



President links women's economic participation with enabling work environment

President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday stressed improving the status of women by providing them with an enabling work environment to increase their economic participation. The president highlighted that following the rights granted by the religion Islam, it was the responsibility of the society to give them their due share... (Details on Page 8)



Pakistani student contributes to China's migratory bird conservation efforts

As winter sets in, flocks of whooper swans from Siberia migrate to the banks of the Yellow River in Pinglu County, north China's Shanxi Province. This spectacle attracts numerous tourists and photographers. Pakistani student Anees Ur Rahman was one of them this winter. "These birds fascinate me and their presence enhances the beauty of our planet," he said. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Group Photo

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force along with other dignitaries during the induction and operationalization ceremony held at an operational Air Base of Pakistan Air Force on Tuesday.



Armed forces fully prepared to thwart any aggression: COAS

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Tuesday wholeheartedly endorsed the Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) dedication to technological advancements and operational excellence. Addressing the Induction and Operationalization Ceremony at an operational base of Pakistan Air Force, he also reassured that the Armed Forces of Pakistan were fully prepared to thwart any aggression against the

country, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

The COAS attended the ceremony as the chief guest. Upon his arrival at the base, he was received by Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. A smartly turned-out PAF contingent presented the Guard of Honour to him. The ceremony showcased the newly inducted weapon systems and defence assets of the PAF. The COAS lauded the operational preparedness

of Pakistan Air Force in incorporating state-of-the-art weapon systems, substantially contributing in ensuring the balance of power in the region. He emphasized the significance of indigenization and human resource development.

The COAS also appreciated the PAF's efforts for transportation of relief goods for the victims of Gaza conflict. During his speech, the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) highlighted the latest inductions in the PAF's arsenal comprising J-10C

fighter jets, air mobility platforms, modern radars, unmanned aerial systems, loitering munition capabilities and long range vectors, which have significantly bolstered the aerial defence capabilities of the country.

The CAS also mentioned that the Center of Excellence for Air Mobility & Aviation Safety, the College of Air Defence and reinvigoration of Air Power Centre of Excellence alongside operation-alization of National Aerospace Science and Technology Park had

provided the PAF the capability to stay abreast with the evolving challenges. He emphasized upon the progress achieved by the PAF in the emerging domains of cyber and space technologies to ensure an impregnable defence of the country. Following the ceremony, a spectacular airshow was conducted, featuring various PAF fighter jets, training aircraft and UAVs. The chief guest and the attendees later witnessed a static display showcasing the diverse PAF fighter, air mobility and UAV fleet.

No one has impunity to spread violence; State to ensure law & order: PM Kakar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday reiterated that the State would not allow anyone to unleash violence and kill people in the name of political, ethnic and religious divides as it was its responsibility to ensure law and order.

The prime minister, in a lengthy interaction with the students of the Beaconhouse National University, said that no one could be given a licence to kill and eliminate others on the basis of political, ethnic and religious differences.

"To maintain law and order is the responsibility of the State, and I assure you that such elements will never prevail on the State of Pakistan," he asserted.

The prime minister, elaborating his viewpoint while responding to a question, said that the one who reverted to fighting with the State and the countrymen would get the befitting response.

He said that the government



would not allow terrorists and militants to kill people with impunity as they had openly declared fight against the State and the civilians in the country.

"We have accepted their challenge," he said and expressed the resolve to fully respond to all threats with full force.

To another query, he said that the government functioned primarily on revenue generation system. The country had a tax collection of over Rs 9,000 billion, but there was tax evasion of more than almost Rs 10,000 billion. The lack of effective revenue system had been a persistent problem which required effective steps to rectify.

Saleh al-Arouri: Hamas leader embraces martyrdom in Israel drone strike

Agencies

BEIRUT: An Israeli drone struck a Hamas office in the southern suburbs of Lebanon's capital Beirut on Tuesday, killing four people including Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri, Middle East Eye reported. Saleh al-Arouri, who embraced martyrdom in the attack, was a founding member of the armed wing of Hamas.

The Manar television station of Hezbollah, the Lebanese armed group which has a



stronghold in the area, said an explosion was heard near the Hadi Nasrallah highway close to a road junction.

It gave no details of the explosion, which comes a day before a speech by Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

Former finance minister Sartaj Aziz passes away



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former finance minister Sartaj Aziz passed away.

Confirming the demise of former finance minister Sartaj Aziz, PML-N Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal said in his Tweet "Mr Sartaj Aziz has passed away. He was a veteran of Pakistan movement & great asset for the nation. He will be missed very much. May Allah Bless his soul and Grant patience to the family Ameen!"

Dry winter to continue; no chances of significant rain: PMD

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The prolonged dry Winter will continue in most parts of the country along with dense foggy conditions during this week with no significant chances of rain as per the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecast.

Talking to APP, Director Forecasting, PMD, Irfan Virk said that dry and cold weather will continue to prevail during this week and there are no chances of significant rain in the coming days. However, there are chances of light rain in a few parts of Balochistan during the next 24 hours.

He said that the fog patches ranging from normal to dense will continue in the plain areas of the country till the next rain.

He said that dense fog is likely to continue over the plain areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Upper Sindh and Islamabad during this week therefore citizens are advised to be cautious.

Peace talks enabled TTP to regroup, Senate told

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) reorganised itself during the peace talks, the interior ministry informed the Senate, adding that recruitment training of suicide bombers in the merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the return of terrorist organisation was an alarming development.

In a written reply, the ministry said inaction on the part of Afghan interim government - led by the Taliban - after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan had provided an opportunity to the TTP expand its influence and range of activities.

The interior ministry's response to the Pakistan's Upper House of Parliament is a damning indictment of the then PTI government which decided to hold dialogue with the TTP and allowed the return of its members to the erstwhile tribal region, which is responsible for a sharp increase attacks on security forces and law enforcement agencies as well as targeted killings of their officials and civilians. According to the reply, the TTP and other terror outfits are sabotaging the fence installed along the Pak-Afghan border, while Daesh - the so-called Islamic State (IS) group that originated in Iraq and Syria - has been also spreading its tentacles.

PTI to contest even if it has to field U-19 team, says Gohar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan says the party will participate in elections even if "it has to field an U-19 team."

He said no returning officer had issued correct instructions. "The PTI will win despite the fact that our nomination papers were rejected," he said.

He said the Supreme Court had assured that elections would be held in time. Some people were resorting to ham-handed tactics to delay the democratic process, he added.

He said democracy would derail and parliament weaken if one party was not allowed to contest elections. "We will not boycott elections as the public will decide who should be voted," he said.

The PTI, Barrister Gohar said, was the most popular party in Pakistan and had requested the judiciary to ensure level playing field in elections.

He said Maulana Fazl's party did not have support all over the country and it's the only one clamouring for delay in polling. "It's the ECP job to ensure election in a peaceful and secure environment," he said.

No chance of election delay, says Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday ruled out any chance of delay in the elections scheduled for February 8, 2024. "There is no possibility of postponing the elections, nor is there any challenge that will affect them," the minister said while speaking in a talk show of

a private television channel.

Expressing confidence in the ability of law enforcement agencies to deal with any challenge, he reiterated that the general elections would be held in the country on February 8, 2024. He said the caretaker government would provide all-out assistance to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold peaceful, transparent, and impartial elections in the country. The minister rejected



the notion that Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar had made any controversial remarks during

his recent media talk. Instead, he referred to those who supported terrorist organizations. To another query, he said the protestors from Balochistan sat before the Islamabad Press Club on their own will, and no force was used against them. He said the committee formed by the prime minister for negotiations held talks with them in a very conducive way. They had agreed to send the committee a list of its demands, but it was still

awaited, the minister added. All the women and children protestors were released on the very first day of negotiations, he said, adding that 163 more people were released after a day, and subsequently, the remaining 34 people were also freed. At present, none of the protestors were in police custody, he stressed, adding that they should be asked why their demands were not sent to the committee.

ECP asks PEMRA to cease broadcast of poll surveys

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday asked the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) to cease the broadcast of poll surveys by news channels as they have the potential to impact the unbiased decision-making of voters. The ECP, in a letter addressed to PEMRA, highlighted the detection of certain channels airing poll surveys - a practice

explicitly prohibited by clause 12 of its Code of Conduct for the National Media.

The Commission urged the regulator to swiftly address news channels' actions in alignment with the Code of Conduct, and provide it a compliance report. It underscored that clause 12 of the Code of Conduct "explicitly" instructs both print and social media to abstain from conducting poll surveys at polling stations or constituencies.

Pakistan looks to boost 'momentum' gained in bilateral ties with US

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interim Foreign Minister (FM) Jalil Abbas Jilani on Tuesday met US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome and underscored that the two sides should "continue to build on the recent exchanges and the momentum gained in bilateral ties".

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office (FO), US Ambassador to



Pakistan called on the interim foreign minister today.

The discussions between the two focused on "some major aspects of bilateral relations", including Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir's recent trip to the US, the statement added.

AJK govt establishes Rs5b endowment fund for deserving citizens

Spokesman Report

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq disclosed that a Rs. 5 billion worth endowment fund was being established for the poor, helpless and homeless people in AJK State.

Talking to a six-member delegation which called on him at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis under the leadership of Chairman Chirag Manzil Ashraf Abbasi, the AJK Prime Minister said that under the endowment scheme, twenty thousand rupees would be provided as a subsistence allowance to the destitute and their families.

PM said that disabled persons, orphans, divorced women, and the



elderly would be eligible to get relief under this scheme.

He said that the government would spare no efforts in providing relief to the common masses and issued special directions regarding the increase of quota of the special persons in government jobs from 2.5% to 5% on the occasion.

PM also directed authorities to provide free treatment and medicines in every district hospital for special people.

The Prime Minister also directed the relevant authorities to activate the rehabilitation centre for the special people at the AIIMS Hospital Muzaffarabad to provide the best medical facilities to the special people.

Rukhsana Mir, Malik Akhtar and Mohsin Awan were also present on the occasion.

DG NIMA called on SAPM on Maritime Affairs



PPA

ISLAMABAD: NIMA delegation, headed by Vice Admiral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed HI(M), DG NIMA called on Vice Admiral (Retd) Ifikhar Ahmed Rao HI(M), Special Advisor to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Maritime Affairs on 02 Jan 24. The SAPM was briefed about NIMA's ongoing multifaceted research and advocacy initiatives including Green Ship-recycling and Aquaculture. The Advisor ensured his continued support and guidance in NIMA's endeavors to promote the maritime interests of Pakistan.

Mehsud Press Club selects new Office bearers



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Mehsud Press Club registered annual elections were completed yesterday, Farooq Mehsud and Rafiq Alam were the candidates for Mehsud Press Club annual elections 2024.

On this occasion 20 members of Mehsud Press Club cast their votes, in which Farooq Mehsud was elected president with 16 votes while Rafiq Alam was second with 4 votes.

The newly elected President of Mehsud Press Club registered Farooq Mehsud announced the other cabinet office bearers.

Sikandar Hayat General Secretary, Adnan Khan Bettani Vice President, Abdul wadood Mehsud Joint Secretary and Jalal Mehsud Press Secretary were elected in the cabinet, when in addition to this, Sikandar Hayat was given the additional charge of Finance Secretary.

It should be noted, to make the elections transparent, political Moharrar Muhammad Ullah participated as the representative of district administration South Waziristan.

A farewell ceremony held



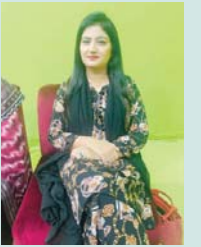
Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A farewell ceremony was held on the retirement of two Employees of Public Relations Office, Multan, Ishtiaq Ahmed and Rana Iqbal Hussain. Director Information Department Sajad Jahania Congratulated and said honorable retirement It is an honor for a government employee. He said that Ishtiaq Ahmed (Babu Bhai) kept service and punctuality as his motto throughout his career, which is a worthy example for government employees. On this occasion retired Director Public Relations Multan Hasan Akhtar Chishti and retired Pictorial Officer Syed Arshad Ali Bukhari along with Deputy Directors Multan Mian Naecem Asim, Farqan Abbas Haider, Muhammad Asghar Khan, Waseem Yusuf and Iram Salimi, Superintendent Allah Wasaya Zahid and Public Relations Office. All officers and officials of Multan participated of Addressing the function, the speakers expressed good wishes for the retired employees. Finally, Director Public Relations Multan Sajad Jahania along with other officers presented gifts and bouquets to the retired employees.

PPP's leader Ishrat Hassan nomination papers approved

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Nomination papers of People's Party leader Ishrat Hassan for National Assembly NA 219 of Hyderabad have been approved. Ishrat Hassan, the active woman leader of PPP Hyderabad, while talking after the approval of the nomination papers, said that the party leadership will decide the ticket, we are candidates for the party ticket, if the party trusts and gives the ticket, then the basic problems of the public will be resolved and try to fulfill the expectations of the party. In response to a question, Ishrat Hassan said that if the party is successful in getting the ticket, providing education, health and other basic facilities to the people of NA-219 will be the first priority.



Transfer of 11 Police Stations of Khanewal to Special Initiatives Police Stations

Asim Tanveer/Waqar



KHANEWAL: organized by Khanewal Police, a special ceremony was organized regarding the transfer of 11 police stations of Khanewal to Special Initiatives Police Stations. The chief guest of the ceremony was Regional Police Officer Multan Captain (Rtd) Muhammad Sohail

Chaudhry while the guests were Honorable CPO Multan Sadiq Ali, Deputy Commissioner Wasim Hamid(Sindhu), DPO Lodhran Hussain bin Iqbal and DPO Wahari Muhammad Isa Khan. The host of the ceremony was DPO Rana Umar Farooq. POS, DSP headquarters, SHOs and other police officers participated in the ceremony. It was started with recitation of Holy Quran. On this occasion, DPO Khanewal Rana Umar Farooq highlighted the excellent performance of the relevant SDPOs and SHOs with reference to the transfer of eleven police stations of Khanewal to the Special Initiatives Protocol and in this regard the police work was transferred to the old police stations. Multiplying with new innovation, excellent environment and amenities. It was shown on the media, on which RPO Multan, CPO Multan and DPOs applauded DPO Khanewal's skills and excellent actions.

Dangerous

FAISALABAD: A rider of loader tricycle loaded over lengthy iron rods at busy canal road, which may cause any incident any time.



Photo: Online

Chairperson of Azad Kashmir Women's Commission meets with caretaker foreign minister

Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairperson Women's Commission Ms. Rehana Khan met with the caretaker Foreign Minister of Pakistan Jalil Abbas Jilani. In the meeting, Jalil Abbas Jilani praised the Chairperson Women's Commission Azad Kashmir Ms. Rehana Khan for making the Women's Commission strong and active and appreciated her performance on this occasion. Jalil Abbas Jilani said that women are working side by side with men in Azad Kashmir. Azad Kashmir is a peaceful region where women are safe.

He said that the government of Pakistan has made national and international agreements with other countries for the welfare and protection of women and ensured their implementation by implementing them in Azad Jammu and Kashmir as well. I have a unique



position in law and order and equality. There are no barriers for women to progress in education and health.

For the development, prosperity and welfare of women, the Interim Constitution of 1974 included basic human rights, provided equal opportunities in all spheres of life and provided them with full constitutional protection. A National Commission on the Status of Women was constituted, which is

reviewing the existing laws and regulations affecting the status of women while continuously reviewing the Pakistan Program and other matters related to the development of women and the provision of equal opportunities.

The Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is constantly striving to create a society in the state in which men and women have equal opportunities to end the exploitation and

deprivation of women, for this purpose social and economic sectors. Equality and women are being empowered in all sectors. Azad Jammu and Kashmir has the unique privilege of empowering women in all matters regardless of gender, caste, religious affiliation or other reasons. Equal opportunities are being provided to them, they are neither deprived of development nor can they be considered exploited on the basis of gender.

The government has taken historic steps related to the development and protection of women, which will have far-reaching results. It is the mission of the Women's Commission to provide protection to the women of Azad Kashmir and the Women's Commission is working hard to fulfill its mission. On this occasion Ms. Rehana Khan also invited caretaker foreign minister Jalil Abbas Jilani to visit Azad Kashmir.

Elite are responsible for looting of the country's resources: Naseer Vohra

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Central President Cloth Board Ittehad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra has said that the elite and privileged class in the form of two and a half to three hundred families are in control of the resources of this country, they are the owners of the authority, they are the state institutions., there are in the judiciary and the elite and they are responsible for looting. This group of incompetents not only brought the country's economy to the brink of destruction, but Pakistan was made into a debt of 75 thousand billion and this debt was taken by the common man, businessman or industrial-



ist. If a common man took a loan, his children would get free education and free medical facilities, clean drinking water, cheap electricity, petrol and gas. The burden is being borne by the common man and the businessman, the business community of Faisalabad, together with the people, will make the future of the city the best and make the business system the best and ideal by establishing an effective system of cleanliness and security in the markets of Faisalabad.

Awalin Sports has become an institution trained players are shining the name of Pakistan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A special ceremony was held in connection with the 44th foundation day of Awalin Sports Cricket Club Multan, which was presided over by the founder of the club, Muhammad Jameel Kamran, while the chief of the club, Dr. Farhan Khan, was the chief guest. Secretary Zohaib Malik President AO Club Manzoor Latifi President Olin Youngster Muhammad Irfan Yusuf President Muslim Gymkhana Hasan Jameel President Multan Youngster Amjad Razzaq Bhatta Makhdoom Muzaffar Alam Adnan Khan Junaid Khan Abdullah Chand Nisarul Haq Jameel Akhtar Abdul Rehman Muzamil President Qasim Bagh Youngster Sadaqat Ali Qureshi President Khudadad Gymkhana Irshad Soni and a large number of players participated as guests. Special Dr. Farhan Khan He said that the success of any institution lies in the fact that the people trained in it are making the name of their institution known in the world. The first sports has become an institu-



tion, then the players here are making the name of their region bright for us at domestic and foreign levels. We are all proud to be a part of the Awalin Sports Multan family, founder Club. pay tribute to Jameel Kamran who founded this club to nurture the natural talent of Multan. Young players can get opportunities to play in a better environment Alhamdulillah, the sapling planted today has become a tree whose players are showing the essence of their abilities at the international and national level, while with this club, three more clubs are also following the footsteps of the first sports to serve and promote cricket.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:44 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 3:33 pm
Maghrib 5:11 pm
Isha 6:39 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

UAE'S cloud seeding team calls on CM Punjab

City Desk

LAHORE: Ahmed Al-Kamal, head of the cloud-seeding team from the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) meteorology department, chief pilot Michael Anstis and pilot Col Ubaid called on Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office.

The CM thanked the team members for their endeavors to induce artificial rainfall to reduce smog and expressed gratitude for the UAE's cooperation, acknowledging it as the first-ever successful attempt at artificial rainfall in Lahore's history.

Chief Minister Naqvi stated that the Punjab government appreciates the collaboration with the UAE, and reiterated the need for artificial rainfall to combat smog. He assured that further efforts would be made to induce artificial rainfall, once again, when the required atmospheric conditions are met, with the assistance of the UAE team.

Highlighting the success of the first-ever artificial rainfall in Lahore, CM mentioned that air quality levels remained below 200 for several days. He expressed hope that, with suitable atmospheric conditions in January, artificial rainfall could once again be employed to bring further reduction in smog levels.



The chief minister commended the UAE's team for their dedication and emphasized that the people of Pakistan will not forget the efforts of the UAE in this crucial initiative. The successful artificial rainfall operation in Lahore now stands as a significant milestone in the history of weather modification, he added. Acknowledging the unparalleled cooperation from the leadership of the United Arab Emirates, Mr Naqvi thanked Ahmed Al-Kamal and his team members.

Al-Kamal expressed optimism for another successful artificial rainfall experiment in January, and expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality in Lahore, stating that Pakistan is their second home.

Provincial Ministers Amir Mir and Bilal Afzal, weather modification expert Brig. Nadeem, DG EPA, Chief Meteorologist Ch. Muhammad Aslam and CAA's Senior Joint Director Muhammad Altaf were also present.

Ignition Pro School in Lahore to award UK Bachelor degrees to students



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: A welcomed event was organized by Ignition Pro School for Entrepreneurship at School campus Gulberg, Lahore. A lunch was also hosted in the honour of students including engaging activities with game of Tambola with Cash rewards. The event featured a vibrant live singing performance accompanied by a mesmerizing On this occasion Notable guests, including actress Resham, Brigadier Abdul Ghafoor, Rana Naqem, Chairman Ignition pro Zahid Bhatti, Director Abdullah Mushtaq, Sharjeel Mehmood, and Nabeel Sheikh were present. Ignition Pro Scholl proudly offering UK Bachelor programs in Pakistan and receiving wonderful response from the Students.

Privatization of HEC completed



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Privatization Commission of Pakistan on Tuesday completed the privatization process of Heavy Electrical Complex (HEC) by handing over the share certificates to the buyer M/s IMS Engineering (Pvt) Limited. In a final settlement of Rs1.4 billion transaction, the buyer IMS Engineering has not only made full payment but has also taken over additional liabilities of Rs 752 million payable to the Bank of Khyber. The Bank of Khyber issued an NOC for the conclusion of the transaction, said a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, Caretaker Minister for Privatization, Fawad Hasan Fawad congratulated all the stake holders who contributed towards the conclusion of the sale agreement including the SIFC, State Bank of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industries, Chief Secretary KPK, the Bank of Khyber, the Financial Advisor and the team of Privatization Commission. The Chairman IMS Engineering, Mahmoud Haq expressed that plans for better utilization of the facility are already in place and that they expect to be able to make exports of \$250-300 million in two to three years. He also informed that they are replacing the current set up with the state of the art German made machinery and equipment and will also endeavor to meet local demand which is currently met through imports.

HRCP appalled at volatile situation ahead of elections



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: - Human Rights Commission of Pakistan co-chair Munizae Jahangir says the caretaker government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should ensure transparent elections.

At a press conference, Jahangir, flanked by Farhatullah Babar, said election environment was being vitiated and the government coming to power (in such circumstances) would have no credibility.

At a press conference held in Islamabad earlier today, HRCP has said it is deeply concerned by the overall deterioration in human rights, which needs urgent attention as the new year unfolds.

She said transparency was the cornerstone of a credible election. The state of human rights in the country was alarming, she said, as a party had been deliberated damaged.

Farhatullah Babar said rigging was under way; those submitting nomination papers were being arrested. People would lose trust in such an election, he said while predicting chaos in the days to come.

Dangers

ISLAMABAD: Dense fog blanket the different areas early in the morning as an unexpected turn of weather events Pakistan is facing extreme challenges, causing disruptions in the daily lives of People.



Photo: Online

CCP Approves Acquisition of Shareholding in Singaporean Company with presence in Pakistani Shipping Industry

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has given approval for a merger in the deep-sea container liner shipping services market. Through the approved merger, M/S. PIL Holdings Pte. Ltd. acquires minor shareholding in M/s. PIL Pte. Ltd. Both entities are registered in Singapore.

PIL Pte. has an indirect subsidiary in Pakistan called Pacific Delta Shipping (PDSPL). PDSPL serves as the designated local agent in Pakistan, helping manage shipments and cargo for PIL Pte. Group customers in the country. The merger shows the interest of foreign entities in Pakistan's cargo and shipment sector.

The acquirer PIL Holdings is primarily engaged in investment holdings. While PIL Pte. Is currently active on the Far East Asia to Pakistan route (China-Vietnam-Singapore-Malaysia-Sri Lanka-India-Pakistan) and vice versa. It also owns and operates an international carrier with a presence in China, Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Oceania, and the Pacific Islands.

The phase 1 review of the merger application concluded that the proposed transaction would not lead to the dominance of PIL Holdings in the relevant market post-transaction. Consequently, the merger has been authorized by the CCP.

Environmental laws, labour rights' oversight imperative for just transition in construction sector

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Robust monitoring of environmental regulations as well as protection of labor rights is crucial for a just and sustainable transition in the construction industry.

This was the crux of a panel discussion titled: "Socially and Environmentally Compliant Construction Industry in Pakistan", at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with NED and SC here yesterday.

Mr Geir Thomas Tonstol, the Country Director of International Labor Organization, Pakistan, said that the construc-

tion sector transforms source materials into capital assets, contributing significantly to economic activity and thus holds immense potential for poverty reduction and income generation. However, he said, the lack of specialized skills, and high risks of occupational hazards have made it one of the riskiest sectors globally. High prevalence of informal employment further weakens the social security and workers' rights, he said, adding that coordinated efforts are required by the government, employers, and workers with initiatives focusing on promoting greater compliance and fostering decent work-

ing conditions in the construction industry in Pakistan.

Dr Saifullah from Development Impact Solutions, highlighting the hazardous working conditions in brick kiln industry, said that out of 4.4-5.2 million brick kiln workers, 68% are doing bonded or forced labor, with 19% being under 18 years of age. The industry employs an estimated 1.3 million workers, including 23% women, with 69% dedicated to molding. He called for enhancing productivity by introducing new technologies to reduce occupational and environmental hazards.

Mr Khalid Mahmood, Director, Labor Education Founda-

tion, stressed the need to protect workers' rights for a truly just transition.

Malik Najaf Khan from Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectedes, remarked that land rights are at the heart of the reconstruction efforts, and called for empowering affected people through ownership, particularly for women and vulnerable households.

Mr Mehar Abdul Haq Brick Kilns Owners' Association Pakistan, called for eco-friendly technologies in kilns, such as Zig Zag, for emissions reduction, energy conservation, and enhanced environmental sustainability.

Disposes of 17,101 complaints

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) on Tuesday released its three years performance report from 2021 to 2023, during which the department disposed of around 17,101 complaints.

Addressing a press conference, FTO Registrar Muhammad Majid Qureshi along with Advisor Media Nazim Saleem and Advisor Customs Dr Arslan Subtagteen highlighted performance of the FTO year by year.

The performance report covered three major aspects of the organization including registration of complaints, disposal of complaints, and implementation of the recommendations.

As per the details, the FTO settled down 8,128 complaints out of 8,076 in 2023, provided relief to 6,106 and 2,867 complainants in 2022 and 2021 respectively. The number of registered

complaints stood 5,752 in 2022 and 2,816 in 2021.

In 2023, FTO Registrar Muhammad Majid Qureshi said the organization launched an aggressive outreach campaign to create public awareness about the role of FTO office for providing speedy and cost-free justice to aggrieved taxpayers and general public.

He said the FTO held around 115 seminars with concerned Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI), different Trade bodies, Tax Bars, and college/universities in 2023 compared to 76 such seminars and sessions in organized in 2022.

In order to facilitate taxpayers and general public to register complaints with FTO office, he said a state-of-the-art automated Complaint System (COMSYS) at (<https://fto.gov.pk/onlineComSys>) for online registration of complaints was in place.

Besides, the complaints can also be made through WhatsApp (0334-0544460) and email (info@fto.gov.pk) swiftly.

He said The Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) was also requested to instruct the Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs) for disseminating tax-complaint related messages to the general public through different cellular companies Mobilink, Ufone, Telenor, CM Pak and SCO.

Following which, almost 60,000 calls were received in FTO office asking questions regarding functions and objectives of FTO office and modes of filing complaints. Such calls numbering 80,000 were also received on FTO's office WhatsApp number 0334-0544460.

It is important to highlight that the President of Pakistan has upheld decisions and recommendations of the FTO



in 86.01 percent of the representations filed by FBR and complainants against these decisions.

A Helpline has also been established in FTO Secretariat, Islamabad to facilitate the aggrieved taxpayers and help out

general public in order to guide them about the modes of filing of complaints.

The Revenue Division (FBR), Majid Qureshi said, had been responding positively on the recommendations of FTO and had accordingly improved some of its systems by issuing SOPs/Circulars/Orders including the SOPs for De-Registration of NTN/STRN of deceased taxpayers.

He said the FTO office was committed to rescuing taxpayers and public on their legitimate complaints against tax officials and system which undermined their legal rights through maladministration ultimately leading to financial corruption.

Replying to a question, Advisor Customs Dr Arslan Subtagteen said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) auctioned several non-custom paid vehicles on directives of the FTO which fetched Rs 7 billion in 2023.

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Does imperialism exist today?

Midhah Fatima

Imperialism is a system in which rich and powerful countries dominate other countries for the desire of power. Like colonialism a country does not physically exerts control over another country rather it dominates politically, economically, culturally on other nations. Pakistan is one of the developing countries which gained independence in 1947 from the shackles of British colonial rule but is Pakistan really independent? Does imperialism still exist today in Pakistan?

The historical context of imperialism in Pakistan is profoundly embedded in the country's colonial past, under British rule. The subcontinent was like many other nations under the rule of the British large Empire for nearly a century until the creation of Pakistan and India in 1947. The British colonization of the Indian subcontinent had a great influence on Pakistan, till today shaping its economy, governance and social structure.

Cultural imperialism in Pakistan is influenced by western culture. Pakistan is infiltrated by western trends and fashion attire which have superseded the traditional trends, craftsmanship and attires. Western music, movies and TV shows have gained popularity in Pakistan often concealing local productions impacting traditional entertainment industries. Even international food chains like KFC, MCDONALDS etc have been expanding in Pakistan, gradually erasing the local cul-

nary traditions and food chains. This cultural shift in Pakistan can deliberately erode Pakistani culture, values and traditions.

Following the formation of Pakistan imperialism still perseveres in Pakistan through the enduring presence of British architecture. The British colonial rule contributed to many architectures for instance In Lahore the Lahore high court exhibits the gothic revival elements showcasing raveled and ornate designs. The imperialism is also evident In Karachi's Imperial Customs House and Jahangir Kothari Parade which was introduced during the colonial period. Despite gaining independence, imperialism is reflected in the prevalence of the English as the official language in contemporary Pakistan. This linguistic shift can neglect the usage and preservation of the local languages and dialects.

Pakistan is an independent country yet its economical reliance on the powerful countries accentuate that imperialism still persists in modern Pakistan. Economic imperialism exists in various forms often through economic dependencies, foreign investments, trade agreements and financial aid. With the advent of Pakistan it is economically dependent on financial assistance, debts and foreign investments from international financial institutions and foreign governments to support its crumbling economy. This economic dependency can limit Pakistan autonomy to make decisions and results in compliance to money lenders decisions and policies.

Pakistan draws foreign investments from multinational enterprises to

boost the economy, but it also leads to dependency. MNCs have the power to influence regional labor laws, resource distribution, and policy, possibly prioritizing their own interests over the host nation. Pakistan trade relations with economically dominant countries reflect economic imperialism because of the unequal trade agreements resulting in exploitation of resources and markets of subordinate countries and benefiting dominant countries. Paki-

Countries looking to gain influence in South Asia have been involved in the long-running conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, which has an effect on Pakistan's foreign policy and security.

stan's geostrategic position also serves for the agendas of the economically and politically influential countries because of the external pressures and vulnerability of Pakistan.

Geopolitical strategies of Pakistan are shaped by major powers reflecting imperialistic tendencies in Pakistan. During the cold war the United States shaped Pakistan's foreign policy and defense strategy in return for providing military and financial aid to Pakistan supporting against Sovi-

et influence. External powers are frequently drawn into regional crises affecting Pakistan due to geopolitical objectives. Countries looking to gain influence in South Asia have been involved in the long-running conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, which has an effect on Pakistan's foreign policy and security.

The CPEC, a project of China and Pakistan, demonstrates a geopolitical and economic collaboration between the two countries. CPEC is perceived as a form of imperialism because of the involvement of major power china which will lead to economic dependency and undue influence of china over Pakistan economy and decision making.

This demonstrates how geopolitical interests of major powers influence Pakistan's defense policies and adeptness, sometimes promoting a reliance on external military aid. Foreign assistance and diplomatic agreements from powerful nations often come with geopolitical motives. Support from countries like the U. S. may be conditional, impacting Pakistan's policies and domestic decision-making, reflecting a form of diplomatic imperialism.

Hence imperialism still exists today in contemporary Pakistan. From experiencing influence of British architecture to economic dependencies on dominant nations, and the impact of geopolitical dynamics on foreign policy decisions, Pakistan struggles with multifaceted remnants of imperialism.

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Kashmiris to observe right to self-determination Day on Jan 5

Reminding the United Nations for early implementation of its January 5, 1949 resolutions for the settlement of the Kashmir issue without further delay, the Jammu and Kashmir people living on both sides of the line of control in the state and the rest of the world will observe Right of Self-determination Day on Friday, January 5, with the renewal of the pledge to continue their ongoing indigenous struggle with full vigor till the achievement of their legitimate right of self-determination through implementation of the U. N. resolutions, official sources said. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, public rallies, besides special gatherings and processions, in all nine district headquarters of the liberated territory would be the hallmark of the day. The special meetings would highlight the importance of early grant of the right of self-determination to Jammu and Kashmir people, which has been suppressed and denied by India for over the last 76 years, an AJK government source told APP here Tuesday.

Speakers in these meetings would reiterate Kashmir's just and principled stance before the world that they (the Jammu Kashmir people) would continue their struggle for the right of self-determination till the achievement of the ultimate goal. They would particularly highlight the reality of the earnest demand for early grant of the birthright of self-determination to Kashmiris without further delay, which has been denied by India for over 76 years because of her traditional hostile and stubborn attitude. The Right of Self-Determination Day reiterates the long-cherished demand of the Kashmiris that they should be granted their birthright to decide about their destiny under the spirit of the internationally acknowledged U. N. resolutions passed by the Security Council of the World Body on January 5, 1949. "It would be once again declared by the Kashmiris before the world, through the special meetings at both sides of the line of control and the rest of the world, that the Kashmir problem should be resolved only by the United Nations resolutions, and no solution of the lingering global dispute sans the aspirations of the Kashmiris would be acceptable to them (the Jammu Kashmir people)," said National Events Organising Committee (NEOC) sources, the major organizer of the scheduled special meetings to be held on January 5 to observe the right of self-determination day in Mirpur district. In Mirpur, a big Right of Self-Determination Day rally of people of all walks of life will be held at the premises of the District Court at 10 a.m. The procession will be taken out, which will later converge into the special ceremony at central Shaheed Chowk in the city under the auspices of the District National Events Organizing Committee.

Speakers representing all sections of life, including political, social, private, and public sector employees, lawyers, journalists, teachers, students, and the business community, will highlight the importance of the day and remind UNO of the early implementation of its resolutions to pave the way for an early peaceful settlement of the much-delayed Kashmir issue in line with the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.



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

Role of 'Chamber and Commerce' in Trade and Society - II

Business Services: Chambers often provide essential services such as certification, arbitration, and dispute resolution, creating a reliable framework for fair business practices within an industry.

8. Promotion and Marketing: Chambers promote the products and services of their member businesses, both locally and internationally. This collective marketing effort can significantly enhance the visibility and reach of industries.

9. Community Engagement: Chambers actively engage with the local community, contributing to social responsibility initiatives. This involvement helps build a positive image for industries, fostering goodwill and a supportive relationship with the community. In essence, Chambers of Commerce act

as catalysts for industry growth, providing a range of services and advocacy that collectively contribute to the prosperity and sustainability of businesses within a particular sector.

Here are some suggestions for good will for Chamber of Commerce

1. Digital Transformation: Embrace digital tools and platforms to streamline administrative processes, communication, and membership management. Implementing a robust digital infrastructure can enhance efficiency and accessibility for both members and staff.

2. Member Engagement Platforms: Develop online portals or apps to facilitate member engagement. Provide a platform where members can easily access resources, participate in discussions, and stay updated

on industry news. This fosters a sense of community and involvement.

3. Skill Development Programs: Introduce regular skill development programs for chamber staff to keep them updated on the latest technologies, communication strategies, and management techniques. This ensures that the team is equipped to handle diverse challenges efficiently.

4. Data Analytics for Decision-Making: Utilize data analytics tools to gather insights into member needs, preferences, and engagement patterns. Informed decision-making based on data can lead to more targeted and effective initiatives.

5. Streamlined Event Management: Implement efficient event management systems to organize workshops, seminars, and networking events. Automate registration processes, digital communication tools, and streamlined logistics can significantly improve the planning and execution of events.

6. Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Forge partnerships with local educational institutions to create internship programs. This not only brings fresh perspectives to the chamber but also provides students with practical experience, contributing to the local talent pool.

7. Regular Feedback Mechanisms: Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from members. This can be done through surveys, focus groups, or regular meetings. Understanding member needs and concerns allows the chamber to adapt its services and initiatives accordingly.

8. Enhanced Communication Strategies: Develop clear and effective communication strategies to keep members informed about chamber activities, industry updates, and relevant opportunities. Utilize various channels, including social media, newsletters, and webinars, to reach a diverse audience.

9. Collaborative Initiatives with Other Chambers: Explore collaborative projects and initiatives with other chambers of commerce. Sharing resources and expertise can lead to more comprehensive and efficient programs, benefiting members from a broader range of industries.

10. Efficient Financial Management: Implement modern financial management systems to streamline budgeting, invoicing, and reporting processes. This ensures transparency and accountability in financial operations.

11. Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: Promote diversity and inclusion within the chamber by implementing policies that encourage the participation of businesses from various backgrounds. This broadens the chamber's representation and strengthens its impact on the community.

12. Regular Strategic Reviews: Conduct periodic strategic reviews to assess the chamber's goals, performance, and relevance. This process allows for adjustments and refinements to ensure that the chamber is continually evolving to meet the dynamic needs of its members and the business community.

By implementing these suggestions, chambers of commerce can enhance their efficiencies, better serve their members, and contribute more effectively to the growth and development of local businesses.



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Atrocities in Occupied Kashmir and Propaganda against Pak Army - III

Pakistan has consistently extended political support and solidarity to Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

This support is evident in various international forums where Pakistan advocates for the rights of the Kashmiri people and highlights the longstanding issue of Kashmir. Pakistan's diplomatic efforts are crucial in bringing global attention to the situation in AJK and fostering a greater understanding of the region's aspirations for self-determination. Economic collaboration between Pakistan and AJK is vital for the development of both regions. Pakistan has played a pivotal role in supporting the economic growth of AJK through various projects, infrastructure development, and trade initiatives.

The Karakoram Highway, which connects Pakistan to China through AJK, serves as a testament to the economic importance of the region and the collaborative efforts between Pakistan and AJK. The security of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is intrinsically linked to Pakistan's defense strategy.

Given the volatile geopolitical landscape in the region, Pakistan plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and sovereignty of AJK. The two regions collaborate closely on defense matters, and Pakistan provides security assistance to AJK to safeguard its borders and protect its residents.

The people of Pakistan and AJK share

strong cultural and social affinities. This commonality in language, traditions, and values creates a sense of unity and belonging. Exchange programs, cultural events, and people-to-people interactions further strengthen the bond between Pakistan and AJK, fostering a shared identity and mutual understanding.

Dear readers, the contributions of Pakistan and Pak Army in Azad Jammu and Kashmir go beyond conventional defense responsibilities. Pak Army's multifaceted involvement in security, disaster relief, infrastructure development, and community welfare reflects a comprehensive commitment to the well-being of the people in AJK.

As the region continues to confront challenges, the Pakistan Army remains resolute in its dedication to ensuring a secure and prosperous future for Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It is crucial to recognize the services of the Pak Army for the entire country and, specifically, for AJK. Presently, it is imperative to draw attention to the situation in Occupied Kashmir, condemning the atrocities committed by the Indian Army against innocent Kashmiris. Loyalty to Pakistan and the Pak Army is paramount, utilizing all available forces and resources to advocate for the right of self-determination for Kashmiris. Additionally, it is essential to vigilantly monitor elements that align with our adversaries, and stringent action should be taken against anti-state entities.



Abdul Basit Alvi

Pakistani student contributes to China's migratory bird conservation efforts

Xinhua

TAIYUAN: As winter sets in, flocks of whooper swans from Siberia migrate to the banks of the Yellow River in Pinglu County, north China's Shanxi Province. This spectacle attracts numerous tourists and photographers. Pakistani student Anees Ur Rahman was one of them this winter.

"These birds fascinate me and their presence enhances the beauty of our planet," he said.

His passion for birds and nature drove him to travel thousands of miles from Pakistan to study wildlife utilization protection at Beijing Forestry University in China.

During his time in China, Rahman has regularly participated in field visits and conducted research in the habitats of wild birds across the country, giving him in-depth knowledge of China's ecological environment and bird conservation efforts.

"In recent years, the ecological environment of the Yellow River basin has been continuously improving, and the number of wild swans wintering here

has peaked at over 10,000," said Wang Chao, a staff member of the county's forestry bureau.

China's bird resources are among the richest in the world, with four of the nine major global bird migration flyways passing through China, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The administration's monitoring efforts confirm that the populations of more than 20 rare and endangered bird species in China have increased significantly in recent years. Among these, the crested ibis is especially notable, with its population soaring from only seven in the 1980s to 7,000 this year.

"China's rich biodiversity and its commitment to environmental conservation were key factors in my decision to study here," Rahman said, adding that he saw an opportunity to contribute to and learn from this vibrant research community, particularly given the rapid environmental changes in China.

To better safeguard migratory birds during their migration, China has set up a comprehensive network to protect migratory birds, including breeding,

wintering, and resting stations, and wetlands and natural reserves, covering almost every key node of the migratory bird flyways.

"Over the years, I have witnessed positive changes in China's environmental practices. Stricter regulations, increased investment in renewable energy, and a growing emphasis on sustainable development indicate a significant shift towards a more environmentally conscious approach," he said.

Thanks to a series of effective protection measures to provide migratory birds with safe habitats and breeding sites, migratory bird populations in China have been constantly growing. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has downgraded the threat of extinction of some rare wildlife in China, including red-crowned cranes and crested ibises.

"By continuing my research and engaging in collaborative conservation projects, I aim to contribute to global efforts in wildlife conservation, promoting sustainable practices for the benefit of both wildlife and local communities," Rahman said.



Israeli soldier kidnappings of Palestinian babies in Gaza

News Desk

GAZA: Occupation Army Radio reported that an Israeli soldier had kidnapped a baby girl from Gaza and sent her to his home, according to the testimony of a friend of his.

He revealed this secret when he announced the death of the soldier who committed this crime, which deepens our conviction that the occupation army is committing the most horrific crimes of genocide, abuse, direct killing, and kidnapping against defenseless civilians. In the Gaza Strip without accountability or oversight, part of which was



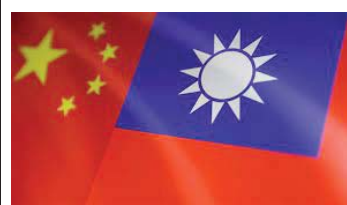
revealed and many other parts remained unknown until the moment, and at the same time it raises a number of questions related to this painful crime and others, especially the lack

of confirmation that it is not the first and may not be the last to occur in the Gaza Strip, questions. Also regarding the manner in which the infant was transported from the Gaza Strip

to inside Israel and how she was smuggled or transported openly with the knowledge of several soldiers, officers and commanders responsible for this soldier? What is the child's health condition, whether she was infected or not, and what is the fate of her family? Did she receive the necessary health care or not? Why was this crime not announced by official Israeli institutions? Where it now and what is its fate?

The Ministry calls on the Israeli side to quickly answer these and other questions and officially hand over the child to the Palestinian National Authority immediately.

China calls on Taiwan's people to promote 'peaceful reunification'



Reuters

TAIPEI: The head of China's Taiwan Affairs Office on Tuesday called on Taiwan's people to promote the process of "peaceful reunification", saying it was the common desire of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Song Tao's message, which comes less than two weeks before Taiwan holds presidential and parliamentary elections on Jan 13, follows President Xi Jinping's remarks in his New Year Eve's address that China's "reunification" with Taiwan was inevitable.

"The motherland will eventually be reunified, and it will inevitably be reunified," Song said in his New Year's message on his office's website.

This is the common desire and common mission of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, Song added.

Taiwan's people should "promote cross-strait relations to return to the right track of peaceful development, and promote the process of peaceful reunification of the motherland", he said.

Taiwan's government rejects China's sovereignty claims. Both the ruling Democratic Progressive Party and largest opposition party, the Kuomintang, say only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

China has offered Taiwan a "one country, two systems" model of autonomy, but no mainstream Taiwanese party supports that idea.

Song reiterated China's support for "one country, two systems" and opposition to Taiwan's formal independence or "interference by external forces".

His message made no mention of the election, which the Taiwan Affairs Office has cast as a choice between war and peace.

China has continued military pressure around the island, ended some tariff cuts for Taiwan and threatened further economic measures as the vote has neared.

Netanyahu, Smotrich and Ben Gvir's statements are official confessions of the plan to displace our people: Ministry Foreign Affairs



News Desk

GAZA: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the racist inflammatory statements and positions that the ruling authorities in the occupying state continue to make regarding deepening the genocidal war on our people, starving them, thirsting them out, and displacing them outside their homeland, as issued by the racist colonial trio, Netanyahu, Smotrich, and Ben Gvir, where Netanyahu bragged that he would prevent the Palestinians from returning to their homeland. Northern Gaza, while Smotrich claimed that achieving security in the Gaza Strip is achieved through building Jewish settlements...

HC Janjua sees opening of new vistas in Pak-Canada ties in 2024

Spokesman Report

OTTAWA: Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada Zaheer Janjua on Monday expressed confidence that the relations between Pakistan and Canada would lead to the opening of new vistas of development in the year 2024. "Looking forward to new beginnings and opportunities in relations," High Commissioner Janjua said in a post on the social media platform, X.

He wished the Pakistani diaspora and friends in Canada and across the globe a happy and prosperous new year. "May the new year bring peace, harmony, and prosperity to all," he said.

Thousands evacuated following Indonesia volcano eruption

News Desk

MAUMERE, INDONESIA: More than 2,000 residents have been evacuated to temporary shelters amid heightened volcanic activities in a volcano in eastern Indonesia, a local official said Tuesday.



Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki in East Nusa Tenggara province has erupted several times in recent weeks, including an eruption on Monday that spewed volcanic ash 1.5 kilometres (4,800 feet) above its peak, according to the Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (PVMBG).

The agency recorded another eruption from Lewotobi Laki-Laki on Tuesday but ash clouds from the volcano were not observed, it said in a statement. Volcanic ashes from recent eruptions have affected two sub-districts near Lewotobi Laki-Laki mountain, prompting more than 2,200 residents to evacuate to temporary shelters set up by local governments, Benediktus Bolibapa Herin, an official for East Flores district, told AFP on Tuesday.

"There are 1,931 evacuees in the Wulanggintang (sub-district), and 328 evacuees in the Ile Bura (sub-district)," Herin said, adding that the number of the evacuees could rise as more people seek safety from the volcano. "Due to the increase in (Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki's) status, the communities must be relocated to safe zones to anticipate unwanted things."

Authorities on Monday raised the volcano's status to the second-highest of Indonesia's four-tiered alert levels and expanded the exclusion zone from two kilometres to four kilometres (13,100 feet) around its crater. The volcano's ashes also forced Frans Seda Airport, located more than 80 kilometres away, to close since Monday, state news agency Antara reported.

The Southeast Asian archipelago sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire, an area of intense volcanic and seismic activity. Last month, Mount Marapi, which means "mountain of fire", on Sumatra island erupted and 23 people were killed.

Israeli soldiers kill 7 Palestinians in Gaza Strip since October 7th: Gaza Ministry

News Desk

GAZA: The Ministry considers with great seriousness the control of field executions and extrajudicial killings over the behavior of the occupation forces and their violent and bloody treatment of Palestinian civilians without posing any threat to their lives, which reflects the nature of the instructions and facilities to shoot at the Palestinian that the political and military level in Israel gives to the soldiers, in light of the brutal massacres. The heinous acts committed by the occupation forces and the mass extrajudicial killing through bombing and starvation, as is happening in the Gaza Strip for the 88th day in a row, the most recent of which was what happened in the town of Azzun, east of Qalqilya, and what was reported by the Hebrew media regard-



ing the occupation army opening an investigation into one of its soldiers who shot and killed a Palestinian prisoner in Gaza Strip, as well as the shooting and killing of 25 Palestinians who tried to return to the northern Gaza Strip during the past two days, according to the Kan channel, the murder of prisoner Abdul Rahman Al-Bahsh in prisons, bringing the number of captive martyrs to 7 since October 7th. In addition, the number of prisoners arrested

by the occupation forces from the Gaza Strip since October 7 has increased to 150%, according to Haaretz. Israel is holding them in detention camps, most of which are secret, and part of which are located deep in the Negev desert, in mysterious and very bad conditions. The occupation forces isolate them, away from the press, media, and institutions. Competent international lawyers and lawyers are subjected to the most horrific forms of killing,

torture, abuse and deprivation of rights.

The Ministry calls for real international and American pressure on the Israeli government to stop the crimes of field executions and extrajudicial killings, and calls on the ongoing UN investigation committee to follow up on these executions as war crimes and crimes against humanity. It also calls on the International Red Cross to move quickly to visit the secret detention centers and learn about the conditions of those kidnapped from the Gaza Strip. All of this is in preparation for submitting reports to the competent international courts. On the other hand, the Ministry asks the occupying state to announce these camps, the number of Palestinian detainees there, what is their fate and the nature of their lives, and to allow lawyers to visit them.

Tens of thousands hold anti-Israeli protest in Istanbul

News Desk

ISTANBUL: Tens of thousands marched in Istanbul Monday to protest "murderer" Israel's war in Gaza and the killing of Turkish soldiers by outlawed Kurdish militants in Iraq.

The rally, called by a foundation which counts Bilal Erdogan, the son of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, among its members started after crowds performed morning prayers at Istanbul's iconic mosques, including Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque.

Protesters waving Turkish and Palestinian flags rallied



to the Galata Bridge on the Bosphorus chanting: "Murderer Israel, get out of Palestine" and "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest).

Tens of thousands of people joined the rally "Mercy for our

martyrs and a curse on Israel", the official Anadolu news agency reported.

Erdogan, a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, has lashed out repeatedly at Israel for the scale of death

and destruction caused by its response to Hamas' unprecedented October 7 cross-border attack.

He has accused Israel of "state terrorism" and said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "no different" from Adolf Hitler.

The nearly three-month war in Gaza was triggered by Hamas's bloody October 7 attacks on Israel, which killed around 1,140 people, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures.

Fighters also took around 250 people hostage that day, most of whom remain in Gaza,

according to Israeli officials.

Israel vowed to destroy Hamas in response, launching a punishing offensive in the Gaza Strip that has reduced vast areas to a ruined wasteland and killed at least 21,822 people, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry.

The Israeli army says 172 of its soldiers have been killed inside Gaza, with the war showing no signs of stopping.

The Turkish army said 12 soldiers were killed in late December in two separate attacks launched by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
64,349.60	64,661.78
Day's High	Day's Low
65,333.69	64,213.62
Index Value	Change
20,126,592,721	-312.18
Percentage	Time
-0.48%	2 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,709.46	-23.78
Percentage	Time
-0.30%	2 Jan, 4:22 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,685.79	-3.75
Percentage	Time
-0.0099%	2 Jan, 11:22 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	189.5	191.5
Bahrain Dinar	747.76	755.76
Canadian Dollar	210	212
China Yuan	39.72	40.12
Danish Krone	41.75	42.15
Euro	309	312
Hong Kong Dollar	35.96	36.31
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	1.85	1.95
Kuwaiti Dinar	914.96	923.96
Malaysian Ringgit	61.19	61.79
New Zealand \$	178.31	180.31
Norwegians Krone	27.47	27.77
Omani Riyal	730.31	738.31
Qatari Riyal	77.45	78.15
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.1
Singapore Dollar	210	212
Swedish Korona	27.97	28.27
Swiss Franc	334.17	336.67
Thai Bhat	8.18	8.33
U.A.E Dirham	76.7	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	358.5	362
US Dollar	281	283.5

SECP organizes workshop on capital markets

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) held a capacity building workshop for journalists at its head office, focusing on equity trading at the Pakistan Stock Exchange, trading activity surveillance, and systemic risk. The event aimed to raise public awareness and understanding of capital markets.

The SECP team explained that the stock exchange plays an important role in capital formation, financial inclusion, and diversification of investments. The participants were briefed on the trading, clearing, settlement, and custodial functions of the Pakistan Stock Exchange, the National Clearing Company, and the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited, collectively referred to as Capital Market Infrastructure Institutions (CMIIs).

The presentation on digital online account opening process emphasized the conveni-



ence offered by the newly introduced Centralized Gateway Portal (CGP) for retail investors across all financial intermediaries i.e., brokers, asset management companies, and insurance companies. The new process has simplified the process for opening accounts with multi-

ple financial intermediaries by ensuring that most of the required documents and details are available in the CGP.

The presentation on market surveillance explained SECP's mandate with respect to surveillance. Participants were informed about

different types of market abuse, such as insider trading, market manipulation etc. and briefed about various tools for surveillance that have been deployed at SECP and PSX. Case studies were presented to participants to help them develop an understanding of market abuses, especially insider trading and market manipulation.

The presentation on systemic risk explained various risk indicators, such as liquidity, settlement-to-trade ratio, broker exposure, leverage, etc., and how these indicators act as early warning signals to identify and address potential market disruptions.

The presentations were followed by a question and answers session with active participation from both sides. The participants agreed that regular communication between regulators and the media is a good practice that will lead to more effective regulation by the regulators and more responsible reporting by the media.

Fish keep you warm

ISLAMABAD: People are buying fish from vendor at Margala Bazaar as Fish is a seasonal food of Winters in Federal Capital. ONLINE PHOTO



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Pakistan Cables lifts the 11th FPCCI Awards 2023

PNP

KARACHI: Pakistan Cables Loyalty Club mobile app won the 11th FPCCI Award in the category of Digital Transformation and Technology ceremony held in Islamabad. The award was presented by the Governor of KPK, Mr. Haji Ghulam Ali to Mohammad Ahad, Assistant Manager Marketing & Brands, Pakistan Cables Ltd.

The Pakistan Cables Loyalty Club App is the first of its kind mobile app which allows the Loyalty Club members a convenient way to submit and redeem points. Pakistan Cables always thrive to upgrade its



services for its stakeholder making the process easier and accessible by introducing technological solutions. This is Company's third win in technological innovation and overall fourth win. Previously, Pakistan Cables won the awards for first e-commerce website and launching ACCC Conductors in Pakistan.

Fly Jinnah and 1-Link collaborates to enhance Customer Experience

PPA

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's low-cost airline, has partnered with 1-Link to streamline payments for flight bookings. Under this innovative collaboration, passengers will have a dedicated time window to confirm their bookings by completing the payment process, offering unmatched flexibility and convenience.

1-Link, which is Pakistan's largest payment gateway and switch system will enable customers with any bank

account to easily complete their bookings by making payments from their phone or laptop, eliminating the need to visit a physical Fly Jinnah office for the transaction.

At the core of this partnership is a dedication to providing Fly Jinnah customers with a seamless booking experience. What sets this partnership apart is the array of payment channels available to customers. Payments can be made through various means, including any bank's branch or ATM connected to the extensive 1-Link network.

Islamic Finance Industry Seems Promising in 2024: Zubair Mughal

Profitability Soars, Regulatory Support Strengthens: Post-Pandemic Islamic Finance Reaches New Heights

DUBAI, UAE: As the global financial landscape finds its footing after the tumultuous years of the pandemic, Islamic finance shines as a beacon of resilience and responsible growth. With assets expected to reach a staggering US\$5 trillion by 2025, this ethical and sustainable financial system is not just recovering, but thriving.

"Islamic finance has shown remarkable resilience in the face of unprecedented challenges," asserts Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal, CEO of AlHuda Center of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE). "While navigating initial disruptions, the industry has demonstrated its inherent strengths, emerging stronger and poised for significant growth." Islamic banks are witnessing a steady rise in profits, with figures reaching up to 40% in some regions. This positive trajectory is bolstered by increased regulatory support, with initiatives like Shariah-compliant investments further solidifying the industry's foundation.

The issuance of Sukuk, Shariah-compliant financial instruments, has seen remarkable prominence. Mr. Mughal predicts that Sukuk investments will reach US\$160-180 billion by 2025, driven by impactful sovereign and corporate issuances. This surge positions Sukuk as a vital engine for Islamic finance expansion.

Saudi Arabia and Indonesia are establishing themselves as regional Islamic finance powerhouses, with dedicated government support propelling their growth. Meanwhile, initiatives like Pakistan's Roshan Digital Account, a Shariah-compliant investment platform, are fostering innovation and driving local industry progress.

Islamic FinTech is on the rise, with a predicted 20% growth in the coming year. This technology-driven wave is revolutionizing access to financial services, opening doors for previously unbanked populations and streamlining operations across the industry.

Governance within Islamic finance is evolving, with organizations like AAOIFI and IFSB leading the charge in developing robust Shariah governance standards. Additionally, many countries, including Malaysia and Indonesia, are exploring Green Sukuk to drive environmentally sustainable development. "Islamic finance is not just about financial products," Mr. Mughal emphasizes. "It's about fostering a more just and equitable world, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. By bridging the financial inclusion gap and supporting poverty reduction, this system empowers individuals and communities."

Crowdfunding solutions are gaining traction in Southeast Asia, offering essential

support to SMEs. Similarly, Islamic micro-finance holds immense potential in alleviating poverty, with Indonesia leading the way through innovative initiatives.

The emergence of social finance, with its focus on innovative approaches and reduced intermediary costs, presents exciting opportunities for Islamic finance. Mr. Mughal believes this disruptive force will attract significant investments, making financial services more accessible for even the most underserved communities.

The increasing issuance of Green Sukuk showcases the commitment of Islamic finance to environmental sustainability. These impactful instruments are essential for tackling climate change and building a greener future.

Mr. Mughal concludes, "The future of Islamic finance is full with possibilities. From crowdfunding platforms in Southeast Asia to Green Sukuk issuance, innovative ideas are constantly emerging, propelled by technology and a shared vision for a better tomorrow. The journey ahead is filled with promise, and AlHuda CIBE is proud to be a part of it, contributing to the growth and impact of this dynamic and inclusive financial system by providing full range of services from advisory, consultancy to the Islamic finance vibrant qualifications."

Ashfaq Tola elected Vice President of SAFA

PNP

KARACHI: Ashfaq Yusuf Tola has been elected as the Vice President of the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) in its annual elections, which include member countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and Afghanistan.

Previously, Ashfaq Yusuf Tola served as the Minister of State on Revenue and Chairman of the Tax Reforms and Resources Mobilization Commission in the government of former Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

Ashfaq Yousuf Tola is a Fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan and the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan, besides Former President ICAP for the term 2022-2023. He



has been a member of the ICAP's Council since 2017.

Mr. Tola has also served as the Vice President for the term 2020-22 and headed various committees of the Institute, including the Fiscal Laws, Economic Advisory and Government Relationship, Overseas Coordination, and Examination Committees.

He is also a life member of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry; he has also served as a technical advisor to a member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) Board, a Member of the Board of Directors CA Worldwide, a Member of the Board of the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA), Member of the Board of Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA), President of Karachi Club for four years.

NTDC successfully replaces circuit breaker at Guddu Switchyard

PPA

LAHORE: The technical teams at National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) have accomplished the replacement of a damaged circuit breaker at the 500 kV Guddu Switchyard. On the direction of NTDC management, additional staff was deployed to ensure the swift completion of replacement works. Moreover, NTDC has also successfully energized the 500kV Guddu-Muzaffargarh transmission line.

Bank of Khyber signed MoU with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University

News Desk

PESHAWAR: of Khyber (BoK) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) for its first-ever women-centric branch, which will be exclusively staffed by women. Sher Muhammad, Group Head

Conventional Banking, BoK, and Prof. Dr. Sadia Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of SBBWU, signed the formal agreement. Zarak Khan, Head liabilities & Business, BoK; Irshad Siraj, Head Institutional liabilities, BoK, and Sana Younas, Deputy treasurer were present along with other senior representatives of both the organizations.

Bank Alfalah achieves two significant milestones



PPA

LAHORE: Bank Alfalah Limited, one of the leading commercial banks in Pakistan, achieved two significant milestones with the launch of its 1000th branch and the surpassing PKR 2 trillion deposits, reflecting its enduring commitment to growth and further solidifying its position as a leading financial institution in the country's banking sector.

Brimming with pride on this momentous occasion, the man who envisioned the dream of Bank Alfalah more than two decades ago, His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan, Chairman, said, "Over two decades ago, we had believed in the transformation in Pakistan's banking sector, today that dream has been materialised as we have evolved into a leading force in the banking industry. Upon inaugurating our 1000th branch and surpassing PKR 2 trillion deposits, I reflect on the enduring values of customer-centricity and innovation that have made Bank Alfalah synonymous with progress.

Atif Bajwa, President and CEO of Bank Alfalah, took pride in the Bank's journey as a testament to its commitment to excellence. "Reaching the landmark of our 1000th branch and surpassing the milestone of PKR 2 trillion deposits, we reflect on our persistent efforts in transforming the banking landscape and reaffirm our resolve to focus on people's banking needs by reimagining a digital future. Our recent digital service strides highlight our dedication to innovative solutions redefining the banking landscape in Pakistan."

U-16 Inter-Division Archery Championship

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that Sports Board Punjab has provided a suitable platform to young athletes of the province to demonstrate their potential and the emerging athletes must avail this golden opportunity; he expressed these views at the prize distribution ceremony of Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Archery Championship at SBP Archery Centre here on Tuesday.



Asif Tufail distributed prizes among the top position holders. The participating male and female archery players and officials also had group photographs with the chief guest.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that all the participating players emerged through a process to this level and now they should work hard to move forward from this level. "Sports Board Punjab will organize Winter Games in the mid of this month to provide sufficient playing opportunities to talented players of the province".

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that new talent is emerging from Under-16 Talent Hunt competitions. "The young talented male and female athletes are demonstrating wonderful performances in these competitions which will continue until January 5".

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail further said that Sports Board

Punjab is working for the development of all sports in the province. "The promotion of sports culture among the younger generation is our mission," he added.

Lahore division U-16 girls' archery team emerged winner in the 30m team event competition with 667 points. The second position in Girls' U-16 Archery Team event went to Bahawalpur team which scored 593 points followed by Faisalabad division with 554 points.

In Boys' U-16 Archery Team event, Faisalabad division clinched the title with 825 points while the next two positions were taken by Bahawalpur and Lahore division teams with 720 and 694 points respectively.

In the 50m girls individual event, Maryam Shoaib of Lahore won the title

with 92 points followed by Rida Fatima of Faisalabad 91 points and Fatima Imran of Multan with 85 points.

Hamza Waseem of Faisalabad was declared winner in 50m boys individual event with 147 points, Abdul Hannan of Multan finished runners up with 116 points while the third position was taken by Bahawalpur's Samir Azhar, who scored 112 points.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail was the Chief Guest on this occasion. Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum Divisional Sports Officers Manzar Farid Shah (Multan) and Amir Hameed (Bahawalpur) were also present on this occasion.

Director General Sports Punjab Dr

On the other hand, the exciting matches of Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Table Tennis Championship were played on the second day at Nishar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) Gymnasium Hall on Tuesday.

Lahore division team toppled Bahawalpur by a wide margin of 3-0 in the U-16 girls' team event match. The second match was played between Multan and Faisalabad in which Multan emerged winners by 3-1. Sargodha girls also scripted a hard fought win against Gujranwala by 3-2.

In the earlier U-16 girls team event matches, Lahore division team outplayed Sahiwal by 3-0, Gujranwala beat Rawalpindi by 3-2, Sargodha beat Faisalabad by 3-0 and DG Khan beat Bahawalpur by 3-2.

In Boys U-16 team event, Lahore beat Sahiwal by 3-1, Faisalabad beat Multan by 3-1, Gujranwala edged out Rawalpindi by 3-2, Bahawalpur beat DG Khan by 3-0, Faisalabad beat Sargodha by 3-0 and Gujranwala beat Sargodha 3-0.

Afghanistan edge UAE in third T20I to claim series win

A Sports

SHARJAH: Najibullah Zadran's late blitz lifted Afghanistan to edge the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by four wickets in the third T20I and win the three-match series 2-1.



Set to chase a modest total of 127 on the slow and tricky surface of the Sharjah International Stadium, Afghanistan raced to a hard-fought victory in the penultimate over.

The touring side had a flying start to the pursuit as they were 30/0 in 3.1 overs, courtesy of Rahmanullah Gurbaz's baton charge early on.

The right-handed opener, however, failed to get going and perished on the next delivery.

He scored a brisk 20 off 14 deliveries with the help of one boundary and two sixes.

Skipper Ibrahim Zadran (23) then joined opener Hazratullah Zazai in the middle and they put together a cautious 37-run partnership which lasted with the

former's dismissal in the 11th over.

Zazai followed his skipper's footsteps 18 balls later which paved the way for the UAE to force a comeback as they picked up three more wickets to reduce Afghanistan to 103/6 in 17 overs.

Hazratullah Zazai remained the top-scorer for Afghanistan with an anchoring 36. His 32-ball knock featured two boundaries and as many sixes.

Afghanistan then had a tough ask when they needed 24 runs off the last

three overs with just four wickets in hand.

However, Najibullah Zadran's quick-fire 28 sailed them through with nine balls to spare.

His 13-ball cameo featured two boundaries and as many sixes.

For UAE, Junaid Siddique bagged two wickets while Aayan Afzal Khan, Muhammad Jawadullah, Ali Naseer and Dhruv Prashar made one scalp apiece.

Opting to bat first, UAE could only pile 126 for the loss of nine wickets in the allotted 20 overs.

The home side appeared clueless against Naveen-ul-Haq-led Afghanistan bowling attack and lost wickets at regular intervals, which eventually barred them from amassing a commendable total.

Skipper Muhammad Waseem remained the top-scorer for his side with a 25-ball 27 while Ali Naseer (21) was the other notable run-getter.

Naveen bagged four wickets for 20 in his four overs, followed by Qais Ahmed, who picked three. Azmatullah Omarzai, on the other hand, claimed two wickets.

Rafael Nadal roars back with 'emotional and important' win over Thiem

Sports desk

LAHORE: Rafael Nadal won his first match back from a year-long injury layoff when he defeated former US Open champion Dominic Thiem at the Brisbane International on Tuesday, calling it an "emotional and important day".

The 22-time Grand Slam winner looked in superb touch with a clinical 7-5, 6-1 victory over the Austrian in front of a full house at Pat Rafter Arena.

The 37-year-old Spaniard has not played singles since a second-round loss at the Australian Open last year, undergoing two rounds of hip surgery.

"Today, honestly, is an emotional and important day for me after probably one of the toughest years of my tennis career, without a doubt," he said.

"To have the chance to come back after a year and play in front of an amazing crowd, and play I think at a very positive level for the first day is something that

makes us feel proud.

"For myself, all the team and my family who have been there every single day during the last year."

The long layoff raised fears that his career could be over, but Rafael Nadal said this week he was always determined to make it back for the 2024 season.

He conceded before the match there was "a high percentage" that it would be his last season, but left the door open to play on should his body hold up.

"I missed being healthy, I missed feeling competitive and to play in front of full crowds like this," he added courtside after beating Thiem in 89 minutes.

"Crowds in Australia all my career have been an amazing support for me. I can't thank everyone enough."

Nadal spent time at his academy in Kuwait to prepare for the Australian summer and trained there with fast-rising French teen Arthur Fils.

He looked like he had never



been away as he lost only six points on serve throughout the match and made few unforced errors in an almost perfect display against a quality opponent.

Former world number three Thiem, who has had injury concerns of his own, came through qualifying to make the main draw and matched Nadal throughout the first set.

But at 6-5 and with the set looking certain to go to a tiebreak,

Nadal stepped up the pressure on Thiem's serve, forcing a series of errors and eventually winning the set when a Thiem forehand sailed long.

Rafael Nadal then seized the advantage, holding his serve to love and then breaking Thiem to take a 2-0 lead in the second set.

The Austrian's head then seemed to drop as Nadal lifted even further, wrapping up the match easily.

"I think the first set was very

equal, both of us serving well and then I was able to have that break for 6-5," he said.

"I know Dominic has been going through hard times with injuries too, so happy to see him on court, wish him all the very best for the season."

Earlier, fifth-seeded American Sebastian Korda and Argentinian sixth seed Sebastian Baez both crashed out.

Germany's Yannick Hanfmann downed Korda 7-5, 6-4 while Baez lost to Lukas Klein, with the Slovakian qualifier winning 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Australian qualifier James Duckworth also enjoyed a good win by ousting American JJ Wolf 6-3, 6-4.

In the women's draw, former world number one Victoria Azarenka came back from second set jitters to see off Russia's Anna Kalinskaya 6-1, 7-6 (10/8), while Sofia Kenin, a former Australian Open winner, was stunned by Australian wildcard Arina Rodionova 7-5, 7-6 (9/7).

Pakistan aim to end series on a high as they gear up for SCG Test

A Sports

Pakistan are set to play the last match of the Benaud-Quadir Trophy against Australia at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) from 3 to 7 January.

Pakistan will be looking to avoid a whitewash by Australia after the hosts took an unassailable lead by winning the Boxing Day Test at Melbourne.

After their 360-run defeat at Perth in the series opener, Pakistan put on a spirited display in Melbourne before Australia claimed victory on the fourth day of the match.

Ahead of the series finale, Shan is leading the run-scoring chart for Pakistan after producing twin

half-centuries in the Boxing Day Test.

Aamir Jamal, after making his debut in the series opener, is the second-highest wicket-taker of the series so far. He has taken 12 wickets in two games, including a five-wicket haul.

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Opening batter Saim Ayub will be making his Test debut, coming in place of Imam-ul-Haq. Saim had earned his maiden Test call-up following an impressive domestic season.

Left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi has been rested with spinner Sajid Khan replacing him in the side.

Pakistan will be persisting

with the three changes made ahead of MCG Test. Mir Hamza, who replaced an injured Khurram Shahzad in the playing XI, registered his career-best figures in Melbourne.

He accounted for six wickets in the match, including a double-wicket maiden in Australia's second innings. Hasan Ali and Mohammad Rizwan, who replaced Faheem Ashraf and Sarfaraz Ahmed at MCG respectively, have also kept their place in the side.

Pakistan captain Shan Masood, in the pre-match press conference, stated: "We have learned from the mistakes we made in the first two matches. Going forth, it is about not repeating them, espe-

cially when playing against quality sides. If we keep playing like this, I am sure there will be a lot of Test wins in the future.

"At Melbourne, we played good cricket all four days but there were several chances we could have seized the game. We will work on the lessons learned. We are positive about the direction our team is taking."

Reflecting on Shaheen, the Pakistan captain said, "Personally and as a team, we have never had any doubts when it comes to Shaheen. If you look at his records, he has bowled the highest number of overs in a while in world cricket. It is up to us to make sure he is looked after, physically and mentally."



"Fitness and workload impact performance. Our all-format players have been playing continuous cricket for a while now—

We have been trying to address this to balance match significance and workload," he added.

"Players like Khurram Shahzad, Aamir Jamal and Mir Hamza have done well in tough conditions. This reflects the success of our domestic system, as it has broadened our bench strength. We want to give similar chances to our batters too, so we can widen our player pool in each department."

Pakistan playing XI for the third Test against Australia: Shan Masood (c), Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Salman Ali Agha, Sajid Khan, Aamir Jamal, Hasan Ali and Mir Hamza.

Australia crush India in third ODI to complete series sweep



A Sports

MUMBAI: Left-handed opener Phoebe Litchfield's magnificent century powered Australia Women to crush India in the third ODI by 190 runs and clean-swept the three-match series.

Opting to bat first in the third WODI, Australia put up a massive total on the board, courtesy of a marathon opening partnership between Litchfield and skipper Alyssa Healy.

The openers added 189 runs for the first wicket to give Australia a flying start.

Both the batters appeared confident to breach the triple figures and add further to the misery of the hosts but Pooja Vastrakar finally broke the shackles in the 29th over.

Vastrakar cleaned up Healy, who fell agonizingly short of her well-deserved century. She scored 82 in 85 balls, hitting four boundaries and three sixes.

Healy's dismissal sparked a collapse in Australia's batting unit and they lost three more wickets – Ellyse Perry (16), Beth Mooney (3) and Tahlia McGrath (0) – in quick succession before Phoebe Litchfield also perished briefly after amassing her century.

Litchfield top-scored with a 125-ball 119, laced up with 16 boundaries and a six.

Later, Ashleigh Gardner (30), Alana King (26) and Annabel Sutherland (23) contributed notably with important cameos to propel Australia to a dominant total of 338/7.

Shreyanka Patil led the bowling attack for India with 3/57, followed by Amanjot Kaur with two wickets while Vastrakar and Deepti Sharma made one scalp apiece.

Set to chase a mammoth 339, the Indian batting unit failed completely and could only accumulate 148 runs before bundling out in the 33rd over.

Opening batter Smriti Mandhana remained the top-scorer for India with a run-ball 29 up the order.

Besides her, Deepti Sharma and Jemimah Rodriguez offered brief retaliation in the middle by scoring 25 each but their efforts were not enough Australia romped to a massive victory.

For Australia, Georgia Wareham bagged three wickets while Megan Schutt, Sutherland and King picked up two wickets each.

Abrar Ahmed ruled out of T20I series against New Zealand



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed has been ruled out of the five-match away T20I series against New Zealand, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Tuesday.

According to the cricketing body, the mystery spinner failed to attain complete fitness and thus will return to Pakistan where he will undergo rehab.

"Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed will not be able to participate in the five-match T20 series against New Zealand due to not being fully fit. He is returning home where his rehab will continue at the National Cricket Academy," stated PCB.

Notably, Abrar Ahmed complained of discomfort in his right leg after bowling eight overs on the third day of a four-day game against Prime Minister's XI.

Consequently, the 25-year-old spinner was taken off the field and was then sent for an MRI scan.

Sajid Khan was then added to the Pakistan squad for the Australia Tests to provide a cover for the injured mystery spinner.

For the unversed, Abrar Ahmed was the first Pakistan player to suffer an injury on the Australian shores while Khurram Shahzad and Noman Ali became the latest victims.

On the other hand, left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz has been released from Pakistan's squad for the ongoing Test series against Australia and has started training with compatriots Zaman Khan, Usama Mir and Haris Rauf.

For the unversed, Usama, Zaman and Haris are also in Australia where they are participating in the ongoing 13th edition of the Big Bash League (BBL).

All four players will depart for Auckland on January 5 where they will link up with Pakistan's squad for New Zealand T20Is and start training.

Pakistan squad for the tour of New Zealand

Shaheen Shah Afridi (c), Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Abrar Ahmed, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Zaman Khan, Aamir Jamal, Azam Khan (wk), Sahibzada Farhan, Haseebullah Khan (wk) and Abbas Afridi.

BARRACUDA-XII

DG PMSA Rear Admiral Imtiaz Ali in a group photo with foreign observers during Exercise BARRACUDA XII on Tuesday.



President links women's economic participation with enabling work environment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday stressed improving the status of women by providing them with an enabling work environment to increase their economic participation. The president highlighted that following the rights granted by the religion Islam, it was the responsibility of the society to give them their due share and create a safer society for them.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting during his visit to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAH) Head Office, in Islamabad. Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment at Workplace Fauzia Viqar, Secretary FOSPAH Arif Karim, advisers and officials of FOSPAH attended the meeting. President Alvi called for taking appropriate legislative measures at the federal and



provincial levels to ensure the protection of women's property rights, besides discouraging the transfer of property by women to their family members due to pressures. He said that he was conducting personal hearings of the Ombudspersons' cases to expedite the process of justice. He stated that highlighting important decisions of FOSPAH

in harassment and women's property cases through media would help increase awareness about the role of the Ombudsman. The president said that police at the local level needed to improve their response to women's complaints in property cases, adding that police officials should be educated about the provisions of the Enforcement of Women's

Property Rights Act, 2020. He urged FOSPAH to further increase its outreach and efficiency to provide speedy justice to women in harassment and property cases at their doorsteps. He also advised FOSPAH to enhance its linkages with NGOs and women's rights organizations in Pakistan to seek suggestions for improving women's

status. The president said that providing a harassment-free and enabling environment to women in both the public and private sectors was essential for their economic and social empowerment. He underlined the need for increased engagements with the business community, particularly the chambers of commerce and industries, to provide employment to women as well as sensitize them about the importance and provisions of the Protection against Harassment at Workplace Act, 2010. The president appreciated FOSPAH for its role in providing speedy justice to women, adding that women-led institutions like FOSPAH were critical in addressing the challenges being faced by women at workplaces as well as in acquiring their due property rights. FOSPAH chairperson Fauzia Viqar gave a detailed presentation about the role and achievements of FOSPAH in protecting women's rights.

Palestinians pray for ceasefire on New Year day as Israeli offensive continues

Agencies

UNITED NATIONS: As the New Year dawned, Palestinians in Gaza, suffering under brutal Israel bombardments, were praying for a ceasefire, but had little optimism that 2024 would be better even though the UN and people around the world push for peace, according to media reports. A video posted by the Red Crescent showed the chaotic aftermath of strikes in central Gaza as rescuers worked in the dark to carry an injured child from smoking rubble.

At least 100 people were killed and 286 wounded

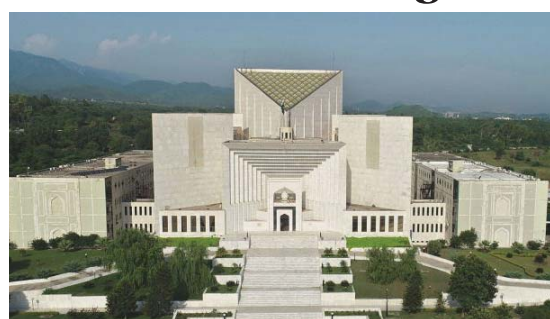
in Israeli attacks on homes in central Gaza in the past 24 hours, the health ministry said. Since Oct 7, Israeli military has killed more than 21,900 people in Gaza, two-thirds of them women and children, the ministry said. "Gaza has been destroyed and we have nowhere to live. But we just want to stop hearing the sounds of planes and drones, for children to stop being afraid, and for us and our loved ones, those who are left, to meet again," Suzan Khader a displaced Palestinian in Rafah was quoted as saying. With the new year beginning, Palestinian armed groups counter-attacked, launching a salvo of long-range missiles towards Israeli cities, the reports said. Sirens sounded throughout Israel warning of rockets flying over Tel Aviv, Gush Dan and the Gaza periphery.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a weekly news conference on Saturday that the Philadelphia Corridor "must be in our hands" and shut down to ensure the security outcome Tel Aviv desires. But diplomats voiced concern, saying Israeli control over the corridor between Gaza and Egypt - as Netanyahu has sought - would mean the de facto full reoccupation of the Gaza Strip. Egypt became the

main player in the control of the corridor, which signifies the only link with the outside world not controlled by Israel - as Tel Aviv maintains a land, sea and air blockade of the strip from all other sides. On his part, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for global unity to make 2024 a year for "building trust and hope" following the immense suffering, violence, and climate chaos that characterized 2023. At the same time, "the planet is peril", Mr. Guterres said, marked by record-breaking temperatures and worsening impacts of climate change. "2023 has been a

year of enormous suffering, violence, and climate chaos [...] 2023 is the hottest year on record; people are getting crushed by growing poverty and hunger; wars are growing in number and ferocity," noted the Secretary-General. Guterres highlights the scarcity of trust and emphasized that "pointing fingers and pointing guns lead nowhere." "Humanity is strongest when we stand together [...] We must come together across divides for shared solutions - for climate action, for economic opportunity and a fairer global financial system that delivers for all," said Mr. Guterres.

CJP hints at concluding lifetime disqualification case at next hearing



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has said the Supreme Court will try to conclude the hearing on the lifetime disqualification case on January 4 (Thursday).

Headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, the larger bench also consisting of Justice Syed

Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali heard lifetime disqualification case of lawmakers under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution.

The proceedings of the case are being live broadcast on SC's website.

ECP serves notice to JUI-F, others over code of conduct violation

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has served notice to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and two other political parties for violation of the code of conduct.

As per details, the notice was also issued to Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) and Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M).

The notice stated that the three political parties painted the party flats on the street lights and posting party flags and banners on government build-



ings is banned by ECP. Earlier, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued a code of conduct for the upcoming general elections 2024, emphasizing avoiding actions prejudicial to Pakistan's interests, prohibiting gifts to influence candidacy, encouraging women's participation, and

banning violence and political influence on media.

The code of conduct bars High-ranking officials, except senators and local government members, from the campaign for peaceful and orderly polling.

As per the code, political entities, candidates, and their agents are prohibited from expressing views or engaging in activities that undermine Pakistan's ideology, sovereignty, integrity, or security. Additionally, they must avoid actions detrimental to morality, public order, and the judiciary.

Exercise Barracuda-XII Commences at Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: International Exercise BARRACUDA-XII formally commences today at Headquarters Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Karachi. The event started with an impressive flag hoisting ceremony followed by wreath laying on Shuhadas monument. The ceremony was attended by observers from 13 friendly countries and officers of Pakistan Navy and PMSA. Exercise BARRACUDA-XII is scheduled from 02-04 Jan 24 and comprising Harbour and Sea phases.

Opening brief of the exercise was held at Karachi. Federal Minister for climate change Ahmed Irfan Aslam graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Foreign Observers and delegations from relevant stake holders also attended the brief wherein the Aims and objectives of Exercise BARRACUDA-XII were highlighted. Moreover, scholarly papers on response of Oil Spill and Search and Rescue at sea were presented by both National and International speakers.

During his address Chief Guest thanked all foreign delegates for their participation in the event. He further added that the exercise will continue to crystallise our preparedness for maritime disasters management. Pakistan has always been and will continue to be an ardent advocate of safe & secure seas for the wellbeing of the region and the world.

Earlier during his welcome address, DG PMSA Rear Admiral Imtiaz Ali apprised the audience

about Government of Pakistan's endeavour to curb pollution at sea and reiterated resolve of PMSA to fight Marine pollution. He further highlighted the role of PMSA in implementing the laws in National seas. He thanked the foreign participants and national maritime stakeholders for their support.

DG PMSA Rear Admiral Imtiaz Ali also called on the foreign observers and discussed the matters of mutual interest.

Exercise BARRACUDA is a marine pollution response exercise conducted biennially by PMSA since 2007. Focused on refining response mechanisms and enhancing coordination among stakeholders. The exercise serves as a critical platform to prepare for and address potential oil spills and other marine pollution incidents.

BARRACUDA-XII will unfold as an immersive experience in the North Arabian Sea providing a platform for participating countries to engage in scenario-based simulations and comprehensive drills starting from 2 Jan 24. The 03 days exercise which includes harbour and sea phase will facilitate knowledge exchange, enhance interoperability and solidify coordination among diverse maritime entities, thereby fortifying our global resilience against marine pollution incidents. As the world grapples with the imperative need to protect our oceans, BARRACUDA-XII stands as a testament to the power of international cooperation in combating marine pollution.

Four terrorists gunned down in North Waziristan IBO: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Security forces gunned down four terrorists in an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) in North Waziristan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Tuesday.

According to the army's media wing, an operation was carried out in North Waziristan where four terrorists were killed in the exchange of fire.

The killed terrorists including a suicide bomber, remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces, ISPR.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered during the operation, the ISPR said.

"Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country," the military's media wing said.



On December 31, Five terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the general Mashkai area of Balochistan's Awaran district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

According to the military's media affairs wing, security forces conducted the IBO on the night of Dec 30 and Dec 31 over the reported presence of terrorists.

The terrorists' hideout was also busted and a cache of arms, ammunition and explosives was recovered, the ISPR said, adding that a sanitization operation was being carried out to eliminate other terrorists in the area.

'Bat' in or out: PHC adjourns hearing on ECP's review plea till Jan 3

City Desk

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) will hear the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) petition against single bench ruling on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) intra-party polls and electoral 'bat' symbol on Wednesday.

Following the Dec 26 suspension of the ECP's directive and the reinstatement of the party's 'bat' symbol until a conclusive decision, the electoral body lodged a review petition at the high court, contesting the prior ruling.

Counsel for the ECP Sikander Mohmand submitted before Justice Ejaz Khan that the decision of PHC regarding suspension of the electoral body's verdict be withdrawn.

Justice Khan remarked that single bench would not decide the case as it was set before a division bench for January 9 and reserved the verdict. Later, the court announced the verdict and said it would hear the matter tomorrow.

It may be noted that the Justice Kamran Hayat had suspended the decision of the ECP regarding annulment of results of the PTI intra-party elections and withdrawal of its electoral symbol.

The court had ordered the ECP to issue the PTI intra-party election certificate on its website and also restore the party's electoral symbol 'bat'.

The ECP filed a review petition against Justice Kamran Hayat's decision on December 30.

Fingerprint bureau: India gears up for 'screening and profiling' of Kashmiris in IIOJK

Weeks after the Indian Supreme Court legalised the Narendra Modi-led government's decision to abrogate Article 370 revoking Indian Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's (IIOJK) special status, New Delhi has now geared up for extensive screening and profiling of the residents of the occupied valley.

In December 2022, a five-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud ruled the IIOJK "which is an integral part of India" became evident from Articles 1 and 370 of the constitution" and ordered India's election commission to conduct elections in the region by September 2024.

The unanimous ruling came in response to more than a dozen petitions challenging the 2019 revocation and a subsequent decision of the Modi government to split the region into two federally administered territories.

In its latest measure to further subjugate the people of Kashmir, New Delhi has approved the establishment of the Fingerprint Bureau in IIOJK for screening and profiling the Kashmiri population as part of its designs to suppress the freedom sentiments in the territory.

The development comes as the occupied valley - since the 2019 August 5 move by the Modi-led government to revoke the semi-autonomous status of the valley - has been subjected to mass arrests, internet and communications blackouts as part of the Indian gov't's attempts to suppress the Kashmiri's dissent and freedom of expression.