

"The authorities should realize the seriousness of the situation and an environment should be made so that we can conduct our election campaign easily," he added. However, he said, if the elections are held on time, the JUI-F will participate and won't not run away.

Perpetrators of May 9 incidents facing judicial process: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday said the incidents of May 9 were still being investigated and action should be taken against those involved in them.

Speaking in a private television channel programme, he said those who perpetrated the incidents on May 9 were facing the judicial process.

Many persons were still avoiding the courts and were in hiding, he said adding they should have surrendered before the law to avail their legal rights but now they would face obstacles in carrying out their political activities related to the elections.

He said the Election Commission would ensure that nobody should get the impression that any person was made a target for his political affiliation.

To a question, he said the leader of the house and leader of the opposition in the National Assembly agreed to his name and he was appointed as the caretaker prime minister.

He said he was supported by many people including his teachers to reach the level of attainment in his life.



The prime minister said the people of Pakistan would elect their representatives on February 8 and his government would carry out a peaceful transfer of power to them.

By the morning of February 9, it would be known whom the people had elected, he observed.

He said the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) failed to resolve problems of governance during its tenure as it lacked political maturity and got involved in confrontation

with the institutions.

Talking about the issues of Balochistan, he said once militants realized that they would have to lay down their arms, the problems would be settled.

PM Kakar was of the view that the sanctity of the state should be observed as it was above any individual.

He said Pakistan lost 90,000 of its citizens in the war against terrorism but not even nine persons were convicted in courts for the deaths.

The issue of terrorism could not be addressed, he said adding that horrific incident like an attack on the Army Public School occurred and personnel of law enforcement agencies, citizens and politicians had been martyred since 2008.

"The criminal justice system is not working and it is a fact," he said adding reforms in the system could not be made by the last three parliaments.

He said democracy would move forward gradually and would bring its fruits to the people as happened in Europe.

He said he believed in pure democracy but the democratic government should improve governance and perform to gain moral strength from the people of Pakistan.

The military institutions were supporting the government in disaster management, economic issues, database management, education, health and space technology, he noted.

He said the Special Investment Facilitation Council was formed to help the prime minister in taking informed decisions about the economy with the support of institutional input.

Wedding ceremony

KARACHI: Hindu minority couples attends their mass wedding ceremony in Provincial Capital. The Pakistan Hindu Council organized the collective wedding for some 122 couples belonging to low income groups.



Photo: Online

Customs Collectorate Enforcement Multan are continuing to crack down against smuggling

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 Collector Customs Enforcement Multan Syed Imran

Sajjad Bukhari and DeputyCollector Miss Jamila Marium. customs teams under the supervision of Collector Customs Syed Imran Sajad Bukhari and 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 naanCustoms 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. During the last one month, the customs teams carried out effective operations against the smugglers in the limits of customs enforcement including Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur and 43 crore 72 lakh 90 thousand. Sumggled Goods Received

Independent candidate NA-42 Maulana M Alam launched officially election campaign

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Independent candidate from South Waziristan Lower and Upper Constituency NA-42 prominent Maulana Mehmood Alam Wazir officially launched the election campaign from Wana Bazar on Sunday.

Tribal elders assured the victory of Maulana Mahmood Alam Wazir for the sake of collective rights and interests and announced full support.

Maulana Mehmood Alam Wazir, an independent candidate for the National Assembly from NA-42 constituency in Wana Bazar, while addressing the tribal elders, Ullamas and youths on the occasion of the election campaign, said that I Ahmadzai Wazir will not compromise on the collective rights of the tribes and their legitimate demands, I will fight for their right to the last extent.

He said that in South Waziristan Lower Wazir tribals have enormous problems which need to be solved



urgently.

He said that the previous Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa divided South Waziristan into two districts.

Due to the slow bifurcation process, the tribal elders is suffering from severe difficulties.

He said, if the tribal elders succeeds

me with a huge majority, then all efforts will be made to solve these problems.

He also made it clear that political minors should remove this from their minds that he will withdraw from contesting elections or compromise on national interests,

He said, the competition will contin-

ue until the last day of the election.

Later, tribal elders, Maulana Abdul Ali Wazir made this pledge while addressing the election campaign event that we will work hard day and night to ensure your victory in any case.

The elders reassured Maulana Mahmood Alam Wazir that we have no best option except you.

Your victory is the victory of all of us.

Tribal elders said that the government gave a separate district on the name of Lower South Waziristan to Wazir tribe.

But most of the district offices have been stuck in serious problems due to being established in Tank district, 160 km away.

Elders said, we do not see a better candidate than you to solve this problem.

They unanimously announced that as an independent candidate, they will make you successful with a huge majority.

PTI leaders allowed to participate in upcoming elections

PPA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf leader and former minister Mian Aslam Iqbal was allowed to participate in the upcoming elections.

The Lahore High Court Appellate Tribunal, Justice Tariq Nadeem, overturned the returning officer's decision to reject Iqbal's nomination papers for PP 171.

In a separate case, the Election Tribunal validated the papers of former Minister of State Ali Muhammad Khan, addressing objections about the absence of a party ticket during submission.

The tribunal stressed that the party ticket could be submitted until January 12.

Also, the nomination papers of PTI's Mian Azhar and Hamad Azhar from PP 171, as well as Kanwal Shuzab from NA 166, were approved.

Senator Aurangzeb's nomination papers from NA 36 and PK 94 were also declared valid.

The series of hearings on appeals related to nomination papers decisions will persist until January 10.

JI for reforms in system to improve people's lives: Siraj

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Siraj ul Haq said the party would want to change the system of the country to bring improvements in the lives of people.

Addressing the election rally in Lahore, JI chief said the people have recognized the duplicitous and erratic policies of the failed political parties time and again.

Talking about the Feb 8 polls, he said, "if elections are not held as per the schedule, the stability of the country will be in peril."

He said that the three failed political parties should present performance manifesto to the people as they have been in power while adding the democratic and developed states give people the right to vote at any cost.

He said in his address that youth have been forced to leave the country due to unemployment, unrest, inflation while highlighting that the JI would make every effort for the immediate neutral and transparent elections.



Appeal against acceptance of Maryam's nomination papers from NA-119 rejected

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The election tribunal in Lahore has reportedly rejected the appeal against the acceptance of Maryam Nawaz's nomination papers for Lahore's NA-119 constituency.

PTI candidate Nadeem Sheerwani had filed an appeal with the appellate tribunal against the decision of the returning officer.

The returning officer had approved the nomination papers of Maryam Nawaz, the chief organiser of the PML-N, for NA-119.

Meanwhile, PML-N Tahmina Daultana has also been granted permission to contest elections from NA-158 and PP-230.



People's Party taken real measures for the development and prosperity in Saraiki Region: Asif Ali Zardari

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former President Asif Ali Zardari has said that the People's Party has taken real measures for the development and prosperity of Saraiki region and made Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani the prime minister from Saraiki region. If still given a chance, God willing, there will be further development in this regionSalim Raja is an old co-worker of the People's Party, of whom the party leadership is proud. He expressed these views to former Prime Minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, former advisor on trade and information secretary of the People's Party, Multan Division, M. Salim Raja, at Bilawal House. What he did in the meeting and his party services on the occasionOn this occasion, M. Salim Raja said that we have worked tirelessly to get a huge mandate from the Saraiki region to the People's Party before and today we are working day and night in South Punjab including Multan, God willing. Bilawal will be successful again with heavy mandate from South Punjab, God willingBhutto Zardari will be the next Prime Minister and dear Pakistan will once again be on the path of development and prosperity.



KP: Winter vacation for primary schools extended

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Due to the intensifying winter conditions, the Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced to extend winter holidays for the primary schools by seven days.

The education department's post said after the extension of vacations, primary schools will be opened on January 15 instead of January 8.

Besides, it added that the timing for high higher secondary schools has been changed as they will start at 9:30 am instead of 8:30 am.

96th birthday of Quaid-e-Awam, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto pays a great tribute

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: NA 100 Sidra Saeed Bandisha, the candidate of Pakistan Peoples Party, speaking at the ceremony organized to pay tribute to the leader of the people on the occasion of the 96th birthday of Fakhar Asia, Quaid Awam Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, said that Tajdar Khatman Nabubat Law Shaheed Bhutto has done such a great feat for the preservation and honor of the Prophet ﷺ that will continue to be written in golden letters in the country's history until the Day of Judgment.

The People's Party will carry forward the struggle despite the remnants of dictator Zia, threats of followers, obstacles, retaliatory actions and oppression. Sadra has further said that the late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed and Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed living in Pakistan and the United Nations.





Islamabad

15° – 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:45 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	3:37 pm
Maghrib	5:15 pm
Isha	6:43 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan	
Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

APHC expresses concern over continued illegal detention of Hurriyat leaders

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has expressed serious concern over the continued illegal detention of thousands of Kashmiris including Hurriyat leaders languishing in different jails of India and Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The APHC spokesman in a statement said that the freedom-loving people of Kashmir have been facing the worst type of Indian state terrorism.

The spokesman urged the United Nations Human Rights Council and other rights organisations to visit IIOJK and monitor the worst situation where people are being imprisoned in their houses, having no right to talk and walk freely in the territory.

Annual Melaad e Mustafa & Haq Bahoo Conference

Essence of Deen lies in the love of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Islahee Jamaat & Aalmi Tanzeem ul Arifeen of shrine Hazrat Sultan Bahoo (RA) organized Annual Melaad e Mustafa & Haq Bahoo Conference at Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad. Patron-in-chief of Jamaat and Tanzeem Hazrat Sultan Muhammad Ali presided over the conference. Ambassadors of the republics of Palestine, Azerbaijan, Sudan, and Indonesia participated in the conference. Secretary General of Jamaat and Tanzeem Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali while addressing the auspicious gathering said that the vitality of the message of Sufis has increased manifold nowadays. Sufis unfold the teachings of Islam in letter and spirit. Essence of Deen lies in the love of Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Islam not only provides guidance for our material life but also grants complete code of spiritual life. Holy Quran draws social principles in order to bring social order in a society. Elimination of social unrest and creating a balanced society is what Quran instructs. Fundamental message of Deen is to follow commandments of Allah through the injunc-



tions of the Holy Quran and obedience of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The love for Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the fundamental prerequisite of Deen. One can never attain the actual essence of Deen unless he loves Holy Prophet (PBUH) more than anything.

It is manifested in the Holy Quran as human being needs to strengthen its relationship with Allah, it needs to strengthen its relationship with Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the same proportion. In fact, Holy Quran teaches manners of the court of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The will

of God is the will of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). One who fulfills the will of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), in fact, fulfills the will of God. Society secures an important position in Deen. Holy Porphet PBUH said if one wants to complete one's Emaan, one has to surrender himself in front of the teachings of Quran and Sunnah.

In this respect, love, peace and harmony is the message of the Holy Prophet PBUH and we must ponder today that what we have learnt from the teachings and of the Prophet PBUH. Do social and



all other types of media present today teach the same message? Do actions on these channels depict our love and fellowship with the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The answer is very disappointing. In fact, our social media is flooded by hate every day. Holy prophet never hated, abused or blamed anybody in his entire life. Recent Gaza and Ukraine war has clearly exposed the hypocrisy of the world. Moreover, the silence of Ummah on the issue of Gaza has badly exposed our spiritual decline.

On the occasion, Haji Muham-

mad Navaz Qadri, Nazim-e-Ala of the Jamaat emphasized that the teachings of Sufis prioritize purification of self and the adoption of Islamic values in letter and spirit. It has been the method of Sufis to learn Holy Quran and apply its commandments in our daily lives. He further endorses the fact that zikar (remembrance of Allah) strengthen our relationship with God. Foreign delegates, academicians, university students, parliamentarians and people from different walks of life participated in the conference.

Addressed

ISLAMABAD: Additional Chief Secretary, Gilgit-Baltistan Captain Retd Mushtaq Ahmed addressing a press conference at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

GB's stunning beauty to be unveiled at 7 day winter sports festival

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented move to boost tourism and showcase the stunning landscapes of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Government, along with private partners, is set to host a seven-day winter festival from January 15 to 25, 2024.

The event, organized by the Department of Tourism, Sports, and Culture, aimed to highlight the region's potential as a year-round destination, starting with winter sports events in all ten districts with an emphasis on promoting

national ice hockey championships and local cultural activities, the festival is a significant step toward putting Gilgit-Baltistan on the global tourism map, Director Tourism GB Sajid Khan said while talking to APP on Sunday.

GB's stunning beauty to be unveiled at 7 day winter sports festival

Minister for Tourism, Sports, and Culture, Ghulam Mohammad, expressed the region's commitment to showcasing its beauty through sports in all seasons. This initiative follows the success of the Sarfa Ranga Skardu festi-

val in autumn. The festival's expansion to all ten districts, including the hosting of the National Ice Hockey Championship, marks a strategic move to attract tourists from around the world.

Minister for Planning and Development, Raja Nasir Ali Khan, emphasized the government's efforts to position Gilgit-Baltistan as a year-round tourist destination. The goal is to organize events aligned with each season, with the winter festival set to become a regular highlight. Gilgit-Baltistan, already hailed as the hub of

Pakistan's tourism, seeks to convey a positive image globally through such initiatives.

Despite being one of the world's most beautiful regions, Gilgit-Baltistan faces under-appreciation, according to Additional Chief Secretary Captain Mushtaq Ahmed. The seven-day winter festival aimed to spotlight the positive aspects of Pakistan, especially Gilgit-Baltistan, through local winter sports and cultural events. The organizers aspire to dispel misconceptions and showcase the region's potential as a premier winter sports destination.

Dr Fazal appointed as Dean Faculty of Education AIOU

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, has appointed Prof. Dr. Fazal-Ur-Rahman as the Dean, Faculty of Education at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) for the next three years. The Ministry for Federal Education and Professional Training notified the University of his appointment, and the university has issued an official notification in this regard. It is pertinent to mention here that according to the Act of AIOU, the President of Pakistan serves as the Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University.

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, congratulated Dr. Fazal for his appointment and expressed his hope that the faculty members under his guidance would work even harder towards the development of the university and aligning the curriculum with contemporary requirements. Deans, faculty members and principal officers also congratulated Dr. Fazal and considered his appointment as a positive omen for the prosperity and progress of AIOU. They wished him good luck for his new position. Prof. Dr. Fazal-Ur-Rahman expressed his gratitude to the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, VC AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and the faculty members for their support. He promised to do his best to fulfill the trust of the higher authorities and contribute to the development of the university, particularly its faculty.



NA-57 candidate discussed election manifesto with the Chairman Awami League

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Awami League (PAL) has announced a 22-point election manifesto. Azmat Ali Mubarak, the candidate from NA-57, Advocate and Asghar Ali Mubarak, the candidate from NA-56 met Chairman Chaudhry Nasir Mehmood and discussed the election manifesto. On this occasion, Azmat Ali Mubarak, the candidate from NA-57 and Asghar Ali Mubarak, the candidate from NA-56, said that the manifesto of Pakistan Awami League is being delivered door to door. Chairman Chaudhry Nasir Mehmood said that we want a Pakistan in which the ideology of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal is seen in practice, a Pakistan in which there is no oppression, violence, unrest, hatred and enmity, ignorance, terrorism. He stated that we want a Pakistan that has peace, love and justice.

Int'l workshop on 'Ethical Research in Clinical Trials' to be held next month



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Two-day International workshop on 'Ethical Research in Clinical Trials' will be held under the auspices of COMSTech and UEARS in February to address the challenges of research integrity in clinical trials in low-middle-income countries and propose the best suitable guidelines to improve the quality of research in this domain.

The workshop, scheduled to be held from February 07-09 in Cairo, Egypt, is aimed at imparting knowledge and training about research integrity and creating a network of professionals working in the field for continuous learning and exchanges.

According to an official of COMSTech, the meeting and its workshop will help devise solutions for the challenges faced in clinical trials by low-middle income country.

Students, scientists, researchers, experts, healthcare managers, government officials, think tanks, health NGO's, policy makers from the domain of multicenter clinical trials research from across the world and global south countries can register for the workshop for physical or virtual participation.

Globally the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge enjoys a place of distinction, and the public expects to reap considerable benefit from the creative and innovative contributions of scientists.

As science becomes increasingly tangled with major social, philosophical, economic, and political issues, scientists become more accountable to the larger society of which they are a part.

District Committees to Gather Comprehensive Data to Unlock Full Potential of Transgender Community: Mushaal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has affirmed the government's unwavering commitment to ensure the provision of fundamental rights for the transgender community at the grassroots level nationwide. She delivered this commitment during the concluding ceremony of a workshop on wellness and communication development for non-binary and transgender individuals. The workshop was a collaborative effort between Dareecha and AQ Khan Foundation. The workshop was also addressed by Ms. Sabien Hussein Mullick (Focal Person to SAPM) and Professor Zafar Iqbal (Advisor to SAPM on Art/Culture and Youth). Representatives from Dareecha



organization, including Ms. Jameela, Sheela, Usman, and Aksh, shed light on the challenges confronted by the transgender community.

Mushaal revealed that more than 0.3 million transgenders were officially registered with the relevant government department. She further announced the government's strategic initiative, a nationwide mass campaign

named 'Dukhtar', designed to educate the public about gender identity. She said that the comprehensive mass campaign would not only focus on awareness but also target the protection, employment opportunities, and skills development programs tailored for the transgender community.

Mushaal announced the government's initiative to establish

district-level committees dedicated to collecting comprehensive data on transgenders. She emphasized that this data collection would be instrumental in facilitating efforts for transgender persons' education, healthcare, employment, social security, social media training, vocational training, and various other opportunities. She said that the goal is to empower the transgender community and enable them to become productive and economically independent citizens of the country.

"We all are human beings and have the right to do every positive act for the development and promotion of the society and state", she added. The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister commended Dareecha organization for their efforts in advancing the development of the transgender community.

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Around 100,000 children develop type 1 diabetes in Pakistan

Around 100,000 children are estimated to have type 1 Diabetes in Pakistan who need insulin for the rest of their lives to live a normal and healthy life.

“Unfortunately, many of them are not diagnosed timely due to lack of awareness among parents and most of the treating physicians,” senior endocrinologists and health experts said on Saturday in a media briefing.

They said sudden weight loss, frequent urination and extreme hunger as well as change in the mood of the children were some of the symptoms of Type 1 diabetes and if such signs and symptoms appear, parents should take their children to trained and qualified physicians and insist for checking the sugar of their child.

“Of the 100,000 children having type 1 Diabetes in Pakistan, many are not diagnosed timely and die within a few days of the onset of the disease.

“If parents are aware of symptoms of type 1 diabetes and such children are treated by trained and qualified physicians, their lives can be saved by giving them insulin for the rest of their lives”, diabetologist and head of Changing Diabetes in Children Prof. Abdul Basit said.

He said, “Our goal is to reach out to 3000 children whose parents cannot afford insulin throughout the country and provide them free of charge insulin to live a normal and happy life.”

The Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linnulf also deplored that hundreds of children were dying as their parents didn’t know that their children had Type 1 diabetes and they were not getting the right, which is insulin that could save their lives and help them live a long, healthy and happy life.

“There is a need to tell parents that early diagnosis of type 1 Diabetes can save the lives of hundreds of children in Pakistan. There is also a need to train physicians and doctors regarding the proper diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes and put them on insulin as per guidelines”, the ambassador said.

Irum Ghafoor Manager of Changing Diabetes in Children said they have 16 Changing Diabetes in Children centres in different regions covering all provinces including Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and also the federal capital, Islamabad.

“Through these centres, we have enrolled 1544 children across Pakistan by the end of year 2023. Children living with diabetes who visit these centres have access to free insulin and blood glucose monitoring equipment for better diabetes control”, she informed.

Population explosion a big challenge for Pakistan

Pakistan is the 34th largest country in terms of land area, and the 41st largest economy in terms of GDP, however, the 5th largest country in terms of population. At the time of independence in 1947, Pakistan's population was around 32 million, which has increased to over 240 million people by 2023 and is equivalent to 2.99 percent of the total world population. This rapid increase in the population is now emerging as a serious challenge for Pakistan as it would overburden the meager resources of the country and create multiple problems that can pose many threats.

The UN Population Division has estimated Pakistan's population to touch 263 million by 2030 if the current trend of population growth is not arrested. The impact of this rising population on Pakistan's economy will be multifaceted as it will increase unemployment, give rise to poverty, and enhance demand for resources, infrastructure requirements, and social services.

A large youth bulge has the potential to provide a demographic dividend to a country by contributing to its economic growth. However, turning this youth bulge into a dividend requires many initiatives including appropriate policies to ensure education, skill development, and job creation. But Pakistan is lacking in these initiatives, due to which the rising population is turning out to be a big problem for the country.

A growing population will place increased demands on essential resources

such as water, energy, and food. This heightened demand is already straining the existing infrastructure leading to resource scarcity issues.

With more mouths to feed, the pressure is rising on the agricultural sector to produce more food. Being an agricultural country, Pakistan's agriculture sector's annual imports are around US\$ 10-12 billion and the rising population would make this issue more serious. The need for sustainable agricultural practices is becoming so important to meet the rising demand without depleting resources.

A rising population often leads to increased urbanization. Pakistan has the highest rate of urbanization in South Asia. According to the UN Population Division, almost half of Pakistan's population will be living in the cities by 2025. It will necessitate substantial investments in infrastructure development, including housing, transportation, and sanitation, to accommodate the expanding urban population. Unplanned and unmanaged urbanization is already creating the issues of urban slums, environmental degradation, poverty, and inequality. Without proper financial resources, it will become more difficult for the country to invest in infrastructure development leading to more serious social issues.

The rising population will necessitate the provision of extensive healthcare and

education services. Pakistan is already spending a low amount of its GDP on health and education. Providing quality healthcare and education services is becoming a serious challenge, particularly if the growth is not accompanied by adequate investments in these sectors.

A rising population can create income inequalities if economic growth does not benefit all segments of the population. Pakistan is already facing this problem as the average income for the richest is more than 16 times the average income for the poorest in the country. The growing population is likely to create more social tensions and potential challenges to the economic stability of Pakistan.

Pakistan is faced with serious challenges of environmental pollution, land degradation, water, and air pollution. A growing population will further increase environmental stress through increased pollution, deforestation, and habitat destruction. Pakistan needs to slow down population growth and adopt sustainable development practices to mitigate adverse environmental effects.

One advantage of a larger population is that it creates a big consumer market and can attract domestic and foreign investment. However, to realize this potential, Pakistan needs to formulate effective economic policies and strategies to harness the demographic divi-

dend, which is currently not happening in our country.

A larger population necessitates the allocation of more resources for social welfare programs to address the needs of people. However, due to a lack of resources, Pakistan's spending on social protection is only 0.5% of its GDP, which is much lower than the average spending of other South Asian countries.

In conclusion, with the current rate of population growth rate, Pakistan will have to experience dramatic declines in per capita availability of arable land, water, and forest resources. This situation will further deepen the economic and political crisis in the country and fuel insecurity challenges over scarce resources. Hence, it is high time that policymakers should devise integrated policies and strategies to cope with the population explosion to ensure sustainable progress and prosperity. Pakistan should move fast without wasting further time to control the rising population. It should implement comprehensive policies that focus on education, healthcare, job creation, and sustainable resource management to harness the potential benefits of demographic growth while mitigating potential risks. Without investing in education, family planning, and women empowerment, it would be difficult for Pakistan to accommodate a huge population expected to become the world's fourth largest by 2050.

The writer is working for a trade organization in Pakistan



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

Baluchistan – A Gem within the Jewel - I

Baluchistan, the largest province in Pakistan, holds a pivotal position in the nation's geopolitical and economic landscape. Boasting abundant natural resources and a strategic location, Baluchistan plays a crucial role in shaping both the present and future of Pakistan. Often referred to as the 'Energy Basket' of the country, Baluchistan is rich in natural gas, coal, copper, and minerals, with the Saindak Gold and Copper Project, the largest gold mine in Pakistan, situated within its borders.

The province's wealth of resources significantly contributes to Pakistan's economy, supporting various industries and providing revenue for development projects. The Sui Gas Field, a major gas-producing field located in Baluchistan, is particularly noteworthy, earning the province its moniker as an essential part of Pakistan's energy landscape. Additionally, Baluchistan is home to the strategically positioned Gwadar Port, a deep-sea port on the Arabian Sea, which serves as a crucial economic and trade corridor, connecting Pakistan to international markets and playing a key role in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

With borders shared with Iran and Afghanistan, Baluchistan is a key player in regional geopolitics, influencing regional stability and security. The province's diverse cultures, languages,

and traditions contribute to the overall cultural tapestry of Pakistan, fostering national unity while preserving unique identities within the region.

The Sui Gas Field, discovered in the 1950s, holds a central role in shaping the energy landscape of both Baluchistan and Pakistan. As one of the country's most significant gas-producing fields, it has been a catalyst for economic development in the region. Revenue generated from natural gas extraction supports infrastructure development, education, and healthcare, improving the quality of life for Baluchistan's residents.

The Sui Gas Field plays a crucial role in ensuring Pakistan's energy security, providing a cleaner and more sustainable alternative to conventional energy sources. By reducing dependence on imported energy, Baluchistan contributes to a more secure and self-reliant national energy infrastructure. The field serves as a primary source of natural gas for domestic and industrial use, enhancing the lives of residents and supporting economic activities. Furthermore, the presence of the Sui Gas Field has led to community engagement initiatives, with companies investing in social responsibility projects to foster development in local communities.

Due to Baluchistan's critical importance to the country, adversaries and anti-state elements are actively engaged

in nefarious activities within the province. India is implicated in supporting terrorist groups operating in Baluchistan, with the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) standing out as a prominent insurgent organization. The BLA seeks increased autonomy for Baluchistan and is notorious for carrying out attacks against Pakistani security forces and infrastructure. Rooted in political, economic, and cultural grievances, the BLA adds complexity to the region's dynamics. Another significant separatist group, the Baluchistan Liberation Front (BLF), led by Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch, advocates for Baluchistan's independence and has been involved in attacks against security forces, expressing resistance to perceived Baluch marginalization.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), initially rooted in the tribal areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, has extended its influence into Baluchistan, intensifying the security challenges faced by the province. Baluchistan's strategic location, coupled with the presence of the Gwadar Port, has attracted external actors, with reports suggesting foreign involvement and support for certain terrorist groups, further complicating the geopolitical landscape. The Pakistani government has initiated various measures, including military operations, development projects, and political dialogues, to address these security challenges. However, the involvement of multiple actors make finding a comprehensive solution a formidable task.

To be continued

Resurgence of terrorism in Pakistan

In the late 2020s, as the United States appeared to be making preparations to withdraw its military from Afghanistan, political and security officials from Pakistan engaged in a discussion regarding the probable ramifications and consequences. During the 2020s, the TTP faced challenges to its operations due to its limited financial resources and incapacity to execute large-scale assaults, both of which were exacerbated by the Pakistan Army's Operation Zarb-e-Azb, which compelled the organisation to withdraw from North Waziristan.

TTP's capacity for reestablishment has been significantly bolstered by its spiritual ties to the Islamic Emirate. The Taliban's return to power in Kabul on August 15, 2021, seems to have resulted in the TTP acquiring both ideological and practical influence. Subsequently, the organisation commenced an active process of reinvention, progressing from a ragtag militia to a fully operational insurgency. The primary sources of funding for their assaults are extortion, smuggling, and hostile foreign intelligence agencies.

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the frequency of attacks in the southern region of KP, specifically in the districts of Tank, DI Khan, Kohat, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Bannu, Karak, and Lakki Marwat. From June 18, 2022 to June 18, 2023, 665 insurgent attacks transpired in KP, as reported by the provincial police.

Case study of Dera Ismail Khan: The highest number of these attacks was reported in DI Khan at 81, followed by Peshawar at 56 and Bajaur at 51. So why does DI Khan stand out when it comes to militancy?

These individuals have endured decades of neglect and maltreatment at the hands of Islamabad and Peshawar.

Decades of neglect in all spheres of life—including healthcare, education, fundamental infrastructure, and energy—along with extreme poverty and a lack of employment opportunities at all levels have all contributed to the ability of radicals to entice these so-called “lost youth.”

The two most lethal attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year—the suicide assault on the Police Lines mosque in Peshawar in January 2023 and the one that occurred on 12 December in Daraban, DI Khan.

ISKP, or the Islamic State of Khorasan Province, is another key player. It is an extremist terrorist organisation that

operates primarily in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The ISKP has reported seventeen attacks thus far in 2023. ISKP collects donations online using cryptocurrency funds through fraudulent activities, gofundme websites featuring fabricated narratives, and freelance work. Their territorial existence has ceased, and their Khilafat has transitioned to the digital realm. They use PUBG, Ludo Star, and Telegram as means of communication, employing these platforms to coordinate attacks, issue orders, and orchestrate assaults.

What measures shall we take next?

The nation unified days following the APS atrocity and swore, “Never again.” Pakistan expeditiously formulated a

National Action Plan in order to address the menace of terrorism. After nearly nine years have passed, we are once again confronted with the identical circumstances. How shall we therefore proceed from this point forward?

Politicians remain the most actively involved individuals who possess firsthand knowledge of the actual situation. They should therefore be entrusted with leadership positions in both military operations and peace negotiations. Confronting the imminent battle necessitates the people, political parties, and governmental institutions to unite in this cause.

Furthermore, the country's internal dynamics are conducive to the growth of these organisations, given that insurgencies thrive on disorder and uncertainty, which can be exacerbated by political, economic, and social unpredictability.

Eliminating the prevailing political and economic instability and resolving internal strife will be essential measures in mitigating the insurgency threat.

Over the past two decades, a one-dimensional strategy that ignores the political drivers of the insurgency in favor of kinetic measures have failed to produce any lasting results; if this strategy is continued, it will likely fail even more.

Now it seems that Pakistan is looking towards Washington to help it counter terrorism, and Washington's declaration of Pakistan as an ally shows its willingness to help it. The top Military brass's meetings with Blinken and other important officials of the US seems to have particularly planned to seek Washington's support in its fight against Terrorism.

The author is a student of BS International Relations at National Defence University Islamabad.

Borobudur Temple is world’s biggest Buddhist monument

 Naveed Ahmad Khan

Located on the island of Java, the magnificent Borobudur temple is the world's biggest Buddhist monument, an ancient site widely considered to be one of the world's seven wonders. The temple sits majestically on a hill-top overlooking lush green fields and distant hills. Built in the 9th century during the reign of the Syailendra dynasty, the temple's design in Gupta architecture reflects India's influence on the region, yet there are enough indigenous scenes and elements incorporated to make Borobudur uniquely Indonesian.

It covers an enormous area, measuring 123 x 123 meters. The monument is a marvel of design, decorated with 2,672 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues. The architecture and stonework of this temple has no equal. And it was built without using any kind of cement or mortar! The structure is like a set of massive



interlocking Lego blocks held together without any glue.

The temple has remained strong even through ten centuries of neglect. It was rediscovered in 1815, buried under volcanic ash. In the 1970's the Indonesian Government and UNESCO worked together to restore Borobudur to its former majesty. The restoration took eight years to complete and today Borobudur is one of Indonesia and the world's most valuable

treasures.

The temple is decorated with stone carvings in bas-relief representing images from the life of Buddha. Commentators claim that this is the largest and most complete ensemble of Buddhist reliefs in the world, unsurpassed in artistic merit.

The best way to explore this site is on foot. As you climb to the top of this magnificent temple you will marvel at the intricate detailed stone carvings displayed

on the temples walls. You will certainly miss a great experience if you visit this enormous temple without learning about its history and importance which are captured on its many reliefs.

Guides are available for around Rp 50,000. This is a wise investment as a guide will be able to walk you around the site and explain the history of the temple, beginning with its construction during the Syailendra dynasty. The stone carvings attached to the temple display legends and stories which have great philosophical significance. For visitors with children, don't miss the massive green grass area surrounding the Borobudur site.

You may choose to walk through Green Park from the entrance. Many vendors will offer you souvenirs and other knick knacks as you walk through this area, however there are regulations in place to prevent them from disturbing visitors.

Borobudur is only one hour's drive from Yogyakarta. The easiest way to get there is by joining



a tour or renting a car. During your journey to Borobudur, enjoy the fresh cool air of Magelang city with its roads lined with big shady trees. Borobudur itself stands tall against the spectacular

backdrop of the Menoreh mountain range that surrounds it.

Entering the temple compound is easy and most visitors choose to wander around on foot. Alternatively, you can

chart a cart (pulled by a horse) at a reasonable price. Alternatively, cruise passengers who disembark at Semarang can take a day tour driving through Wonosobo to Borobudur.

Across China: Roadside concerts become a hit in SW China’s Guizhou

 Xinhua

GUIYANG: No superstars. No tickets. Everyone can sing on the stage. Different from regular concerts, roadside concerts in Guiyang, capital city of southwest China's Guizhou Province, allow people to immerse themselves in music. Despite the cold weather, the roadside concerts in Guiyang still attract a lot of tourists and residents to watch performances on bustling streets and in tourist attractions.

Roadside concerts in the city date back to 1937, when some musical organizations taught the masses to sing anti-Japanese songs that helped arouse their fighting will during the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression.

This hit came from a roadside performance.

On the eve of a big concert, some music enthusiasts from across the province gathered in advance and sang songs in an underground passageway of the city's Guanshanhu District.

Without tickets or fences, young people held hands together, singing and dancing. Videos showing their relaxing and cheerful performances quickly went viral after being posted on social media.

"We were amusing ourselves and didn't expect to become the highlight of the summer," said



Yang Zhi, initiator of the show and lead singer of the local band "Zhe Er Gen."

"Guiyang has a good vibe for music, and many bands enjoy street performances. This is a tradition that has been passed on for many years," Yang added.

On a weekend evening in May 2018, several visually impaired music lovers held a concert under the wall of Wenchang Pavilion in Yunyan District. "More than 300 people came at that time, which was a bustling and exciting scene," recalled Chen Changhai, drummer of the band.

Since then, the band "Zhe Er Gen" was founded and roadside

performances became popular.

"Zhe Er Gen," also known as fish mint, is a herb native to southwest China. The band consists of three blind massage therapists and one takeaway delivery man. They work at their posts during the day and gather at night to incorporate the notes into their instruments. The blind individuals are just like "Zhe Er Gen" which carries a rich essence of Guizhou and thrives in the darkness.

Up till now, more than 20 concerts have been held at Wenchang Pavilion, attracting nearly 40,000 spectators and about 37 million online viewers.

During the Mid-Autumn Festival

and National Day holiday in 2023, a famous Chinese tenor, Zhang Yingxi, went to a roadside concert. "I took off the tuxedo and stepped on the roadside stage. Being so close to the audience, I think this was the music of the people and by the people," said Zhang. From common people to stars, music brings people together. Besides Zhang, celebrities from all walks of life, including film actors and champions of the 19th Asian Games, also joined roadside concerts.

"Whether they are ordinary people or stars, when stepping onto the small stage by the road, they can enjoy the joy of music



together," said Zhou Wenjia, deputy head of the publicity department of Yunyan District.

Sun Guang, head of Nanming District's cultural and tourism bureau in Guiyang, became a hit for the roadside concert.

"I have a music dream," said Sun, who once took part in national competitions and performed on stage in Beijing. But for being busy with his work, he saw his guitar covered in dust. While seeing the flowing crowds, Sun signed up in secret, put on his leather jacket and sunglasses, and stood on his beloved stage.

But perhaps because of his wonderful performance, some

audience recognized him. When singing on the stage for the third time, a short video showing his performance became a hit online and received nearly 1 million views, which put him at a loss for a time.

Qingyun Market, one of the venues of roadside concerts, is a famous tourist attraction in Guiyang which sells night snacks and local cultural and creative products. With the popularity of concerts, the market has become an important engine to boost the city's economy.

Data shows that during the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holiday last year, the number of tourists to the

market reached about 900,000, with a sales volume of nearly 30 million yuan (about 4.2 million U. S. dollars).

"Roadside concerts now have become an important economic booster, and I could be a driving force. This is a good combination of my hobbies and duties," said Sun.

As roadside concerts continue to gain steam, music has become an impetus for consumption. Guiyang has made it clear that roadside concerts will continue to require zero tickets, zero business, and zero distance from the people, with an aim to build a city with warmth and hospitality.

Historic Centre of Bukhara

 Spokesman Report

Bukhara, which is situated on the Silk Route, is more than 2,000 years old. It is the most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia, with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact. Monuments of particular interest include the famous tomb of Ismail Samani, a masterpiece of 10th-century Muslim architecture, and a large number of 17th-century madrasas.

The Historic Centre of Bukhara, situated on the Silk Roads, is more than two thousand years old. It is one of the best examples of well-preserved Islamic cities of Central Asia of the 10th to 17th centuries, with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact.

Bukhara was long an important economic and cultural center in Central Asia. The ancient Persian city served as a major center of Islamic culture for many centuries and became a major

cultural center of the Caliphate in the 8th century.

With the exception of a few important vestiges from before the Mongol invasions of Genghis Khan in 1220 and Temur in 1370, the old town bears witness to the urbanism and architecture of the Sheibani period of Uzbek rule, from the early 16th century onwards. The citadel, rebuilt in the 16th century, has marked the civic center of the town since its earliest days to the present.

Important monuments that survive from early times include the famous Ismail Samanai tomb, impressive in its sober elegance and the best surviving example of 10th century architecture in the whole Muslim world. From the 11th century Karakhanid period comes the outstanding Poi-Kalyan minaret, a masterpiece of decoration in brick, along with most of the Magoki Attori mosque and the Chashma Ayub shrine. The Ulugbek medresseh is a surviving contribution from Temu-

rid. With the advent of the Sheibanids came some of the most celebrated buildings of Bukhara: the Poi-Kalyan group, the Lyabi-Khauz ensemble, the Kosh Medresseh and the Gaukushon medresseh in the Hodja-Kalon ensemble. Later buildings from this phase of Bukhara's history include monumental medresseh at important crossroads: Taki Sarafon (Dome of the Moneychangers), Taki-Tilpak-Furushan (Dome of the Headguard Sellers), Tim-Bazzazan, and Tiro-Abdullah-Khan. In the early 17th century fine buildings were added, including a new great mosque, Magoki Kurns (1637), and the imposing Abdullaziz-Khan medresseh (1652).

However, the real importance of Bukhara lies not in its individual buildings but rather in its overall townscape, demonstrating the high and consistent level of urban planning and architecture that began with the Sheibani dynasty.

Criterion (ii): The example of Bukhara in terms of its urban layout and buildings had a profound influence on the evolution and planning of towns in a wide region of Central Asia.

Criterion (iv): Bukhara is the most complete and unspoiled example of a medieval Central Asian town which has preserved its urban fabric to the present day.

Criterion (vi): Between the 9th and 16th centuries, Bukhara was the largest centre for Muslim theology, particularly on Sufism, in the Near East, with over two hundred mosques and more than a hundred madrasahs.

The property contains all the attributes that sustain its Outstanding Universal Value. Its boundaries and buffer zone are appropriate and adequate. Despite the insensitivity of much of the new construction from 1920 until the 1950s and earthquake damages, Bukhara retains much of its historic ambience and still has a largely intact urban fabric.

However, the integrity of the property is threatened by aggressive impact of salinity and underground water and by



termites causing the erosion of wooden structures. In addition, large numbers of the outstanding earthen buildings are in some quarters extremely vulnerable due to the deterioration of the historic fabric.

Bukhara has preserved a great deal of its urban layout that dates from the Sheibanid period. Modern buildings have been erected in the historic centre over the past half-century that have destroyed the appearance of some quarters, but in others the medieval townscape has survived. The proportion of old structures, particularly the public and religious buildings, nonetheless remains high, and the historic centre is unquestionably of outstanding significance as an exceptional example of a largely medieval Muslim city of Central Asia.

In the context of regarding the Historic Centre of Bukhara as an entire entity – expressed through a variety of attributes including urban setting, form and design, use of materials and techniques, functions and tradition – some factors can be recognized as having the potential to impact adversely on the authenticity of the property, namely: (i) the diminishing use of traditional materials and traditional building techniques and introduction of new building materials, as well as new architectural details; (ii) inadequate documentation of major monuments and urban



fabric; (iii) urban development pressures resulting in inappropriate designs of new structures.

Relevant national laws and regulations concerning the World Heritage property include the Law on Protection and Exploitation of Cultural Heritage Properties, 2001. Current laws together with urban planning codes provide protection of monuments of cultural heritage and their buffer zones. These documents are reflected in the Master Plan of Bukhara city in 2005. In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan approved special Decree No. 49 of 23 March 2010 "On State programme on research, conservation, restoration and adaptation to modern use of the cultural heritage properties of Bukhara until 2020". At present this state programme is being implemented which provides an additional layer for the protection and conservation of the property.

Management of monuments of cultural heritage in Bukhara is carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan at national level and Bukhara Regional Inspection for Protection and Utilization of Monuments of Cultural Heritage and local authorities at regional level.

In the framework of protection of cultural heritage of the historic centre of Bukhara, Cabinet of Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a

State Programme for complex activities on research, conservation, restoration of monuments of cultural heritage of the Historic Centre of Bukhara and their adaptation to the modern needs for the period 2010-2020. Interventions are strictly regulated in order to ensure the integrity and characteristic elements of monuments. During the realization of the State Programme the monitoring of monuments will be carried out on a permanent base. A management plan, which should include a computerized database, a Master Conservation and Development Plan, a scientific monitoring system, an infrastructure plan, design guidelines, and guidelines and regulations for all tourist services, is required in order to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and balance the needs for sustainable development. To maintain the conditions of integrity and authenticity, a comprehensive conservation strategy needs to be in place, in particular, to remove cultural layers built on later periods and to reduce the surface of streets to their historical level. Another important aspect is to build capacity in traditional building techniques. At present Urban Planning Scientific-Research and Project Institute is developing a project of detailed planning of historic centre of Bukhara, which will further address these issues.



Turkish Airlines grounds Boeing 737 MAX 9 jets for checks



Commerce Desk

ANKARA: Turkish Airlines said Sunday that it would ground five Boeing 737 MAX 9 jets in its fleet for inspections after a panel blew out of one of the planes in midair in the US, forcing an emergency landing.

The Alaska Airlines scare over Oregon on Friday prompted the US Federal Aviation Administration to order immediate inspections of around 171 of the jets operated worldwide.

A sealed-over door panel had opened and come off mid-flight, prompting the cabin to suddenly lose pressure.

"In light of the incident with the Boeing 737 MAX 9 operated by Alaska Airlines, five Boeing 737 MAX 9 in the Turkish Airlines fleet have been recalled for checks as a security precaution," the airline said in a statement.

They will be grounded "where they are to land", it added.

Alaska and United Airlines, which has the world's largest fleet of 737 MAX 9s, have also grounded their planes for checks, leading to dozens of flight cancellations.

Aeromexico and Panamanian carrier Copa Airlines also said they had grounded the planes affected by the FAA order, while Icelandair said none of its 737 MAX 9s had the plane configuration specified in the FAA grounding order

Apple kicks off sending 'batterygate' payouts to iPhone users

It seems that tech giant Apple's decision to slow down iPhones with older batteries back in 2017 has finally come to an end as reports suggest that users are receiving settlements in their bank accounts.

According to a report by MacRumors, people affected by this issue have started receiving checks in their bank accounts, with a value of \$92.17.

The website confirmed the news and later updated the story with an embedded post from one of its readers.

The website set up for the settlement was updated in December to say the payments were expected to go out this month, bringing the matter to an end.

The batterygate saga began in 2017 when a developer discovered that certain iOS 10 updates throttled the performance of older phones like the iPhone 6S and iPhone 7, The Verge reported.

The company did not disclose the purpose of the slowdown initially but later revealed that it was to prevent the phones from randomly shutting down once the battery degrades beyond a certain point.

As a result, multiple class action lawsuits were filed against Apple, claiming that the company's actions drove people to upgrade their phones early, rather than simply paying to have their phones' battery replaced.

In 2020, the company agreed to a settlement, and in August of that year, one of the law firms representing customers in the lawsuit confirmed that a judge had cleared the last legal obstacle and that the payouts would be made soon.

If you filed an approved claim by October 6th, 2020, you might receive a payment of around \$65. However, it seems that the actual payments will be higher, at \$92.17, according to The Verge.

The phones affected by this issue were the iPhone 6, 6 Plus, 6S, 6S Plus, 7, 7 Plus, and the original iPhone SE. So, if you're one of the affected customers, keep an eye on your bank account for the payment.

Key industries and sectors are being run without any regulator

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that it is not acceptable to exploit others in developed nations. Still, business without exploitation is unthinkable in Pakistan.

Key sectors and industries are operated without any regulatory oversight in Pakistan, allowing businessmen to rob the masses and promote poverty in the country, he added.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that in developed countries, no business is allowed to exploit the people and if it is done, it is made an example but the majority of businesses in Pakistan are milking the masses.

He said that irresponsible and greedy people, whose only aim is to make money, exploit people in the



name of business, as most of the big businesses are in their hands. The business leaders said that many sectors are operating without a regulator and many regulators have been hijacked by big business-

es. For this reason, the wealth and influence of businessmen are continuously increasing while the country's population is getting poorer.

He observed that weak oversight has allowed businesses to continuously seize the rights of the people, while the compromised regulators of various sectors burden the national treasury.

Many influential business groups have started exploiting the people by putting their favourite officers at the head of the regulatory bodies, which is sad.

He said that presently, there is nobody to regulate FBR. The FBR officers also make decisions in case of dispute between the taxpayer and the tax collector and if the taxpayer does not agree with the decision, they appeal in the appellate forum, which takes years to get its result.

Due to this setup, the expected revenue of trillions of rupees is also stuck due to delay, he said, adding

that in many cities of the country, including Islamabad, the bureaucracy increases property and other taxes whenever it wants.

The businessmen dealing in oil, gas and shares frequently get their favourite people appointed to the most important regulatory positions so that no one can stop them from plundering.

Those responsible for the crises of the stock market have never been punished, while consumers of electricity, gas and oil are also being robbed continuously, but the role of the regulator is no more than a silent spectator.

There is nobody to regulate the business of oil and gas production, due to which dozens of companies have fled Pakistan. And we have to import billions of dollars' worth of gas. He said that the whole nation has to bear the consequences of lacking a regulator in the agricultural sector.

spring's preparation

ISLAMABAD: A worker showering water on plants in a local nursery in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Unlocking economic potential, PBF advocates regional trade agreements for growth

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a push for economic growth, the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has highlighted the crucial need for regional trade agreements among South Asian nations, as Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad, the Vice President of PBF, stressed the vital role of friendly relations with neighboring countries in promoting sustainable and inclusive development.

This call to action comes as Pakistan grapples with sluggish economic performance, characterized by a modest 4 percent average annual growth between 2010 and 2023, coupled with a growing debt-to-GDP ratio, Director PR said on Sunday while talking to APP.

Jawad asserts that embracing trade with neighboring countries, currently at near-nonexistent levels, could be a transformative step. Citing World Bank research, he posits that Pakistan's exports could surge by 80 percent, significantly impacting

GDP and employment, with normalized trading relationships. This, coupled with deeper economic engagement, is seen as a remedy for acute issues such as inflation, a rent-seeking private sector, and the long-standing energy crisis.

The PBF official advocates for a comprehensive approach, utilizing the gravity



model of trade to unlock the full potential. Highlighting the significance of variables like GDP, distance, and Regional Trade Agreements (RTA), Jawad argues that trade is directly proportional to the product of economies' GDPs and inversely proportional to the distance between them. The gravity

model suggests that even a modest change in tariffs can have notable effects on Pakistan's total trade.

Looking back at the trade landscape, PBF notes that in 2021-22, the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands were major trading partners for exports, while China, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, the United States, and Saudi Arabia led in imports.

He said that, shifting focus to Afghanistan, PBF advocates for enhanced trade facilitation to unleash the true potential of commerce between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

He emphasized that with trade between the two nations fluctuating over the years, from \$2.5 billion in 2010 to \$1.6 billion in 2022-23, PBF calls for streamlined payment settlements, improved insurance mechanisms, and simplified processes in visa issuance, trade financing, tax collection, and documentation to revitalize and expand trade ties.

Rising inflation continued to hurt economic growth as inflation above 40pc: PIAF

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has warned the authorities that rising inflation continued to hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control, as the prices of essential commodities continued to stay away from the reach of the financially vulnerable segments, with data showing the annual short-term inflation well above 40 percent.

The government computes the Sensitive Price Indicator on a weekly basis to evaluate the price fluctuation of necessary commodities by evaluating the rates of 51 items collected from 50 markets in 17 cities of the country. The SPI report for the week ending on January 4 reflected an increase in the rates of 19 commodities, decrease in nine and stability in 23.

PIAF Chairman Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol, quoting the data, observed that trade and industry have suffered from the double-



edged sword of food and energy prices with transport inflation peaking to a record 65% while the annual inflation rate increased to 24.9% in 2023.

The SPI for the current week ended on 04th January, 2024 increased by 0.81 percent, the PBS said in its report. Major increase is observed in the prices of Tomatoes (16.04 percent), Chicken (13.98 percent), Eggs (3.20 percent), Onions (3.04 percent), Bananas (2.13 percent), Pulse Gram (2.12 percent), Sugar (2.04 percent), Pulse Moong (1.68 percent), LPG (1.19 percent), Firewood (0.51 percent) and Georgette (0.23 percent)."

The year on year trend depicts increase of 42.86 percent, it added.

BMP calls for solid economic plan, as uncertainty looming in 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has called for solid economic plan from all the stakeholders, terming the new year of 2024 as the uncertain one in view of deteriorating energy crises following the tough conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund amidst upcoming elections, making this period more complicated and unstable for the economy.

The FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said all political parties should provide their economic stability plans to avert further losses and delays, warning that numerous global issues are impacting world economies.

He said the upcoming government should prioritize resolving the energy crisis by providing sufficient and affordable electricity and gas to industries.

The import bill should be reduced by imposing bans on luxury products.

GRCP hosts 2nd annual Gandhara Citrus festival to boost agricultural tourism

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Gandhara Resource Center Pakistan (GRCP) proudly unveiled the Second Annual Gandhara Citrus Festival on Sunday with a dynamic celebration held in Taxila.

This event aimed to stimulate agricultural tourism by showcasing the distinct citrus offerings of the region while highlighting its rich Buddhist heritage, GRCP public relations officer said.

The festival, sponsored by PTCL-Ufone and the Center for Culture and Development (C2D), among others, featured primary objectives. Firstly, it sought to promote a diverse range of oranges from Khanpur, fostering enduring connections between orange producers and exporters nationally and internationally.

Secondly, it aimed to spotlight and exhibit the ancient stonework of the Gandhara civilization, fostering connections between artisans and exporters.

The festival offered many activities, including live painting sessions, exhibitions, and promo-

tions of locally harvested citrus fruits and home-made products. Additionally, it served as a platform to showcase the intricate Stone Carving Art of the Gandhara civilization, contributing to the advocacy and promotion of local heritage.

In a dedicated effort to promote environmental preservation and food security, the festival engaged the private sector, exporters, researchers, and academia to establish connections that support the preservation of the Gandhara-themed civilization and stonework.

The vibrant marketplace at the festival boasted numerous food stalls, handicrafts, and agricultural product displays, attracting a considerable number of vendors, he added.

The event was expertly orchestrated by stage secretary Sadia Atta and featured distinguished speakers, including Malik Fateh Khan- Advisor National Rural Support Program-Environment & Natural Resource Management, Khwaja Mazhar from agri-tourism, Dr. Waseem (Director Undergraduate Studies-University of Haripur) Dr. Riaz Alam-Director Pakistan Agricultural Research Institute-PARC Tarnab

Farm Peshawar, Yusuf Shah- Pak Olives, Nighat Un Nisa (Foreign Commonwealth Development Organization), Imran Siddiqui (Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Ahmed Khan (President Welfare Adventure Societies-HITECH University Taxila).

The speakers emphasized the significance of branding local farm products, underscoring its pivotal role in elevating the agricultural sector. To ensure the seamless execution of the event, a dedicated team of 50 volunteers from HITECH University supported the core committee of GRCP.

The Gandhara Citrus Festival witnessed a diverse turnout, with active participation from thousands of women, children, and adults from Taxila, Haripur, Wah, Mansehra, Chakwal, Tala-gang, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. Attendees commended the meticulous efforts of the GRCP core committee, consisting of Sara Mehmood, Riaz Ahmad, Ifthikhar Ahmad, Malik Ushtar and Ifthikhar Siddiqi, for organizing such a unique festival. The event is anticipated to propel Taxila into the spotlight as a hub for



heritage and agritourism.

GRCP official further said that for those unable to attend in person, Asif Farid and Sania Shah ensured widespread coverage by broadcasting the event live on social media platforms, contributing to the festival's broader reach and impact.

He said that with cooperation of district administration particularly Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Assistant Commissioner Taxila and security provided by local police

department, the event went very smoothly. GRCP appreciate and extends their deepest gratitude towards cooperation of government officials in execution of 2nd Gandhara Citrus Festival.

The Gandhara Citrus Festival stands as a testament to GRCP's unwavering commitment to promoting the cultural and agricultural treasures of Taxila, offering a promising vision for the region's future in the realms of heritage and agritourism.

Shoaib defeats Aqeel to win Federal Cup Tennis C'ship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Promising Muhammad Shoaib clinched men's singles title of the 36th Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships after overpowering seasoned Aqeel Khan in the final of the 36th Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Sunday. The 22-year-old Shoaib pulled off a straight set victory 6-2, 6-4 in the final fixture that lasted for one hour and 18 minutes.

Shoaib got off to a flying start, taking a 4-2 lead by breaking first game of Aqeel and kept the same pressure to win the first set at 6-2. In the second set Aqeel fought back but Shoaib did not allow him to settle down as he exhibited excellent tennis from the base line, breaking the 7th game of Aqeel to build up the winning streak 4-3. Aqeel in the process hit a double fault. Shoaib continued the same pressure and in the 10th game he hit strong serve. He won the set by hitting ace to win the title. Earlier in the day, in the ladies singles



Sarah Mahboob annexed the title by eliminating upcoming youngster Amna Ali Qayum from Islamabad in a well-fought straight sets final. Sarah won the toss and chose to serve. Both the players exhibited excellent game down the line and cross-court. Sarah took the lead 5-4 and broke the 10th game of Amna and won the set at 6-4. In the second set both the players again

played the marvelous tennis with the combination of excellent cross-court and down the lines. Sarah took the lead of 5-3 by breaking the 8th game of Amna, who fought back bravely and managed to level the score 5 games all by breaking the 9th game of Sarah. In the 11th game, Sarah took the serve advance and again developed the winning lead 6-5. In the 12th

game, Amna was unable to maintain her confidence and hit two double faults. Sarah took the advantage and comfortably broke the game and won the set at 6-4 7-5. In the boys & girls 10 & under Muhammad Arsh from Karachi won the title by defeating the 2nd seed Muhammad Faizan in straight set 4-2 4-1. Usama Azhar, Director Sport PTV and Majid Bashir Senior Executive Vice President of Islamabad Tennis Association attended the closing ceremony as guest of honour and distributed the prizes amongst the winners and runners-up. Secretary PTF Col. (r) Gul Rehman, M. T. Cheema, Senior Executive Vice President, ITA also distributed the prizes to winners and runner-ups.

Results in brief:

Men's Singles Final
Muhammad Shoaib beat Aqeel Khan 6-2 6-4
Ladies Singles Final
Sarah Mahboob Khan beat Amna Ali Qayum 6-4 7-5
Boys & Girls 10&U Singles Final
Muhammad Arsh beat Muhammad Faizan 4-2 4-1.

Balochistan Sports Department celebrates 2023 as sports year

Sports Desk

QUETTA: Director General Sports Department Balochistan, Durra Bloch, said the province has successfully organized over 30 sports events in the year 2023, the first time in the history of the province. The organization of the 34th National Games after 19 years in the province was a big achievement for the sports department, he said in a statement issued here.

He said that many sports competitions will be held across Balochistan this year too.

Bloch said the Olympic athletes of Pakistan and Balochistan, sports organizations, and people of Balochistan played an important role in making it a success, for which we are all grateful. He added that in 2023, more than 30 sports competitions were organized across Balochistan, starting with the Gwadar Sports Festival and Beach Games held in January, which continued from January 20 to 27 last year. The exhibition match of PSL 8 between Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi was played on February 5 in Quetta, in which cricket fans participated in large numbers. Apart from that, a women's cricket match



was also organized on February 5 on the occasion of Kashmir Day. On February 15, the final of the All Quetta Tape Ball Cricket Tournament was held, which started on December 13, 2022. The Sports Department organized the first Balochistan Games, which were held in all the districts of Balochistan from February 20 to March 11, and their final round was held in Quetta from March 12 to 20. In the month of Ramazan, the Ramazan Sports Festival was organized from April 9 to April 26 in Quetta. In the month of June, the Secretary Sports Ishaq Jamali Under-13 Cricket Tournament was concluded peacefully. The

All Balochistan Chief Minister Cricket Tournament was also organized from June 20 to 26.

In the month of July, the All Quetta Table Tennis Championship for Women was held from July 18 to 20, 2023. On the occasion of Independence Day, the All Pakistan Azadi Cricket Gold Cup was held in Quetta from August 8 to 14, and the Azadi Sports Festival was organized in all districts of Balochistan from August 10 to 14 in connection with the celebration of Pakistan's independence. The sports department has also organized a cash prize-giving ceremony on September 13 for the athletes who won medals and showed outstanding performances for Balochistan in the National Games. In the month of September, the Quetta Super League Cricket Tournament under 13 and under 16 was held, which continued from September 10 to October 1. From September 19 to October 8, Pakistan's biggest football festival, the All-Pakistan CM Balochistan Football Gold Cup, was organized, in which more than 60 teams from all over the country participated. The All-Pakistan-Pakistanist Balochistan Inter-Provincial Women's Volleyball Championship was organized from October 5 to 9, and in continua-

tion of this, the 53rd National Volleyball Championship was held from October 11 to 17. The Balochistan Inter-University Sports Festival was organized for the students of Balochistan from October 19 to October 23. From October 26 to November 1, the Shaheed Nawabzada Mir Siraj Khan Raisani Sports Festival was launched by the Sports Department, in which more than 30 sports were included.

The All Balochistan Under-19 Cricket Tournament was organized in two parts from October 24 to November 2 in Khuzdar and Quetta, and the final round was played in Quetta. The Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani Under-10 Women's Futsal Tournament was held from November 4 to 6, and the second Southern Balochistan Sports Youth and Culture Festival was held at the end of the previous year, which continued from December 11 to 15. Director General Sports Durra Bloch said that the department is committed to working hard for the promotion of sports and producing players who bring laurels to the country.

The authority will take more steps in 2024 to create more opportunities and provide facilities to the sportsmen for representing the country.

Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma back in India's squad for Afghanistan T20Is

A Sports

LAHORE: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Sunday announced a 16-member squad for the upcoming three-match T20I series against Afghanistan, featuring returning Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

The star batters are set to make their return to the T20I format during the series after a hiatus of more than a year.

They haven't played the format since India's semi-final defeat against England in the T20 World Cup in November 2022, prioritizing ODI and Test cricket.

Rohit Sharma will lead the team, while Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav, who captained India in his absence are out with injuries.

Pandya led India in T20I cricket since the T20 World Cup 2022, however, he was ruled out during the ICC World Cup 2023 with an ankle injury, which led to Yadav being named captain.



Yadav and Pandya both are nursing ankle injuries currently and are expected to achieve full fitness prior to the T20 World Cup.

The three-match series against Afghanistan will be India's last T20I series ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024, which is scheduled

to be played in the USA and West Indies.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan named a 19-member squad for the series, commencing on January 11 in Mohali.

India T20I Squad

Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, and Mukesh Kumar.

Afghanistan T20I Squad

Ibrahim Zadran (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ikram Alikhil (wk), Hazratullah Zazai, Rahmat Shah, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Karim Janat, Azmaullah Omarzai, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Mubeen Ur Rahman, Fazal Haq Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad, Naveen Ul Haq, Noor Ahmad, Mohammad Saleem, Qais Ahmad, Gulbadin Naib and Rashid Khan.

Bahawalpur wins U-16 Inter-Division Athletics Championship



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Athletics Championship concluded at Punjab Stadium on Sunday.

Hundreds of male and female athletic players from all divisions are participating in the Annual Sports Calendar Programme event organised under the banner of Punjab Sports Department.

DG Sports Punjab Dr. Asif Tufail distributed prizes among the top performing players.

Bahawalpur Division, with 49 points, bagged the first position in the Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme Inter-Division Athletics Championship.

Faisalabad division stood second with 41 points while Lahore division won the third position with 31 points followed by Sargodha Division with 28 points.

Speaking on this occasion, DG Sports Punjab Dr. Asif Tufail said that new talented players are emerging from inter-division competitions. He congratulated the successful players and their team officials.

Dr. Asif Tufail said that the Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme has great significance in the development of sports across the province. "Sports Board Punjab will continue to organize such events for the development of sports in all parts of the province".

Director Sports Yasmin Akhtar, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, all Divisional Sports Officers of Punjab and other officials were also present on this occasion.

On the other hand, the thrilling matches of the Under-16 Inter-Division Girls/Boys Badminton Championship are under way at NPSC Gymnasium Hall. This championship will continue till January 10.

Following are the athletics results on the last day, In the 400m girls race, Rimsha Ishaq of Lahore left behind all the sprinters with the timing of 1.15.81. The next two positions in this event were taken by Fajar Fatima of Rawalpindi (1.16.41) and Swera Siraj of Faisalabad (1.18.00).

In the 400m boys event, M Shahbaz of Bahawalpur exhibited excellent stamina and was declared a winner with a time of 53.40 followed by Sohail Akhtar of Faisalabad (54.56) and Arif of Sahiwal (58.16).

Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) Inter School & Inter collegiate Hockey Tournament from Jan 10



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) Inter school and Inter collegiate Hockey Tournament will start from January 10 at Olympian Islahuddin and Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy. 12 girls and boys teams will participate in the tournament. Islahuddin held a press conference at Olympian Islahuddin and Dr. Mohammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy. Dr. Farhan Essa, organizing secretary of the tournament Olympian Syed Sameer Hussain, and Dr. Nayer Jabeen were also present with him. Olympian Islahuddin said that the tournament which started from January 10 will continue till January 15. The tournament will be inaugurated in the morning of January 10. Teams from six boys schools and six girls colleges will participate in the event. Olympian Sameer Hussain has been appointed as the organizing secretary, the top scorer, best player, prizes have also been kept in the tournament, Olympian Islahuddin said that our aim is to promote the national game if hockey is to stand on its feet in Pakistan then the teams of the departments have to be restored. In today's era, the establishment of administrative teams has become inevitable, he said that by creating a pool of players who performed well in the tournament, they will be trained in the training camp, and opportunities to play with Olympians will also be provided, on this occasion.

Dr. Farhan Essa said that our national sport is not given the same importance as it is given to cricket. Olympian Sameer Hussain said that the best arrangements have been made to organize the event in a dignified manner and secret committees have been formed in this regard. Tournaments are organized regularly in Islahuddin Academy. From this platform, future stars are emerging.

Rafael Nadal pulls out of Australian Open with muscle tear

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal on Sunday pulled out of the Australian Open with a "micro tear on a muscle" barely a week after making his comeback from a year-long injury absence, but said he remained positive.

The 37-year-old had been out of the game since injuring his hip at the 2023 Australian Open, undergoing surgery before making his comeback at the Brisbane International.

He won his opening two matches but needed a medical timeout towards the end of his quarter-final loss to Jordan Thompson after feeling pain in his upper left thigh.

"During my last match in Brisbane I had a small problem on a muscle that as you know made me worried," Rafael Nadal posted on his official X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Once I got to Melbourne I have had the chance to make an MRI and I have

micro tear on a muscle, not in the same part where I had the injury and that's good news.

"Right now I am not ready to compete at the maximum level of five-set matches. I'm flying back to Spain to see my doctor, get some treatment and rest."

Injuries have been a recurring theme of Nadal's record-breaking career, a painful by-product of his all-action, brutal-hitting style that has led to struggles with serious knee, wrist and foot problems.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion stressed in Brisbane that he did not come into the tournament expecting to win, and hinted that the Australian Open was coming too soon for him.

"I have worked very hard during the year for this comeback and as I always mentioned my goal is to be at my best level in three months," he said.

"Within the sad news for me for not being able to play in front of the amazing Melbourne crowds, this is not very bad

news and we all remain positive with the evolution for the season.

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"I really wanted to play here in Australia and I have had the chance to play a few matches that made me very happy and positive. Thanks all for the support and see you soon."

During his career, Nadal dominated the French Open, where he won 14 of his majors, his first arriving just days after his 19th birthday in 2005, his last in 2022 making him the event's oldest champion.

Rafael Nadal is a four-time champion at the US Open, won Wimbledon in 2008 and 2010, and is a two-time winner at the Australian Open — with 13 years spanning his first triumph at Melbourne Park in 2009 and his second in 2022. The injury absence saw Nadal's ranking slip to 672 while rival Novak Djokovic has passed him in the Grand Slam title count with 24.





Hamas leaders ready to sacrifice their lives for Palestine: Haniyeh

IRNA

TEHRAN: Head of Hamas' Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh has said that all leaders and commanders of the resistance movement are ready to sacrifice their lives for Palestine, and that the resistance against the Israeli occupation will continue more powerful than before.

"Leaders and members of Hamas consider martyrdom as their greatest honor. They are like their Palestinian brothers and sisters, paying the same



price in the face of Zionists' war machine and brutal killings," Arabi 21 electronic news-

paper cited Haniyeh as saying, according to a Sunday report by IRNA.

Haniyeh referred to Israel's assassination of deputy Hamas political leader Saleh al-Arouri that took place in Beirut, Lebanon, on January 2. He said that al-Arouri, like other Hamas members, was seeking the liberation of Palestine and wished for martyrdom in the path of freedom.

The Hamas political leader described al-Arouri's assassination as cowardly, saying that his killing is indicative of the Israeli regime's defeat in its ongoing war on Gaza, despite the unprecedented support it

receives from the West, especially the US.

This assassination not only reveals the bloody nature of "this Nazi regime", but also it adds to the determination and steadfastness of the resistance to emerge victorious in liberating Palestine, Haniyeh said.

The resistance is in a good status and will continue with the same determination and power, the senior Hamas official said, adding that "the Zionist enemy has suffered huge losses which it has not witnessed before."

More flights cancelled as fog persists

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Air operations remained disrupted on Sunday due to the prevalence of heavy fog in various parts of the country.

A total of 22 flights more were cancelled. In first seven days of 2024 year, a total of 250 flights were cancelled and more than 200 domestic and international flights were delayed.

Meanwhile, the met department has forecast cold and dry spell for most parts of the country and the hilly areas will experience intense cold on Sunday.

According to the Met Office, the ongoing spell will continue in most parts of the country.

The weather in the upper districts of KP, north-western districts of Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan will be cloudy and cold.

The plains of Punjab, Islamabad, Punjab, Upper

Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be in the grip of heavy fog/smog.

The Met Office pointed out a possibility of heavy fog in Charsadda, Mardan, Nowshera, Swabi, Peshawar, Lucky Marwat, Bannu and DIK districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In Punjab, fog/smog will blanket Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, Okara, Kasur, Lahore, Sialkot, Narowal, Gujranwala, Mangala, Faisalabad, Jhang, Sargodha, Mandi Bahauddin, Toba Tek Singh, Khanewal, Multan, Khanpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Hafizabad, Bhakkar, Leh and Dera Ghazi Khan.

In Sindh, heavy fog/smog is likely to prevail over Jacobabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Ghotki, Khairpur, Kashmore and surroundings during morning and night hours. The weather in Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan will remain very cold and cloudy.

Murree snowfall: Comprehensive traffic plan devised for tourists

Imran Satti

RAWALPINDI: The traffic police department has devised a comprehensive plan to regulate traffic and facilitate the tourists during snowfall season in Murree.

Regional Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khurram Ali and City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani directed the Chief Traffic Officer, Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan and City Traffic Police Officers deployed in Murree to make best arrangements to regulate traffic during snowfall season.

According to a CTP spokesman, 163 traffic wardens and officers of traffic police had been deployed at all important

points of Murree to regulate traffic and facilitate the tourists.

Traffic police had devised a comprehensive plan for Murree for the snowfall season according to which entry of heavy vehicles in the city would be banned, he added.

He said an emergency Help Line 051-9269200, had also been introduced for facilitating the tourists.

He informed that two traffic control rooms at Jinnah Hall Murree and Suni Bank Traffic choki, had been established to facilitate the tourists.

According to a Commissioner office spokesperson, Murree district administration on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta had set up 13 centers

at different places in Murree at Satara Meel, Lower Topa, Jika Gali, GPO, Kashmir Point, Kuldana, Kali Matti, Masiyari, Sindhan, Sunny Bank, Bhurban, Thanda Jungle and Saharbagla to facilitate the tourists.

The Commissioner Rawalpindi Division had directed the authorities concerned to provide all possible facilities to the tourists during snowfall season. The biggest problem of Murree is traffic jam, he said adding, the role of police and traffic wardens is the most important.

According to Deputy Commissioner Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, all the departments were put on high alert in view of the forecast of snowfall in the coming days.

JUI-F's Fazlur Rehman in Afghanistan to discuss security issues

Spokesman Report

KABUL: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday reached Kabul, Afghanistan to hold talks on regional and security issues amid a spike in cross-border attacks.

According to party spokesperson, the JUI-F chief - who is on maiden visit to Afghanistan in nearly 10 years - was welcomed by interim Afghan Foreign Minister Ameer Khan.

Fazl last visited Afghanistan in 2013 and met then-president Hamid Karzai.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), the JUI-F said Fazlur Rehman departed for Afghanistan with a high-level delegation of party leaders, including Maulana Abdul Wasi, Maulana Salahuddin, Maulana Jamaluddin, Maulana Salimuddin Shamzai, Aslam Ghauri and others.

During the visit, Fazlur Rehman will hold

meetings with the Afghan Taliban leaders and discuss the regional and security situation, the statement noted.

It is pertinent to mention here that the representative of the Taliban government and Afghan envoy in Islamabad had officially invited Maulana



Fazlur Rehman a few days ago to visit Afghanistan on behalf of his government.

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

At least 20 killed in Israeli airstrikes on northern Gaza

Xinhua

GAZA: Israeli army launched on Saturday night airstrikes on the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza Strip, killing at least 20 people, the official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported on Sunday.

According to the report, dozens of injured people have been sent to hospitals, many of whom were in serious condition.

Local sources told Xinhua that many people are still buried under the rubble and the death toll may further rise.

The Palestinian death toll from the

ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip rose to 22,835, and the injuries have reached 58,416, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said Sunday.

In a press statement, the ministry said that the Israeli army "launched 12 strikes against families in the Gaza Strip, killing 133 Palestinians and wounding 250 others during the past 24 hours."

Since Oct. 7, Israel has been launching a large-scale military offensive in the Palestinian enclave after Hamas's unprecedented attack on southern Israel, which claimed the lives of around 1,200 Israelis, according to the Israeli authorities.

Masood Usmani's murder case registered against unidentified assailants

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Police on Sunday registered a case against unidentified assailants for the murder of Sunni Ulema Council (SUC) leader Maulana Masood ur Rehman Usmani in Islamabad.

The case was registered in Khanna police station in Islamabad. The FIR includes serious provisions including murder charges.

Sunni Ulema Council (SUC) leader Maulana Masood ur Rehman Usmani was shot dead by unknown assailants in Islamabad on January 6.

According to police, unknown

armed men opened fire on the vehicle of Deputy General Secretary Sunni Ulema Council Masood Usmani.

He was rushed to hospital where doctors pronounced him dead, police say.

Soon after the incident, police personnel reached the crime scene and cordoned off the area.

"An investigation has been launched to arrest the suspects," said police.

They further said that the suspects were being traced with the help of CCTV cameras, adding that one person was also injured in the firing incident.

Saudi king and crown prince receive letters from Belarus president



Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman received letters from the President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on Sunday.

The separate written letters dealt with bilateral relations and ways to support them and enhance them in

various fields. The letters were handed over to Saudi Foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan during a meeting with his Belarusian counterpart Sergei Aleinik in Riyadh.

During the meeting, Prince Faisal and Aleinik discussed relations between the two countries, ways to enhance them in various fields, and issues of common interest.

Nationwide anti-polio drive to start from tomorrow

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A nationwide anti-polio campaign of varied duration will begin tomorrow to administer vaccine drops to children under five year's age.

During the campaign, a statement said, that polio teams of the health department would go door to door in all 159 districts of the country.

In Punjab, during a week-long polio campaign over 23 million children will be administered polio drops. The health department has declared Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan as the most sensitive cities in this regard.

In Sindh, nearly 10.03 million children up to five years of age will be administered with anti-polio vaccine drops during a week-long campaign.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (LP), over 7.4 million children up to five years of age will be administered

anti-polio drops during five-day drive.

In Balochistan, over 2.5 million children up to five years of age would be administered anti-polio drops during week-long polio drive.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, over two hundred fifty thousand children will be vaccinated during five day campaign. In case a polio team does not visit any home, the parents can access to helpline 1166.

Last year, Islamabad reported six polio cases as Pakistan and Afghanistan remained the only two countries in the world where polio remains endemic.

In Dec 2023, a nine-month-old child in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Orakzai district became the latest victim of the crippling disease. The Ministry of Health confirmed that the polio virus was found in a 9-month-old child in Orakzai district.

Woman 'raped' in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: As per details, a woman has accused the brother of two police officers in Islamabad police of raping her and alleged that police have denied registration of the case.

The woman alleged that the brother of the accused, Safdar, who is a police officer, is putting pressure for the settlement of the issue.

The 'raped' woman demanded justice.

It is pertinent to mention here

incidents of rape and sexual assault against women have been reported time and again amid calls for strict action against the culprits.

A report on criminal activities in Lahore shared by police authorities on June 08 showed that 327 incidents of kidnapping were reported in the city of which also included eight women being sexually assaulted.

The figures were more than the previous year when 265 abduction cases were registered including gang-rape of four women.