ambassador to the UK was Bahadur Shumsher JB Rana (1934-1936).

Bijaya Shumsher JB Rana, director general, Foreign Affairs Department, had formally communicated Nepal's membership at the United Nations through letters of February 13 and March 10, 1949, which was rejected from the veto used by Soviet Union Russia-Ukraine. Although Nepal had bilateral relations with neighbouring China and India since 1792 and 1947 respectively, Nepal was asked to prove its independence and sovereignty. Nepal had submitted evidence of the Treaty of 1923, which had explicit-

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
64,661.78	62,451.04
Day's High	Day's Low
64,718.88	62,672.96
Index Value	Change
13,346,596,713	+2210.74
Percentage	Time
+3.54%	1 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,733.24	+10.50
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	28 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

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

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
33,464.17	-75.45
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	29 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	189	191
Bahrain Dinar	749.78	757.78
Canadian Dollar	210	212
China Yuan	39.72	40.12
Danish Krone	41.75	42.15
Euro	308	311
Hong Kong Dollar	36.1	36.45
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	1.65	1.75
Kuwaiti Dinar	914.42	923.42
Malaysian Ringgit	61.43	62.03
New Zealand \$	178.31	180.31
Norwegians Krone	27.47	27.77
Omani Riyal	732.59	740.59
Qatari Riyal	77.45	78.15
Saudi Riyal	74.2	74.9
Singapore Dollar	210	212
Swedish Korona	27.97	28.27
Swiss Franc	335.08	337.58
Thai Bhat	8.274	8.39
U.A.E Dirham	76.4	77.2
UK Pound Sterling	357.5	360.5
US Dollar	281.3	283.8

Popular decisions to push int'l financial institutions away, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday that international financial institutions fear what may happen after the election as the newly-elected administration might undo the reforms.

The new government will be under pressure to reverse reforms and make popular decisions, which will push away multinational financial organizations, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that international organizations also want timely elections in Pakistan and are also afraid of the post-election situation as the government formed as a result of the election can stop the process of reforms to increase its popularity.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the concerns and reservations of the international organizations that are playing a major role in saving the country from bankruptcy must be addressed.

He said that there was no option other than accepting the dictates of international organizations to save the country from default. Problems will increase for the country's economy if the reforms are reversed, and foreign investors will also stop planning to invest in Pakistan.

The business leader noted that some international organizations believe that the benefit-seeking elements have become active even



before the elections, and they are making efforts for subsidies, tax exemptions, various

types of packages, etc.

These influential classes will resist an increase in the tax base and pile up unnecessary imports into the country, widening the current account deficit and making the economy lean again for personal gains.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the property sector has also become active in eliminating new taxes; those buying electricity and gas are also active, while the sectors that evade more than \$4 trillion in taxes are also running their campaigns.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that it is also a fact that if the new government is irresponsible, the international organizations will withdraw, in the absence of which the help of friendly countries will also be limited to statements.

Dry fruit

ISLAMABAD: People are buying dry fruits from vendors at green belt along the Road side at Pir-wadhai in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raj Farid

Super Asia Bridges signing MOU with UET



ISLAMABAD: Super Asia, a renowned Home Appliances brand and exporter, takes a great initiative towards fostering collaboration between industry and academia by signing an MOU with the University of Engineering & Technology (UET).

It is an excellent step that opens the door for many opportunities and growth for UET students by participating in joint R&D in Products and Process-

es developments supporting indigenous technology development and developing customize products for Exports: A way forward for enhancing the exports. Appreciated and honored by all the stakeholders, where the Vice Chancellor of UET, Prof. Dr. Habib-ur-Rehman and CEO Super Asia Muhammad Faisal Afzal, signed the MOU. The initiative was taken by Hammad Khalid, an Industry specialist and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz, Coordinator, Narowal Campus.

ICCI congratulates to Atif Ikram Sheikh on elected as President FPCCI

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh has assumed the charge as the newly elected President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). In this regard, a ceremony was held in the FPCCI House in which UBG Patron-in-Chief S. M. Tanveer, President Zubair Tufail, Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, outgoing President of FPCCI Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and others were present. They congratulated Atif Ikram Sheikh and expressed best wishes for him.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry congratulated Atif Ikram Sheikh on being elected as the President of FPCCI and expressed his best wishes for him.

UBG Patron-in-Chief S. M. Tanveer said that the success of UBG in the elections of FPCCI reflects the confidence of the business community in its performance. He said that this great success is not only a historic moment for him but also the first step in his journey for the betterment of the business community.

The newly elected President of FPCCI, Atif Ikram Shaikh, thanked all his voters for giving him an overwhelming victo-



ry and reaffirmed to use all his ability to solve the major problems of the business community of the entire country.

Zubair Tufail, President, UBG said that the business community of the country has started a new journey of success by posing full confidence in the UBG and hoped that the newly elected leadership of FPCCI will spare no effort for the better protection of the interests of the business community.

UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said that the success of Atif Ikram Sheikh is the fulfillment of the wishes of the late S. M. Munir, the former Patron-in-

Chief of UBG. Appreciating the role of the armed forces, he said that Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir has undertaken the responsibility of reviving the country's economy and the business community will fully support him in this mission.

The outgoing President of FPCCI Irfan Iqbal Sheikh congratulated Atif Ikram Sheikh on his election as the President of FPCCI and wished him well. He assured that he would extend all possible cooperation to Atif Ikram Sheikh in his efforts to resolve the key issues of the business community.

A few lakh taxpayers cannot run the nation of 24 million people

Tariq Kattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Monday that a few lakh taxpayers cannot run a country with a population of 240 million.

Paying taxes is not only the responsibility of the salaried and poor classes, while the rich and influential have been given a free ride, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that those who earn millions and billions are kept out of the tax net for political favours which has ruined the country.

The elements that distort the economy for personal interests should be dealt with strictly;



otherwise, the country will be dependent on borrowing while the masses will never get any relief, he said.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that a country cannot survive where the majority of people are outside the tax net, and a large number of big businessmen think it is better to give donations to politicians instead of paying taxes to the government.

He noted that our tax system has been faced with several challenges, including low tax-to-

looting in the name of business should not be allowed.

The business leader said that a report by an international organization has revealed that there are only five industrial sectors in Pakistan that steal taxes worth Rs 956 billion annually, which include real estate, tea, cigarettes, tires, and pharmaceuticals.

He added that forty per cent of the economy is with retailers and wholesalers, who pay negligible taxes while smuggling under the guise of transit trade has become a parallel economy.

Only the poor and salaried class remain in the tax net, and they are subjected to harsh taxation which is regrettable, he said.

He noted that our tax system has been faced with several challenges, including low tax-to-

GDP ratios, a narrow tax base, and high rates of tax evasion. According to the World Bank, Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio was only 10.4% in 2020, which is significantly lower than the average of 15.3% for countries in the South Asian region.

Economists have proposed that a low-rate, flat, broad-based, and predictable tax regime can help Pakistan overcome these challenges and achieve greater economic growth and development.

Mr. Butt said that the Federal Board of Revenue has decided to include 1.5 million people in the tax net, including doctors, engineers, lawyers, and other businessmen who avoid paying taxes. This is a welcome step that needs to be implemented with full force, he demanded.

JS Bank reflects on the year of progress and growth



PNP

KARACHI: As the year 2024 begins, JS Bank, one of the fastest-growing banks in Pakistan, reflects on its journey of progress and growth to provide the best-in-class services to its customers.

In a year full of memorable highlights, the acquisition of BankIslami was a major milestone for JS Bank, reiterating its commitment to growth and evolution. Together, both banks will continue to operate independently in their respective domains and remain steadfast in their mission to provide best-in-class financial services to their customers.

JS Bank also remained committed to expanding its footprint across the country by inaugurating new state-of-the-art branches, aiming to improve customer outreach. Under JSBL's Annual Bank Expansion Plan (ABEP), several branches in the rural and urban areas were inaugurated, including Hala, Chawharmal, and Gambat branches in Sindh, Samundri branch in Faisalabad, Gujar Khan branch in Rawalpindi, and several others.

Zindigi, JS Bank's fintech offering, witnessed 100% YOY growth in its user base in 2023, accumulating 4.8 million customers, with a consistent 200% increase in transactions and a 50% increase in the value of transactions. The growth resulted from continuous innovative product offerings, including digital payments, loans, stocks, mutual funds, and a premium debit card proposition. Zindigi also became a leading Banking as a Service (BaaS) and Open Banking Solution Provider.

JS Bank also became a trusted partner to provide corporate and employee banking solutions to some of the leading businesses in the country, including Daraz, State Life Insurance, Attock Petroleum, Nestle, and Oil & Gas Development Company (OGDCL).

Mobilink Bank closes 2023 with 41% increase in MSME disbursements

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank stood out for its commitment to empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), constituting a significant 36% of its total loan portfolio and a noteworthy MSME Growth (YoY) of 41% in 2023. The Bank strongly advocates for social mobility, especially in empowering MSMEs and women across remote rural regions, offering tailored financial products and services. Mobilink Bank's inclusive loan offerings are pivotal in bringing about positive transformations within communities nationwide. In a dedicated effort to address the gender-specific impacts of natural disasters driven by climate change, the Bank has allocated PKR 1.7 billion to climate finance.

President and CEO of Mobilink Bank, Ghazanfar Azzam, expressed his satisfaction with the extraordinary impact created by Mobilink

Bank and resolved to enhance it manifolds.

"We have experienced a fulfilling year, reinforcing our existing business verticals and venturing into new areas to amplify our impact," shared Ghazanfar Azzam. "Our ambitious development vision for the next three years is geared towards increasing our female customer base and expanding the reach of our climate finance program, promoting economic and environmental sustainability."

He further expressed, "At Mobilink Bank, gender equity and sustainability will remain focal points as we enter New Year 2024. We believe an equitable and environmentally responsible business approach can generate shared value for businesses and the community."

Inaugurated by its achievements and customers' extraordinary trust and loyalty, Mobilink Bank commits to going the extra mile to create more value for the economy and society.

FPCCI elections

BMP Progressive has emerged as a powerful party in business community

PPA

KARACHI: Adeel Siddiqui, Coordinator of Businessmen Panel Progressive (BMPP), attributed the clean sweep in the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) elections to the pivotal role played by the Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sindh, supported by the Associations. He highlighted that the successful candidates achieved a significant margin, securing over 100 votes, underscor-

ing the broad-based support received.

It should be noted that the four powerful personalities of the current ruling group BMP Saqib Fayyaz Magoor, Adeel Siddiqui, Shabbir Mansha and Khurram Ijaz had separated.

These figures are prominent in associations including the Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Inner Sindh and in the recent FPCCI elections, the BMP Progressive has emerged as a powerful party in the business community.

South Africa's David Bedingham eyes 'life after cricket' in England

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Batsman David Bedingham, who made an impressive Test debut for South Africa against India last week, said he is still trying to secure a British passport – but not so he can play for England.

Bedingham made 56 in the first Test at Centurion and impressed observers with his stroke play, calm demeanour and shot selection.

The 29-year-old right-handed batsman has played English county cricket for Durham since 2020.

He has a claim to British citizenship through ancestry and took no part in the 2022/23 South African domestic season, leading to speculation that he saw his future in England.

"I'm still trying to get a passport in England but it's not for cricket, it's for after cricket," he told journalists on Monday ahead of the second Test starting at Newlands on Wednesday.

"I'd like to continue playing there (in England) but since I've gone there I've



played as an overseas player and I don't think that will change."

David Bedingham refuted that he had entertained ambitions of playing for England.

"I had ambitions of playing (county cricket) as a local but if I was going to

play for England it would still be another three or four years," he said.

He added a call from South African coach Shukri Conrad had persuaded him to make himself available for the Test team rather than seek a place in the SA20, South Africa's T20 franchise

competition.

Bedingham and Keegan Petersen are the only two players who took part in the first Test who have been named in South Africa's squad for two Test matches in New Zealand, with all the other first-choice players committed to the SA20.

"I took my name out of the draft so that I could play in New Zealand," he said.

"Shuks (Conrad) called and said there's a possibility. When I heard that no-one from SA20 can play I thought my chances of playing are quite high. I didn't have a second thought.

"I told him I would take my name out of the draft."

He said being selected for the series against India had come as a surprise.

David Bedingham played for South Africa Under-19 in 2012/13 and was long regarded as one of the country's most promising young players.

But a serious car accident in 2016 kept him out of cricket for a year, contributing to him making a relatively late international debut.

Afghanistan extend Jonathan Trott's contract as head coach



A Sports

KABUL: The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Monday, extended Jonathan Trott's contract as their national team's head coach for 2024.

The ACB, in a statement, acknowledged Jonathan Trott's success as the head coach and thus announced a contract extension for a full year.

"Afghanistan Cricket Board confirms the extension of the contract with Mr. Jonathon Trott, the National Team's Head Coach, for the year 2024," said the Afghan cricketing body.

"The decision comes in after his successful 18-month tenure, during which he made significant contributions to the team's progress and development."

Notably, the ACB appointed the South-African born former English cricketer, as the National Team's Head Coach in July 2022.

Under his leadership, the team achieved remarkable success and secured several victories, including the team's impressive performance at the ACC T20 Men's Asia Cup 2022, its maiden international win and a T20I series victory against Pakistan, a maiden ODI series win over Bangladesh and a successful campaign at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

Jonathan Trott has played 52 test matches for England from 2009-2015, scoring 3835 runs at 44.08 with 9 centuries and 19 half-centuries to his name with the best of 226 in an inning.

He has also represented England in 68 ODIs during the period, having scored 2838 runs at 51.25 with 4 hundreds and 22 half-centuries to his name in the format.

Jonathan Trott expressed his pleasure on the extension of his contract and stated that he is looking forward to spending more time with the squad and building on performances of the recently held ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

It is worth mentioning here that Afghanistan are on a brief tour to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to play a three-match T20I series.

The three-match series between Afghanistan and UAE is levelled at 1-1 with the third and final fixture to be played on Tuesday.

Babar Azam, Shaheen Afridi remained top performers in 2023

Bismah Maroof emerged as the leading run-getter for women team with impressive 624 runs



Former captain Babar Azam and pacer Shaheen Afridi remained the top-performing cricketers for Pakistan in international cricket in 2023, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement on Monday.

In a post on X, the PCB said Babar remained the leading run-getter and Afridi the top wicket-taker for Pakistan.

In November last year, Babar stepped down as Pakistan's cricket captain days after a group-stage exit from the World Cup.

After showing dismal performance in the 50-over Asia Cup and World Cup tournaments, Babar failed to perform in Pakistan's ongoing Test series against Australia.

Babar retained the top spot in the ODI batters' rankings last month and scored 1,399 runs from 35 matches, which included three centuries and 10 fifties throughout the year.

Following Babar's resignation, fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi was appointed captain of the Pakistan T20 team. The left-arm pacer took 62 wickets in 30 matches at an average of 27.80 in 2023.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's former captain Bismah Maroof emerged as the leading run-getter for the women's team with an impressive 624 runs from 25 matches in 2023 which included three half-centuries.

Usman Khawaja recalls childhood memories with David Warner

A Sports

LAHORE: Left-handed Australian opener Usman Khawaja unveiled the funny side of his fellow David Warner and also recalled some captivating childhood memories.

Ahead of David Warner's retirement from Test cricket, Usman Khawaja recalled a hilarious prank his teammate played on others. Judging by the story, it seems that his teammate had a mischievous personality.

He recalled the time when they got into "cherry fights" and his mother would be furious at them as getting rid of stains on the clothes was difficult.

"Davey [David Warner] was an absolute menace," he said. "He was a terror as a kid honestly. One of the stories I bring up all the time that I love was we used to have tea time and he always gravitated towards the cherries. He is a smart man and he knows those cherries stain."

"So we would pick up a cherry and chuck it at other people and teammates and the mum's would be blowing up at



the end of the day because they couldn't get these cherry stains off. It is impossible to get cherry stains off."

Moreover, Usman Khawaja added that David Warner has a polarising personality like the late-great cricketer Shane Warne.

"He (Warner) has that persona about

him, he is a bit like Warnie [Shane Warne], he is polarising. Like Warnie was and a lot of Australia loves Warnie.

There was a lot of people I grew up with who didn't like Warnie and there were people sitting on either side, very polarising. Davey is the same. He is very polarising. You either love him or

you don't. There is nothing really in the middle," he added.

Usman Khawaja added that David Warner is a generous person off the field who gets along with others easily.

"You would have no idea that he is a Test cricketer and one of the greats of the game. He is the first person I see whether it is family or friends, he is like what do you want? I will get it for you. What do you need? I will do this or that for you," Usman Khawaja added.

Usman Khawaja said he highly trusts David Warner and the latter is the one he would first ask for help during personal crisis.

"He is that kind of guy and that is the side you don't see of him and he doesn't show that to a lot of people, so people just see what they see on the field and make up their minds, which is fair enough," the cricketer said.

Usman Khawaja said that people would not know the "real" David Warner behind the scenes as he can be quite rough even off the field, but the latter is a really good person.

Dominant Iga Swiatek sends Poland into United Cup quarter-finals

Sports Desk

LAHORE: An irrepressible Iga Swiatek unleashed on Spain Monday as Poland booked a 2-1 win to move into the quarter-finals of the United Cup.

The world number one showed no mercy to Sara Sorribes Tormo in a 6-2, 6-1 singles victory before teaming with Hubert Hurkacz to clinch the tie with a 6-0, 6-0 mixed doubles thrashing in just 53 minutes.

Hurkacz was ambushed in the day's opening singles, losing 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

The top-seeded Poles finished Group A play with a perfect 2-0 record and await a last-eight opponent.

Iga Swiatek, who has lost only seven games in two singles matches to start her countdown to the Australian Open, said



playing mixed doubles was a good experience.

"It's lessons for the future and great practice," the 22-year-old said. "I hardly ever play mixed. You use different skills, it's about feeling the geometry of the court."

Hurkacz credited his teammate with doing most of the hard yards.

"She carried me throughout the whole match, in every game she was making amazing shots," the world number nine said.

In Sydney, a sharp Casper Ruud won his second straight singles match before backing up in the mixed doubles to steer Norway past Croatia.

World number 24 Donna Vekic ground past unheralded

Malene Helgo 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 to give the Croats a winning start to the Group F tie of the United Cup.

But three-time Grand Slam finalist Ruud swept past Borna Coric 6-4, 6-1 in just 89 minutes to level proceedings, then partnered with Ulrikke Eikeri to beat Vekic and Ivan Dodig 6-2, 3-6, 10-7.

It was a much-needed win for Norway, who lost to the Netherlands at the weekend.

"I'm motivated for the new year, I'm fresh and I'm ready," said world number 11 Ruud. "Another great singles match. I'm very happy to start the new year that way."

The win followed a similarly dominant 6-3, 6-4 victory over Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor on Saturday.

Ruud has dropped serve just once through the two matches, and was not broken on

Monday.

He also won 12 of 13 net approaches and said he had been working hard to improve his volleys.

"I'll never be the guy who is all over the net, but I'm trying to come into the court a little more," he said.

Vekic needed two hours and 49 minutes to battle past Helgo, who played far better than her ranking of 539 suggested.

"She's a really good player and her ranking doesn't do her justice," said Vekic, a quarter-finalist at the Australian Open last year. "Finally my serve showed up in the third set, which made it easier."

The Alexander Zverev-led Germany meet France in Group D later Monday in Sydney, while the defending champions United States face Australia in Perth.

Wahab Riaz inaugurates U-16 Talent Hunt Programme

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz inaugurated Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Archery and Table Tennis Championship at a grand opening ceremony at Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) Gymnasium Hall.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwar and Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail were guests of honour on this occasion.

Director Sports Yasmee Akhtar, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, Deputy Director Ataur Rahman, Deputy Director Chand Perveen, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed, Administrator NPSC Gymnasium Hall Mustafa Shah, all divisional sports officer of the province, District Sports Officer Lahore Tanveer

Shah, Assistant Directors Sajid Ali, M Waseem, provincial coach Shaista Qaiser, Zareena Waqar and Chief Sports Consultant Hafeez Bhatti were also present on this occasion.

It is worth mentioning that Sports Board Punjab is organising Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Archery and Table Tennis Championship under Annual Sports Calendar Programme from January 1 to 5, 2024 in which over 200 male and female players and officials are participating.

All the participating U-16 divisional archery and table tennis teams and their officials were introduced to the Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz, Secretary Sports Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwar and DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail on this occasion.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth

Affairs Wahab Riaz, Secretary Sports Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwar and Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail exchanged souvenirs at the opening ceremony.

Talking to media at the mega inaugural ceremony, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said that the consultation was underway among top sports hierarchy of the province for the last few months to devise a mechanism for the promotion of sports at grassroots level. "It was felt that a proper infrastructure is there in the province but we need to incline young players to utilise the said infrastructure properly," he added.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said that under the newly-devised mechanism, U-16 teams will be selected from all nine divisions and the

young players will be on board not for specific events but for the whole year. "Sports Board Punjab will organize camps and sports competitions of the selected players and give them sufficient incentives to motivate them".

Elaborating the system, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said that Sports Board Punjab's selection committee will select the top performing players from these young players and these selected players will be given a stipend of Rs 10,000 each per month for one year.

He said that the competitions of six games are being organized in the upcoming Winter Games to be started from January 14. "In total, 18 sports disciplines have been selected in which Sports Board Punjab will form its own teams. In the first phase, we are working on six games—athletics, badminton, football, hockey,



volleyball and tennis. 90 players from these six games will be

awarded stipends of Rs 70,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 per month for one year respectively," he explained.

Hope

MULTAN: The first sunrise of 2024. People hope that the year 2024 will bring prosperity and happiness in Pakistan and with the end of terrorism from all over Pakistan, people will get rid of inflation and youth will get employment opportunities.



Photo: Asim Tanveer

China's BRI project appreciated by world as progress possible by working together: Solangi

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that China's Belt and Road Initiative was appreciated by the world as progress was possible only by working together. In an exclusive interview with China Radio International, the minister said that President Xi Jinping's vision of development was based on universal development.

"The fruits and benefits of development come only when development is not limited. No country can progress in isolation", Murtaza Solangi maintained. Welcoming the

message of the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping at the beginning of the new year, Murtaza Solangi said his vision of global development was also evident in his New Year message. President Xi has always promoted the timeless principles of humanity and his theory was a negation of the theory that a country can achieve development only by keeping other countries behind, the minister opined. "In our region too, President Xi Jinping's globalist ideology is gaining ground," he said.

Central Asian countries, Solangi added were already implementing Belt and Road



Initiative projects. He said with the passage of time, President Xi's globalization-based ideology will gain momentum.

Solangi said cooperation in the fields of information technology, mining, special

economic zones, agriculture, agro-based industry and tourism was developing as new avenues of cooperation between China and Pakistan were opening. He remarked that Pakistan-China friendship was not limited

to slogans and the future of the relations between the two countries was very bright.

"Thousands of Pakistani students are studying in Chinese universities", Murtaza Solangi stated. As a result of the cooperation between Radio Pakistan and China Radio International, Pakistan's professionals went to China and brought back the pleasant experiences of working with their Chinese brothers, the minister said. Saying that CPEC projects have had a positive impact on the lives of local people, Murtaza Solangi urged the media to highlight the positive impact on people's lives.

Most powerful means must be mobilized to destroy US: Kim Jong Un

Reuters

SEOUL: North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un told the country's military commanders the most powerful means must be mobilized to destroy the United States and South Korea if they choose military confrontation, state media reported on Monday.

Kim said the danger of an armed confrontation on the Korean peninsula is fast becoming a reality because of hostile maneuvers by the enemies including the United States, requiring the country to "sharpen the treasured sword" to protect itself.

"If the enemy opt for military confrontation... our army should deal a deadly blow to



thoroughly annihilate them by mobilizing all the toughest means and potentialities without moment's hesitation," KCNA news agency quoted Kim as saying.

Unmute Kim made the comments as he hosted senior military leaders on Sunday at the ruling Workers' Party (WPK) head-

quarters to congratulate them on the accomplishments made in 2023, the state news agency said.

North Korea in 2023 tested its largest ballistic missiles and launched its first military reconnaissance satellite, which Kim has called major advances in modernizing the country's military.

The call to upgrade the country's military readiness follows the pledge made at the conclusion of a five-day WPK meeting that ended on Saturday to boost its nuclear arsenal, build military drones and launch three new spy satellites in 2024.

The escalation of rhetoric from Kim comes as the United States increased drills with South Korea in the past year, deploying more strategic military assets, including a nuclear missile submarine, aircraft carriers and large bombers.

It also comes ahead of a year that will see pivotal elections in both South Korea and the United States, which Pyongyang likely sees as an opportunity to increase its leverage by stepping up a campaign of

military pressure.

On Monday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol pledged to accelerate work to complete a missile defence system and a system using U.S. extended deterrence to "fundamentally deter any North Korean nuclear and missile threat."

Extended deterrence refers to the strategy of using U.S. military assets including nuclear weapons to deter and, in the event of an attack against an ally, respond.

In separate reports, KCNA said Kim hosted a reception for senior members of the ruling party and attended a late night "grand art performance" celebrating the new year at the May Day stadium in Pyongyang, where senior party members,

Message of DG PMSA Rear Admiral Imtiaz Ali on Exercise Barracuda

The dependence of mankind on sea, its resources and environment has increased manifold in today's globalized world. The corresponding upscale in maritime activities is threatening marine environment. Mercantile traffic accounting for more than 90% of global trade carries along a perpetual danger of marine pollution through oil/chemical spills during collision/groundings and port operations. Timely and effective containment of such pollution requires regular rehearsals of response options besides coordination among all stakeholders. Likewise, being Regional Coordinator of Search and Rescue (SAR) setup of IMO, maritime services of Pakistan are required to coordinate and respond to distress situations at sea where human life and property is at risk.

In this context, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) is holding its twelfth series of exercise BARRACUDA scheduled from 2-4 Jan 24. PMSA has consistently taken the leading role both national and international level to safeguard maritime security in the region and the exercise has become a signature event of PMSA since 2007. The pressing need for mitigating and managing Oil spill at sea became evident following the catastrophic incident of MV TASMAN SPIRIT in Karachi back in 2003. PMSA then vehemently proposed development of national oil spill contingency plan to deal with all maritime disasters. Subsequently the national Marine Disaster Contingency Plan (NMDCP) was approved by Govt in 2007 which mandated PN & PMSA to lead national effort to fight the pollution, oil spillage and other maritime disasters at sea. Resultantly exercise BARRACUDA was conceived by PMSA with the aim of



generating consensus and fostering a coordinated response among different stakeholders, ensuring preparedness in the event of potential maritime disaster. The practical manifestation of response mechanism was seen in case of oil spill by MT AL-JAWAZA off Mubarik village and MV Hang Tong off Sea View wherein all stakeholders came together to handle disaster of oil spill at sea.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the friendly nations that have responded to our invitation and envision this exercise as a learning opportunity. The collaborative nature of the Ex BARRACUDA hold the potential to foster a valuable exchange of knowledge and experiences among participants. As we join hands together for this exercise the collective and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders will help to achieve the objective of shared response against disaster management to marine pollution and SAR.

I look forward to welcome all national stakeholders and maximum international participants/observers at the inaugural session of exercise BARRACUDA-XII as I remain hopeful of a rewarding and mutually beneficial exercise.

NAB moves IHC for restoration of 10-years disqualification period

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) moved Islamabad High Court (IHC) for restoration of the 10-year disqualification period.

As per details, the anti-graft watchdog stated in its plea that the single bench limited the 10-year disqualification period to 5 years in June this year.

However, NAB has filed an intra-court appeal against the single-bench verdict and urged the court to suspend the verdict limiting the disqualification period.

Furthermore, the NAB plea has been fixed for hearing and Justice Saman Rifat will hear the case.

It is pertinent to mention here that the then acting President Sadiq Sanjrani, who assumed the role when President Arif Alvi went on Haj, approved the Elections Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023 aimed at reducing the period of disqualification of lawmakers to five years.

The acting president gives assent to bill "as advised by former Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif", following which the latter becomes Act of Parliament.

Pakistan, India exchange lists of prisoners

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday handed over a list of 231 Indian prisoners including 184 fishermen and 47 civilians lodged in its jails to the Indian High Commission here. Similarly, the Indian government also shared the list of 418 Pakistani prisoners in its custody with a representatives of the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi which included 337 civilian prisoners and 81 fishermen, a Foreign Office statement said.

The simultaneous exchange of lists took place in pursuance of the

Consular Access Agreement of 2008. Under the agreement, both countries are required to exchange the lists of prisoners in each other's custody on 1st January and 1st July, every year. The Government of India has been urged to release and repatriate all those Pakistani civilian prisoners and fishermen, who have completed their respective sentence and whose national status stands confirmed. A request for grant of consular access to missing defence personnel of 1965 and 1971 wars, and special consular access to 77 civil prisoners has also been made.

Annual Exchange of Lists of Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition, on 1st January of each calendar year. Signed on 31 December 1988, the Agreement entered into force on 27 January 1991.

Pursuant to Article-II of the Agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, today. Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi.

The two countries have been exchanging the lists since 1st January 1992.

Meeting with Chinese Business Delegation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Chinese Companies and Investors called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Mr. Fawad Hasan Fawad today at Privatisation Division. The Federal Minister appreciated the interest of the Chinese companies and briefed them regarding investment opportunities in Pakistan. He observed that the true potential of the partnership between the two countries in trade and investment is not being realised. Pakistan can be a very suitable country for relocation of industry from China given availability of both skilled and unskilled labour, basic raw materials for a wide range of industries as well as fast growing local market. The minister articulated that investing in renewable energy sector and in EV manufacturing can be of good interest for Chinese investors. The Minister offered all cooperation to investors on behalf of the government and informed the delegation that a one window investment facilitation arrangement under SIFC is fast addressing the issues in investor facilitation and implementation at various tiers of the government. The Secretary, Privatisation Division, Mr. Jawad Paul was also present in the meeting.

36 projects completed so far under CPEC: Senate informed

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Monday said that 36 projects with a cumulative value of 24 billion dollars have been successfully completed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Additionally, 22 projects with a total investment of five billion dollars are currently under construction, he said while concluding a debate on motion under rule 218 in Senate, focusing on the underdevelopment of Balochistan despite the claims of successive governments to promote the region's growth through CPEC and other Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects.

Providing further insights in CPEC at the national level, the minister informed the House that negotiations are underway for 26 projects, totalling 27 billion dollars under the CPEC framework. Furthermore, 27 other projects dedicated to the social and economic development of Balochistan are actively under implementation.