



Measures for improving water use efficiency considered

On January 4, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev got acquainted with the presentation of proposals to improve water use efficiency in agriculture. In the current conditions of an increasingly worsening shortage of water resources in the country, special attention is paid to their rational and careful use. In recent years, 472 thousand and 48 thousand hectares of land... (Details on Page 5)



Dr Muhammad Ali Manjhi Honored by Sindh Culture Department

Sindh Culture Department paid homage to seasoned historian, writer, poet and researcher by inviting him to 'Cafe Saqafat' on Thursday evening. Cafe Saqafat is an event aired live through a facebook page launched by the culture department in 2020. During the program he was interviewed by host Dr Sher Umran who highlighted contributions of Dr Manjhi in the field of literature, history and culture while, Dr Manjhi during... (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Self-Determination Day

MUZZAFERABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir holds placards and shouting slogans during protest against the Indian oppression, to mark the Self-Determination Day, in City.



Photo: Online

PM-Right-Day

PM reiterates Pakistan's continued support for Kashmiris' right to self determination

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday reiterated that Pakistan would continue to extend its full political, diplomatic, and moral support to the valiant Kashmiri people in their just struggle for their rights including the inalienable right to self-determination, by the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

"Today, Kashmiris around the world are observing the 75th anniversary of the Resolution adopted by the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP), providing that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite under the UN auspices, the prime minister said in a message on the occasion of Self-Determination Day.

In essence, he said it was a reaffirmation of the inalienable right of Kashmiris to self-determination, which is enshrined in international law and upheld by international human rights instruments.



He regretted that despite more than seven and a half decades, the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have not been able to exercise this fundamental right. India continues to oppress the people of Jammu and Kashmir to break their will.

He pointed out the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) annually adopts a resolution on "Universal Realization of the Right of the People to Self-Determination" that draws international attention towards the plight and rights of people living under situations of forced occupation.

The international community, especially the United Nations, is responsible for ensuring that the people of IIOJK exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, he added.

Senate passes resolution seeking delay in elections 2024

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday approved a resolution seeking a delay in the February 8 general elections, citing security concerns, ARY News reported.

The resolution, presented by Senator Dilawar Khan, was approved by the majority of lawmakers.

However, Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and PML-N Senator Afhan Ullah, who were present in the house, opposed the move.

"The Constitution upheld the right to vote for every citizen of Pakistan and the Election Commission of Pakistan was

bound to conduct free and fair polls in contingent upon inclusivity and ensuring the participation of all regional people."

"The vote turnout in colder areas remains notably high during the moderate weather conditions. January and February are recognised as the coldest months in the majority of the areas in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," it stated.

The resolution said various political parties had expressed their reservations regarding difficulties in ensuring participation in cold areas during the electoral process.

"Recent attempts on the lives of JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman,



former lawmaker Mohsin Dawar, and other political figures had raised concerns about the safety of political leaders."

"The Ministry of Interior has conveyed serious threats to the lives of prominent politicians increasing the challenges faced by political parties in exercising their right to a free and fair elec-

tion," the resolution noted.

It added that there had been a spike in attacks on security forces and citizens, particularly in KP and Balochistan.

"The Senate of Pakistan hereby resolves that the conduct in elections without addressing legitimate concerns, facilitating sufficient opportunities for election campaign and guaranteeing the safety of politicians and citizens would amount to violation of fundamental rights."

"The election schedule may be postponed to facilitate the effective participation of people from all areas of Pakistan and belonging to all political shades", it demanded.

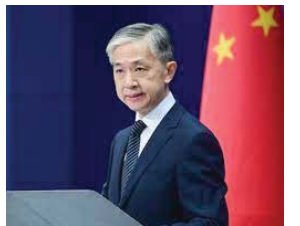
China calls for full ceasefire under UN resolutions

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: China on Friday urged parties to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, carry out full ceasefire at once and stop the collective punishment against the people of Gaza.

"The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict has killed more than 22,000 people in Gaza already, most of whom were civilians. The daily civilian death toll remains above one hundred. This must not continue," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing.

Responding to a question about filing of a lawsuit by the Republic of South Africa in the International Court of Justice requesting an interim injunction on the ground that Israel violated the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide with the actions it committed in Gaza since October 7, the spokesperson said, "We noted the application."



"The Chinese side opposes any action that violates the international law," he said. "We urge parties to the conflict to implement the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, carry out full ceasefire at once and stop the collective punishment against the people of Gaza."

No directives from PM, cabinet for delay in elections: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi on Friday said that there was no directives from the Prime Minister or the federal cabinet for delay in general elections.

Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, the minister said that he did not get a chance to give arguments in the resolution on the postponement of the elections in the upper house.

According to Article 218(3) of the Constitution, it was the power of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), to conduct elections, give a date or change the date for elections, he said.

Political parties reject 'unconstitutional' Senate resolution seeking delay in elections

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The political parties on Friday rejected an 'unconstitutional' resolution adopted by Senate, seeking a delay in February 8 general elections citing security situation.

The Upper House of Parliament adopted a resolution, which was moved by independent Senator Dilawar Khan during a session with only 15 lawmakers in attendance. It sought polls delay in the light of extreme weather in hilly areas and the deteriorating security situation.

However, the political parties - PPP, PML-N and PTI - strongly rejected the non-binding resolution and said further deferring the electoral process would be "unconstitutional".

Addressing a press conference,



PPP Senator Sherry Rehman pointed out that the party has a clear stance that the elections should not be delayed. "We didn't support the resolution," she said, adding that PPP was ready for the polls.

Referring to the security concerns, Rehman said that PPP has been the biggest target of terrorism, pointing out the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. "Even the elections were held after Bibi's [Benazir Bhutto] assassination," she added.

"We always wanted free, fair and timely polls," she said, adding that

there should be no more uncertainty in the country. "A resolution passed by the Senate is not a law", she added.

Meanwhile, PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that a resolution of 14 Senators based on their personal opinions, has no "legal or binding force in the constitutional process of holding general elections".

"Elections must take place on time and Supreme Court to enforce its orders and observations," the PTI chief said in a statement issued on X (formerly Twitter).

Barrister Gohar noted that PTI strongly supports and demands holding of polls on February 08. "PTI further prays Supreme Court to ensure level playing field including allotment of election symbol to PTI for fair and legitimate elections," he added.

Aneeq urges youth to help promote interfaith harmony

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed on Friday urged the young generation to play their due role in the promotion of service to humanity and brotherhood by following the teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Pursuing the values of tolerance, respect and peace was imperative for religious and interfaith harmony, he said addressing a seminar on "The Importance and Necessity of Promoting Inter-faith Harmony" at the Iqra University Islamabad, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-Religious Harmony.

May 9 riots: PTI founder summoned on Jan 9

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Rawalpindi has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in a case pertaining to May 9 riots, where-

in military installations were attacked following the former premier's arrest.

According to details, Imran Khan - who is currently incarcerated in Adiala Jail - has been summoned in cases regarding an attack on General Head-

quarters (GHQ) and burning pictures of martyrs.

It is pertinent to mention that the PTI founder is named the main accused in all the May 9 riots cases.

Violent clashes were broken out across Pakistan after

former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested on May 9, 2023.

The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers were agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order.

Army installations, including Corps Commander's house in Lahore, had come under attack during the protests by PTI workers

SC reserves verdict in lifetime disqualification case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday reserved the verdict in a case pertaining to the lifetime disqualification of lawmakers under Article 62(1) (F) of the Constitution.

A seven-member larger bench, headed by the CJP and comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali, reserved the verdict after the completion of arguments.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa said that a short order would be announced soon. The proceedings were broadcast live on the apex court's website.

As the proceedings commenced today, Advocate Makhdoom Ali Khan, repre-

senting Jahangir Khan Tareen, argued that the Saniullah Baloch case created a "complete disconnect" between Article 62 and Article 63 of the Constitution regarding lawmaker disqualification.

Makhdoom emphasized the distinction between civil liability and disqualification, stating, "...a citizen is denied the right to exercise, or the protection of a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution for the rest of his life."

Responding to queries about the role of civil courts, Makhdoom asserted, "There is no civil court in this country which can grant that," referring to a declaration of honesty and truthfulness.

Chief Justice Isa expressed concern over neglecting the constitutional history of Pakistan, emphasizing the need for logic and reasoning behind lifetime disqualification.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir bank reports profit of over one billion rupees in 2023

Abdul Majeed Tahir

Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has achieved an operating profit of more than one billion and 20 crore rupees in the year 2023 by showing excellent performance. According to the financial data of December 31, 2023 released by the spokesperson of the bank on Friday, the state financial institution is the economic and social of the region. Under its vision to play a key role in development, it is achieving remarkable achievements in all sectors including profitability.

The value of assets has crossed 33.23 billion rupees while deposits have reached 24.14 billion rupees. The remittances have increased to

more than 5.48 billion rupees. The number of esteemed account holders of the institution has increased to 261 thousand and the branch network has expanded to 85 operational branches in urban and rural areas. Branches will be opened in more areas deprived of banking facilities.

The spokesman further said that along with traditional banking, the bank is playing an important and active role in driving the economy of this region. The provision of loans of more than 4.14 billion rupees by the institution has accelerated the pace of the state economy.

Including encouraging small businesses and creating new employment opportunities for educated youth. In



order to promote business activities and provide new employment opportunities, new attractive loan schemes have

been introduced this year on very easy terms. Will be done. Due to the strong acceptance of the people of the state, especially the business community, the mutual trust relationship of the bank with the customers and all the stakeholders has been further strengthened. Which is the result of the special interest of the Azad Kashmir government, especially the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Ch Anwarul Haqeth Chair- man/ Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan President Shehzad Mir and all Board of Directors, especially the state finance minister and the chairman of the bank and the tireless work of the respected staff under their supervision. The provision of more banking facilities will be continued.

Self-Determination Day

ISLAMABAD: Lawyers affiliated from Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council holds placards and shouting slogans during protest against the Indian oppression, to mark the Self-Determination Day of Kashmir's, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Protest rally held in Muzaffarabad on 'Right to Self-Determination'

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Protest rally was accorded by Pasban Hurriyat, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell and district administration, in front of the Central Press Club Muzaffarabad regarding the "Right to Self-Determination Campaign" on January 5. Minister of Social Welfare and Women's Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Mayor of Muzaffarabad Syed Sikandar Geelani, Chairman Pasban Hurriyet Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, Senior Leader of People's Party Shaukat Javed Mir, Vice Chairman Pasban Hurriyat Mushtaq Isalam, Vice Chairman District Council Raja Nasir Latif, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad Nadeem Ahmad Janjua, Assistant Commissioner Shabbir Geelani, Usman Ali Hashim, Media Coordinator Sardar Ali Shan, President Teacher Organization Mir

Khalid Salharia, Business Leader Sardar Abdul Razak Khan, Leader EPCA Ramzan Mughal, Leader Pasban Hurriyet Women Wing, Meenaz Qureshi, President Schools Teacher Organization Saqib Shaheen, leader of Jammu and Kashmir Mihajir Ghulam Hasan Butt, employees MDA, EPCA, teacher organization including women, media representatives, civil society and a large number of people participated. Addressing the protest demonstration on this occasion, the Minister of Social Welfare and Women's Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi said that the people of Kashmir have been demanding the fulfillment of the promise of plebiscite from the United Nations for the past several years.

Speaking on this occasion, Chairman Constable Hurriyet Uzair Ahmed Ghazali said that there is a world of chaos in Occupied Kashmir. Indian army is

using all possible tactics for genocide in Occupied Kashmir. He said that today's day is of special importance in the history of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. On this day, January 5, 1949, Kashmiris were promised a referendum. Kashmiris are still waiting for the fulfillment of this promise.

Addressing the protest demonstration, Mayor Muzaffarabad Syed Sikandar Geelani said that he wants to convince India that Kashmiris will not back down from their long-standing demand. Indian atrocities are threatening the peace of the region. In an appeal to the United Nations, he said that the United Nations should play a role in ensuring the referendum process. Speaking on this occasion, People's Party leader Shaukat Javed Mir said that India openly violates the resolutions of the United Nations every day. India is involved in war crimes like extrajudi-

cial killings, enforced disappearances in Occupied Kashmir. India has made the situation in

He demanded the United Nations to take action against Kashmiris. Addressing the protest demonstration on this occasion, Pasban Hurriyat women's department leader Mehnaz Shaheen, Tasab Shaheen, Ghulam Hasan Butt, Vice Chairman Raja Natar Latif and others also condemned the ongoing Indian war crimes in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and demanded the United Nations. I said that the United Nations should ensure the fulfillment of its historical promise by taking action for the fundamental right of Kashmiris, the right to self-determination. On this occasion, the participants of the protest organized a rally from Burhan Wani Chowk to Garhi Pan Chowk. In the rally, the participants carried banners and placards with slogans of independence.

Commissioner Dera arrangements, reviews for upcoming anti-polio campaign across in division

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Division Zafar Ul Islam has said here yesterday that all efforts should be made to ensure the achievement of goals during the anti-polio campaign.

He gave these instructions while addressing the division-wide arrangements and review meeting regarding anti-polio campaign.

In the meeting, Regional Police Officer Nasir Mehmood Satti, Deputy Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan while Deputy Commissioners Tank, South Waziristan (Upper) and South Waziristan (Lower) online and Secretary to Commissioner,

N Stop Officers, DHCSOs, Health Department, Local Government, WHO, EPI and other relevant department officers participated.

During the meeting, a detailed briefing was given to commissioner and told about the arrangements for the upcoming campaign including the perfor-



mance of the previous campaigns. Considering the security situation, the campaign will be launched in Dera Ismail Khan district from the 8th of this month and in the southern districts of the division from the 15th of this month.

Mentioning the problems faced regarding the anti-polio campaign, it was said that various challenges are being faced including security, shortage of EPI staff and delay in salaries of various staff.

On which Commissioner Dera issued immediate orders that all concerned Deputy Commissioners should ensure the payment of anti-polio staff.

Similarly, sufficient measures should be taken to protect the anti-polio teams, so that they can perform their services without fear and danger.

He directed the police department to ensure full implementation of the security plan prepared for the anti-polio campaign while all concerned officials should perform their duties diligently

and so as not only to ensure achievement of targets during the anti-polio campaign but also to ensure maximum coverage and that no child up to the age of five years will suffer lifelong disability by missing out on anti-polio drops.

He appealed to all the parents to give anti-polio drops to all their children up to five years of age during every anti-polio campaign, so that not only to save our children from being crippled, but also to realize the dream of eradicating deadly viruses like polio forever

SM Tanveer expressed satisfy on the performance of the Business Facilitation Center

PPA

LAHORE: The signing ceremony of the agreement for running the affairs of Business Facilitation Centers was held in the committee room of Punjab Small Industries Corporation. Provincial Industries and Commerce Minister SM Tanveer made a special appearance. Officials of Punjab Small Industries Corporation, Punjab Investment Board, PEDMIC, FIDMIC and PITB signed the agreement. According to the agreement, the institutions will jointly take forward the issues of Business Facilitation Centers. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer said that the Business Facilitation Center is an unprecedented initiative of the Punjab government. The agreement signed among the institutions to take forward the affairs of the Center is welcome step. He said that investors are getting facilities under one roof to set up a new factory. Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce visited the Business Facilitation Center after the agreement. He went to the desks of every department in the Business Facilitation Center. The Provincial Minister was briefed about the performance of the institution. The Provincial Minister expressed his satisfaction on the performance of the Business Facilitation Center. Secretary Industry and Trade Ehsan Bhutta, Additional Secretary Commerce, MD PSIC and concerned officers were also present on the occasion

Muzaffarabad celebrates 96th birthday of Quaid-e-Awam

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The 96th birthday of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, founder chairman of Pakistan People's Party, was celebrated with great devotion and respect in Azad Kashmir as well as across Pakistan, and several events were held and cakes were cut and Quaid-e-Awam was celebrated. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the daughter of Mashreq Ms. Benazir Bhutto, paid homage to the national and global services of the capital Muzaffarabad. Senior Vice President of the party, Minister of Law Mian Abdul Waheed, Minister of Social Welfare Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi, Candidate Assembly Constituency Seven Shaukat Javed Mir, District Council Member Syed Ali Raza Sabzwari, Khawaja Farooq Ahmed, Bashir Alam Awan, Bilawal Munir, Mahmood Mir besides. Speaking on the occasion attended by officials and workers, Law Minister Mian Abdul Waheed said that the Bhutto family and Pakistan are inseparable.

Middle East Mrs. Benazir Bhutto granted observer status to Hurriyat Conference in OIC. The gift of constitution to the country and nuclear program for invincible defense. The judicial killing of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto martyr is an ugly stain on the justice system. Minister of Social Welfare Syed Bazal. Ali Naqvi said that the leader of the people, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, proved to be the messiah for the oppressed middle classes and the suffering humanity, and made the right of self-determination of one and a half million Kashmiris a clear flash point in the world's parliaments, and the implementation of agricultural and public reforms is underway.

Speaking at the birthday ceremony of Laya, Deputy Secretary Information, nominated candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven, Shaukat Javed Mir said that the People's Party and the Bhutto family made a world history of independence, patriotism and devotion to Mother Earth by sacrificing their four generations on February 8th. Appreciating the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the party to nominate Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the candidate for the Prime Ministership, it was approved through a resolution and former President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari nominated as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Political Affairs Full confidence was expressed in the leadership of Chairperson Ms. Faryal Talpur, Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Senior Leader Chaudhry Riaz, Secretary General Faisal Rathore, and praised the performance of the coalition government headed by Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq and called it people-friendly. Assured full cooperation

Jamaat-e-Islami to reject Senate resolution to postpone general elections

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Passing the resolution to postpone the general elections in the Senate is tantamount to taking away the soul from the Constitution of Pakistan. Pakistan needs to hold timely elections. If elections are not held in time, there is a fear of anarchy spreading in the country. Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Dr. Safdar Hashmi has said that it is regrettable that the resolution was presented and approved in the presence of a few favorite members of the Senate and the facts on the ground were left behind. If the election is postponed, the responsibility will be on the caretaker government and the Election Commission. It is the responsibility of the state institutions to conduct timely elections in a peaceful environment. Dr. Safdar Hashmi further said that Jamaat-e-Islami will not tolerate any delay. We will not accept this kind of decision. Chairman Saint should have returned this resolution immediately, but it was presented and approved under a well-thought-out planning.

YDA Dera delegation met with Chairman BOG

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Young Doctors Association (YDA) held a detailed meeting with Dera Ismail Khan Chairman Board of Governors Mushtaq Dar and BOG member Dr Essa Khan here on Thursday.

The meeting was chaired by Young Doctors Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Asfandiar Bettani.

Meanwhile, Young Doctors Association (YDA) Dera Ismail Khan Cabinet President Dr. Adil Wazir, Chairman Dr. Idris Bettani and General Secretary along with the Cabinet were present.

In the meeting, President of Young Doctors Association, Dr. Asfandiar Bettani informed the BOG Chairman and member about the corruption in the hospitals from the previous board of governors and the mafia behind them.

The Young Doctors in the meeting highlighted the corrupt mafia and their corruption in the previous Board of Governors, while emphasizing that the doctors demanded that whoever violated the rights of the poor people of Dera Ismail Khan should be punished.

YDA demanded they should be removed from their positions by holding an inquiry on them, while at the same time the government was requested to do so that these people should be held accountable so that the market of corruption in the hospitals of Dera Ismail Khan can be ended forever.

On this occasion, the Board of Governors assured the delegation of Young Doctors Association and promised to take action against them. All the reservations on Associate Dean Gomal Medical College were placed before the Chairman of the Board of Governors by the Young Doctors along with the evidence.

However, it was demanded that the associate dean should be removed from his post as soon as possible and the previously appointed associate dean should be reinstated.





Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:44 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 3:35 pm
Maghrib 5:13 pm
Isha 6:42 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

Customs of Multan arrest 437.2 million worth of smuggled goods in December

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The teams of Customs Collectorate Enforcement Multan are continuing to crack down on smuggling in southern Punjab including Multan. Multan Customs Collectorate Enforcement, while carrying out operations against smuggled goods, seized non-customs-paid vehicles worth crores of rupees in the month of December. Large quantities of smuggled goods including diesel according to customs sources, under the direction of Collector Customs Enforcement Multan Syed Imran Sajjad Bukhari, customs teams under the supervision of Deputy Collector Maryam Jamila seized 437.2 million 90 crores during operations against smugglers at various entrances of Multan region in the month of December. Goods worth thousand rupees have been confiscated, including 40 naan Customs paid vehicles, Iranian diesel, foreign cloth, electronics, auto spare parts, foreign cigarettes, ratna gutka, mobile phones, food atoms, nut bolts and liquors have been confiscated after being taken into custody, said Collector Customs Syed Imran. According to Sajjad Bukhari, Multan Customs Enforcement, despite its limited resources, has been able to deal with crimes such as smuggling. Prevention is always active so that the society can be freed from smuggling.

NDRMF and IRC Pakistan emerge as Strategic Partners for shaping Resilience

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In an attempt to address the challenges of disaster risks and vulnerability faced by Pakistan, the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have solidified their commitment for enhancing resilience in Pakistan through signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This initiative marks a significant collaboration between NDRMF Pakistan leading public sector entity and IRC a global humanitarian organization. Pakistan faces some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world, ranked 11 out of 193 countries by the 2023 World Risk Report. Pakistan also has high exposure to flooding, including flash, and coastal, as well as exposure to tropical cyclones and drought. The Disaster risk in Pakistan is further exacerbated by its social vulnerability. Pakistan's vulnerability ranking (37 out of 191) is driven by its high rates of multidimensional poverty.

The scope of this collaboration

encompasses joint efforts in strengthening Community-Based Disaster Risk Management/Reduction models, the outlook for anticipatory actions. This includes consultations on innovative programmes and policy ideas for strengthening resilience in communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and relevant institutions. NDRMF and IRC will leverage their partner networks to foster collaboration in areas of mutual interest. The organizations further commit to share technical assistance for developing a repository of best practices on resilience.

In the realm of policy advocacy, the organizations will engage in public profiling and awareness programs to address issues exacerbating climate adaptation and resilience markers. This would entail co-creating evidence pieces for informed decision making, programming and potential avenues of technology transfers as well as to disseminate research findings to build a consistent, coherent national to global narrative.

In a joint statement, Mr. Bilal Anwar, (CEO NDRMF), and Ms. Shabnam



Baloch, Country Director the (IRC), conveyed their unwavering commitment to the newly formed partnership. They underscored the critical significance of collaborative initiatives, tackling the multifaceted challenges present-

ed by climate change and natural disasters specifically within the context of Pakistan. Mr. Anwar and Ms. Baloch recognized the potential of the Pakistani youth as catalysts for positive change and committed in engaging them in the

co-creation of solutions. They highlighted the importance of youth engagement at the grassroots level, ensuring that the perspectives and innovative ideas of the youth are integral to initiatives undertaken by NDRMF and IRC.

Press conference

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor National Council of Arts Professor Dr Mustafa Jafri addressing during exhibition at National College of Arts at Sector G-7, to mark the Self-Determination Day, in Federal Capital.

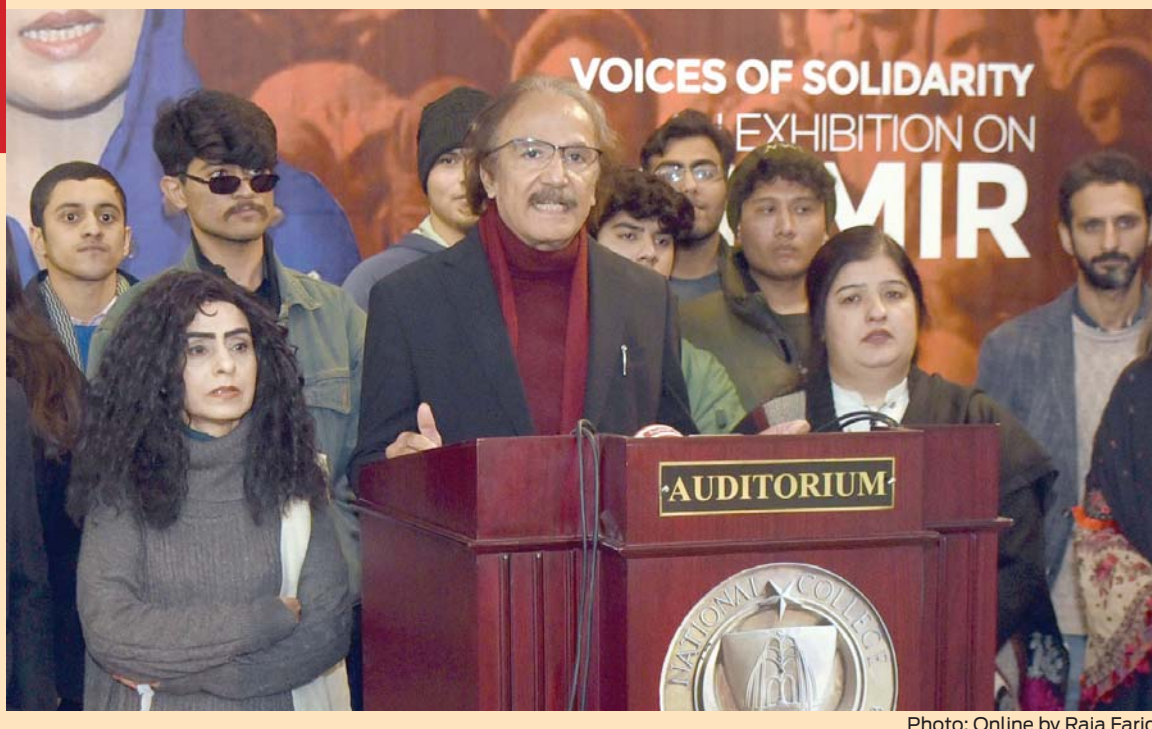


Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Khawaja Rizwan discusses general election campaign in Multan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: According to the Senior Vice President Pakistan People's Party South Punjab Khawaja Rizwan Alam Under the chairmanship of President PPPP Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistan Peoples Party Multan division and district office bearers discussed the political situation of Saraiki Wasib and the general election campaign in a joint meeting.

Pakistan People's Party Vice Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, People's Party South Punjab President Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood and Abdul Qadir Shaheen participated in the meeting.

Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Khalid Hanif Lodhi, Dr. Javed Siddiqui, Kamran Abdullah Mudal, Rao Sajid Ali, Malik Naseem Hussain Labar and AD Khan Baloch participated



in the meeting.

Salim Raja, Khawaja Imran, Chaudhry Yasin, Naem Shehzad Bhatti, Khalil Ran,

Barkat Ali, Hamid Ali Bhatti and Altaf Chanar were present in the meeting.

Nawaz Sotrak, Rana Zava-

lafiqr, Amin Sajid, Zaman Zaidi, Muhammad Shafiq, Raja Pars and others participated in the meeting.

FGEHA to implement E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System at earliest: Director

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Capt. (R) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Director General, FGEHA directed Director (IT) to implement PPRAs electronic system of procurement i.e. E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (EPADS) in our esteemed organization at the earliest. Mr. Asim Amir, Director (IT) requested PPRa and organized a two-day training session from 4th-5th January 2024, for the employees of FGEHA in the Committee Room of FGEHA. Mr. Rizwan Mahmood, Director (MIS), and Ms. Wardha Rizwan, Principal Business Analyst from PPRa delivered the introductory session very diligently, which was informative for the participants. Mr. Faiz Umer Sial, Director (Admin), and Mr. Ahmed Hassan, Deputy Director (GA) provided their full support for organizing this training.

This digitization/e-Procurement System (i.e. E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (E-PADS)) will improve governance, management, transparency, accountability, and quality of public procurement, and ensure an effective Monitoring & Evaluation System in FGEHA.

AIOU increases convocation seats to accommodate students

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has decided to increase the number of seats in the upcoming convocation. This decision was taken in response to thousands of requests from students and recommendations made by the convocation committee. The eligibility criteria for the convocation have also been amended to include all graduates from Semester Autumn 2004 to Semester Spring 2022. To accommodate the maximum number of students, the university has extended the registration date. Graduates can now register themselves on <http://convocation.aiou.edu.pk> until January 10, 2024. AIOU Convocation 2024 will be held on January 31, 2024, at the Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad. The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, who is also the Chancellor of the University, will be the chief guest at the event. Students from Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, AJK and Rawalpindi Division (Attack, Chaklala, Jhelum, and Rawalpindi) will participate in the convocation at Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad. The convocation for the Karachi chapter is scheduled for March 3, 2024, while Lahore's convocation will be held on March 28. Quetta will host its ceremony on May 19, and the convocation for Peshawar is scheduled for June 9, 2024.

PhD graduates are required to register in Islamabad only. Students of MPhil programs will be awarded gold medals and degrees at the convocations held in their respective cities.

Muslim League UK to support PM Sharif for fourth term: Chaudhry Ansar

Correspondent

KHARIAN: President of Muslim League Lawyers Wing UK Chaudhry Ansar Mehmood Advocate has said that Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will become the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the fourth time and will lead Pakistan on the road of reconstruction and development. Leader of League (N), former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has full public support and under his leadership, the journey of construction and development of Pakistan will start again from 2018. Chaudhry Ansar Mehmood Advocate said that the Muslim League under the leadership of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will get votes for its performance, whenever the Muslim League got the government, inflation, unrest and load shedding from Pakistan ended and for the development of the country. Mega projects were started



Murder convict sent to gallows in Fatehjang

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A Session court in Fatehjang town of Attock on Friday sentenced a convict to death for murdering a man over land feud in the limits of Fatehjang Police station during year 2003. The judge also imposed fine over convict as damages.

According to the FIR registered under section 302 and 34 of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) at Fatehjang Police station, the accused Muzloom Hussain Shah had shot dead his brother in law Nusrat Hussain Shah on March 2003 in Mian Rasheeda village over land dispute. The suspect went underground after committing the cold blood murder and subsequently he was declared a proclaimed offender (PO) by the court. Police after almost after 20 years of hunt arrested the suspect on August 1, 2023 after raiding at his hideout. Later during the trial, the prosecution produced substantial evidence against the accused which established involvement of Mr Shah in the cold blood murder of a man and subsequently sent the convict to gallows. The convict was also ordered to pay Rs 1 million as damages.

Dr Muhammad Ali Manjhi Honored by Sindh Culture Department

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: Sindh Culture Department paid homage to seasoned historian, writer, poet and researcher by inviting him to 'Cafe Saqafat' on Thursday evening. Cafe Saqafat is an event aired live through a facebook page launched by the culture department in 2020.

During the program he was interviewed by host Dr Sher Umrani who highlighted contributions of Dr Manjhi in the field of literature, history and culture while, Dr Manjhi during the interview recalled his days of struggle and cherished golden memories of childhood.

Born in Thatta a historically rich district of Sindh Dr Manjhi held different positions in educational institutes of Sindh and unveiled chapters of Sindh, s history. He has served as head of Sindh language Authority, Director



General Colleges Sindh, Director Dr NA Baloch Institute, Director General Culture Department and Director General Liaquat Library Karachi.

The seasoned historian initially hesitated to share his arduous journey but later on he disclosed that before

becoming PhD scholar he resorted to different "small jobs" to do away with financial constraints prevailing in his life.

"I did a short medical course and got job of dispenser in a hospital of Hyderabad to meet the expenses of my educa-

tion"; he said and added that he inherited love for Sindhi language and Shah Abdul Latif from his maternal grandfather who was well-versed in Shah Latis poetry and would sing verses of Latif after morning prayers.

Dr Muhammad Ali Manjhi completed his doctorate in the "Poetry of Sufi Shah Inayat and other poets belonging to his school of thought".

Dr. Nawaz Ali Shaouk persuaded him to engrave hidden aspects, historical sites and stories related to the culture of Sindh. Manjhi being a distinguished historian wrote as many as 16 books and various research articles on Sindh, s history and archeological sites. Several students under his mentorship sought motivation for PhD studies and went abroad to achieve this feat. In the course of discussion with the host he shed light on historical aspects of Sindh, s and archeological sites.

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PTI Sans BAT and Playground

The PTI's plight can be likened to facing double jeopardy in a rigged match. Initially, they were denied a fair playing field, and subsequently, they were stripped of the emblematic BAT symbol. The analogy mirrors a cricket game where one team is equipped with guards, safety gadgets, their own umpire, a favorable ground, and a bat, while the other team is denied safety equipment, the BAT, and access to the field, effectively barring them from even entering the playground. Consequently, it's akin to handing a walkover victory to the favored team, unjustly declaring them the winners.

This scenario was painted in the Supreme court by the PTI's lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa around first jeopardy where relying on the report filed by the Election Commission, he pleaded that political scenario in Pakistan reveals a disturbing asymmetry in the political landscape, where one party faces a relentless onslaught from the state machinery while others glide through their election preparations with ease. While rivals conduct candidate interviews in opulent drawing rooms accompanied by lavish feasts, this singular party battles each day for mere survival. Their access to political and administrative arenas has been systematically barred—a calculated strategy aimed not just at crippling but annihilating them.

Another scenario was painted by the PTI's lawyers in the Peshawar High Court around second jeopardy where the PTI lawyers pleaded that following a directive from the Election Commission, the party held the intra party elections strictly in accordance with the party's constitution yet, within days, these very elections were branded unlawful. Worse, the party was denied the emblematic BAT symbol, laden with the historic significance of the

Chairman's leadership, notably marked by the cricket World Cup triumph in 1992. This symbol wasn't just a party emblem; it encapsulated the aspirations and pride of the electorate, the Peshawar High Court first allowed the retention of the bat by PTI but rethought its decision and took away the BAT as a symbol. PTI now is all set to prefer appeal before the supreme court with the hope to get its symbol back which is a distant possibility albeit worth trying.

According to PTI lawyers, denial of an emblem goes beyond mere symbolism but effectively dissolves the party for practical intents, forcing the party's candidate to contest election in their individual capacity with separate symbols for each individual leading to a fragmented struggle. Such a calculated suppression undermines not just the party's identity but also erodes the democratic fabric by silencing diverse voices.

They argued that separate symbols for hundreds of party's candidates in the federal and provincial levels would create confusion among voters who may struggle to recognize or locate the party on the ballot, resulting in potential loss of votes. Additionally, this last-minute change undermines the party's campaigning efforts, stripping them of a vital visual tool integral to their promotional materials. The sudden absence of their symbol creates a void that's challenging to fill in the eleventh hour of a political race. It erodes the morale of party workers and supporters. Legal battles to reclaim the symbol can drain resources and attention, diverting crucial focus away from campaigning efforts. Ultimately, the loss of a symbol doesn't just impede current elector-

al success; it can cast shadows over the party's credibility and standing in future elections.

This means that a party will be contesting elections on the face of an uneven playing field and without its symbol in the lead-up to general elections impeding fair representation, distorting the ability of parties to reach voters on an equal footing. This distortion not only skews public perceptions but also undermines the electorate's capacity to make informed choices. The erosion of a level playing field corrodes trust in the democratic process, fostering disillusionment and cynicism among citizens. This disillusionment, if left unaddressed, can result in reduced voter turnout, weakening the legitimacy of election outcomes and threatening the very foundation of a robust democracy.

PTI's vehemently uphill efforts in Supreme Court to secure a level playing field and restore its symbol may not go in waste as there are many examples in the judicial parlance of many countries where the parties deprived of symbols and level playing field were provided with remedy.

In India- Sampath Kumar v. Union of India (2000), the Supreme Court of India addressed a case where a political party was denied its election symbol. The court ruled that the Election Commission's decision to freeze the symbol violated natural justice and ordered the restoration of the symbol to the party.

In Bangladesh-Jamaat-e-Islami v. Bangladesh Election Commission (2013), the Bangladesh Supreme Court dealt with a case involving a political party whose registration was canceled, thereby denying them the right to participate in elections. The court upheld the Election

Commission's decision, stating that the cancellation was justified due to violations of the country's election laws.

In the United States-Bush v. Gore (2000), the U. S. Supreme Court was involved in deciding the outcome of the presidential election. The case centered on the recounting of votes in Florida and whether it was being conducted fairly. The Court ruled in favor of George W. Bush, effectively ending the recount and deciding the election outcome.

In Zimbabwe-Movement for Democratic Change v. Zimbabwe Election Commission (2018), the Zimbabwean courts heard cases regarding allegations of election irregularities and lack of a level playing field. While some cases were dismissed, others led to calls for electoral reforms, highlighting concerns about fairness and transparency.

Seeking recourse in the Supreme Court of Pakistan offers a potential avenue for a political party unfairly deprived of a level playing field and denied their election symbol. However, the outcome of such appeals is intricate, resting on several critical factors. The success of the appeal hinges on the legal arguments presented, demanding clear evidence of constitutional or electoral law violations. The court's independence and impartiality, coupled with strong evidence supporting the party's claims, are pivotal. Past legal precedents, public perceptions, and political pressures also subtly influence the environment, shaping the court's decision-making process. If the case finds favor, possible remedies might include corrective measures in the electoral process or fair allocation of symbols, yet the complexity of judicial proceedings means outcomes aren't guaranteed.

Former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pak-China collaboration to continue expand chilli sector

With deepening bilateral collaboration in the chilli industry, the sector in Pakistan will continue to thrive and expand steadily, which will also pave the way for the flourishing pepper trade with China. Pakistan is the fourth largest chilli producer globally, with 150,000 acres of farms yielding 143,000 tonnes annually. This remarkable production capacity positions Pakistan favourably in the global chilli market.

At the same time, China's soaring demand for dry chilli, surpassing 200,000 tons annually, presents a significant opportunity for Pakistan to tap into a lucrative market and expand its pepper exports. The China-Pakistan Chilli farming project, a crucial component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, can serve as a great example. Spanning 16,000 acres of chilli farming land, the project adopts an order-based contract farming model.

The program has successfully trained over 1500 agricultural technicians in Pakistan, which led to a 100,000 Pakistani Rupee increase in per-acre output, reaching three times the unit production value of traditional crops, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Awis Mir, CEO and Founder of DEA Group of Companies, explains the benefits of collaborative partnerships, stating, "Chinese companies are not only providing technical support and guidance for seedling cultivation, field management, harvesting and drying of chilli pepper, but also establishing a system that connects Chinese buyers with guaranteed demand."

This system creates clusters of buyers, including state-owned enterprises, streamlining the supply chain and ensuring market access for Pakistani chilli exporters. As a significant milestone in the project's progression and Pakistan's agricultural exports, the first consignment of Pakistani chilli was shipped to China earlier this month. Despite its great potential and remarkable advancement, the chilli industry in Pakistan still faces challenges.

According to the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Pakistan exported 2,751 tons of dried red chilli peppers in 2019, which decreased to 1,665 tons in 2022. "The severe flooding in these years has adversely affected chilli production within the country. There are also problems in the drying process as well," remarks Muhammad Irfan, Trade and Investment Counselor of the Pakistan Consulate in Guangzhou.

"To solve the related problems, Pakistan and China have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements. Pakistan, in particular, is offering land with preferential policies, especially in areas prone to floods, as part of their efforts to support the chilli industry and mitigate the impact of climate change," Irfan added. It was also pointed out that the China-Pakistan Food Export Processing Zone will be established by the end of the year 2025.



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

Sultan Muhammad Bahadur Aziz: Star of Pakistan Off-Road Racing

Sultan Muhammad Bahadur Aziz is a prominent figure in the realm of off-road racing within Pakistan. Hailing from the distinguished lineage of the revered Sufi saint of South Asia, Sultan-ul-Arifeen Hazrat Sultan Bahoo, known for his excellence in the world Sufism, Sultan Bahadur Aziz embodies a dynamic spirit. Grounded in the values of struggle and diligence that characterize his family's legacy, he has emerged as a formidable force in the arena of off-road sports.

Sultan Bahadur Aziz's affinity for equestrian pursuits dates back to his childhood, deeply rooted in the family tradition of horse riding. His father, Hazrat Sahibzada Sultan Muhammad Asghar Ali (RA), established the Muhammadiyah Haideria Sultania Awan Horse Club, a hallmark in Pakistan. This club stands as the largest private horse club and the sole tent pegging club in the country, annually organizing the prestigious Sultan International tent pegging tournament.

Beyond his familial ties, Sultan Bahadur Aziz is recognized as a commendable individual, affiliated with the renowned Team Sultan and esteemed as the brother of Pakistan Off Road Champion Sahibzada Sultan. His fervor for motorsports has propelled him into a leadership role within Team Sultan, showcasing his passion and commitment.

In a remarkably short span, Sultan Bahadur Aziz has contributed significantly to the advancement of off-road racing in Pakistan.

His adeptness and prowess extend beyond the realm of off-road racing, encompassing horse riding and tent pegging. Not only has he secured numerous accolades in off-road racing, but he has also distinguished himself in national tent pegging competitions, garnering several awards. As a rider in Pakistan International Tent Pegging, he stands as Pakistan's champion in tent pegging competitions at the global level.

Sultan Muhammad Bahadur Aziz's achievements in off-road rallies commenced with Team Sultan in 2016. A glimpse into his triumphs over the years reveals a remarkable journey marked by continuous success and skillful navigation of the challenging off-road terrain.

In the year 2018, Sultan Bahadur Aziz demonstrated his prowess in off-road racing, securing notable positions in various competitions. In the B Stock Category, he achieved the 2nd position at the Jhal Magsi Desert Challenge and the 3rd position at the Thal Off-road Rally.

The following year, 2019, marked a series of remarkable achievements for Sultan Bahadur Aziz. In the B Stock Category, he secured the 2nd position at the Jhal Magsi Desert Challenge, clinched the 1st position with the Fastest Time of the Day (FTD) at the Thal Off-road Rally, and attained the 2nd position at the Night Flood Light Lahore. Additionally, he claimed the 1st position at Chakwal, the 1st position at Cholistan, and the 2nd position at the Hub Rally.

In 2020, Sultan Bahadur Aziz continued his winning streak in the B Stock Category

by securing the 1st position at the Jhal Magsi Desert Challenge, the 1st position at the Thal Off-road Rally, and the 2nd position at the Cholistan Jeep Rally.

The year 2021 witnessed Sultan Bahadur Aziz's consistent excellence, earning the 2nd position at the Dehra Jaat Rally, the 2nd position at the Hub Rally Cross, and the 2nd position in the B Prepared Category at the Cholistan Jeep Rally. Furthermore, he secured the 2nd position at the Gawadar Off-road Rally and the 1st position at the Thal Off Road Rally.

In 2022, Sultan Bahadur Aziz continued to dominate the B Stock Category, achieving the 1st position at the Sarfaranga Off-road Rally, the 1st position at the Thal Off-road Rally, and the 3rd position at the Thar Desert Rally.

The trend of success persisted in 2023, with Sultan Bahadur Aziz attaining the 2nd position at the Cholistan Jeep Rally, the 2nd position at the Hub Rally Cross, and the 1st position in the B Prepared Category at the Thal Off-road Rally. He also claimed the 1st position at the Jhal Magsi Desert Challenge.

Acknowledging his remarkable consistency, Sultan Bahadur Aziz earned the title of "Mr. Consistent" at the Jhal Magsi Desert Challenge a few years ago. During the prize distribution ceremony at the Gawadar Rally, he was hailed as "Mr. Cool." Beyond his achievements in off-road racing, Sultan Bahadur Aziz has been recognized as a patriotic individual dedicated to promoting cultural activities in Pakistan, contributing to the country's positive image on the global stage.

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South Africa Takes Bold Stand Against Israel

On December 29, 2023, South Africa started a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The lawsuit says that Israel did a genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. The application says that Israel broke its promises under the Convention on stopping and punishing genocide. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation in South Africa (DIRCO) said on Friday that the application was submitted. Israel swiftly rejected the filing "with disgust". South Africa has also warned its people fighting with the Israeli army in Gaza they might get into trouble.

In a critical time when world peace is under attack, South Africa has shown that it's strong and brave by quickly taking action against Israel. President Cyril Ramaphosa's tough position against Israel comes from strong proof. He says that Israel is doing things in Gaza to completely kill off a big part of the Palestinian people based on their nationality and race. Pretoria's choice to have the problem heard by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), saying Israel did genocide, is a brave move that echoes its own past battle against apartheid and unequal treatment. This simple situation demands not just disapproval from the global people, but also punishments towards Israel as they did very bad things against humanity. Since both South Africa and Israel have to

follow what the world court says, this move is thought to be very important. At least it will put those who are blamed in focus for all people to see. The story shows 11 weeks where the city of Gaza was attacked for a long time. This attack caused over 21,000 people to die sadly including kids. Even though there is a big problem for people, important countries and human rights groups along with the United Nations don't seem to be able to stop what some say is a planned killing of an entire nation by Israel.

The area under attack also struggles with not having enough help and medicine supplies. The news doesn't like the UN Security Council's weak plan. People think it tries to make everyone happy, but actually makes a fool of morals and what countries should do together for good reasons.

South Africa is seen as a great example for fighting for something important. The choice to shut down the Israeli embassy and stop diplomacy until a peace agreement was reached shows strong principles. Putting Israel on trial is shown as a smart and thought-out legal way to make that country responsible. Now, it's up to international lawyers to make sure International Law helps people instead of being mixed with unfair country-centered thinking.

Writer is student in International Relations at National Defense University. He can be reached at ibrahimdrmuhammad@gmail.com



Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim

Iran armed forces to determine time, place of Kerman attacks' revenge: President Raisi

IRNA

KERMAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has said that the time and place of reaction to the recent tragic terrorist attack in Iran's Kerman will be determined by the Iranian Armed Forces. Addressing the people participating at funeral of the people who were martyred in a terrorist attack in the southern city of Kerman on January 3, President Raisi said on Friday that the enemy has observed and seen the magnitude of Iran's power many times, noting that the enemy once again will feel the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in response to the recent tragic case in Kerman.



Regarding Iran's revenge for the heinous terrorist attack in Kerman, Raisi gave an assurance that "the Iranian Armed Forces will determine the time

and location" of the reaction. Elsewhere in his remarks, President Raisi referred to Operation Al-Aq-

sa Storm, highlighting that the end of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm would be the end of the Zionist regime.

President Raisi described the victories of the Resistance as a result of the support, management, and actions of martyr General Qassem Soleimani; however, Palestine, Hamas, and Hezbollah should be appreciated.

The Americans plan to establish another Israel in the region was foiled by General Soleimani and the Resistance forces, he said, adding that that's why the Americans, the Zionist regime, and its agents in the region hold grudge against General Soleimani.

The Wednesday's twin blasts at an event held in commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the martyrdom of late commander Lt. General Soleimani resulted in the tragic loss of at least 89 lives and left scores more injured, with some in critical condition.

Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack on Thursday.

Measures for improving water use efficiency considered



News Desk

ISLAMAAD: On January 4, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev got acquainted with the presentation of proposals to improve water use efficiency in agriculture.

In the current conditions of an increasingly worsening shortage of water resources in the country, special attention is paid to their rational and careful use. In recent years, 472 thousand and 48 thousand hectares of land have been converted to drip and sprinkler irrigation, respectively, and water-saving technologies have been introduced on 97 thousand hectares. Laser leveling was carried out on 649 thousand hectares of land.

As a result of these measures, 2 billion cubic meters of water were saved in 2023 alone. This is equal to the annual water consumption of Bukhara region.

Specific problems hamper the expansion of the scope of this work in the areas. For example, the powers of district irrigation departments are limited to inter-farm canals. Water supply services are not fully funded. Commercial bank loans allocated for introducing saving technologies are not attractive to farmers.

In this regard, on behalf of the Head of state, proposals were developed to improve the water resources management system's lower level and increase efficiency.

Thus, based on regional irrigation departments and specialized services, it is planned to organize state institutions "Suv yetkazib berish khizmatlari" (Water supply services). They will be provided with excavators and other equipment, reducing the cost of servicing irrigation networks by half.

It is also envisaged to carry out an inventory of all irrigation networks, assign them to their owners, and develop a single identification number.

Starting this year, payment for one cubic meter of water supplied to the field is set at 100 UZS. It was noted that the time has come to change the stereotype that has been established in the minds of many people that water is free.

In this regard, it was proposed to organize settlements with water consumers on a differentiated basis. In particular, from 2025, it is planned to apply a lower tax coefficient to farmers who have installed water meters and introduced saving technologies and to those who have not done so, on the contrary, an increasing coefficient. At the same time, fees for water supply services will be waived.

Measures to further stimulate the introduction of water-saving technologies were also discussed at the meeting.

It was noted that a preferential credit line would be opened for these purposes. In particular, loans will be issued at 14 percent for 5 years with a two-year grace period. For projects in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm region, the rate will be 10 percent. Farmers will not be required to pledge property when receiving such loans.

At the same time, it is possible to obtain loans online. For example, Agrobank has developed the Suvkredit.uz system. It is planned to impose additional obligations on contractors, such as constructing water-saving technologies only based on a detailed design, providing at least a two-year warranty on installed systems, and providing service for at least 5 years. The system will not include contractors who do not meet these requirements.

As is known today, a subsidy of 8 million UZS is provided for every hectare on which water-saving systems are introduced. Until now, 50 percent of this amount was paid in the year the technology was installed, and the rest was paid the following year. This condition is also planned to be simplified by paying the subsidy in full in the same year the technology was installed. The Head of state approved these proposals and instructed on properly establishing a system to cover every end user and expand the scope of water conservation work.

'Hero' British-Pakistani honoured for saving nearly 30 lives

LONDON: An exceptional British Pakistani rail worker who has saved 29 people from taking their own lives since 2015 has been appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Rizwan Javed, from Leyton in east London, works for the MTR Elizabeth line at Ealing Broadway and Paddington stations. He has helped to save several lives at the platform during the course of his work by being alert and approaching vulnerable individuals in difficult situations.

Javed joined the railway around 10 years ago and at the start of his career, he attended the Samaritans training course.

He told Geo News in an interview: "I am thankful to Allah for this honour. It's all due to the prayers of my parents that I have been recognised in the King's New Years Honours List. It's a huge honour for me that my work in the mental health area has been recognised this way."

He said his work with the Samaritans is the key. "With the Samaritans, I learned how to identify vulnerable people, what sort of conversations to have with them, how to engage them, how to look out, and how to take them to the point of safety," he said.

Within the first week after starting his railway job, Javed helped stop someone from taking their own life.

In 2019 Mr Javed, who has previously worked for Great Western Railway (GWR), won the Samaritans Lifesaver Award which recognises people who have used their talking and listening skills to save lives.

Academicians Play Vital Role in Driving Movements Forward: Mushaal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has emphasized the pivotal role of educational institutions in instilling the spirit of the Kashmir Struggle in the new generation. She was speaking at a meeting that brought together over 256 vice chancellors from universities across the country, including those from Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting was organized by Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. The meeting gained heightened importance as it was convened on the occasion of Kashmir's Right to Self-Determination Day.



Mushaal asserted that India had been engaged in state terrorism within the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She said that Kashmiris had endured unprecedented human rights violations at the hands of Indian occupation forces. She highlighted that the Indian govern-

ment had granted an unrestricted mandate to RSS to implement its ideologies in the region which had resulted in the widespread permeation of RSS ideologies throughout Indian society. She said that the collaboration between Indian Government and RSS had posed threat to the minorities of India and the overall peace and stability of the region. She also urged the international community to take decisive action against the network of RSS terror which was extending across continents.

Mushaal emphasized that achieving economic prosperity and regional stability hinges on a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir Issue. She underscored the underutilized potential of the pen in exposing India's human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She also highlighted the pivotal role of educational institutions in nurturing think tanks which were crucial for the success of any revolution or movement. She welcomed the establishment of Kashmir centers in various universities

of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

Mushaal apprised the gathering about the work of Kashmir Advisory Committee, comprised of intellectuals from diverse fields. She extended an invitation to the vice chancellors of universities to actively contribute in the formulation of recommendations in response to India's illegal actions in IIOJK. She expressed appreciation for the efforts made by Higher Education Commission (HEC) in educating the younger generation about the complexities of the Kashmir issue.

Setting New Standards in Retail: Service Sales Corporation's Digital Leap with Confiz

PPA

LAHORE: Confiz, globally recognized technology services and solutions provider, celebrated the successful implementation of Dynamics 365 Finance and Operations for Service Sales Corporation (SSC). The grand Project Closing Ceremony, held at Ramada Hotel Lahore, underscored Confiz's standing as a trusted Microsoft Solutions Partner in Pakistan's retail industry.



The ceremony provided a platform for networking and commemorating the collaborative success between Confiz and SSC. Both teams shared insights, acknowledging pivotal contributions that steered the project to its accomplishment.

Representatives from SSC lauded Confiz for their meticulous project planning, seamless execution, and compre-

hensive support. Acknowledgments were extended to key project contributors,

recognizing their exceptional dedication and contributions in ensuring the success of a

complex on-premises deployment of D365 F&O.

Ahmad Shahid Hussain, Chief Strategy Officer at SSC, commended Confiz for the successful transition to D365 F&O. He emphasized, "Confiz's expertise in retail, meticulous planning, and customer-centric approach were instrumental in revolutionizing our digital landscape."

Hashim Ali, the Chief Operating Officer of Confiz, expressed his gratitude to SSC for entrusting Confiz with their continued collaboration for over 15 years. During this time, Confiz has assisted SSC in digitizing several business areas, including store operations, merchandising, supply chain, finance, and human resources.

Türkiye, Malaysia, OIC back South Africa's case against Israel at ICJ

News Desk

GAZA: Türkiye, along with Malaysia and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have officially announced their support for South Africa's case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

South Africa filed a case last month requesting that the ICJ declare "on an urgent basis that Israel is in breach of its obligations under the Genocide Convention", and that it "should immediately cease all acts and measures in breach of those obligations and take a number of related actions".

The submission asks the Court to "indicate provisional measures in order to protect against further, severe and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people."

In a statement earlier this week, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Oncu Kececi, welcomed the application by South Africa.

"Israel's murder of more than 22 thousand Palestinian civilians, the majority of whom were women and children...should not go unpunished in any way, and those responsible for this must be held accountable before international law," the statement said. Kececi said "We hope the process will be completed as soon as possible," and likewise, the ICJ "is expected to issue an interim injunction ordering Israel to stop its attacks on Gaza."

Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday, that the legal action against Israel before the ICJ "is a timely and tangible step towards legal accountability for

Israel's atrocities in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territory at large."

"As a fellow State Party to the Genocide Convention, Malaysia calls on Israel to fulfill its obligations under international law and to immediately end its atrocities against the Palestinians."

Meanwhile, the 57-member OIC also welcomed the lawsuit, saying that "The OIC has affirmed that the indiscriminate targeting by Israel, the occupying power, of the civilian population and the thousands of Palestinians, ... killed, injured, forcibly displaced, and denied basic necessities...in their totality constitute mass genocide."

The OIC further called upon the Court "to respond expeditiously and take urgent measures to stop this mass genocide being perpetrated by the Israeli

defense forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories."

The ICJ will hold its first public hearing on January 11 in The Hague, to consider the lawsuit filed by South Africa.

Israel has said it will appear before the ICJ to counter what it called "South Africa's absurd blood libel."

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, "a senior legal expert dealing with the matter has warned IDF brass, including Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi, that there is real danger that the court will issue an injunction calling on Israel to halt its fire, noting that Israel is bound by the court's rulings."

The hearings will be streamed live and on demand in the two official languages of the court, English and French, on the court's website and on UN Web



TV. To understand the intricacies of this case, and its possible legal

and political repercussions on the ongoing Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, the Palestine Chronicle

spoke to Dr. Triestino Marinello. Read what this international law expert had to say here.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Current | Prev. Close |
| 64,514.89 | 64,639.15 |
| Day's High | Day's Low |
| 65,077.47 | 63,757.95 |
| Index Value | Change |
| 13,801,019,978 | -124.26 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.19% | 5 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm |

| Europe: FTSE 100 Index | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 7,689.61 | -33.46 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.43% | 5 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT |

| USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 37,375.62 | -64.72 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.17% | 5 Jan, 12:22 pm GMT-5 |

| Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 33,377.42 | +89.13 |
| Percentage | Time |
| +0.27% | 5 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9 |

| Open Market Forex Rates | | |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| Currency | Buying | Selling |
| Australian Dollar | 189.5 | 191.5 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 749.61 | 757.61 |
| Canadian Dollar | 209 | 211 |
| China Yuan | 39.54 | 39.94 |
| Danish Krone | 41.41 | 41.81 |
| Euro | 307.5 | 310.5 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 36.08 | 36.43 |
| Indian Rupee | 3.39 | 3.5 |
| Japanese Yen | 2.05 | 2.13 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 916.49 | 925.49 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 60.84 | 61.44 |
| New Zealand \$ | 175.62 | 177.62 |
| Norwegians Krone | 27.18 | 27.48 |
| Omani Riyal | 732.12 | 740.12 |
| Qatari Riyal | 77.4 | 78.1 |
| Saudi Riyal | 74.7 | 75.45 |
| Singapore Dollar | 209.5 | 211.5 |
| Swedish Korona | 27.34 | 27.64 |
| Swiss Franc | 331.46 | 333.96 |
| Thai Bhat | 8.16 | 8.31 |
| U.A.E Dirham | 75.65 | 77.4 |
| UK Pound Sterling | 357 | 360.5 |
| US Dollar | 280.8 | 283.3 |

SIFC should try to reduce electricity and gas tariff: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that the expense of gas and electricity is preventing local and foreign investment.

He said that without inexpensive energy, exports and production cannot increase, hence taxes will remain unsatisfactory and unemployment will increase.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that SIFC ought to make an effort to lower gas and energy rates to attract investment.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that people and investors are worried due to the ever-increasing prices of electricity, gas, and oil.



Energy prices in Pakistan are the highest

compared to other countries in the region, which is hampering exports, he said.

The business leader observed that a reduction in electricity and gas prices is possible provided line losses, theft, and defaults are eliminated. Instead of capacity payments, full utilization of electricity production should be ensured.

He demanded that SIFC take note of this situation and take steps so that investment could be lured, which would also increase employment, income, and revenue.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that electricity rates in India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam are almost half of those in Pakistan, due to which it has become difficult for our exporters to compete with these countries in the global market.

He further said that the industrial sector is already drowning in the mire of problems, but it is forced to pay Rs 300 billion extra in power bills so that the masses can be subsidized.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that due to the high cost of electricity, its usage is decreasing, which is a bad omen for the economy, while the theft of electricity is increasing, which has to be borne by honest consumers.

By making electricity cheaper for the industrial sector, production, exports, and employment will increase, while increasing its use will also reduce the circular credit, but the current policy is the opposite, he observed.

The textile industry can export two billion dollars per month, but the energy sector is blocking its way and is constantly weakening it, which should be taken into immediate notice and necessary steps should be taken, he demanded.

Price hikes

ISLAMABAD: A man is buying vegetables from vendor at Weekly Friday Market of Sector G-6 in Federal Capital.



Photo: by Raja Farid

Karim Aziz Malik urged a significant cut in the policy interest rate to help to revive the economy

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Capital Office, Islamabad said that the record high interest rate has made it very difficult for the private sector to get credit from banks for the expansion of existing businesses and make new investments due to which the business activities are suffering badly. He further said that rising interest rates make your business debt more expensive which means more cash required to cover interest costs. Kareem Aziz Malik urged a significant cut in the policy interest rate to help to revive the economy.

He said that current 22% interest rate has severely damaged the business environment without achieving its intended objective of controlling inflation. He said that the bank advances to the



private sector have declined to just Rs.208 billion in the financial year 2023 compared to over Rs.1329 billion in the financial year 2022 due to which the GDP of the country has contracted significantly. Pakistan must foster private sector-led economic growth. He said that the production of all major industries of large scale manufacturing sector including textile, paper board, iron and steel products, electrical equipment, automobiles and furniture are badly affected and manufacturing activities have been reduced. If this trend continues, it would not be possible for the government to achieve its set growth target, he added.

Emirates celebrates 25th anniversary of operations at Islamabad and Lahore airports

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Emirates, the world's largest international airline, proudly commemorates its 25th anniversary of operations at Islamabad and Lahore airports. Since its inaugural flights to both cities in January 1999, Emirates has played a crucial role in connecting Islamabad and Lahore to the world via Dubai, while fostering economic growth and cultural exchange.

Over the past quarter of a century, Emirates has been a reliable partner facilitating seamless passenger and cargo movement and significantly contributed to the development of the country and region through tourism and trade. The airline's strong presence in Islamabad and Lahore underscores its position as a leading and reliable carrier which is committed to excellence and innovation in the aviation sector.

In its pivotal role, Emirates ensured seamless journeys for millions of passengers on its routes from the key points in Pakistan, with the airline operating a robust schedule of ten weekly flights from each of the two cities.

Highlights etched in Emirates' remarkable history serving Pakistan's capital city Islamabad, and its second largest city Lahore, include the transport of over 11.4



million passengers on over 34,000 flights between both cities and the airline's hub in Dubai.

On the airline's 25th anniversary of operations in both Islamabad and Lahore, Mohammed Alhashmi, Emirates' Vice President for Pakistan said: "Emirates is proud to have been part of the country's growth story, with operations to Islamabad and Lahore, two important points in

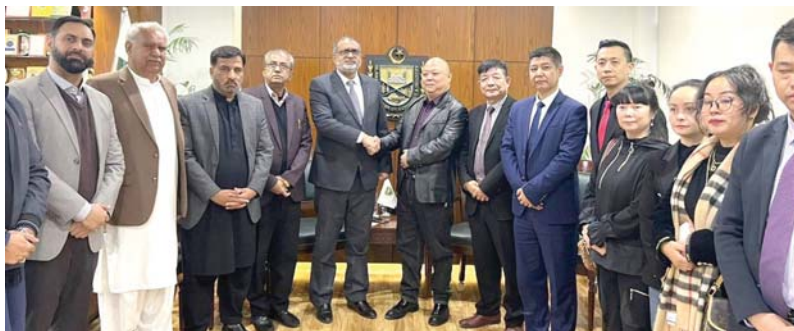
our Pakistan network. Emirates continues to be a dependable travel partner for many in Pakistan, including our loyal customers who rely on us for the premium services we offer, both in the air and on the ground, commitment to excellence in our service standards and ensuring an unmatched travel experience, as well as seamless connectivity to points in our vast network.

Chinese delegation visits ICCI to explore JVs and investment prospects in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese business delegation led by Zhang Yang, Chairman, Chang Jiang Industrial Company (Pakistan) Company Limited and Director Chongqing Federation of Industry and Commerce visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and explored the possibilities of joint ventures and investment in Pakistan. The representatives of Li Ting International China and Yihai Culture Communication Company Limited of China were also in the delegation, said a press release issued here on Friday.

Addressing the delegation, Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Chinese delegation about the potential investment opportuni-



ties in various sectors of Pakistan's economy. Speaking on the occasion, Zhang Yang, Chairman, Chang Jiang Industrial Company (Pakistan) Co., Ltd, and Director of Chongqing Federation of Industry and Commerce said that they are in Pakistan to explore business and investment opportunities. He said that the delegation members

have found Pakistan a promising investment destination and would like to contribute to its economic development. Both sides discussed various options to strengthen collaboration between the private sectors of Pakistan and China to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Effective mechanism for cross fertilisation of investment reforms in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Investment, Prime Minister's Office held an important engagement with key federal departments, all provincial and regional investment departments, and related agencies on the Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative (PRMI). The main purpose of this engagement was to share successes and challenges of Investment reforms in Pakistan and to develop a robust coordination mechanism for uniformity and replication of successful investment reforms across federal and provincial governments. The meeting was chaired

by Secretary BoI and senior representatives from all four provinces, two regions (GB and AJK), SECP, SMEDA, NITB, ICT Administration and sector agencies like DRAP were present. FCDO-funded Revenue Mobilization, Investment and Trade Programme partnered with BOI to bring all these key stakeholders together after months of exercises at the federal level and with provincial departments.

Secretary BOI, Dr. Sohail Rajput highlighted the usefulness of such a coordination mechanism as participants from provinces and regions identified certain quick wins simply by learning from others.

Govt of Pakistan and K-Electric Ink Agreements

PNP

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark moment for the power sector, the Government of Pakistan and KE reached a significant milestone by signing various agreements underpinning Karachi's energy security. The signing ceremony took place at the Energy Division on Friday and resolved long-standing disputes between the Government and KE, with foremost among these being regarding formalizing and securing a firm supply of power from the National Grid to Karachi up to the interconnection capacity. The agreements were signed by Government of Pakistan through its representative bodies in the presence of Mr. Muhammad Ali, Minister of Energy, Power and Petroleum, and Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Minister of Finance

while KE was represented by CEO, Moonis Alvi and CFO, Muhammad Aamir Ghaziani.

Expressing his gratitude at the occasion, CEO KE Moonis Alvi said: "Today is a momentous occasion for us, representing a paradigm shift in the energy landscape as well. We have been working on these issues since as long as I can remember, and today I am deeply grateful for the endeavors of the Honorable Prime Minister, Mr. Anwaar ul Haq Kakar, Minister for Energy Mr. Muhammad, Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, the SIFC, and also the task force under Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi along with the innumerable other stakeholders who demonstrated resolve and pragmatism in bringing these legacy matters to a close."

Khunjerab Pass to remain open till Jan 16 to facilitate trade activities



Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Khunjerab Pass, temporarily reopened by the Chinese government on Jan 2, will remain open till Jan 16 to facilitate trade between Pakistan and China.

Situated at an elevation exceeding 4,600 meters (15,000 feet) above sea level, the Khunjerab Pass serves as the highest paved international border, linking Pakistan and China. The pass, an important land route linking Pakistan and China, is conventionally closed from November to March each year due to extreme cold weather conditions, according to local media reports.

The border crossing, which links Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) autonomous region with China's Xinjiang, was previously reopened in April 2023 after nearly three years of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During a visit to China in October of the same year, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar announced plans to transform Khunjerab Pass into an 'all-weather' border. However, the pass has remained closed since December 1 due to harsh winter weather.

The Chinese had agreed to open the border temporarily during the specified period (January 2-16) to allow the passage of a few Transports Internationalx Routiers (TIR) consignments and address the issue of Chinese containers stranded on the Pakistani side since December 1.

TIR is an international customs transit system that simplifies border procedures for road transport, reducing the administrative burden for customs authorities.

According to a letter issued by the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, only transportation vehicles, drivers, and cargoes will be permitted to pass during this period.

La Liga: Gundogan's late penalty helps Barcelona edge Las Palmas

A Sports

LAS PALMAS: Ilkay Gundogan scored a match-winning penalty in stoppage time to help Barcelona sink Las Palmas 2-1 during La Liga 2023-24 clash at Gran Canaria Stadium on Thursday.

The defending La Liga champions hit with an early blow as Munir El Haddadi scored in the 12th minute for the home side.

Haddadi hit a powerful, low shot into the bottom corner of the net after receiving a delightful pass inside the penalty area.

Sandro Ramirez made an impressive effort to further extend Las Palmas' lead however he was blocked by Barcelona.

The first half ended at 1-1, before Barcelona turned things around in the second half with an equalizer ten minutes



into the play.

Ferran Torres scored the first goal

of the night for the defending La Liga

champions as he hit right footed shot

from the centre of the box to hit the net.

Barcelona dominated the second half with several attempts to hit the winner however the home side worked well to deny those chances.

However, in the stoppage time, La Palmas' Daley Sinkgraven made a strong challenge inside the penalty area which was considered a foul by the referee, resulting in a red card.

Barcelona was awarded a penalty kick which was successfully converted by Ilkay Gundogan to get the win for the Catalans.

In another La Liga match, Athletic Club registered a 2-0 away victory over Sevilla at Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium.

Mikel Vesga and Aitor Paredes scored the goals to lift Athletic Club over Atletico Madrid to fourth spot in the La Liga standings with a superior goal difference.

Abu Bakar, Abeera win table tennis singles titles

Tahir Amin Malik

The Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Table Tennis Championship culminated in style when Lahore's Abu Bakar and Abeera defeated their respective opponents to win Boys and Girls U-16 Singles titles at Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) Gymnasium Hall on Friday.

In the Boys U-16 Singles final match, Lahore's Abu Bakar edged out Bahawalpur's Anas Muneeb in a 5-set thrilling final by 3-2 with the score of 5-11, 14-12, 8-11, 11-8 and 11-9. Anas won the first set convincingly 11-5 but Abu Bakar regained his rhythm and won second set by 14-12. In-form Muneeb again took the lead by winning the third set by 11-8 but after conceding 2-1 lead, Abu Bakar exhibited plenty of maturity in the remaining part of



match and won the next two sets that sealed title victory for him.

The third position in the Boys U-16 Singles event went to Sahiwal's Nabeel, who thrashed Lahore's Rehman by 3-0 with the score of 11-9, 11-9 and 11-5.

In the Girls U-16 Singles title clash, Lahore's Abeera dominated the proceedings most of the time and won the title encounter 11-7, 9-11, 11-7 and 11-9 against Gujranwala's Zaryab. Sargodha's Esha finished third in the tournament after defeating Mari-

am Asim of Faisalabad in the classification match.

DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail congratulated the title winners and advised the runners up and other position holders to improve their game further for next competitive events.

David Warner finally gets what he's been looking for days

Australian cricketer David Warner got his baggy greens back, which had been stolen from his luggage on a flight to Sydney for the third Test against Pakistan.

The 37-year-old player, who is retiring soon, said he was "pleased and relieved" to have found his Test cap.

The baggy greens are highly esteemed by the Australian cricketers and there is a long tradition of them wearing the caps throughout their careers, even if they become torn and tattered.

"Any cricketer knows how special their cap is and I will treasure this for the rest of my life," Warner said in a video posted on Instagram. "It is a load off my shoulders going into the last couple of days."

The ongoing third Test against Pakistan in Sydney will be Warner's farewell to Test cricket.

He is one of Australia's greatest opening batsmen, scoring 8,729 Test runs since his 2011 debut at an average of 44.53, with 26 centuries. Warner's bag, containing the cherished Test cap, had gone missing during the team's flight from Melbourne to Sydney. However, the gear was found after days of searching as the cricketer made a desperate plea for the recovery of baggy greens.

13th Pakistan Junior Amateur Golf Championship



Tahir Amin Malik

The 13th Pakistan Junior Amateur Golf Championship gets going at the awesome designer Rumanza Golf Course, Multan and from today (Friday) onwards the consummate and gifted young golf players of the national golf scene will be competing for honors and recognition as players of the future. Organized by Pakistan Golf Federation, the national golf body of the country, this championship will also serve as an occasion for conducting of Faldo Series Trials and the winner of each age category will represent Pakistan at the Faldo Series Asia Grand Final.

A total of 70 accomplished and expertise loaded young ones are participating for higher achievements. Age categories are four and includes segments for under 16 years and under 21 years for boys and girls. These aspirants for honors have undergone rigorous preparation and hope to come upto the expectations of the experts who are overseeing this championship. And the Championship Committee includes Brig Fayyaz Ahmed Sial, Salman Sabir Abbasi and Malik M. Kamran.

From the competitive angle boys will tee off from White tees and girls from Red tees with Course distances of 6500 yards for boys and 5600 yards for girls.

Closing ceremony will take place on 7th January, 2024 and chief guest will be Lt Gen Qazi Muhammad Ikram, HI(M), President, Pakistan Golf Federation.

For these young aspirants, playing and competing at the world class Rumanza Golf Course will be a rewarding experience.

Zone-V Blues win A. S. Natural Stone U-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Contest

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Zone-V Blues defeated Zone-III Blues by 40 runs in the A. S. Natural Stone Under-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament by 40 runs at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Scores in Brief: Zone-V Blues 215 all-out in 43 overs. Haroon Rafiq 88 with the help of 12 fours, Huzafa Faheem 38, Najib Ali 33, Ali Mitha (mf) 4/38, Usman Bin Rashid (tlb) 2/20, Subhan Sadiq (sla) 2/38.

In reply, Zone-III Blues 175 all-out in 33.3 overs. Muhammad Emaaz 42, Najeeb ullah 29, Ahmed Mohiuddin 27, Salman Sarwar 21, Haroon Rafiq (mf) 5/22, Shah Zain Khokar 2/32.



Schedule for ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 revealed

A Sports

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled the schedule for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to be co-hosted by the United States of America (USA) and the West Indies from June 1 to 29.

The pinnacle ICC men's T20 event will see a record 20 teams competing across 55 games for the right to be crowned ICC Men's T20 World Cup Champions 2024.

The participating teams are divided into four groups. Group A features two former champions Pakistan and India, who are accompanied by Ireland, Canada and the USA. Group B also features two former champions England and Australia besides Namibia, Scotland and Oman.

New Zealand, the West Indies, Afghanistan, Uganda and Papua New Guinea are placed in Group C while South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Netherlands and Nepal formed Group D. Here's the complete schedule of T20 World Cup 2024:

T20-World-Cup-2024-schedule

Each side will compete in four group-stage matches. The top two teams from each of these groups will then advance to the Super 8s where they will be divided into two groups.

The top two sides of the two groups by the completion of the Super 8s will qualify for the semi-finals.

The event commences with the two co-hosts starting their campaigns on the first two days of June.

The USA will take on Canada in the tournament opener at the Grand Prairie Cricket Stadium in Dallas on Saturday 1 June, while the West Indies will kickstart their campaign against Papua New Guinea at the Guyana National Stadium on Sunday 2 June.

Pakistan will start their campaign against the co-hosts USA on June 4 before taking on their arch-rivals India on June 9 at Eisenhower Park in New York.

Babar Azam, Mitchell Starc engage in heated verbal exchange

A Sports

LAHORE: A video of Pakistan batter Babar Azam and Australia pacer Mitchell Starc's verbal exchange in the third and final Test in Sydney is going viral on social media.

The viral video showed Pakistan opening batter Saim Ayub leaving Mitchell Starc's delivery.

Mitchell Starc had a few words with Babar Azam as he went to collect his hat and sweater from the on-field umpire. They both walked away after the banter.

Aamer Jamal took 6-69 as Pakistan claimed a slender first-innings lead in the third test against Australia on Friday but the home bowlers hit right back to leave the match in the balance heading into the final two days of the series.

Paceman Josh Hazlewood (4-9) tipped the scales towards the home side with three wickets in the penultimate over of the day to leave Pakistan reeling on 68-7 with a lead of 82 runs.

Mohammad Rizwan, who had made six not out, and Aamer Jamal, who had yet to score, will resume on Saturday looking to set Australia a more impos-



ing fourth-innings target on a deteriorating pitch.

Pakistan's bowlers delivered 33 dot balls at one stage as Australia, who had resumed on 166-2, took their time in their pursuit of the tourists' 313.

Steve Smith departed for 38 and Marnus Labuschagne (60) joined him in the dressing room before lunch, undone by a peach of a delivery from spinner Agha Salman that clattered into his wickets.

Seamer Aamer Jamal, whose brilliant rearguard 82 was the highlight of day one, got in on the act by removing Travis Head lbw for 10 and spinner Sajid Khan bowled Alex Carey for 38 just before tea to leave the hosts on 289-6.

Australia would have been confident of a first-innings lead but Aamer Jamal came out firing after the break to secure his second six-wicket haul of the series after taking 6-111 on debut in the first test

in Perth.

The 27-year-old, playing only his third Test, took four wickets in just seven balls, first winking out Mitchell Marsh for 54 caught behind.

Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood both went for ducks and Nathan Lyon managed just five runs as Australia gave up their last four wickets for 10 runs to be dismissed for 299, a deficit of 14 runs.

Pakistan are looking to end a losing streak of 16 tests in Australia since their last win in 1995 but quickly discovered that there was a long way to go yet.

Abdullah Shafique's miserable series continued when he was bowled by an absolute jaffa from Mitchell Starc in the first over to make it a pair of ducks in the match.

Skipper Shan Masood went for a golden duck two balls later, caught behind off Josh Hazlewood, as the post-tea fireworks continued and Pakistan slumped to 1-2.

Debutant Saim Ayub settled the innings with Babar Azam before being trapped in front for 33 by Nathan Lyon. Babar Azam followed for 23, caught behind off Head's spin and then came Josh Hazlewood's devastating late spell.

Pat Cummins among nominees for Sir Garfield Sobers Award

A Sports

DUBAI: Australia's all-format captain Pat Cummins has been nominated by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for the ICC Cricketer of the Year 2023.

Cummins, who led Australia to ICC World Test Championship and ICC World Cup 2023 triumphs, has now been nominated for the most prestigious award in cricket alongside compatriot Travis Head, India's Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja.

The right-arm pacer had a stellar 2023 as a player and also as a captain.

He finished the year with 59 wickets in 24 matches across formats and also scored 422 runs with the bat.

Pat Cummins had a contrasting start to 2023 as Australia's captain as his side succumbed to defeat in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

However, Cummins-led Australia regrouped and lifted themselves to down India in the WTC Final, followed by a successful Ashes defence in England.

The side once again displayed their ability to bounce back when they won nine games on a trot to lift the World Cup title after losing the first two matches of their campaign.

Pat Cummins also gave notable all-round performances for Australia in each format before signing off with a 10-fer against Pakistan in the Boxing Day Test.

Former ICC Cricketer of the Year Virat Kohli returned to

his best in 2023 and enjoyed a remarkable year which saw him yielding a mammoth 2048 runs in 35 matches.

2023 brought fortune for Kohli as he hit his first Test ton since 2019 against Australia in March. He went on to play a marathon 186-run yet India had to settle for a draw.

Kohli did not have to wait much for another Test century as he soon hit 121 against West Indies.

But it was the ODI format, in which Kohli shone the most. The right-handed batter accumulated 1377 runs at an average of 72.47, recording six centuries and eight half-centuries in 24 innings.

He also picked up a wicket and took 12 catches in 27 matches.

The star Indian batter had

a prolific campaign in the ICC Men's ODI World Cup and finished as the leading run-getter of the tournament, scoring 765 runs, the most ever scored by an individual batter at a men's Cricket World Cup, going past the previous record set by Sachin Tendulkar in 2003.

Sensational all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja was the other Indian nominated for the prestigious Men's Cricketer of the Year Award for his consistent all-round exploits across formats.

Jadeja scored 613 runs and bagged 66 wickets in 35 matches. The highlight of his stellar was his 23 scalps in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy which helped India win the series.

He shone in white-ball cricket as well, picking up 31 ODI wick-



Head, however, staged an astounding comeback in the mega event and rendered crucial performances at the pointed end of the World Cup.

Both his ODI tons in 2023 came in the global event, and he was the Player of the Match for his inimitable performances in the semi-final and the final.

Head's success in other formats of the game was also monumental, especially in Test cricket. He played a crucial role in leading Australia to victory in the ICC World Test Championship title in 2023.

Head was the star of the show in the WTC final against India, as he smashed an impressive 163 runs in the first innings, leading Australia to a remarkable victory by 209 runs.

ets, 16 out of which came at the World Cup at an average of 24.87.

Australia's explosive opener Travis Head, a member of the ICC Men's ODI Team of the Year 2022, Travis Head soared even

higher in 2023.

But it was not a straightforward affair for Head as the Southpaw had to deal with a fractured hand that threatened to rule him out of the World Cup.

Birth anniversary

LARKANA: Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari along with her maternal aunt, Sanam Bhutto showering flowers at the grave of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the eve of his 96th birth anniversary at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto.



Photo: Online

Pakistan supports Kashmiris' right to self-determination: President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan remained determined to playing its role in supporting the right to self-determination of Kashmiris through a free and impartial plebiscite as per the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The president, in his message in connection with the Right to Self-Determination Day being observed on January 5, said, "Our strong and steadfast moral, political and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people will continue till the realisation of this inalienable right."



"Every year, on the 5th of January, we renew our support for the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. On this day in 1949, the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) unanimously adopted a resolution

affirming the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations," he added.

"The right to self-determination is a cardinal principle of international law, upheld in

numerous core United Nations treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights."

President Alvi said, "For decades, it has been reaffirmed by the UN General Assembly in its annual resolution on self-determination. However, the last 76 years of India's occupation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) are a sad story of repression of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"India is trying to consolidate its occupation of IIOJK. The Indian Supreme Court's judgment of 11th Decem-

ber 2023 on the status of this disputed territory is the latest step in this direction. India is striving to subjugate the Kashmiris through such oppressive tactics further. It continues to deny their inalienable right to self-determination and live with freedom and dignity," he observed.

"Today's commemoration is aimed at reminding the international community of its responsibility towards the oppressed Kashmiri people. The United Nations must honour the commitments that it had made 75 years ago and support the Kashmiri people's struggle for self-determination," he concluded.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, other PTI leaders allowed to contest polls

City Desk

MULTAN/RAWALPINDI/KARACHI: Appellate tribunals across country, accepting appeals of several PTI leaders against rejection of their nomination papers, allowed them to contest upcoming general elections going to be held on Feb 8.

Appellate tribunals in different cities conducted hearing of appeals filed by several PTI candidates against decisions taken by the returning officers for rejecting nomination papers.

A tribunal accepted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi's appeal against rejection of his nomination

papers and allowed him to contest election from National Assembly constituency NA 214 (Umar Kot).

Nomination Papers of Zain Qureshi from NA 214 were accepted whereas election tribunal granted permission to PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh to run for election from NA 238.

Appeal of PTI candidate Arslan Khalid was also accepted and tribunal allowed him to take part in National Assembly election from NA 241 (Karachi)

Nomination paper of PTI candidate from Noshera was also cleared to vie for election. Tribunal conducted hearing of PTI aspirant Mian Muham-



mad Omer and granted him permission to run for election from PK 88 (Noshera).

In Peshawar election tribunal judge Justice Shakeel Ahmad accepted nomination papers of Atif Khan for NA 22 and PK 59 (Mardan). In Rawalpindi, appellate tribunal rejected RO's decision

and cleared Raja Basharat to contest polls from NA 55 and PP 15.

Zulfi Bukhari's appeal was allowed by a tribunal and he was given permission to run for election from Attock's NA 50 constituency. Former PTI MPA from PP 15 was also

allowed to contest election.

Appellate Tribunal Judge Asjad Javed conducted hearing of PTI lawyer Naeem Panjotha against RO's decision and declared returning officer's decision as null and void. Panjotha will contest election from National Assembly constituency NA 82 (Sargodha) and PP 71 and PP 80.

However, former PTI MPA Arif Abbasi's appeal from PP 19 was rejected by the election tribunal. Appellate court said Arif Abbasi was a proclaimed offender and he had not surrendered to the court.

Election tribunal in Rawalpindi accepted nominations of Sheikh Rashid Shafiq from NA 56, 57 and PP 19.

India legend Sunil Gavaskar names his favourite Pak cricketers



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Legendary India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar has named his five favourite Pakistan cricketers.

A fan asked Sunil Gavaskar, who was covering the two-match Test series between hosts South Africa and India in the African country, to name his favourite cricketers from Pakistan.

Sunil Gavaskar started by naming Zaheer Abbas. His remaining picks were Imran Khan, Javed Miandad, Wasim Akram and Babar Azam.

British High Commissioner meets Mayor Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott and Deputy High Commissioner Evan Harris met Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab at his office on Friday. The Mayor Karachi welcomed the British HC and expressed the hope that mutual cooperation between the two countries in various fields will expand further.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that Britain is a long-standing friend of Pakistan and cooperation between Pakistan and Britain in various fields has always continued. He said that Britain can help Pakistan in various fields and told the British High Commissioner about the history of Karachi, its culture and details of the steps taken for development. The Mayor Kara-



chi said that the historical buildings of Karachi were built during the British era in the sub-continent. He said that the present buildings of KMC Head Office, Frere Hall, Empress Market, Kothari Parade Clifton, Merewether Tower, and other buildings were built during the British period. These buildings have now become the hallmark of Karachi, he added. He said

that work is going on in various sectors to provide quality amenities and the city's basic infrastructure including roads, bridges, underpasses, flyovers, and drainage systems is being improved and functional along with residential areas. Development works are also going on in all the industrial zones of Karachi, he added. The Mayor of Karachi said that Karachi is

the center of the country's economy and an important city with two international ports and a modern airport. He said that due to its unique geographical location, Karachi has a special importance in the region, and it connects to the Middle East, Central Asian states, and Arab countries. He said that the municipal bodies in Karachi are trying to improve the provision of municipal services given the importance of the city and positive results are coming. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott said that Karachi is the largest and most important city in Pakistan and the British government wishes for its development. The development works will be useful for the citizens and standard municipal facilities will be available to the residents of every area of Kara-

PM asks envoys to identify avenues for Pakistan's int'l economic collaborations



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday asked Pakistan's envoys in the United States and the United Kingdom to identify the new avenues for Pakistan's economic collaborations at international level.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador in the US Masood Khan and Ambassador in the UK Dr Muhammad Faisal, instructed them to constantly highlight the Kashmir cause as well as Pakistan's stance on Palestine issue. The envoys briefed the prime

minister about the performance of their respective missions and also got the prime minister's instructions on Pakistan's foreign policy.

The prime minister also directed the envoys to hold road shows for attracting foreign investment to the projects initiated under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Calling the overseas Pakistanis a national asset, Prime Minister Kakar asked the Pakistani missions to address the problems faced by the expatriates on priority basis.

He also called for persuading the Pakistani diaspora to invest their capital in Pakistan.

Security forces kill two terrorists in Tank operation

Adam Khan Wazir

TANK: Security forces killed two terrorists in an intelligence-based security operation in Tank.

According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), a media wing of the Army, security forces killed two terrorists in a fierce exchange of fire in Tank district.

The ISPR said that Gul Yusuf aka Toor, was involved in various terror acts against the security forces in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank.

The terrorist commander was also involved in the targeted killing of civilians.

According to ISPR, the terrorist commander Gul Yusuf was the



most wanted with a bounty of Rs 2.5 million on his head.

The ISPR said the local people had appreciated efforts of the security forces for peace and stability.

The media wing added that the security forces were determined to eradicate the scourge of terrorism from the country with the support of the nation.

Former President Zardari cuts birthday cake of PPP founder



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former President Asif Ali Zardari cut the birthday cake of PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at Bilawal House Multan on the last day. On this occasion, he said that the founder Pakistan People's Party had made the people of Pakistan the source of power for the first time. He equated the vote of a poor laboring farmer with the vote of a landlord. Even today they are alive in the hearts of poor people. We all pay tribute to him on his 96th birthday. On

this occasion, former President Asif Ali Zardari cut the birthday cake of PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

During the event, the jials also raised slogans of Long live Bhutto, Long live Bilawal, Prime Minister Bilawal.

On this occasion, along with President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Vice Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, PPP South Punjab President Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood Tehmina Daultana, Hina Rabbani Khar and others were also present.

Canada issues new travel advisory for Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Canada has issued new travel advisory for its citizen in Pakistan, advising them to exercise a "high degree of caution" amid prevailing security situation and threat of terrorism.

According to the travel advisory, Canadian nationals in Pakistan were advised to exercise a high degree of caution due to the prevailing security situation, threat of terrorism, civil unrest, sectarian violence and kidnapping.

The country advised its nationals against traveling to the area within 50 kilometres of the border with Afghanistan, within 10km of the borders with India and Iran and the areas within 10km of the Line of Control (LoC), except the official border crossings at Wagah Border and Khunjerab Pass.

The regions deemed dangerous to travel also included section of the Karakoram Highway from Mansehra to Chilas, Kashmir, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa except Haripur, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Buner and Chitral district.