

FIA establishes Cyber Crime Investigation Authority to control cybercrime in Pakistan: Director

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The National Cyber Control Investigation Authority is being established to control the growing cybercrime, while more stringent measures are being taken to eradicate trafficking. This was said by FIA Director Rai Ijaz Ahmed while addressing the members of Faisalabad Chamber. He said that to avoid financial complications, industrial and commercial establishments should prefer domestic and international transac-

tions through government channels instead of referrals. He quoted Reid on the dealer of the reference handi said that 50% of remittances are done by business people, but those who do it unknowingly are ignored on the basis of mens rea, but their focus is on the network of dealers..

He said that normal tax matters are looked into by FBR, but with fraud and forgery, the scope of FIA starts. He said that business people should pay only to the people with whom they deal, if a textile person pays a large

amount to a cement and surya person, doubts will arise. Similarly, if billions of transactions are made from the account of a person earning a salary of 20,000, then there must be an investigation. Regarding the business of fake invoices, he said that this matter started with saving 2-3% income tax but 17-18% rebate. He said that apart from FBR, bank staff are also involved in this scam. He mentioned various types of forgery and fraud cases and said that patriotic businessmen should conduct business transactions under

a set procedure to avoid financial complications.

He further said that there is a clear difference between the price of legal imports and smuggled goods, so businessmen must avoid it. In response to a question, he said that a cybercrime body, the National Cyber Control Investigation Authority, is being established, which will help control cybercrime. He said that the Faisalabad Chamber should organize a full awareness session on the issues related to FIA in which senior officers of

other relevant departments can also be invited. He said that cryptocurrency is currently illegal, but Federal Minister Umar Saif is looking into regulating it. Earlier, Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Dr. Khurram Tariq welcomed Rai Ijaz Ahmed and said that in some cases, overlapping is happening, but not only these cases can be resolved through your contacts, but our Members will also have capacity building. He said that there will be a change in the income tax laws from January 1 and

it is important to clarify the role of FIA. He also asked about FIAs role in Ponzi housing schemes. Vice President Haji Mohammad Aslam Bhali, Haji Gulzar Ahmed, Shahid Mumtaz Bajwa, Ayub Aslam Manj, Mian Abdul Waheed, Shafiq Hussain Shah, Habib Aslam Gaba, Mian Usman, Zafar Iqbal Sindhu participated in the question and answer session while at the end President Dr. Khurram Tariq presented the shield of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to the Director of FI.



Additional Chief Secretary of South Punjab visits Victoria Hospital Bahawalpur

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Additional Chief Secretary of South Punjab, Capt. (Rtd) Saqib Zafar, has said a comprehensive upgradation of all major hospitals across the province was going on, following directives from Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi.

During an inspection at Bahawal Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur, Capt. Saqib Zafar outlined the ambitious project, detailing the construction of new floors, doors, windows, and false ceilings. He said the initiative involves a complete overhaul of electrical and plumbing systems to enhance overall facilities. The plan has been extending to all major hospitals in South Punjab, he added. Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar said a substantial sum of 1.107 billion rupees have been allocated for upgrading Bahawal Victoria Hospital. Capt. Saqib Zafar emphasized the urgency of completing the work by February 28 while maintaining a high standard of construction. Earlier, he inspected various sections of hospital, including the Outpatient Department (OPD), Emergency, different blocks, wards, operation theaters, and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Present during the inspection were Secretary Specialized Health South Punjab Afzal Nasir Khan, Additional Secretary C&W Ghulam Yasin, Medical Superintendent Dr. Aamir Bukhari, SE Buildings Anwar Adil, and XEN Arshad Nadeem. On this occasion, Additional Chief Secretary was briefed that Rs. 242 million has been released for the project, with 58 percent of the funds already utilized. It was informed that the project scope covers to upgrade the hospital's OPD, emergency block, ICU, operation theaters, surgical wards, gynae, neuro, peds, and TB block.

During a briefing, it was highlighted that the labor force has been doubled to ensure the project's timely completion. The increased workforce aims to meet the stipulated deadline without compromising on the quality of construction.

New ICT building inaugurated at AIOU

PNP

ISLAMABAD: "Equipping the youth with information technology is the most important need of the hour, if the entire system of the university had not been digitized in time, it would not be possible to carry on educational activities during the covid-19", said Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the newly constructed building of Directorate of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that no one in Pakistan has such a platform, students have got online facilities because of digitalization and, problems are being solved on a priority basis.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood stated that digitalization was the vision and mission of Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum. Despite the interruption caused by Covid, AIOU continued its educational activities, which is creditable to the former Vice-Chancellor. Executive Director, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and former Vice-Chancellor AIOU, Prof Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, was the chief guest of the event. Dr. Zia expressed gratitude to the university administration for continuing the digitalization policy and emphasized that good initiatives should be carried forward to strengthen institutions. He also stated that the new ICT building is a modern facility, and institutions must be run by planning. After digitization, it is essential to pay special attention to the quality of education and course development, particularly in standardizing the texts of undergraduate, BS, postgraduate diploma programs, and associate programs.

Registrar AIOU, Raja Umar Younis, deans, and principal officers participated in the ceremony. It is pertinent to mention here that the foundation stone of this building was also laid by the former Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, who also inaugurated the building today.

Gangsters in Faisalabad extort over Rs 500,000

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Zeeshan Iftikhar alias Shani Dhillon, Asad Awan, Mirza Arsalan, Ehsan Jatt and three unknown persons robbed the stage drama producer Sheikh Imran's house at gunpoint for refusing to pay Rs 500,000. The house was completely wiped out with weapons. The victim Sheikh Imran further said that for 2 months Zeeshan Iftikhar alias Shani Dhillon was demanding a monthly extortion of 5 lakh rupees. They robbed me and my wife of 9 lakh rupees in cash, motorcycle and valuables worth more than 14 lakhs from the room and store. Police teams are raiding places to arrest the accused, he further said that the main accused Zeeshan Iftikhar alias Shani Dhillon, Asad Awan, Mirza Arsalan and Ehsan Jat have been charged with dozens of serious crimes including murder, murder, death threats. The cases recorded in the cases and there are signs of fear, the honor and life and property of the citizens are not safe at the hands of the named accused. After committing serious crimes, they hide in a city or province or flee to Dubai. The main accused Shani Dhillon and Asad Awan etc. gang members intimidate and harass the witnesses including the plaintiff or the accused. After receiving the green signal of agreement, they return to Pakistan after the reconciliation and manage to escape easily again by doing new incidents, which is the worst example of cruelty and extravagance and is no less than a moment of thought. is equivalent to Shani Dhillon's group is constantly threatening to kidnap and kill me, my wife and witnesses to prevent me from pursuing the case. Or if there is a financial loss, the accused and their other associates will be named. It is requested that ensuring the safety of people's life and property is the first responsibility of the higher authorities. The symbol of fear in the whole of Punjab and especially Faisalabad, the third largest city of Pakistan, Zeeshan Iftikhar alias Shani Dhillon, Asad Awan, etc. It should be brought to the point of disobedience so that the word of justice prevails, otherwise lawlessness, robbery and looting will be further strengthened by injustice and lack of control.

People's Party will win with a heavy mandate in general election 2024: Asif Ali Zardari

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former President Asif Ali Zardari has said that the opposition will try as much as they want, the People's Party will win with a heavy mandate in General Election 2024. Action taken by the workers are the asset of the party on which the party leadership is proud to go door to door to convey the party's message to the workers party candidates. On this occasion, Farhan Zaidi, AD Baloch has said that workers The party is trying day and night for the success of the candidates and is continuing their election campaign.

7th Anniversary of Pakistan Independent Living Network's

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: 7th Anniversary of Pakistan Independent Living Network's Cake cutting Ceremony held at Hands Independent Living Centre Hyderabad, and on this occasion Abbas Development organization distributed Ladies Dresses among users and members at HILC. In which Abdullah Kohistani (Chairman-ADO) was the Chief Guest, PPP worker Seema Afridi and Abdul Rehman Saand was guest of honor.

Nomination papers of two candidates of SWL PK 110 Constituency approved.

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Independent candidate Taj Muhammad Wazir from South Waziristan Lower (SWL) constituency PK 110 and Awami National Party PK 110 candidate Ayaz Wazir appeared before the Election Tribunal on Monday.

Where the Election Tribunal and the District Returning Officer approved the nomination papers of both the candidates, and both were allowed to contest the election.

Both the leaders had submitted nomination papers from South Waziristan Lower PK-110, those who were rejected by the Returning Officer in case of incomplete nomination papers.

Both appeared in the RO's office today for nomination papers

Where RO approved the nomination papers of Taj Muhammad Wazir and Ayaz Wazir after a question and answer.

Along with him, prominent lawyer of South Waziristan Lower Abd Ur Rehman Wazir also appeared in the RO's office.

Both are contesting from the provincial seat PK 110 of this constituency South Waziristan Lower District.

Taj Muhammad Wazir and Ayaz Wazir have contested elections from here before.

According to the sources, after the approval of the nomination papers of Taj Muhammad Wazir and Ayaz Wazir, they are now eligible to contest the election. On the other hand, ANP candidate Ayaz Wazir and independent candidate Taj Wazir from PK-110 told the media that today BBA will appear in the district court to confirm.

A visionary physician

Hakim Mohammed Said and his achievements

Spokesman Report

A visionary physician, Hakim Hafiz Abdul Majeed set up a small herbal drug shop in Delhi, India in 1906. Called the Hamdard Dawakhana, the small enterprise progressed, expanded and became a leading manufacturer of herbal medicines and products and a philanthropic institution, having high aims and objectives for the development and standardization of Eastern System of Medicine and selfless service to the humanity, in South Asia, spreading India, Pakistan and Bangladesh within half a century.

After creation of Pakistan Hakim Mohammed Said, the younger son of Hakim Abdul Majeed migrated to Karachi, the then capital of Pakistan, on 9th January 1948 and founded Hamdard Pakistan in the same year. He started his clinic and preparation of medicines and products at Aram Bagh, Karachi. In order to meet growing demand of Hamdard medicines and products, particularly its popular syrup – Rooh Afza, the first Hamdard Factory was built at Nazimabad, Karachi in 1953. Thereafter Hamdard factories were constructed at Lahore and Peshawar and a large manufacturing unit, Hamdard Industrial Complex (HIC) was also built in Karachi.

At the time when Hamdard enterprise became a lucrative business and Hamdard industry a viable proposition, Hakim Mohammed Said declared it a Waqf unto Almighty Allah on 1st April 1953. Hitherto, the industry and entire business had been the personal property of Hakim Mohammed Said. An Islamic Waqf, by definition, is absolutely irrevocable while a secular Trust is revocable. According to this decision, the profits accruing to Hamdard Laboratories (Hamdard pharmaceutical industry) were to be spent entirely on social uplift and welfare work, chiefly on



the development of education, science and culture through Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, established by Hakim Mohammed Said for this purpose.

Hamdard's great achievement is its gigantic project of Madinat al-Hikmah, a dream of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, which has come true. It is a city of education, science and culture, spreading 260 acres of land at Bund

Murad Khan on the borders of Sindh and Balochistan provinces where Main Campus of Hamdard University, and its allied educational institutions, such as HIMS, HIIT and FEST, Hamdard Colleges of Science, Commerce and Medicine, Hamdard Public School and Hamdard Village

School for the free education of the children of villages, situated in the vicinity of Madinat al-Hikmah, and a hospital for Eastern Medicine, providing free health facilities to the village people and research institutes are running. A vast and well equipped library of this region, Bait al-Hikmah, is situated there and a Centre for Horticulture which is providing free service, guidance and training to the farmers of Sindh is also working there. Recent addition of Environmental Studies Centre and Solar Energy Lab are also made there.

Establishment of Hamdard University, which has two campuses in Karachi and one in Islamabad is no doubt, a great service of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said to the nation. This is a seat of learning and excellence which looks always beyond horizon and thinks beyond tomorrow. The mission

of Hamdard University as envisage by its Founder is to extend knowledge, stimulate learning and promote understanding for the benefits, of nation and humanity.

After the tragic martyrdom of Hakim Said, the mantle of leadership fell on the unassuming shoulders of his daughter, Mrs Sadia Rashid. She is Chairperson of the Hamdard Laboratories (Waqf) Pakistan – the manufacturing, thus 'earning', arm of the organization – and President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, which dispenses the funds earned by the former on the various philanthropic and nation-building projects of Hamdard.

Hakim Mohammed Said Shaheed, wrote, edited or compiled over 200 books and journals in Urdu and English on Islam, Education, Pakistan, Science, Medicine and Health. Besides writing travelogues of countries he visited, he also wrote books travelogues especially for youth and children. He also edited some journals such as Hamdard Islamicus, Hamdard Medicus, Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society "Histricus", Hamdard-e-Sehat and Hamdard Naunehal. For several years he was also editor of 'PAYAMI' – Urdu edition of UNESCO'S journal "Courier".

Hakim Mohammed Said Shaheed participated in various international conferences on medicine, science, education and culture and traveled widely to many countries of the world. While in Pakistan he himself organized numerous international and national conferences on topics of prime importance.

Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said founded "Sham-i-Hamdard" in 1961 to boost literary activities in the country. Later on in 1995 he turned this forum into Shura Hamdard Pakistan, a think tank, to provide brain food to the nation and practical suggestions and recommendations to the powers that be to solve the country's problems.



Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said with Janab Abdul Aziz Bin Saleh, Imam Masjid e Nabvi (pbuh)

Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said with H.R.H Prince Karim Agha Khan

Hakim Mohammed Said (Shaheed)

(1920 – 1998)

- Chairman, and Waqif Mutawalli, Hamdard Laboratories (Waqf) Pakistan
- President, Hamdard Foundation Pakistan
- Founder-President, Madinat al-Hikmah
- Chancellor, Hamdard University
- President, Hamdard Public School
- Waqif Mutawalli, Hamdard Bangladesh
- Chief Physician, Hamdard Clinics
- President, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi
- President, Institute of Health and Tibbi Research, Karachi
- President, Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, Karachi
- Federal Minister / Advisor to the President of Pakistan on Tibb from 1979 to 1982
- Governor of Sindh, from 1993 to 1994

Academic Qualifications:

- BEMS from The Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbi College,

- Delhi, 1940
- D Sc. "Medician Altermative", The International Multidisciplinary
- Scientific Society on Alternative Medicine – 1984
- Languages:
- Urdu and English
- Working knowledge of Arabic and Persian
- Honours, Prizes, Awards:
- Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan 1966
- "Sadiq Dost Award" from the people of Bahawalpur through commissioner of Bahawalpur, Pakistan
- Certificate of Merit from the Institute of History of Science and
- Technology, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey 1981
- Islamic Medicine Prize, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Kuwait, 1982
- Winner of the Novosti Press Agency's Abu Ali Ibn

- Sina (Avicenna) International Prize for 1989, U. S. S. R.
- World No-Tobacco Day Medal, World Health Organization, 1965
- Award by the Pakistan League of the United States of America, New York, for the services in the fields of health, education and social work, 1996
- Outstanding Pakistani Award from the Rotary Club Islamabad Cosmopolitan, 1996
- Commemorative Postage Stamp, issued on 17th October 1999 on 1st anniversary of Martyrdom of Hakim Mohammed Said
- Nishan-i-Imatiaz (Posthumous), in the field of Medicine (Hikmat) conferred by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of the Independence Day, 14th August, 2000

Editorship (Urdu):

- Hamdard-i-Sehat (Monthly)

- Hamdard Naunehal (Monthly)
- Akhbar-ul-Tibb (Monthly)
- Payami (Urdu version of UNESCO's Courier)
- Editorship (English):
- Hamdard Medicus (Quarterly)
- SPEM, Bulletin of the Society for the Promotion of Eastern Medicine
- Medical Times (Fortnightly)
- Hamdard Islamicus (Quarterly)
- Endeavour, Newsletter of Madinat al-Hikmah
- Other Achievements:
- Author and editor of more than 189 books both in Urdu and English languages
- Has written more than 500 articles on science, medicines History and Islam
- Treated more than 5 million patients
- Participated in more than 92 international conferences round the globe and presented papers

A Tabib (doctor) to the Masses: Hakim Muhammad Saeed



Analysis

Marium Rauf

How can one define a person who is a character of larger-than-life? On the 24th anniversary (17th oct) of the late Hakim Saeed's passing, this couplet by the great poet Mirza Ghalib makes me think of him. Hakim Saeed on his 21st death anniversary (Oct 17). "If I ever get a chance I would ask earth, 'Oh miser, what did you do with all the

priceless treasures that were entrusted to you...

Saeed was the governor of Sindh and an outstanding scholar and philanthropist (1993-1996). In addition to founding the Hamdard Foundation in 1948, he also authored more than 200 works on philosophy, science, and medicine. He was killed in 1998 while on route to oversee and conduct experiments at Hamdard labs in Karachi when he was ambushed by a group of gunmen.

Hakim Muhammad Saeed left his homeland in 1947, the year Pakistan gained its independence, together with his wife and daughter. The family made Karachi their home. Up until his passing in 1998, he founded Hamdard Laboratories and served as its founding director. He went to Turkey in 1952 and attended the Ankara University, where he received a PhD in pharmacy. After that, he went back to Pakistan and



committed his life to studying medicine. He established Hamdard Foundation in 1948. Hakim Mohammed Saeed also authored or compiled several books which include books on religion, Tibb (natural medicine), health and sciences, literature, social and scientific topics and travelogues. Hakeem Saeed founded Hamdard University in 1991. He was

awarded Nishan-e-Imtiaz in 2002, in recognition of his services.

Hakim Saeed started his medical practice and persisted in his study of Eastern remedies. He was one of the pioneers in Pakistan who engaged in medical biology and drug research after founding the Hamdard Laboratories in 1948. He joined Sindh University in 1953 as an associate professor of pharmacy and began teaching organic chemistry there after receiving his doctorate. He gave never his professional even after getting into politics. He never missed to check his patients on daily basis even during his political affairs.

It is known by very few that Hakim Saeed left his position in 1963 because of disagreements with the federal administration. He gained notoriety in 1964 when he criticized a Lieutenant-General, the high-profile man in

charge of the Ministry of Health under Field Marshal Ayub Khan. He was the Surgeon General of the Army Medical Corps. The General was criticized by Hakeem Saeed for declaring homoeopathy and eastern medicine quackery. Ayub Khan was forced to approve a law legalizing Eastern medicine out of fear that Hakim Saeed would continue to produce articles, organize conferences, and vigorously lobby against its use.

On 17th oct entire Pakistan give tribute to the contributions of Hakeem Muhammad Saeed Shaheed. He absolutely needs no introduction. Philanthropist, scholar, writer, researcher, innovator, and entrepreneur, Hakeem Muhammad Saeed Shaheed was regarded as jack of all trades. He was a blessing to Pakistan and was the most prominent medical researcher of his time.

Hakeem was not a hero to this

nation; he was a hero to his only daughter too. He travelled and roam around the world with his daughter. He had a greatest affection towards his daughter. Like all father he passed own his heroic attributes to his daughter.

Like father; like daughter". Mrs. Sadia Rashid is daughter of Hakeem Muhammad Saeed (Late). Her father gave her a legacy of which she is proud of. "Hamdard" is the name which Hakeem Saeed had owned up; and it is this very name which her daughter is carrying forward.

People like Hakeem Saeed born in million. His martyrdom caused a grave loss to the people of Pakistan but he will stay alive as an amazing person of diverse abilities in memories of Pakistan even years after his tragic murder in 1998.

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Change in lifestyle crucial in managing stomach diseases

Renowned consultant Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist Dr. Hyder Abbasi emphasized the pivotal role of lifestyle changes in effectively managing stomach diseases.

Addressing the interconnected nature of mental and physical health, Dr. Hyder underscored its significance in comprehensively addressing stomach-related health issues. Abdominal discomfort, a commonly experienced ailment, becomes a matter of concern when it was persistent and accompanied by alarming symptoms, he said in an interview with Pakistan Television News on Sunday.

He identified red flags such as unexplained weight loss, chronic constipation, or traces of blood in urine, indicating the need for a more in-depth investigation into the underlying causes.

Dr. Hyder recommended undergoing a colonoscopy test as part of a comprehensive examination of the intestines for individuals aged 50 and above.

However, he acknowledged that barriers such as carelessness and a lack of resources often deter many from pursuing necessary diagnostic procedures.

Dr. Hyder expressed concern over the premature attribution of urinary issues to hemorrhoids, leading individuals to self-medicate without a proper diagnosis.

He highlighted the unfortunate realization that individuals often become aware of the true underlying problem, such as colorectal cancer, only when the condition exacerbates.

Dr. Hyder also shed light on inflammatory bowel syndromes (IBS), presenting a unique challenge in diagnosis. Symptoms like abdominal pain, changes in bowel habits, and constipation can point to IBS, he added.

Unlike other conditions, IBS often doesn't present clear signs on medical scans. Counseling and a holistic approach to diagnosis and treatment are effective in managing IBS, he said.

Dr. Hyder further said that swift action is imperative in IBS cases, as delaying tests may lead to complications.

Dr. Hyder emphasized that a holistic approach, including a diet rich in fiber, increased vegetable intake, regular exercise, and mental health awareness, can significantly contribute to overall well-being.

The Lingual Dilemma; a Crisis of Identity - I

One of the challenges faced by youth today is that of lingual identity, stuck in between the two main languages currently used in Pakistan. Though the 1973 constitution clearly states that the national language of Pakistan is Urdu, still much of day-to-day communication and academic activities are conducted in English. There is no doubt regarding the vitality of knowing English, as English is the language used at a global level, but just focusing on English to forget the proper usage of Urdu. Urdu is slowly fading away, though unconsciously from the minds of the younger generation, but our identification as Pakistani demands us to be proud speakers of our national language. Youngsters feel proud in flaunting their English accents, but if asked about a few words in Urdu they immediately dodge such questions. We have a meager level of understanding of Urdu because it has been treated as a secondary language. Urdu is not only a language that can be studied just by preparing grammar for examinations or by reading a few articles by famous Urdu writers. The learning of a language continues throughout one's lifetime. Language plays a huge role in nation-building and the promulgation of national ideas. The language of the people affects their emotional understanding and the message can be conveyed easily, we see that political leaders always choose Urdu to communicate with the masses. In the words of Noah Webster, "national language is the band of the national union"

The national union in Pakistan is being

threatened by many factors, one of which is the crisis of languages. The usage of English is becoming more and more popular even when people are talking informally. There are many other languages Pashto, Punjabi, Balochi, Sindhi, Saraiki, and Potohari just to name a few that are used in daily conversations but they're gradually being replaced by English. This is an alarming situation if looked at closely where people have started moving away from their roots and have been found inclined to the idea of losing lingual identity. Urdu can be called clearly as the language that gives Pakistanis their distinct identity. When any nation turns away from its own roots, its destruction lies near in sight. The cultural shift through active media propagation resulted quite well by forcing the practices of the Western world. Now the same active propagation of speaking Urdu as a shame and sign of being less educated can be seen. Being good in spoken English, regardless of having actual knowledge depth and conceptual clarity of the topic makes one shine out.

Young people are mostly affected by such a mentality and are striving to converse in English to gain acceptance by the new norms of society. This culture is seen in educational institutions as well where children are sometimes forced to speak English. This is a good step in order to improve their English skills, however, the institutions should not forget that their students being well-spoken in the Urdu language is equally important. English medium education should not bind students to learn all subjects in English, they should also be taught the Urdu content of the same topic so that they're aware

of the subjects in their national language. Many English terms have infiltrated Urdu, which has led to an easier version of Urdu being used in daily conversations. Educational institutions of Pakistan bear this responsibility of promoting their national language, rather than playing a role in the endangerment of it.

Students these days face immense difficulty in understanding even the basic poetry and prose in Urdu, while on the other hand, they are perfectly comfortable reading literature works of authors such as Oscar Wilde, Jane Austen, William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Geoffrey Chaucer, etc. This clearly illustrates how the students have been pushed away from national language and literature. A large part of our heritage is left unexplored as we become less and less interested in the timeless works of Urdu writers. This shows how we as Pakistanis are losing our identity and our culture. Ending the identity of a nation does not require physically fighting with them, sometimes just wiping off their unique aspects of values, traditional practices, language, and culture is more than enough to plunge them into a crisis of identity. They have become perplexed due to the lingual dilemma; of whether to choose English or Urdu. In accordance with scientific research, understanding of subjects can be best developed in the mother tongue, English is the secondary language which should be learned as a 'language'. Not all the subjects should be taught in English. The reason for students being weak in Urdu is the English curriculum of all the other subjects. In the words of Rita Brown, "Language is the roadmap of a culture; it tells you where its people come from and where they are going."

To be continued

Baluchistan- A Gem within the Jewel - II

Militant and terrorist groups in Baluchistan manipulate the emotions of the Baluch people by emphasizing their perceived deprivations. Central to their complaints is the alleged political marginalization by the central government, despite the region's richness in natural resources. Baluchistan, they argue, grapples with persistent poverty and underdevelopment, with the benefits of resource extraction not trickling down to the grassroots level, exacerbating economic disparities. The presence of the Pakistani military, particularly in response to insurgencies and separatist movements, is a source of tension, especially for anti-state elements, while the majority of Baluch people and the military view these operations as necessary for maintaining law and order.

Contrary to false propaganda, Pakistan is actively engaged in development activities in Baluchistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project, has catalyzed development in the province, leading to significant infrastructure projects, such as road construction, energy facilities, and the development of the Gwadar Port. These initiatives aim to enhance connectivity, stimulate economic growth, and position Baluchistan as a key player in regional trade. The Gwadar Port, situated in Baluchistan, not only bolsters the local economy but also creates opportunities for trade and commerce, connecting landlocked Central Asian countries to

international markets.

Baluchistan's abundant natural resources, including natural gas, minerals, and coal, are being harnessed for economic development, with a focus on sustainable extraction practices and responsible resource management to benefit local communities. Recognizing the importance of human capital, initiatives have been launched to improve education and healthcare in Baluchistan, addressing long-standing gaps in social services. Economic development is linked to job creation and diversification, with projects under CPEC aiming to enhance the standard of living for residents and contribute to the overall stability of the region.

Challenges related to water scarcity are being addressed through development initiatives focused on water resource management, including the construction of dams and reservoirs. Acknowledging the diversity of Baluchistan's population, development initiatives prioritize inclusivity and community engagement, ensuring that projects align with the needs and aspirations of the people, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability.

The Pakistan Army has played a noteworthy and diverse role in contributing to the development, security, and stability of Baluchistan. The province has grappled with security challenges from various fronts, including insurgent groups and separatist movements. The Pakistan Army has taken a leading role in efforts to maintain law and order, executing counterterrorism operations to suppress violence and stabilize the region. Their dedication to securing Baluchistan has been pivotal in fostering an environment conducive to development.

The army has actively participated in numerous infrastructure development projects across Baluchistan, ranging from the construction of roads and bridges to supporting energy projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Their involvement has played a key role in enhancing connectivity and stimulating economic growth. In times of natural disasters and humanitarian crises, the Pakistan Army has been swift in responding, providing relief during earthquakes, floods, and other emergencies, earning the trust and gratitude of many.

Recognizing the significance of education in driving long-term development, the Pakistan Army has initiated various educational programs in Baluchistan. The establishment of schools and colleges, particularly in remote areas, has expanded access to quality education, empowering the youth and contributing to human capital development. The army's medical corps has actively provided

healthcare services, with mobile medical units, free medical camps, and the construction of medical facilities improving healthcare accessibility in the province.

Engaging with local communities, the Pakistan Army has fostered a sense of partnership in Baluchistan's development. Collaborative efforts in community projects, vocational training, and skills development have empowered residents, encouraging self-reliance and entrepreneurship. Given Baluchistan's borders with Iran and Afghanistan, border security becomes a critical aspect of regional stability, and the Pakistan Army plays a pivotal role in ensuring the security of these borders, collaborating with neighboring countries to address transnational security challenges effectively.

The military's involvement extends to the strategic Gwadar Port, where security concerns are closely intertwined with economic development. Their efforts contribute to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, positioning Gwadar as a key hub for regional trade. The Pakistan Army's remarkable role in Baluchistan spans beyond traditional security concerns, encompassing a wide range of development initiatives. From counterterrorism operations to infrastructure development and community engagement, their multifaceted contributions have been instrumental in guiding Baluchistan toward progress and stability.

To be continued



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

Playing With Higher Education in Pakistan - I

With the establishment of Higher Education Commission Pakistan a Myth was created that now higher education will progress in Pakistan and the days of 'dark ages' are over. The Musharraf regime brought Dr Atta Ur Rahman, with a 'remarkable' research paper record of publishing a paper every week for fifty years, to shoulder the project. A new pattern of higher education was introduced and a plan was chalked out to 'develop' higher education in Pakistan.

Over the years new universities were established without proper homework and any future vision. Initially the problem of mushroom growth of HEIs was not visible, however with the passage of time particularly after the adoption of the Vision 2025 new universities were established in almost every district for achieving political gains rather than academic growth and development, and within a couple of years the number reached to 177 universities and HEIs across the country. Under the Vision HEC intends to establish 300 universities in 170 districts of Pakistan including AJK and Gilgit Baltistan.

Neither HEC nor government of Pakistan paid proper attention to the financial needs of these institutions. The state didn't design any comprehensive policy to solve the financial needs of these universities. The government channel funds through HEC Islamabad which cut it into half and eat the bigger piece of the pie and consumes up to 50% as per reliable sources. HEC never reveals his own expenditure and try to keep it under the carpet. However it can be gauged from the budget allocated to five universities of Pakhtunkhwa which includes Universi-

ty of Hazara and Abdul Wali Khan University, KKKUK, University of Malakand and University of Swabi. It suggests that HEC give below 40% of universities budget only (PEPRI Report: 2021).

The financial issues are alarming. Not a single university has adopted DRAs notifications which were twice given in other departments to decrease the salary gap among different departments and institutions. The office barriers at HEC are enjoying luxurious life style with handsome salary packages and other facilities while on the other hand universities are getting bankrupt and as per a recent Dawn's report 20 universities in Pakhtunkhwa are getting bankrupt.

The case of other provinces is not different. Universities in Baluchistan were not in a position to pay salaries a couple of months back. The situation in Azad Kashmir is also the same and faculty members of five universities are on strike for their pay.

The absence of proper mechanism for distribution of funds, centralization of authority and resources controlled by HEC has compelled the HEIs to increase tuitions fees, hostel fees, Transport and other fees which have inversely effected the enrolment in universities. With this Higher education has become rich guys business. Due to higher fees the allocated seats remains vacant in most of the universities.

The universities' administration has also turned to financial managers rather than administrators of Academia. The focus of every Vice chancellor is to complete his tenure with no financial obligations and in most of the case the universities do not hire regular faculty and run their BS programs through visiting faculty member. It is lowering the standards of education.

To be continued

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
64,237.02	64,514.89
Day's High	Day's Low
65,069.43	64,183.52
Index Value	Change
8,869,617,386	-277.87
Percentage	Time
-0.43%	8 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,694.19	+4.58
Percentage	Time
+0.060%	8 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,396.14	-69.97
Percentage	Time
-0.19%	8 Jan, 11:43 am GMT-5

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

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	189.5	191.5
Bahrain Dinar	748.99	756.99
Canadian Dollar	209	211
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Danish Krone	41.3	41.7
Euro	308	310.5
Hong Kong Dollar	36.05	36.4
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	2.05	2.13
Kuwaiti Dinar	912.77	921.77
Malaysian Ringgit	60.53	61.13
NewZealand \$	175.76	177.76
Norwegians Krone	27.33	27.63
Omani Riyal	731.38	739.38
Qatari Riyal	77.37	78.07
Saudi Riyal	74.75	75.5
Singapore Dollar	209.5	211.5
Swedish Korona	27.47	27.77
Swiss Franc	331.42	333.92
Thai Bhat	8.2	8.35
U.A.E Dirham	76.7	77.45
UK Pound Sterling	358	361
US Dollar	281	283.5

Rupee gains 11
paisa against
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed an appreciation of 11 paisa against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs281.28 against the previous day's closing of Rs281.39.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs281 and Rs283.5 respectively.

Special attention

Direction of economy should be corrected: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that some economic sectors will be hit as the world GDP declines.

Policymakers should take action to tackle the situation, with a special focus on rising debt, inflation, and the value of the rupee, he said.

The economy should be headed in the right direction, and development barriers should be taken down to improve the situation, he added.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the global GDP will shrink this year, while there will be a slight improvement in Pakistan's GDP.

Inflation, the rupee, and rising debt need to be given special attention this year, while the growth rate is likely to improve further if energy



prices and political tensions ease.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that many international organisations believe that Pakistan's growth rate will be 2 percent this year, while India's GDP is likely to be 6.2 percent. Pakistan's

GDP may increase from 2% to 2.4% in 2025.

In the opinion of international organisations, the food security situation in Pakistan may be more disturbed this year, which should be taken seriously, he underlined.

The business leader said that global GDP will fall to 2.4 percent this year from last year's 2.7 percent. Reasons for a decline in global GDP include high interest rates, political conflicts, reduced trade, and the possibility of natural disasters.

A decrease in global GDP will also create problems for Pakistan as it will reduce the demand for our products, he said, adding that the economic crisis has caused a lot of pain to the people, so policymakers should correct the direction of the economy during the current crisis like other countries and solve all the problems that are damaging the economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain added that in 1960, the per capita income of West Pakistan was 32 percent higher than the per capita income

of East Pakistan. This gap had increased to 81 percent by 1970.

When Bangladesh was formed, Pakistan was performing better than neighbouring countries in every field, but now its condition has become worse.

Now we can't even imagine development like Bangladesh, which started its journey with a negative 13% growth rate. Currently, the size of our economy is 340 billion dollars, and the size of Bangladesh's economy is 454 billion dollars.

The economy of Bangladesh and other regional countries is expanding rapidly, but our economy is shrinking. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the condition of Afghanistan's currency, which has been devastated by continuous war for decades, is much better than Pakistan's currency.

If our rulers, political leaders, and people do not change their attitude, the time is not far when Afghanistan will also leave Pakistan far behind in economic and social matters.

ICCI shows concerns over Rs.1.4 trillion losses of SOEs in two years

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has shown great concerns over the massive losses of around Rs.1.4 trillion incurred by Pakistan's state-owned entities (SOEs) over the fiscal years 2021 and 2022 as per the latest consolidated report of the Ministry of Finance, which is twice the size of the Public Sector Development Program.

Ahsan Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry stressed that the government should work on a war footing basis for a comprehensive strategy to save the nation from the unnecessary financial burden of these loss-making SOEs. He said that commercial SOEs should be a source of revenue generation for the government, but instead of contributing to the national exchequer, these SOEs have become a big drain on public finance.

ICCI President said that all the major commercial SOEs of Pakistan are running in losses including PIA, Pakistan Steel Mills, NHA, Pakistan Railways, and DISCOs, which should be a cause of concern for the



policy-makers. He said that with this huge amount of Rs.1.4 trillion, the government can establish many hospitals, schools, colleges, and universities and spend on public welfare projects. But, unfortunately, the government has to spend this huge amount to bail out the loss-making SOEs and this situation is depriving millions of people of better health and education facilities.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that PIA alone

has reportedly accumulated losses of over Rs.600 billion, growing at an average rate of Rs.150 billion per annum. He said that PIA's outstanding debt and liabilities have exceeded Rs.350 billion, even after getting several bailout packages from the government. He stressed that the government should privatize all the loss-making SOEs without wasting further time to save the nation from further troubles.

FPCCI invites Chinese investors for investment, JVs in local businesses

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has invited Chinese investors from different sectors of the economy for investment and Joint Ventures in local businesses.

It is the right time for Chinese investors to earn lucrative returns on their investments in Pakistan and FPCCI assures to connect the Chinese investors with the right partners in Pakistan for joint ventures, this was stated by Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office while meeting Chinese investors delegation, said a press release issued here.

The Chinese investors visited FPCCI Capital Office under the leadership of Mr. Zhang Yang, Director Chongjiang Federation of Investment and Commerce and Chairman of Chang Jiang Management Company. On this occasion, Ashfaq Ahmed, Vice President and Chairman of the Coordination Capital Office Malik Sohail Hussain, Tariq Sadique, and others were also present.

Addressing the delegation, Mr. Karim Aziz Malik further said that Pakistan provides attractive incentives and liberal policies for investment in all sectors of the economy for foreign and local investors.

These incentives are available in

special schemes and in traditional as well as non-traditional sectors of the economy which offer great opportunities to the business community to invest in the country and to have maximum profit on their investments, he said.

Chairman Capital Office said that Pakistan is the world's 10th Largest Producer of rice. Pakistan's exports make up more than 8% of the world's total rice trade. Pakistan's export of broken rice to China has increased substantially.

He further said that Pakistan is the world's sole producer of pink Salt and the global market for pink salt is approximately \$12 billion.



Mr. Ashfaq Ahmed, Vice President FPCCI stressed the importance of interaction between business people, expansion of trade, and creation of joint venture investment between both nations.

Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman of Coordination FPCCI Capital Office briefed the participants about business opportunities and investment potential in various sectors of Paki-

stan's economy.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Zhang Yang, Director of CFIC and Chairman of Chang Jiang Management said that Pakistan has made attractive policies, which provide numerous investment opportunities for Chinese investors.

He said that various Chinese companies are working in various fields in Pakistan.

China's high-standard opening-up boosts foreign investment, global prosperity

Xinhua

BEIJING: Despite the rising tide of deglobalization and protectionism, China has remained committed to high-standard opening-up to boost foreign investment, providing much-needed certainty and opportunities to global businesses.

As the world's second-largest economy, the largest trading nation and a major magnet for global investors, China, through wider opening-up, would not only push forward its high-quality development but also create broad opportunities for the world, according to guest speakers at the third episode of the China Economic Roundtable, an all-media talk platform hosted by Xinhua News Agency.

Institutional Opening-Up
As China pursues high-quality development, it has been working to expand institutional opening-up with regard to rules, regulations, management and standards in order to improve the level and quality of trade and investment cooperation.

"Institutional opening-up will be the centerpiece of China's opening to the outside world," said Zhang Wei, vice president of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and

Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce.



Speaking at the roundtable, Zhang added that China's sound economic fundamentals have remained unchanged, with competitive industrial and supply chains, while its advantage of a vast domestic market is expected to strengthen further. "Expanding institutional opening-up will be an effective way and strong support for the country's high-quality development," she said.

In the latest step, the State Council, or the cabinet, issued a comprehensive plan in December 2023 to promote the high-level institutional opening-up of the China (Shanghai)

Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ) by aligning it with high-standard international economic and trade rules.

A total of 80 measures were outlined in the plan including initiatives to facilitate trade in goods and services, promote digital trade and enhance intellectual property rights protection, among others.

Expanding institutional opening-up serves as a reassurance for foreign investors, as the country focuses on further easing market access as well as ensuring fair treatment and competition, said Zhao Yugang, an official with the Shanghai Pilot FTZ management committee.



China's Foreign Ministry said Thursday that in 2024,

China will continue to expand high-standard opening-up, further ease market access, and share with the world new opportunities brought by the country's modernization.

Easier Market Access

Under the policy of high-standard opening-up, China has adopted a series of measures to ease market access and level the playing field, so that foreign companies can enjoy a better business environment in the country.

Last year, the country renewed the Catalogue of Industries Encouraged for Foreign Investment by adding 239 items, marking a record high.

The country is also actively seeking to continuously lower

the threshold and reduce the costs and risks associated with foreign investment. Items on the negative lists nationwide and for pilot FTZs have been cut to 31 and 27, respectively.

In the financial sector, the country has implemented over 50 financial opening-up measures in recent years, including eliminating foreign ownership limitations in the banking and insurance sectors and lowering access criteria for foreign investors.

The Central Economic Work Conference held at the end of 2023 stressed efforts to foster new drivers of foreign trade, consolidate the overall performance of foreign trade and foreign capital, and expand the intermediate goods trade, service trade, digital trade and cross-border e-commerce export.

The tone-setting meeting also noted that market access for telecommunications, medical and other service industries shall be eased, while efforts should be made to align with global high-standard economic and trade rules, resolve issues such as cross-border data flow and equal participation in government procurement, and make "Invest in China" a popular choice.



The meeting has sent "a positive signal" that China will continue to expand opening-up and further attract foreign investment, which will give foreign investors stable expectations, and hedge against the "uncertainty" of the external environment while bringing the "certainty" of opening-up, said Zhu Bing, director of the commerce ministry's department of foreign investment administration. Looking ahead, Zhu said the country has plenty of favorable conditions to draw foreign investment, adding that the country will open the door wider to the world. According to him, multinationalals will continue to expand their footprints in China and share the dividends of China's high-quality economic development as "investing in China means investing in the future."

Better Business Environment
China has been stepping up efforts to create a top-notch

business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and internationalized.

On Jan. 1, 2020, the country implemented the milestone Foreign Investment Law, which includes a comprehensive and fundamental set of legal standards for foreign investors and aims to better protect their rights and interests. With unified provisions for the entry, promotion, protection and management of foreign investment, the law has addressed the concerns of foreign firms and provided facilitation and ease to foreign investment.

According to a report released by the Development Research Center of the State Council, China has maintained its position as the world's second-largest recipient of foreign investment since 2017 and remains one of the most attractive investment destinations globally.

Zhang Wei said China's attraction for foreign investment now lies in its comprehensive advantages, which include suitable cost performance, well-developed supporting facilities and an optimized business environment as well as a wealth of opportunities.

Zhang added that the country can not only offer a conducive business environment for foreign investors to operate and thrive but also provide ample space for further development and profitability.

Diplomatic Focus host farewell

Pakistan is among Italy’s top 10 trade partners: Ambassador

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Mian Fazal Elahi, Chief Editor and publisher of monthly Magazine “Diplomatic Focus” host a farewell in the honor Italian Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese. He completed his tenure in Pakistan. Mian Fazal Elahi is very famous his hospitality in diplomatic and business community. Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of Austria, Andrea Wicke, Czech Ambassador Ladislav Steinhübel, the Pakistan people’s Party (PPP) Senator Palwasha Khan, Defence Attaché of Italy and his wife, Barrister Ayesha and Kifayat Malik were also present on the occasion.

Among the New Year celebrations the Diplomatic Enclave has indulged in these days (though very few envoys are there and majority has left for Christmas/New Year vacation) farewell parties for the outgoing Italian couple, Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese and Albana Planeja is one prominent feature.

This is because of the couple’s active participation in the diplomatic events during these three years and Mrs Albana’s role as President of the Islamabad Foreign Women Association (IFWA) is also a major factor.

So there is no end to invitations from friends and the poor couple is left wondering which one they should accept and which one they should politely turn down. But as the saying goes “Italians have their hearts in their sleeves, a fire in their soul and a mouth they cannot control” it is not easy for them to refuse a friend’s invitation, that too a parting one.

A number of diplomats—mostly European nations’ envoys, Canada and the UK too—were among the guests and they had made it a point to come and formally say thank you to the wonderful couple that has always been in the forefront to organize many charity and cultural events introducing the Italian cuisine and culture,



fashion and investment.

We wish you Excellency and Madam, endless successes and joys for the days to come and we thank you in return for what you have done during your tenure as Ambassador, said Mian Fazal Elahi in the farewell party he hosted for the outgoing couple.

It is pertinent to mention here that during the Italian ambassador’s tenure, trade between Pakistan and Italy touched new heights and it is for the first time that the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) formally opened its office to promote bilateral trade.

Ambassador Andreas while terminating his stay in Pakistan a memorable period said he was taking along wonderful memories of friendship, discoveries and excitement. My wife

and I will cherish these memories and will stay in touch with the friends we have made here in Pakistan, he said.

About the ‘remarkable’ bilateral trade (touching \$2 billion in 2022) with Pakistan the ambassador highlighted that apart from \$ 1 billion exports nearly \$1 billion was in home remittances from the 300,000 Pakistanis living in Italy. This has made Italy’s Pakistani community the largest expatriate community within the European Union, he said.

“Italy remains among the top 10 exporting countries for Pakistan in the world, and the third major trade partner in the EU,” he said. Both are in favor of the trade liberalization scheme at the World Trade Organization and contest the idea of unilateralism” he said.

The couple along with their cute daughter is scheduled to leave the country sometime near the middle of January and the new ambassador who is a woman will also join around the same time.

Mian Fazal Elahi said that the worth of bilateral trade of Pakistan with Italy up to increasing. Mian Fazal Elahi said that the worth of bilateral trade of Pakistan with Italy up to increasing. He talking to daily the spokesman on the occasion.

He said that Pakistan’s main exports to Italy include bedlinen, woven fabrics of cotton, articles of apparel, leather items, rice, footwear, and cotton etc. Pakistan imports pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, electrical machinery,



mineral fuels and articles of plastics from Italy.

“It is really good that Italian investors and businessmen are taking interest in fashion and marble sectors of Pakistan in particular.

If Italy could help Pakistan get the latest technology required in these sectors then we can perform much

better which in a way would also benefit Italy”, he added.

Mian Fazal Elahi said Under CPEC, special economic zones are being built up. If Italian companies take interest in these zones then Pakistan can become a lucrative destination for them, he maintained.

Photos by Raja Farid

Raja Ampat

The Ultimate Pristine Paradise in West Papua



Spokesman Report

Far from the view-blocking skyscrapers, dense and hectic concrete jungles, congested traffics, flickering electric billboards, endless annoying noises, and all the nuisances of modern cities, you will find a pristine paradise where Mother Nature and warm friendly people welcome you with all the exceptional wonders in Raja Ampat, the islands-regency in West Papua Province. With all the spectacular wonders above and beyond its waters, as well as on land and amidst the thick jungles, this is truly the place where words such as beautiful, enchanting, magnificent, and fascinating get its true physical meaning.

The Emperor of Four

Situated off the northwest tip of Bird’s Head Peninsula on Papua, the most eastern island of the Indonesian Archipelago, Raja Ampat or literally meaning ‘The Four Kings’ is an archipelago comprising over 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals surrounding the four main islands of Waigeo, Batanta, Salawati, and Misool. The name Raja Ampat itself is believed to derive from a legend where a woman found seven eggs, with four of them hatch and become the kings of the four main islands, while the other three became a woman, a ghost, and a stone.

For underwater enthusiasts, Raja Ampat definitely offers some of the world’s ultimate experience. The territory within the islands of the Four Kings

is enormous, covering 9.8 million acres of land and sea, home to 540 types of corals, more than 1,000 types of coral fish and 700 types of mollusks. This makes it the most diverse living library for the world’s coral reef and underwater biota.

According to a report developed by The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International, around 75% of the world’s species live here! Raja Ampat’s sheer numbers and diversity of marine life and its huge pristine coral reef systems are a scuba dream come true – and a fantastic site for snorkelers too.

As you embark on your dive here, the phrase “Attention to detail” takes on new meaning as pigny seahorses swim around your fingers. Manta Rays and wobbegongs will glide right by you. Schools of Tuna fish, giant trevallies, snappers, batfish, and even barracudas are there to complete your underwater “meeting list”. Not to mention the friendly assistant of the dugong, and a busy colleague, the turtle. Down at the sea floors, giant sea clams measuring to over one meter in length truly offers one of kind close encounter sensation.

Obviously, there are a lot of diving and snorkeling spots to choose from in these vast waters. Among these are at the Kabui Passage (the very narrow passage between Waigeo and Gam Island crossed by the renowned British explorer, Alfred Russell Wallace in 1860), around the Arborek Island’s Dock, Sawandarek, Yenbuba, Friwen Wall, and many-many more.

While its underwater splendors are



beyond exceptional, the landscape above the surface is equally breathtaking. As if it was carefully designed and placed with such aesthetic, the rock islets amidst the clear blue water and bright blue sky in Piaynemo offers some of the most spectacular sceneries on the face of the earth. Looking down from the top of the hill, it almost seems that Mother Nature painted her finest artwork and offers a glimpse of paradise. Further at Wayag Island, you will also find an amazing rock islets formation in an even bigger scale.

The incredible wildlife of Raja Ampat

does not stop underwater. Amidst the many thick jungles within the islands, one can still find various bird species including the spectacular Cendrawasih or the bird of Paradise. There is also an endemic species of cuscus, the Waigeou cuscus or Waigeou spotted cuscus (Spilocuscus papuensis) which is a species of marsupial in the family Phalangeridae.

The Local Ambience

Aside from its endless fascinating natural attractions, Raja Ampat also offers the distinct hospitality of the Papuan. At the Arborek Tourism

Village, you can stay at a number of homestays and mingle with the locals whilst observing their daily life and unique traditions. When a group of tourists arrived, they usually perform a traditional welcome dance right at the dock and entertained the ‘guests’ with various Papuan folk songs.

With all its spectacular wonders inland, on the shore, and beyond the waters, and distinct serene ambience that you rarely find anywhere else on earth, Raja Ampat truly offers the ultimate experience ones can only dream of. So, whether you are an avid diver,

occasional snorkeler, or just someone who appreciated the beauty in every sense, Raja Ampat welcomes you to the Heaven on Earth.

Get Here

To get to Raja Ampat you should first take a flight from Jakarta or Makassar to Sorong. There are small aircraft to take you to Waisai, the capital of the district of Raja Ampat, or alternatively, you can take a ferry from the port of Sorong to the islands.

Established in 2012, the Marinda Airport in Waisai, the capital town of Raja Ampat Regency served flights to and from the city of Sorong. Wings Air served daily flight between Sorong and Raja Ampat, while Susi Air flight twice a week on Monday and Saturday. Please be advised that Marinda Airport is still under development and expansion and located relatively far from any facilities. So be sure to pack some snacks and drinks as you await your return flights to Sorong.

Alternatively, there are ferries available to get you from Sorong and Waisai and vice versa. The ferry trip will take about 2 to three hours.

As the main hub to Raja Ampat, the Domine Eduard Osok Airport in Sorong serves flights to a number of major cities in Papua and Indonesia including Manokwari, Jayapura, Ambon, Makassar, Manado, and Jakarta.

Garuda Indonesia operates daily flights between Jakarta-Sorong. As do Sriwijaya Air and Nam Air, Whereas Batik Air flies twice daily between Jakarta and Sorong.

Liyanage's 95 trumps Ngarva's five-fer as Sri Lanka edge Zimbabwe

A Sports

COLOMBO: Young batting all-rounder Janith Liyanage emerged as the difference-maker for Sri Lanka with his gutsy 95-run knock which lifted them to edge Zimbabwe in the second ODI on Monday.

Set to chase a modest 209 on the tricky surface of the Rana Premadasa Stadium here, the home side had to grind hard to taste the victory.

Sri Lanka lost eight wickets in the process and knocked the winning runs with just six balls to spare.

The hosts had a horror start to the pursuit as they lost two wickets — Avishka Fernando and Sadeera Samarawickrama (four each) — with just 16 runs on the board in the third over.

Skipper Kusal Mendis was then joined by talented Liyanage at the crease and the pair looked to anchor the run chase with a cautious partnership.

But they could only 35 runs in 69 deliveries before Richard Ngarva got Mendis caught on 17 to halt Sri Lanka's recovery.

The home side then began to lose wickets at regular intervals but Janith Liyanage kept the scoreboard ticking single-handedly.



The right-handed batter, however, had an agonizing end to his gritty knock as he fell just five short of his well-deserved maiden hundred.

He remained the top-scorer for Sri Lanka with a 127-ball 95 which included six boundaries and two sixes.

His dismissal had brought Zimbabwe back into the game as they only needed two more wickets while Sri Lanka were required 37 runs in 45 deliveries.

Dushmantha Chameera and Jeffrey Vandersay, however, batted sensibly for their match-winning ninth-wicket partnership and steered their side over the line with important cameos.

Chameera scored a cautious 18 off 25 deliveries while Vandersay scored a brisk 19 off 18 balls.

Richard Ngarva led the bowling charge for Zimbabwe and picked up five wickets. Sikandar Raza bagged two wickets while

Blessing Muzarabani made one scalp.

Opting to bat first, Zimbabwe could only raise 208 runs before getting bundled out in the 45th over despite Craig Ervine's 82.

The visitors at one stage were cruising towards a big total when they were only two down with 112 runs on the board in the 25th over with Milton Shumba (26) and Ervine on strike.

However, Shumba's dismissal off Maheesh Theekshana in the same over sparked a collapse and Zimbabwe, as a result, slipped to 182/5 in 36.5 overs when their mainstay Ervine also walked back.

Craig Ervine remained the top-scorer for Zimbabwe with an anchoring 82 off 102 deliveries, laced up with nine boundaries and a six.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe's collapse intensified when Ryan Burl (31), their second top-scorer, perished in the 39th over with the scoreboard reading 190/6.

The visitors lost their remaining four wickets for just 18 runs and were eventually booked on a paltry 208.

Theekshana was the pick of the bowlers for Sri Lanka, picking up four wickets while Chameera and Vandersay took two each.

Steve Smith can break Brian Lara's 400 record, says Michael Clarke

A Sports

LAHORE: Former Australia captain Michael Clarke pinned massive hope on experienced batter Steve Smith, stating that the latter could break Brian Lara's record of a marathon 400-run knock.

David Warner's retirement from Test cricket sparked a selection dilemma for Australia Cricket as the current Test champions, now seek potential contenders to replace the Southpaw at the top of the order.

While there are several contenders from their domestic circuit including Cameron Bancroft, Matt Renshaw, and Will Pucovski, who also have a modest international experience in their arsenal.

Meanwhile, Australia's World Cup-winning captain Michael Clarke threw his weight behind Steve Smith to take up that role, expressing his hopes that the right-handed batter can do wonders as the opener.

"If he wants to do it, I think they will allow him to do it. Listening to Patty Cummins' quotes, I think it's a simple



swap," said Clarke on ESPN Around the Wicket Podcast.

"I think Cameron Green is going to come in to open the batting for David Warner unless Steve Smith wants to do it. If he does, they might go Steve Smith to open and Cam Green at No.4 or Green

to No.6," he added.

Michael Clarke further lauded Smith's abilities and stated that it would not be a surprise if he broke Brian Lara's record of 400 not out.

"He [Smith] is that good a player. If might be that challenge he's looking for. If

he opens, he will be the best opener within 12 months," stated Clarke.

"Don't be surprised if he breaks Brian Lara's 400 record because he's that good and now he's got the whole day."

Steve Smith, on the other hand, also spoke about the possibility of him taking the top spot in Australia's batting order, during an interview with ABC Radio after the conclusion of Day 3 of the third Test against Pakistan, stating he was pretty keen for the role.

"I'm actually happy to go up the top. I am pretty keen if that is what they want to do," said Smith.

"I'm sure the selectors and 'Ron' [head coach Andrew McDonald] and Patty [captain Pat Cummins] will have a chat after this game, but I am certainly interested. For sure," he added.

It is worth mentioning here that Smith has never opened for Australia in his 13-year-long Test career. The right-handed batter has scored 9,514 Test runs at an average of 58.01 and with the help of 32 centuries. He currently bats at No.4, where he averages 61.50.

Zeeshan Bhatti lifts National Tenpin Bowling Championship title

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rising bowler Zeeshan Bhatti from Karachi lifted the Men's Singles title of the 16th National Tenpin Bowling Championship after beating Waqar Abdul Qadir Parkh in the final here at Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park on late Sunday.

Ali Nauman and Faisal Feroze ended third and fourth, respectively. In the final, Zeeshan scored 358 points, while Waqas Parkh collected 331 points. It was Zeeshan's first appearance of in the national championship. At the end of the final, Mohammad Riaz Khan Turkalani along with Hamad Khan and President of Pakistan Ten Pin Bowling Federation (PTBF) Ijaz-ur Rahman distributed prizes among the players.

Ali Saldira and Ibrahim Saldira won the men's doubles event. In the men's



doubles event, Shabbir Lashkarwala and Aleem Agha secured the second position while Ayan Bhatti and Waqas Parkh finished third. Similarly, Ibrahim

Saldira won the amateur title while Tayyab Bilal and Azazur Rahman secured the second and third positions respectively. Umar won the men's deaf title, while

Wajid and Adeel ended second and third respectively. In the women's deaf competition, Zahra got the first position. Noor Al-Ain took the second position, and Asma remained third. Commenting on his performance, Zeeshan Zeeshan said: "I am happy with my performance. It was a tough competition as the top 16 players were featuring in it."

"It was my first participation and winning the title in first appearance is a great achievement for me at the national level. I will remain focused on my game and will work hard to represent Pakistan at international level." Waqas Parkh said: "It was a thrilling final showdown. Zeeshan did very well to annex the title. I congratulate him on this victory. The first round score was leveled 159-159 but he did well in the second round and hit a couple of strike to win the championship."

Pakistani shooter Kashmala Talat qualifies for Paris Olympics 2024

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistani shooter Kashmala Talat qualified for the Paris 2024 Olympics after winning a silver medal at the Asian Shooting Championship on Monday.

In a statement on X, Pakistan Olympics Association announced that Talat ranked second in the Women's 10m-Air-Pistol event with a remarkable score of 236.6 points at the Asian Shooting Championship in Jakarta, Indonesia.



PAF T20 Cricket C'ships: Bahawalpur, AJK register easy wins



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bahawalpur pulled off a comprehensive 10-wicket victory over Abbottabad in PAF T20 Cricket Championships Trophy at PAF Cricket Ground E-9 Islamabad on Monday. Batting first, Abbottabad scored 184 runs, courtesy to Naemullah, who scored 84 runs.

In reply, Bahawalpur chased the target in just 9.4 overs without any loss with opening pair Moin and Rashid scoring unbeaten 97 and 75 runs, respectively. Moin was named man-of-the-match for his superb innings.

In the second match, Islamabad won the toss and opted to bowl first against Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). AJK scored 251 for the loss of three wickets. Nisar scored 112 not out and Kamran Akhtar scored 73 runs for them. In reply, Islamabad could score 210 runs for the loss of three wickets, conceding defeat by 41 runs. Matiullah was the top scorer with 70 runs.

Nisar was awarded man-of-the-match for his brilliant century. On Tuesday, AJK will take on Abbottabad, while Bahawalpur will face Islamabad.

Pakistan team reach New Zealand for T20

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan cricket team on Monday reached Auckland from Sydney for a five-match T20I, commencing on January 12. The team would start training from Tuesday, a spokesman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement.

Pakistan team reach New Zealand for T20 series Pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi has been named the captain, with wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Rizwan his deputy. The PCB posted videos and photos of the players on its social media platforms, where they can be seen carrying their baggage at the airport.



Birmingham City hire Tony Mowbray to replace sacked Wayne Rooney

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Birmingham City hired Tony Mowbray on Monday as their new manager to replace sacked Wayne Rooney.

Former Sunderland and West Brom boss Tony Mowbray agreed a two-and-half-year deal with the Championship strugglers.

He is Birmingham City's third manager this season after the dismissals of John Eustace and Rooney.

"I am excited to be joining Birmingham at this time. I can't wait to get back on the training pitch and start working with this talented group of players," Mowbray said.

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"I know from personal experience how passionate Blues are, home and away, and I'm looking forward to having their full support for the team starting on Saturday at home to Swansea."

Tony Mowbray was sacked by Sunderland in December after 15 months in charge, despite guiding them to the play-offs last season.

Former Manchester United and England star Wayne Rooney was axed by Birmingham City after just 83 days in charge, having replaced Eustace in October.

Wayne Rooney managed just two wins in 15 games as Birmingham City slipped from sixth in the Championship to 20th.



Kevin De Bruyne 'nowhere near' his best after Manchester City return

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Kevin De Bruyne admits he is "nowhere near" his best yet after the Manchester City midfielder made his return from a five-month injury absence.

De Bruyne came off the bench in the second half of City's 5-0 win against Huddersfield in the FA Cup third round on Sunday.

Playing for the first time since the opening day of the Premier League season against Burnley in August, the Belgium star was given the last 33 minutes and was quickly back in the old routine as he

set up City's fifth goal for Jeremy Doku.

De Bruyne had hamstring surgery after aggravating a problem that had affected him in the latter stages of last season's treble-winning campaign.

Although he is back to fitness, Kevin De Bruyne said he needs time to get up to full speed.

"I worked hard and I'm happy to be back. I felt good so I'm pleased about that but I'm still nowhere near where I need to be," he said.

"It's a good continuation of the process of the last few weeks. I feel good, the movements were good, I felt comfortable in what I was doing and that was the only

thing I was really looking for.

"To get that ovation after being away for five months gives you more of a boost. There will be moments I want to play every game but I know in the back of my mind I need to take care of myself."

"It's good being January where we have fewer games. I don't expect to be playing too many games and Newcastle next week is a big game so I'll expect to be back on the bench."

Kevin De Bruyne was greeted like a returning hero by Manchester City fans at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

In his absence, City have been short of their best for much of

the campaign.

With De Bruyne back in the fold, they will be expected to step up their bid for an unprecedented fourth successive Premier League title, as well as challenging to retain the Champions League and FA Cup.

While the injury was a blow for De Bruyne, he believes the revitalising rest may be a long-term boost given his heavy schedule for club and country in recent years.

"To be honest I enjoyed it in a way. At the beginning it was a big blow but I knew I was going to be out for four or five months," he said.

"So after the first reaction I



thought to myself I needed to work hard when I'm working, but then I could enjoy the things

that I've not been able to do with my family and friends.

"Maybe it was good to refresh

a little bit. It's not like I needed a break but I took it, to turn a disadvantage into an advantage."

Meeting

PN Delegation headed by Vice Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami visits Saudi Arabia for Expert Level Talks between Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces.



Photo: Online

Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces hold Expert Level Staff Talks

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami alongwith 6 members dele-

gation visited Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Expert Level Staff Talks between Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces. During the visit, Vice Chief

also called on Commander of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces HE Vice Admiral Fahad Bin Abdullah Al Ghofaili. Matters of mutual interest and avenues to further

enhance bilateral cooperation were discussed during the meetings.

Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces enjoy extremely close relations

and cooperate in number of operational and training matters prominently the regular conduct of major maritime exercise Naseem Al Bahr.

Chinese FM refutes joint statement on U. S.-Japan-ROK Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue

Xinhua

BELJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman on Monday refuted a joint statement released by the Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue between the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Spokesperson Mao Ning made the remarks at a daily press briefing in response to a query on the joint statement, which was released on Jan. 6 by the U. S. State Department. It expressed the three countries' concerns over China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and "escalatory behavior," and said that the United States, Japan and the ROK "will continue their trilateral maritime security and law enforcement cooperation in accordance with international law." The three countries also reaffirmed that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are indispensable to security and prosperity in the international community. "China has noted the U. S.-Japan-ROK dialogue and its resulting joint statement,"



Mao said, expressing serious concerns about the statement's rhetoric on China. "We firmly oppose the attempt from these countries to cobble together exclusionary groupings in the name of cooperation, grossly interfere in China's internal affairs, attack and smear China and stoke confrontation and antagonism," the spokesperson said. She said that the situation in the South China Sea is generally stable. China is committed to safeguarding its own territorial sovereignty, maritime rights and maritime interests, while managing differences properly with countries directly concerned through dialogue and consultation. "Certain non-regional countries have sought to flex their muscles and incite confrontation in the South China Sea, which is not conducive to peace and stability in the region," she said.

NCA £190m scandal: Perpetual arrest warrants issued for six accused

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Court has issued perpetual arrest warrants for six accused in the National Crime Agency (NCA) £190 million scandal. As per details, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) submitted asset details of the six accused and the court granted their perpetual arrest warrants in NCA £190 million scandal. Furthermore, the Proprietary Assets of the six accused were also frozen. The accused who were declared absconders include Farhat Shehzadi, Shehzad Akbar, Zulfi Bukhari and Zia Mustafa Naseem. Earlier, former PTI Minister Zubaida Jalal made startling revelations before National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in National Crime Agency (NCA) £190 million scandal. Zubaida Jalal told NAB in her statement that she urged the cabinet for investigation into this matter but former prime minister Imran Khan didn't listen to her. She further revealed that the NCA £190 million was approved despite objections from cabinet members and the minutes of the meeting were kept secret.

Minister Dr. Al-Maliki calls on his German counterpart

Spokesman Report



RAMALLAH: His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Dr. Riyad Al-Maliki urged his counterpart, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, to press Israel for a ceasefire and the need to urgently bring basic humanitarian needs to the Gaza Strip. This came during his meeting with Ms. Biryuk today, Monday, at the Ministry's headquarters, where he informed her of the catastrophic conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the ongoing genocidal war committed by the occupation forces against innocent civilians for the third month, destroying all components of its humanitarian presence in the Strip, and transforming it, according to international certificates, into an uninhabitable place. He added that Netanyahu and his ruling right-wing coalition are choosing to escalate and prolong the war to achieve their interests and strategic colonial plans and prolong their stay in power. Al-Maliki touched on the

ongoing violations that our people in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are subjected to by the occupation and its settlers, including daily incursions into Palestinian cities, villages and camps, and the killing of Palestinian civilians, including children. He added that in the last 24 hours, the Israeli occupation forces killed 11 Palestinian citizens in various areas. From the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In addition to the escalation in the pace of settlement, the latest of which was the approval by the extreme right-wing Netanyahu government of the colonial plan called "Silicon Valley," as well as the approval of the establishment of a garbage dump in northeastern occupied Jerusalem, which leads to undermining any opportunity to implement the principle of the two-state solution and embody the Palestinian state on the ground.

Pakistan strongly condemns terrorist attack in Kabul's Dasht-e-Barchi area

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack that took place in Dasht-e-Barchi area of Kabul on 6 January 2024 and resulted in loss of several precious lives and multiple injuries. The Government and the people of Pakistan extend their heartfelt condolences to the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) and the people of Afghanistan over the loss of innocent lives and pray for the early recovery of the injured. Pakistan reiterates its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stands in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan in this hour of grief.

Mushaal blasts Modi govt for subjecting Kashmiris

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick lashed out at the fascist Narendra Modi-led government for a fresh and much-intensified wave of terrorism aimed at subjecting the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to collective punishment like people of Gaza for their just demand of the UN-mandated right to self-determination. The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, in a statement said that the hindutva regime crossed all limits of barbarism and fascism to silence the dissenting voices in the occupied valley. She called upon the UN bodies, human rights organisations and world powers to take cognizance of the Indian state terrorism, as the IIOJK people were being subjected to widespread kill-

ings, physical violence, illegal detentions and deprived of all fundamental rights. Mushaal pointed out that the people of the scenic valley was being subjected to collective punishment for their sole of crime of demanding the UN-sponsored plebiscite. She noted that the RSS-inspired Modi government had no respect for law and constitution, which was clearly reflected from his government inhuman treatment of the dwellers of the occupied region.

The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment went on to say that top Kashmir leadership including her husband Yasin Malik were kept in illegal detention in fake, fabricated and politically-motivated cases in order to keep them away from the people aimed at defusing the just movement of right to self-determination. However, she made it clear that the notorious Indian authorities had been using such brutal, unlawful and inhuman tactics for the last over seven decades but they could not dampen the courage of freedom fighters. Mushaal urged the United Nations Secretary General and human rights organizations to take notice of the Indian worst state terrorism and should take steps on war-footing basis so as to ensure early and immediate settlement of the long-delayed Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UNSC resolutions, which was pre-requisite for lasting peace in South Asia.

Soldier martyred in North Waziristan gun battle: ISPR

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army soldier embraced martyrdom on Monday during an exchange of fire with terrorists in North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the fire exchange took place in North Waziristan district where Pakistani troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. Resultantly one terrorist was arrested in injured condition.

The Army media wing added, 41-year-old Havaladar Muham-

mad Zahir having fought gallantly, embraced martyrdom.

The statement said that sanitisation of the surrounding areas is being carried out to neutralise any terrorists found in the area.



Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve, it further said.

Pakistan has seen an uptick in terror activities, especially in KP and Balochistan, after the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November.

Pakistan to Host Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference & Single Country Exhibition in Cairo

PPA

CAIRO: Pakistan is set to strengthen economic ties with Egypt as it hosts the 4th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference (PATDC) & Single Country Exhibition (SCE) in Cairo. Dr. Gohar Ejaz HI, SI, Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries and Investments, alongside the Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Ahmed Samir, Minister for Trade & Industry of Egypt, will inaugurate the event at the Egypt International Convention Center on January 9th, 2024.

Marking the first occasion of Pakistan bringing over 100 companies to Egypt, the delegation, led by the Federal Minister, will be in Cairo from January 9th to 11th, 2024. The

official component of the delegation comprises Secretary for Commerce, Chief Executive of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Secretary Board of Investment (BOI) and other senior officers from Ministry of Commerce, BOI and TDAP. This highlights Pakistan's commitment to fostering strong economic relations with Egypt.

Mr. Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, Chief Executive of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, extends a warm invitation to the business and trade community of Egypt and the MENA region to attend the conference and exhibition. He emphasizes, "We are showcasing the best products produced by Pakistan in Egypt."

NIMA chief briefs DG DEPO on maritime affairs

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Vice Admiral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed HI(M), President National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) called on Major General Asad Nawaz Khan, HI(M), Director General, Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) on 08 Jan 24. The DG was briefed about NIMA's

functioning and ongoing multifaceted research and advocacy initiatives including the conduct of NIMA's international seminars i.e. PIMEC and IMS. Both heads of organizations ensured each other support in advancing the national interests of Pakistan through cooperation and collaboration.

Crackdown launched against May 9 'fugitive' suspects

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The authorities have launched a crackdown against the 'absconding' suspects, who are not yet arrested in cases pertaining to May 9 riots, wherein military installations were attacked after PTI founder Imran Khan's arrest. The operations and investigation teams of Lahore Police were tasked to arrest the 'absconding' suspects, who according to officials, are at least 382. The police claimed that almost 14 cases under provision of terrorism were registered in Lahore after the May 9 riots, while another 49 cases were registered under other provi-

sions. The police further claimed that at least 1,035 suspects were arrested under terror charges, while 884 accused were arrested in other cases. According to the officials, 741 accused were brought to justice in cases under terrorism provisions. Moreover, 318 accused in cases under other provisions were judicially held, while all other accused were granted bail or discharged in cases. According to the notification, the caretaker federal law and justice minister will be the convener committee. Other members of the committee include ministers of interior, information, and human rights.

Faizabad commission seeks a month-extension to complete probe

ISLAMABAD: The commission constituted to investigate the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) sit-in staged at Faizabad Islamabad in 2017, has sought a month-extension from Supreme Court (SC) to complete the probe. According to details, the commission submitted a formal request to Supreme Court (SC), seeking a month-extension to complete the probe and identify those who planned, financed, and supported the sit-in six years back. Meanwhile, the commission also summoned former Defense Secretary Lt Gen (retd) Syed Zameer-ul-Hassan, former DG Rangers Major Gen (retd) Azhar Nadeem, and former interior secretary Major (retd) Azam Suleman.

Illegal foreigner not permitted to stay in Pakistan: Secy Interior

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary of Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani on Monday said that illegal foreigners would not be allowed to stay in Pakistan. The foreigners could stay in this country with valid documents, he said while chairing a meeting held here. The meeting was attended by representatives of NADRA, Passport Office, provincial governments and other concerned institutions. The secretary said that return of illegally staying foreigners to their country is one of the government's priorities. He further stated that the process of repatriation of illegal aliens would continue till the objectives were achieved.