Barkat Rice Mills

Joint sitting should focus on law & order: Shazia Marri

Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with President of the Republic of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu in Beijing on Wednesday. The two heads of state announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Xi said that the people of the two countries established friendly ties through the ancient Maritime Silk Road, undertook productive cooperation... (Details on Page 5)



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Pak-Qatar Joint Aerial Exercise Pakistan Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force contingents at the opening ceremony of Air Exercise Zilzal-II.

Pak-Qatar Joint Aerial Exercise 'Zilzal-Ii' Kicks Off in Qatar

Spokesman Report

in joint aerial Exercise Zilzal-II, commencing in Qatar. First II air exercise is the 2nd in the series of these exercises, hosted by State of Qatar. The exercise is one of the most complex joint air force exercises, which aims at promoting interoperability between the two allied nations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air cise will mimic a near realistic muscles against Eurofighter jets Staff, Pakistan Air Force, premairspace with utmost proficiency. Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force aerial warfare scenario coupled of Qatar Emiri Air Force in their ised on smart inductions and Exercise Zilzal-II serves are all geared up to participate with real-time opportunity for first ever face-off in an aerial focused indegenization. The as a platform to foster greatthe participating Air Forces to exercise. The successful inductest their operational readiheld in the year 2020, Zilzal- ness. Exercise Zilzal-II, aimed the J-10C fighter jets in PAF's a significant milestone in PAF's at improving joint planning fighter fleet and their particimechanism, is considered as a historical benchmark to further solidify the existing defence partnership between the two brotherly countries.

During the exercise, PAF's with modernization plan of Air

while providing an opportunity newly inducted state-of-the-art Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed capable of meeting evolving chalfor shared learning. The exer- J-10C fighter aircraft will flex its Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air lenges and defending Pakistan's tion and operationalization of pation in yet another international exercise in an unprecedented short span of time is a remarkable achievement. The feat has been achieved in lines

participation of these fighter er understanding, cooperation jets in the aerial exercise marks journey towards a technologically advanced and formidable air force. The rapid acquisition and operationalization of these advanced fighter aircraft showcases PAF's dedication to main-

taining a cutting-edge force,

and friendship between Pakistan Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force, contributing to regional stability and security. Pakistan Air Force remains committed to its mission of safeguarding the skies, strengthening international alliances and promoting peace through mutual cooperation.

PTI gets back 'bat' symbol as PHC annuls ECP order

👺 Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Wednesday got back 'bat' as its election symbol after the Peshawar High Court (PHC) nullified

the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) order of stripping the party of using the 'bat'

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf moved Peshawar High Court to challenge the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision declaring the intra-party election as null and void and revoking their electoral symbol

A two-member Peshawar High Court (PHC) bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Arshad Ali announced the verdict.

The PHC while nullifying the order of the ECP, allowed the PTI to contest elections on 'bat' symbol. The verdict further directed the electoral body to upload the PTI's certificate on its website.

Cabinet approves reconstitution of committee on missing persons

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Wednesday approved the reconstitution of its committee on missing persons headed by the law minister.

The reconstitution is being done on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior. The position became vacant after the resignation of the previous head of the committee, Sarfraz Bugti.

The cabinet meeting, chaired Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also approved reguralisation of 227 Education and recommended nals across the city.



by the Federal Public Service Commission in line with the Islamabad High Court's decision of 2018.

For the construction of the Supreme Court Karachi Registry building, the cabinet on the by Caretaker Prime Minister recommendation of Ministry of Law and Justice as endorsed by the Supreme Court Building daily-wage teachers as proposed Committee, approved the transby the Federal Directorate of fer of federal courts and tribu-

It approved the summary regarding the operationalization of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board so as to fulfill the legal requirements for the appointment of chief executive, in line with the decisions of the Islamabad and Balochistan

The cabinet gave in principle approval to the Canna-

high courts

bis Control and Regulatory Authority Ordinance 2024 and forwarded it to the Cabinet Committee for Legislative Cases. Under the authority, neces-

sary guidelines would be formulated for the cultivation, extraction, refining, and medicinal and industrial use.

Justice Mazahar Ali Naqvi resigns as SC judge



跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mazahar Ali Naqvi on Wednesday resigned as

Supreme Court's (SC) judge. Naqvi, who is facing misconduct' allegations in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) has forwarded his resignation to the President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi.

It was an honour to work as Lahore High Court and Supreme Court judge, Naqvi said and added he could not continue discharging his duties.

"I, therefore. Effective today resign as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan," the letter added.

Two soldiers martyred, as many terrorists killed in Lakki Marwat

👺 City Desk

LAKKI MARWAT: Two soldiers embraced martyrdom and as many terrorists were killed in a gun battle in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday, the military said.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the fire exchange took place between security forces and terrorists, in which army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, resulting in the successful neutralisation of two terrorists, Aftab alias Malang and Masood

Both of these individuals were actively involved in various terrorist activities against security forces and were implicated in the targeted killings of innocent civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from them.



in the operation, Sepoy Muhammad Afzal (29 years old, resident of district Bhimber, Azad Kashmir) and Sepoy Ibrar Hussain (27 years old, resident of district Mansehra), fought gallantly but tragically embraced Shahadat during the intense exchange of fire, the ISPR said.

The military's media wing said sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate 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,"

PM for establishing global fund to ensure worldwide health security



跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesdav stressed the need to explore mechanisms for global funding that could support nations in need, ensuring that no one was left behind, in the global pursuit of health security. "The call for a sufficiently funded, widely supported country medium-term roadmap, as highlighted in the International Health Regulations Core Capacities evaluation, resonates globally. We must invest in open, transparent, and multi-sectoral processes to strengthen buy-in and commitment at all levels," the prime minister said while addressing the inaugural session of the first ever two-day Global Health Security Summit 2024.

Highlighting the importance of enhancing coordination in health sector beyond the borders, Prime Minister Kakar said a "One Health" approach, recognized the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.

PM Kakar also called for collaboratively working towards establishing international standards for food safe-

to ensure the highest level of protection for populations worldwide. "A cross-sectoral approach to managing antimicrobial resistance requires international collaboration," he said adding "We need a unified front against antimicrobial resistance, with coordinated efforts to develop and enforce global standards for the responsible use of antibiotics and infection prevention," he remarked. Highlighting the need of collective response to address external and internal health challenge, he said no state in the world could meet the health challenges all alone.

Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan said The summit aimed at collaborating with global leaders to ensure equity-based pandemic preparedness financing for low and middle-income countries and mutual exchange of knowledge and rich experience with member states and experts around summit thematic areas which focuses on vaccine equity, patent deregulation and transfer of technology. He said the ongoing global health challenges had highlighted the significance of working together, exchanging information, and taking united action.

Current situation in country better than 2008, 2013 elections period: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday reiterated the commitment that general elections would eventually be held on February 8 in the country.

that in the past elections were conducted even in the worst

Murtaza Solangi pointed out that the current situation in the country was much better than the years 2008 and 2013. He said that the government had been in constant contact with the Election Commission of Talking to the media, he said Pakistan since the first meeting



the daily basis and his visit was part of the routine communicasioner Raja Sikandar Sultan. He expressed the optimism that security situation in the country would further improve in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their election campaigns now.

tion with ECP was underway on the ECP would provide information regarding the foreign media teams' arrival in Pakition process. He said he had not stan for election coverage. To met the Chief Election Commis- a question, he said that election activities would hopefully pick the momentum after the announcement of the candidates of the political parties as the coming days. He said that all parties were commencing

ECP to unveil preliminary candidate lists on Thursday

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The preliminary lists of candidates will be released by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday, and candidates can opt to withdraw their nomination papers until

According to the spokesperson of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the process of hearing appeals

against the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers by the appellate tribunals for the general elections 2024 concluded Wednesday. These tribunals are being headed by judges of the High Courts.

Electoral symbols will be assigned on Saturday, coinciding with the release of the final list of candidates on the same day. The general elections are set for the 8th of the next

Chinese delegation expresses interest in investing in Azad Kashmir mineral sector: PM

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation led by the President of the Chinese Mineral and Mining Department, Mr. Lee called on Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq here today. During the meeting, the Chinese delegation expressed its interest in investing in different mineral deposit areas in Azad Kashmir. Speaking on the occasion, the AJK premier, while referring to the investment-friendly atmosphere in the region, said, "Azad Kashmir is a very safe and peaceful region for foreign investment".

He said that Chinese engineers and workers have been working and higher than the Himalayas. He alongside the local workers at different hydel-power generation projects mir would encourage Chinese invesin different areas of Azad Kashmir. tors besides providing them with all



Referring to the time-tested friendship between Pakistan and China, the PM said that both nations enjoy a cordial relationship that is sweeter than honey said that the government of Azad Kash-

the required facilities.

He said that the large scale presence of minerals makes the region's mineral sector more lucrative for foreign investors. He said that various companies were engaged in mineral exploration and many more have expressed interest in this field. He said that the govern- of the government of Azad Kashmir.

ment was providing all necessary facilities for the investors. The Prime Minister assured the visiting delegation that his government would provide maximum facilities for the Chinese investors. The Chinese delegation appreciated the investment-friendly policies

Monumento

ISLAMABAD: Visitors are taking interest in engraved paintings of the "Heroes of Pakistan Movement" on wall at Pakistan Movement Park in Federal Capital.



AJK minister Bazil Naqvi meets with Punjab caretaker CM Naqvi

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi met Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi. The two leaders discussed the current situation of Occupied Kashmir, political situation and issues of mutual interest. Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi said that the people of Pakistan have an emotional attachment to the issue of Kashmir until the Kashmiris get their right to self-determination, we will continue to support the Kashmiri people politically, diplomatically and morally. Qauid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Army, highlighted the issue of Kash-



had said that Kashmir is the artery of Pakistan.

He said that General Sved Asim Munir, the Chief of the Pakistan

mir in his visit to America. He said that the people of Pakistan and Kashmiris are one. There are two dimensions, the people of Punjab have an emotional attachment to their Kash-

miri brothers. He assured Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi that the Punjab government will fully cooperate with the Azad Kashmir government in all fields. Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi. Thanked the caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab and said that Kashmiris love Pakistan dearly.

Photo: Online

He also stressed on the need to increase institutional cooperation between the government of Punjab and Azad Kashmir. Sved Bazal Ali Naqvi said that Punjab is a big brother and I have emotional attachment to Lahore. It is the city of saints, the thinker Pakistan is the city of Hazrat Allama Iqbal, therefore Lahore lives in our hearts he added

US redefining bilateral relations with Pakistan

KARACHI: Ms Shelley Saxen, Political and Economic Chief of U. S. Consulate General, stated that the U.S. Pakistan bilateral relationship is strong and continues to expand and our interest is in helping Pakistan grow its economy. She added that the private sector must become more proactive to resolve Pakistan's branding problem. She was addressing the Members of the Board of Directors of Employers Federation of Pakistan.

Ms Saxen further said that U. S. make a lot of positive impact and it is important for business organizations to visit the USA and interact not only with their counterparts but also with government officials. It is the business



business delegations to the community that can do pragity, Women Empowerment, He also appreciated the hard matic advocacy and lobbying Skills Development, Nationin the USA. Ms Saxen complimented EFP for its vision and for initiating and working on impressive projects to address

al Skills Passport, and Labor Standards Compliance. Elijah Jatovsky, Political

Officer of U. S. Consulate Disability, Occupational Safe-General, said that he has ty and Health, Gender Equalrecently arrived in Karachi.

work being done by EFP. He was specifically interested in knowing the positive efforts of disabled workers in enhancing organizations'

Earlier, Muhammad Feroz

Alam, Vice President EFP, in his welcome address, highlighted the efforts of EFP in formulation of Sindh Labor Policy, Gender Equality Policy, and a new Social Contract that are the need of the hour.

Majyd Aziz, Former President EFP, said that EFP has embarked on the process to meet diplomats and sensitize them about EFP activities.

Syed Nazar Ali, Secretary General EFP, gave a detailed powerpoint presentation about EFP, its role, initiatives, and achievements.

EFP Board Members who were present were Khalid Junejo, Humayun Nazir, Mohsin Tabani, Hasnain Mazhar, Sadaf Hatif, Mehmood Arshad and Mustafa Diwan, Fahd Zaidi and Qaseem Saeed of USCG Economic and Commercial Section also attended.

NBP Digital launches new mobile app donation feature

KARACHI: The National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) has embarked on a new initiative with the NBP Digital App to streamline and improve $\,$ the digital customer experience for account holders, including both conventional and Aitemaad Islamic banking. This innovative feature in NBP Digital app allows users to make donations effortlessly with just a single tap, anytime and anywhere.

NBP customers can now donate to leading NGOs including Edhi Foundation, Saylani Welfare Trust, Chippa Welfare Association, Indus Hospital, and others. This innovation reflects NBP's commitment to providing a simplified customer experience with the help of digital technology, enabling the Nation's bank to further accelerate its technological innovation.

Kashmiri morale rises after Army Chief's Kashmir statement: Tabinda Munir

跨 Abdul Majeed Tahir



MUZAFFARABAD: prominent educationist, political and social figure Ms. Tabinda Munir has said that the morale of the entire Kashmiri nation has risen after the statement of the Army Chief regarding the Kashmir issue. The Army Chief spoke strongly for the Kashmiris and has shaken the conscience of the international organizations by highlighting the Kashmir issue at the global level. The entire Kashmiri people stand with the forces of Pakistan. She expressed these views while

talking to journalists. She said that Pakistan Army has made eternal sacrifices for the elimination of terrorism from Pakistan. The sacrifices of the martyrs of Pakistan Army will always be remembered, I salute those who sacrificed their holy blood for the protection of the homeland.

The Army Chief has made world leaders and organizations realize the seriousness of the Kashmir issue. General Asim Munir, during his recent visit to America, has done his best by drawing the attention of the world leaders to the seriousness of the Kashmir issue and the Palestinian issue. He said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved according to the resolutions of the Security Council and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. There can be no peace in South Asia until the long-standing dispute of Kashmir is resolved.

DS Railway Multan inaugurates the New Five Star Dining Car

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Good news for the people of South Punjab and railway passengers. Divisional Superintendent Railway Mahmood Rehman Lakho inaugurated the new five star dining car with Bahauddin Express train. Now the passengers will have the best dining environment and



can enjoy the superior facilities of this dining car. Up to 45 passengers can eat at a time in the upgraded dining car. The car's menu includes more than 40 dishes, including barbecue and pizza and countless other dishes. An oven has also been installed in the dining car to keep in view the demand for hot fresh bread. This dining car has been installed in Bahauddin Zakaria Express, this dining car will be operated under the private company S Jameel Company and very soon new dining cars will be installed in other trains as well. DS Railway Multan Mahmood Rahman Lakho thanked CEO Railway HQ Lahore Aamir Ali Baloch for this special effort who first chose Multan Division for this facility.

Demonstration held to express solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people



😂 Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Under the auspices of Mayo National Solidarity Council of Pakistan, a demonstration was held to express solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people and to protest against Israeli atrocities. They also raised placard banners expressing solidarity with the Israeli atrocities and the Palestinian people. They also shouted slogans. America and its followers should know that Israel's oppression will not continue anymore. Israel is oppressing the oppressed Palestinians on the orders of the United States. Rahenge said that the brutality of children and women in hospitals are the worst examples of Israeli atrocities, which civilized nations should play their role to stop.

Multan-Under the auspices of Mayo National Solidarity Council of Pakistan, Alhach Chaudhry Ghulam Rasool Mayo, Salimur Rehman Mayo, Chaudhry Mohammad Azam Mayo are leading the demonstration of solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people and protesting against Israeli atrocities.

Peoples support to Peoples Party in general elections: Gilani



跨 Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that the people-friendly policies of the People's Party are in front of the entire nation. He will express these thoughts in Geelani House. With the efforts of former chairman Sheikh Nadeem Akbar, Sheikh Bilal Akbar, Sheikh Akbar Sheikh Asghar Akbar, Vice Chairman Qasim Belah Sheikh Sohail Akbar along with his colleagues called the Muslim League-N as Good Bye, the leadership of the People's Party and Syed. Having full confidence in Yusuf Raza Gilani, on the occasion of joining the People's Party, the candidate of the People's Party, the candidate of Provincial Constituency 218, Haji Rana Sajjad Hussain was also present. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani announced full support and election campaign for the candidates of People's Party and People's Party. By taking steps, God willing, he will use all his abilities to fulfill the trust of the people by succeeding in the general elections.



15º – 23º Clear

Namaz Timings Maghrib . 6:45 pm

EMERGENCY

EIMEIZOEIZO I	
Rescue (Police)	. 15
Bomb Disposal	. 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/	
Islamabad1122 8	i 16
Emergency Ambulance 112	2 &
& Rescue Services 4451	122
Motorway Police92660)44
Motorway Police9270601-	-20

Women Police Ctations

Statio	113
Islamabad	9222590
Rawalpindi	. 9270601-20

ENQUIRY	7
Edhi Ambulance	
PIA Flight Info	11
PIA Cargo	928097
Dailway Inquiry	11

HOSPITALS		
CAA	9281092	
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489	
Railway Exchange92	270831-5	
Railway Inquiry	117	
PIA Cargo	280979	
PIA FUGIIL IIIIO	114	

CMH	5611111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864

AIOU admissions to commence from Jan 15

₿ PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Igbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing the admissions for the Spring 2024 semester (first phase) across the country, including AJK and GB, on January 15, 2024 while admissions in second phase will start from March 1. Admissions in first phase include Matric, FA, I. Com, certificate courses, BS (face to face), MPhil, and PhD programs. Teacher training programs, Associate Degree (BA) Post Gradi ate Diploma and BS (ODL) programs will be offered in second phase.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has instructed the regional heads of university to enable facilitation centres to support students. Students will be able to use computer and internet facilities in the regional offices of the university. SWIFT Centers have also been established across the country to provide information and

support to students. Prospectuses and admission application forms for all the programs will be available online on the university website (www. aiou.edu.pk) on January 15, 2024. Admission in BS (face to face) MPhil and PhD programs can only be applied online whereas admission application forms for matriculation, intermediate and I Com can be submitted manually as well as via online mode.

World divided between champions of justice and oppressor sympathizers: Mushaal

跨 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has highlighted the prevailing double standards in the global discourse on Kashmir and Palestine. She was addressing as a chief guest at a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine, organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America in Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad. The event, which saw participation from distinguished speakers including Ambassador of Iran in Pakistan H. E. Reza Amiri Mughaddam, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, and Ambassador Naila Chohan, also drew a significant audience comprising students, media professionals, and members of civil

Mushaal expressed a stark reality by stating that the world appeared to be divided between those who support oppressive regimes and those who advocate for the rights of the oppressed. She said that in the contemporary global landscape moral values and principles took a back seat to economic opportunities, power dynamics, and materialistic gains. She pointed out the shifts in U.S. policies

towards Kashmir and Palestine, emphasizing that these shifts were dictated by their own strategic interests rather than a steadfast commitment to democratic principles, human rights, and the right to self-determination.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister pointed out escalating deterioration of the global human rights situation over time. She lamented that genocide had seemingly become an unfortunate new norm in international affairs. She highlighted the plight of the people in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and underscored the challenges faced by minorities within India due to oppressive policies of the fascist regime. She asserted that addressing the challenges in Kashmir and Palestine is indispensable for global peace and lasting security.

Mushaal emphasized the imperative of formulating innovative strategies for the freedom movements in IIOJK and Palestine in wake of the alarming trend in IIOJK and Palestine of silencing peaceful voices through various means. She raised concerns regarding the unjust and dubious trial of Kashmiri Hurrivat Leader Mohammad Yasin Malik by India and condition of other Hurriyat leaders jailed in India.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister witnessed the artwork displayed in the



of Kashmir and Palestine under occupation and recorded her remarks on the wall the seminar organizers, terming it a signif-

art gallery, depicting the lives of the people of solidarity for people of Kashmir and Palestine. She also extended her thanks to

icant stride in educating the new generation about the pressing issues of Kashmir

Truck Art

ISLAMABAD: A skilled painter is busy in making the traditional truck art on the truck at Pirwadhai



Fruit tree planting campaign in Islamabad underway to fulfill dream of green Pakistan

Muhammad Amin

ISLAMABAD: National Highway and Motorway Police HT Headquarters started planting campaigns in Islamabad, more than 30 fruit trees donated by AIMS Horticulture and gardening club H 8/1 Islamabad were planted. Deputy Superintendent Sanam Hayat said that the purpose of plantation work is to fulfill the dream of a green Pakistan and an effort to get rid of environmental pollution. According to the details, a fruit tree planting campaign was held at the headquarters of National Highway and Motorway Police H8 Islamabad in which more than thirty different fruit trees donated by AIMS rated by the Deputy Superin- Hayat, by planting saplings



Education System were planted. tendent of National Highway The plantation was inaugu- and Motorway Police, Sanam

police officers were also present. The chief guest said that plantation has become the basic need of the whole world, especially Pakistan, because trees are absolutely necessary to cope with the changing climatic conditions.

Regarding plantation of fruit trees, he said that this is a unique idea which will fulfill the dream of Green Pakistan and also make fruits available for people to eat. Abdul Waheed Khan, General Secretary of Private Schools Association Islamabad, said that the provision of plants for planting by Aims Education System is an example to be emulated. Can

with her own hands. Senior

Gender discrimination in Pakistan is rooted in culture

ISLAMABAD: Gender discrimination in Pakistan is a deeply ingrained societal issue that continues to impact the lives of women across various domains. Despite legislative strides aimed at promoting gender equality, pervasive cultural norms and practices contribute to the persistence of discriminatory practices.

One glaring area of concern is education. While efforts have been made to improve access to education for girls, disparities persist. Societal expectations often prioritize boys' education, leading to a gender gap in literacy rates. Additionally, girls may face early marriages, denying them the opportunity to pursue their education further.

In the realm of employment, women in Pakistan encounter challenges ranging from limited job opportunities to unequal pay. Traditional gender roles confine women to domestic responsibilities, hindering their participation in the workforce. Even in sectors where women are employed, they frequently face discrimination and harassment, creating a hostile work environment.

Access to healthcare is another dimension where gender discrimination manifests. Cultural norms can restrict women from seeking medical attention, leading to inadequate care for maternal health and family planning. Moreover, discriminatory practices within healthcare settings can deter women from seeking help, exacerbating health disparities.

Efforts to address gender discrimination involve both legal and societal dimensions. Legislative measures exist to safeguard women's rights, but effective enforcement remains a challenge. Raising awareness about gender equality, challenging stereotypes, and promoting women's $\,$ empowerment are crucial steps towards fostering a cultural shift.

Civil society organizations play a vital role in advocating for women's ghts and providing support structures. Educational campaigns, community engagement, and initiatives promoting economic opportunities for women contribute to dismantling the deeply rooted structures of gender discrimination.

XL Screens, XL Action: Elevate Your Entertainment with the TCL XL Collection

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's No.1 LED TV brand, proudly presents the much-anticipated XL Collection—a range of TVs spanning from 75 to 98 inches. This collection is strategically tailored to captivate a diverse audience, including avid gamers, sports enthusiasts, those who love hosting grand parties, and individuals with a penchant for an opulent lifestyle. The promise of BIGGER screens, FASTER action, CLEAR-ER visuals, and an IMMERSIVE entertainment experience forms the cornerstone of this innovative collection.

At the forefront of the XL Collection are the P745 and C755 models, carefully curated to offer impressive sizes and deliver an unparalleled immersive experience. With the 98-inch and 85-inch P745, as well as the versatile C755 ranging from 55 to 75 inches, TCL ensures that these feature-packed giants resonate with the discerning preferences of the target audience. Majid Khan Niazi, TCL Pakistan Head Of Marketing, passionately states, "The TCL XL Collection transcends beyond mere screen sizes; it's a journey into immersive home entertainment. These TVs redefine the boundaries of what's possible, delivering an unparalleled experience at irresistible prices."

Win-Win mindset crucial for effective climate change negotiations

№ PPA

ISLAMABAD: While the outcome of COP28 is being criticized, there is no good or bad COP for climate; what is in driving economic growth. This calls important is applying the Win-Win for the governments to develop policies mindset which is crucial for effective in consultation with the private sector. climate change negotiations, said Director, SDPI. He was speaking at COP28: From Consensus To Realization" organized by SDPI here today, according to a press release.

He said that the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels is a yet welcome decision and hoped that the government of Azerbaijan will follow in the footsteps of the UAE government and will continue to build this ultimately leading to fossil fuel phase out. He said that this decision will open new avenues for investment, technology development, global stock

take and greater global cooperation. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Mr. Khazar Farhadov address-

action cannot move forward without economic development which underlines the key role of the private sector

Shedding light on the impact of Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive conflicts on the environment, he said that Azerbaijan aims for a clean enviseminar titled "SDPI's Response To ronment realizing the grave environmental impact of conflicts experienced by Azerbaijan.

He informed that the government of Azerbaijan has termed 2024 "Green World Solidarity Year" and plans to increase the share of renewable energy by 30% and inhibit greenhouse gas inhibition to 35% by 2040 and 40% by 2050. He stressed that the country momentum on fossil fuel transition is ambitious to deliver on its national climate commitments and aims to strengthen multi-lateral partnerships and global cooperation which is also evident from the plans to export 4GW of renewable energy to Europe

through the Black Sea. Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel,

ing the session said that climate Chairperson of BOG SDPI, said that COP28 succeeded in operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund, and a total of US\$800 million was pledged by countries as the baseline. COP28 also recognized that the global community had not delivered in any area including mitigation, adaptation, adoption of science and technology, and weak partnerships but the decision to transition away from fossil fuels is a big success.

Dr Shafqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director, Policy Outreach, SDPI said that financing for adaptation and disaster risk reduction cannot continue in silos anymore. He said that the outcome of COP depends on what negotiators want and not what academia, and developing countries' experts suggest in a political economy context.

Syed Qasim Shah, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI said that 36% of emissions arise from the dairy sector alone, and delivering on the Global Methane Pledge without an elaborately designed plan is not possible. A critical reality is that 40% population in

Pakistan is insecure 12% is severely insecure and small farmers are already financially burdened with adopting

new technologies to adapt to climate He stressed that technology transfer and global financial cooperation

remain in this aspect. Dr Khalid

Waleed, Research Fellow SDPI, said mechanism for funds transfer and that in terms of diversity and inclusivity, the COP28 can be regarded as a brilliant success. However, in the context of transitioning away from

fossil fuels met with mixed responses. Zainab Naeem, Associate Research Fellow stressed that developing the

pressure to meet conditionality's must be alleviated considering developing countries' GHG share and financial constraints. She urged the public sector to present a comprehensive roadmap for the private sector to increase the flow of investments.

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: Almas Ayoub Sabir Vice Chairman: Asim Nazir Ahmad Managing Editor: Naveed Ahmad Khan Head Editorial Advisory Board: Amjad Mehmood Bureau Chief Karachi: Saleem Zaman Khan. (mszk786@gmail.com

(afrazalishah@gmail.com) Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.

Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11. Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.

Syed Afraz Ali Nazish

Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town. spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com Email:

0346-5008408 Whatsapp:

Bureau Chief Lahore:

UN reports global unemployment to rise this year

lobal unemployment is expected to rise this year, with growing inequality and stagnant productivity also a cause for concern on the economic horizon, the UN labour agency said

Just over five per cent of the world's workforce is without a job, according to the World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2024 report from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

This is a better situation than before the pandemic, but it isn't set to last, as an extra two million people are expected to be looking for a job over the next 12 months,

The UN agency's findings chime with a new World Bank report released on Tuesday indicating that the global economy is on track for the slowest half-decade of growth in 30 years.

In addition to the uncertain jobs market outlook, ILO noted that the majority of the world's richest nations had seen living standards eroded, because of inflation, which is now in decline in many major economies.

The erosion of living standards resulting from inflation is, "unlikely to be compensated quickly", said the

ILO experts underscore that there are significant differences between higher and lower-income countries. While the jobs gap rate (the number of jobless who are looking for work) in 2023 was 8.2 per cent in richer nations, it stood at 20.5 per cent in poorer countries.

Similarly, while the 2023 unemployment rate stuck at 4.5 per cent for wealthier countries, it was 5.7 per cent in low-income countries.

ILO Director-General, Gilbert Houngbo warned that "falling living standards and weak productivity combined with persistent inflation create the conditions for greater inequality and undermine efforts to achieve social

"And without greater social justice we will never have a sustainable recovery." He called for workforce challenges overall to be tackled quickly and effectively.

Despite quickly declining after 2020, the number of workers living in extreme poverty (earning less than US\$2.15 per person per day) grew by about a million in

Income inequality has also widened, the trends show: the erosion of real disposable income, "bodes ill for aggregate demand and a more sustained economic recovery", notes the report.

Despite various policy initiatives to tackle the underground economy, the number of people employed informally is expected to remain static, accounting for around 58 per cent of the global workforce in 2024.

5-Strategic Communications to derail elections... - I

has orchestrated a coordinated effort to obstruct or delay the impending elections through a multifaceted strategic communication strategy. This intricate approach, executed subtly, revolves around five pivotal narratives: prioritizing financial and economic stability over electoral processes, justifying the interim government's continuity citing security concerns, leveraging adverse weather conditions to advocate for postponement, associating the pursuit of justice for the 9th May incident with election timing, and crucially, emphasizing that aggrieved parties won't accept election outcomes, potentially plunging the country into chaos. This narrative underscores the rationale for postponing elections until all parties consent to accept the election results, portraying it as a crucial step towards averting potential unrest and chaos.

From a Public Relations perspective, each narrative serves as a strategic tool to shift focus away from the electoral process, weaving a complex web of reasoning to legitimize the government's intent to circumvent or postpone the elections in favor of its continuation.

Communication Strategy 1 begins by addressing the severity of the financial and economic situation in Pakistan. Emphasize the challenges, such as debt burden, inflation, and economic instability, impacting the daily lives of citizens. Stress the crucial need for stability

what might happen without immediate corrective measures. Illustrate the interim government's proactive steps and policies taken to stabilize the economy. Highlight achievements and ongoing efforts to mitigate the crisis, emphasizing that they are promising but need as a sacrifice for a stable and prosper-

ous future. Emphasizing the need for unity and cooperation, suggesting that delaying elections is a collective decision for the greater benefit of Pakistan.

Leveraging Communication Channels by utilizing television, radio, newspapers, and

social media to disseminate the message widely and consistently. Arrange speeches by influential figures to reinforce the narrative of financial emergency and the necessity of stability. Using Slogan: "Ensuring Stability, Securing Tomorrow: Let Our Economy Flourish First!" Visual Imagery: Infographics, charts showing economic indicators improving, visuals depicting stability leading to prosperity.

The SC campaign-2 begins by prioritizing citizens' safety above electoral processes, emphasizing the broader regional implications of Pakistan's security situation. The postponement of elections is positioned as a measure

he interim government to ensure the well-being and prosperity to safeguard citizens' lives, reinforcing "Postponing Elections for Public Safety of the nation. Present a bleak picture of that public safety remains paramount. Continuous engagement through regular updates and open dialogues with stakeholders, including security forces and international partners to ensure transparency, address concerns, and gather support for this crucial strategy. Various media platforms are used

time to yield positive results. Frame it extensively—television, radio, newspapers, and social media—to disseminate

a consistent message about the critical need for stability. Key influential figures are engaged to deliver speeches reinforcing the narrative. Visual aids, including infographics showcasing pressing security challenges. It vividly depicts Pakistan's volatile secu-

rity landscape, emphasizing the gravity of significant domestic, regional, and international security threats with the slogan "Terrorism and Instability." The campaign advocates for a "Security First Approach," stressing that conducting elections amid such turmoil risks citizen safety and democratic integrity. It aims to showcase the interim government's unwavering commitment to national security, highlighting ongoing efforts to combat terrorism and restore stability.

Strategic Communication-3. The Campaign Title: "Prioritizing Public Safety: Postponement Due to Severe Weather Conditions". The Key Message:

Amid Harsh Winter Weather". Illustrating the severity of the ongoing winter weather across the country, emphasizing its adverse impact on public safety and accessibility to polling stations. Emphasize that the extreme weather conditions will deprive a significant portion of the population from exercising their fundamental right to vote. Frame the decision to postpone elections as a necessary step to prioritize the safety and well-being of citizens. Highlight the dangers posed by severe weather, such as transportation hazards, potential accidents, and health risks, making it unsafe for citizens to travel to polling stations. Emphasize the government's duty to ensure citizens' safety and well-being above all else. Position the postponement as a temporary delay, ensuring that citizens will have the opportunity to exercise their voting rights when weather conditions improve. To achieve the results, utilize television, radio, newspapers, and social media to ensure a consistent and clear message about the weather-related challenges and the decision's necessity for public safety. Keep the public informed about weather improvements and any developments regarding rescheduling elections. Sample Slogan: "Safety First: Weathering the Storm for a Fair Election Tomorrow!. Visual Imagery: Visuals portraying harsh winter weather conditions, safety precautions, and images illustrating citizens'

difficulties in reaching polling stations. To be continued



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

Disqualification on Anti-Army Propaganda - I

Abdul Basit Alvi

ropaganda aimed at undermining or conventional battles to include hybrid threats such can have profound and far-reaching consequences on military institutions and the nations they serve. Campaigns against the military through propa-

ganda can erode the morale of military personnel. A demoralized army is less effective and may struggle to maintain the necessary cohesion to perform its duties efficiently. Discontent within the ranks tive perceptions may strain diplomatic relations can lead to a breakdown of trust among soldiers and compromise the unity required for successful military operations.

Negative propaganda can discourage individuals from considering a career in the military. The portrayal of armed forces in a negative light may dissuade potential recruits, leading to challenges in recruitment efforts. Additionally, existing military personnel may be less likely to reenlist if they perceive a lack of public support or if they are disheartened by anti-army sentiments.

A weakened military, influenced by anti-propaganda, can pose a significant threat to national forces may struggle to respond adequately to exterto protect its borders, citizens, and vital interests. Anti-propaganda campaigns often strain relations between the military and the civilian population. A Civil-military relations are crucial for a functioning democracy, and disruptions caused by anti-propaoration needed for the well-being of the nation.

security. A less effective and demoralized armed nal threats or emergencies. The erosion of the military's capabilities jeopardizes the nation's ability divide between the armed forces and the public can hinder effective communication and cooperation. ganda efforts may impede the harmonious collab-In the modern era, warfare has evolved beyond

distorting the image of armed forces as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and psychological operations. Anti-propaganda can leave a nation susceptible to these unconventional forms of warfare, as a weakened military may struggle to defend against non-traditional threats that exploit vulnerabilities created by negative narratives. The international standing of a nation's armed

forces can be influenced by anti-propaganda. Negaand weaken alliances, making it more challenging for a country to collaborate on shared global challenges. The tarnished image of the

military can hinder international cooperation, affecting a nation's influence on the world stage.

Anti-propaganda ed at armed forces is not merely a matter of tarnishing reputations; its consequences extend to the very core of national security and societal stability. Recognizing the impact of such campaigns is

crucial for fostering a society that values and supports its military. A nation's armed forces, when respected and supported, can better fulfill their critical roles in defending the nation, preserving peace, and contributing to the overall well-being of society. Understanding the implications of anti-propaganda allows societies to work towards ensuring the strength and resilience of their armed forces.

In numerous nations across the globe, the military is seen as the safeguard of national security, integrity, and the embodiment of patriotic duty. Consequently, many countries have enacted stringent measures against individuals involved in propaganda or disinformation campaigns intending to

damage the reputation of their armed forces. Singapore, known for its disciplined and highly efficient armed forces, enforces strict regulations

against anti-army propaganda. The city-state place es great importance on national service and views the armed forces as vital to its security. Those found guilty of participating in propaganda against the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) may face legal consequences, including fines and imprisonment. The government's dedication to presenting a positive image of the military underscores its belief in the necessity of a robust and respected defense force.

China, boasting one of the world's largest military forces, has rigorous laws against activities that could tarnish the image of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The Chinese government regards the PLA as a symbol of national strength and unity. Involvement in anti-army propaganda is considered a threat to social stability, and individuals found guilty may face severe legal consequences. China employs a combination of legal measures and strict media control to prevent the dissemination of information deemed detrimental to the military's reputation.

Turkey, a nation with a rich military history, takes a strong stance against anti-army propaganda. The Turkish Armed Forces are seen as the guardians of the country's secular principles, and any attempts to diminish their standing result in legal repercussions. Laws addressing offenses related to defamation and disinformation against the military are rigorously enforced, emphasizing the importance of maintaining respect for the armed forces.

Russia, emphasizing its military heritage, has implemented strict regulations to counter anti-army propaganda. The Russian Armed Forces are considered a source of national pride and a symbol of strength. Legal measures are in place to prevent the spread of false information and propaganda against the military. In Russia, anti-army sentiment is often linked to threats to national security, and individuals found guilty may face legal consequences.

To be continued

FDI, debt-trap diplomacy: How to balance growth and sovereignty - I

Sohail Ahmad Baber

and debt-trap diplomacy are two terms that have become increasingly familiar in recent times. FDI is the investment by a company or individual from one country into another, while debt-trap diplomacy refers to the practice of a country using its financial leverage to gain political concessions. These terms have now become intertwined in the global political and economic discourse, with many charging that China's

Belt and Road Initiative has adopted a debt-trap diplomacy strategy.

To understand these two terms I have to discuss about Foreign direct investment (FDI), which plays a significant role in fostering economic development by attracting capital, creating employment

opportunities, and extending technological advancements. It also stimulates economic growth, enhances competitiveness, and boosts the transfer of skills and knowledge. Foreign investors typically provide financial and technical assistance for infrastructure projects such as power plants, transportation networks, and telecommunication systems that benefit the host country and facilitate other economic activities. FDI brings capital investment that creates job opportunities for the host country's labor force, thereby reducing unemployment and increasing per capita income. It also triggers the development of nearby service sectors such as transportation, restaurants, and

oreign direct investment (FDI) hotels, providing additional job opportunities. FDI can bring efficiency into the local economy by introducing innovative technologies and management techniques that lead to improved productivity. This encourages quality and cost-effective production which can then be exported, increasing the country's competitiveness in the global market. FDI in export-oriented industries provides access to larger markets and sophisticated means of production, helping to boost the

export capacity of the host country. It also brings the transfer of skills and knowledge, encouraging capacity-building and workforce development. The knowledge and skills gained from foreign investors can be used in other sectors of the economy, thus promoting further growth and diversification. It also generates tax revenues

for the host country's government, which can then be used for social and economic development programs such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. FDI in agriculture promotes rural development by bringing in new production methods, technology, and management skills to smallholder farmers, increasing yields and farm profitability. It also helps in reducing inequality and poverty issues in rural areas.

Now I have to discuss debt trap diplomacy. Debt-trap diplomacy is often seen as a strategy employed by powerful nations to take control of the resources and political systems of less developed countries.

To be continued

China, Maldives upgrade ties as presidents hold talks

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with President of the Republic of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu in Beijing on Wednesday.

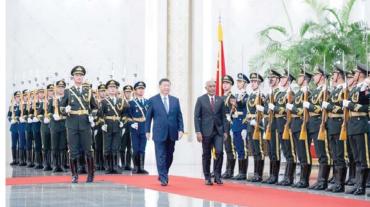
The two heads of state announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partner-

Xi said that the people of the two countries established friendly ties through the ancient Maritime Silk Road, undertook productive cooperation in the construction of the Belt and Road and other areas in recent years, and set a good example of equality, mutual assistance and mutual benefit between countries big and small over the past 52 years of diplomatic ties.

"Under the new circumstances, China-Maldives relations face a historic opportunity to build on past achievements and forge ahead," Xi said, noting that the elevation of ties is necessary alongside the growth of bilateral relations and meets the expectations of the

Xi spoke about the hard work and valuable experience of the Communist Party of China over the last century. He stressed that China respects and supports the Maldives in exploring a development path suited to its national conditions, and supports the Maldives firmly in safeguarding its national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national dignity.

China stands ready to exchange governance experience with the Maldives, strengthen the synergy high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and set a new benchmark for the China-Maldives friendship, Xi said.



He called on the two sides to strengthen cooperation in such areas as the economy, trade and investment, agricultural parks, and the blue, green and digital economies. He also called for expanded cooperation on marine ecological and environmental protection, as well as strengthened peopleto-people exchanges. He said China will support more Maldivian students to study in China and promote more direct flights between the two countries.

Xi noted that the two sides should strengthen multilateral communication and coordination to safeguard genuine multilateralism and the common interests of developing countries, and build a community with a shared future for humanity to make the world more peaceful, secure and prosperous.

He said that China is willing to work with the Maldives to implement the consensus reached at the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai, and to of development strategies, advance promote the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

pay his first state visit to China with a great achievements and experienced

number of important cabinet ministers and become the first foreign head of state that China has hosted this year, fully demonstrating the great importance both sides attach to the development of bilateral relations.

Muizzu said the Maldives pursues the one-China policy firmly. Firm mutual support in safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is a solid foundation for the sustained and sound development of Maldives-China relations.

Noting that this year marks the 10th anniversary of President Xi's historic state visit to the Maldives, Muizzu said that China has provided a significant amount of valuable assistance to his country's economic and social development. He said the Maldivian people have benefited greatly from the Belt and Road Initiative, citing the Maldives-China Friendship Bridge as a symbol of the bond between the two peoples.

During his visit to Fujian Province, Muizzu said he was honored to Muizzu said he has witnessed China's



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan hold a welcoming ceremony for President of the Republic of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu and his wife Sajidha Mohamed in the Northern Hall of the Great Hall of the People prior to the talks between Xi and Muizzu in Beijing, capital of China, Jan. 10, 2024. Xi held talks with Muizzu, who is paying a state visit to China, in Beijing on Wednesday. (Xinhua/Huang Jingwen)

the excellent leadership of President Xi. al Development Initiative, the Global action plan to establish the China-Mal-He said the Maldives looks forward to taking the elevation of ties as an opportunity to expand new channels of cooperation and promote high-quality partnership in the construction of the Belt and Road, and that it welcomes more Chinese tourists to visit the country.

Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, all of which were put forward by President Xi, and is willing to communicate and cooperate closely with China on international and regional affairs, Muizzu noted.

The Maldives supports the Glob-state witnessed the signature of an economies.

dives comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, as well as cooperation documents on the construction of the Belt and Road, disaster management, the economy and technology, infrastructure, people's livelihoods, green After their talks, the two heads of development, and the blue and digital

Israeli right targets Palestinian civilians in its bid for unbreakable rule: Palestinian Ministry

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry believes that the Israeli right and the ruling extreme right follow a clear-cut policy that, through its application, deliberately targets Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, and strikes and existence and human survival in their homeland, and does not the dignity of citizens and confis-



cate their livelihoods and their ability to fulfill their obligations. persecutes all elements of their Humanity towards their children and their future, through a long series of unilateral, illegal waste any opportunity to harm measures that achieve this racist colonial goal on a daily basis, es outside the scope of its resi-

whether by confiscating the lands of the Palestinian citizen and granting them to a handful of colonizers to protect his hearing and sight, or demolishing his home and economic interests under flimsy pretexts that have nothing to do with international law. To the obligations on the permitted except with the of the occupying power, and subject it to a series of unlimited collective punishments that control its ability to move and reach its interests and business-

dence, as the occupation army is creative in erecting thousands of iron gates, military towers and death barriers that strangle every camp, town and city and cut off the pieces of the occupied West Bank. Turning them into prisons from which exit or entry is approval of the occupying Israeli. This is in addition to the systematic daily intimidation operations represented by invasions, raids, arrests, and field executions, which are always accom-

panied by heavy firing of bullets, the Israeli extreme right to the in their lives and will not leave sound bombs, and gas bombs over the heads of defenseless citizens, and the demolition of infrastructure, including streets, water lines, electricity, and sewerage, as collective punishment of Palestinian citizens. This is the case in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the intensity of which escalated significantly with the beginning of the war of extermination against our people in the Gaza

Palestinians, under the guidance of Smotrich and Ben Gvir.

The Ministry confirms that ness and survival of the Pales-

it anywhere in the world, which requires the decision-making circles in the occupying state to this futile policy expresses a acknowledge the failure of its state of loss of balance that is oppressive and abusive polinow controlling decision-mak- cies and procedures against ing centers in Israel and does citizens, and to take the initinot lead anywhere except more ative to recognize their right escalation, igniting fires, and to self-determination and the an endless cycle of violence. It embodiment of their state. On also affirms that the steadfast- the ground as the only gateway to achieving security and stabiltinian people in their home- ity for both sides of the conflict, Strip, in the intense hostility of land is a constant foundation the region and the world.

British HC celebrates the UK and Pakistan's strong people-to-people ties while visiting Mirpur

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, visited the UK-Pakistani diaspora in Mirpur. She was accompanied by the Head of Pakistan Department at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Richard Lindsay. Mirpur is called by some as a home away from home for Pakistani Brits. This is due to the large number of dual nationals. The UK-Pakistani diaspora is at the heart of the With an estimated 70% of British Pakistanis originating from Mirpur, the High Commissioner was delighted to gain insight High Commissioner said: into how cross-cultural influences have shaped Mirpur into her visit to Birmingham on 12 er, whether it's liberalising trade,

The High Commissioner and Head of Pakistan Department met with various government officials during their visit, including the Commissioner of the Mirpur region and the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police at Mirpur. The High Commissioner thanked local officials for their continued support and cooperation. She also emphasised the importance she places on consular support for the British community living in the area.

British High Commission-UK and Pakistan's relationship. er Jane Marriott, CMG OBE, visited the Mirpur Chamber of Commerce. While speaking to the business community, the

"This visit has reaffirmed my view that across Pakistan there the city it is today. This followed is a lot more we can do togeth-



opening up investment opportunities, bringing in new technologies, or helping Pakistan on the path to sustainable growth and clean energy – there is so much we can do. I return to Islamabad

with a strong feeling that our two countries together are primed to grow even closer and continue to work hard to deepen our rela-

tionship." The High Commissioner was



she met with Street Children Qatar.

delighted to visit the Muslim Team runners-up at the Street Hands Football Academy where Children Football World Cup in er said "The footballing talent

The British High Commissionhere at the academy is incred-



Xinhua

HARBIN: As the night unfolded amidst the radiant moonlight, visitors flocked to Harbin Ice-Snow World, a captivating dreamscape illuminated by dazzling lights and adorned with majestic ice sculptures, transforming the "ice city" into a vibrant tourism hotspot amid China's winter travel spree.

The capital of China's northernmost province of Heilongjiang, Harbin is renowned as the "crown jewel of ice and snow" in the

country. The city has emerged as one of the top tourist destinations this winter. During this year's threeday New Year holiday, it received some 3.05 million tourists, a record high, raking in a tourism revenue of 5.91 billion yuan (about 831.75 million U.S. dollars).

With winter tourism injecting a robust momentum into the local economy, numerous global players are drawn to the snowy province, capitalizing on new opportunities amid the prevailing enthusiasm for ice and snow tours.

Booming ice-and-snow economy boosts foreign companies' confidence in China market Braving freezing temperatures, throngs of winter tourists are providing a significant boost to the hotel industry. Expressing delight at the thriving hotel business, Pierre G. Chidiac, general

manager of Sofitel Harbin, said there's been a remarkable surge in passenger numbers at both the airport and train stations.

Sofitel Harbin is operated by the leading French hospitality group Accor, boasting over 5,100 branded hotels in more than 100 countries and regions globally.

Having initially worked in Harbin from 2008 to 2011, Chidiac shared his enduring fascination with the charm of Harbin Ice-Snow World and the city's Central Street renowned for its diverse European-style architecture. He said that upon his return to Harbin in May 2023, he observed the enduring economic vitality of this familiar

According to Chidiac, modern travelers are increasingly inclined towards adventurous journeys, with many challenging winter activities gaining popularity. A considerable number of tourists are not only visiting traditional attractions but also actively participating in various ice and snow activities along the Songhua River. Some even venture to Yabuli's ski resorts or the "Snow Town" in Mudanjiang City for further exploration, he noted.

The French hotelier is confident that these winter "adventure" journeys will increasingly attract international tourists and businesses to Harbin, making ice and snow tourism a powerful driver of economic development.

"We have noticed that Harbin is becoming a more and more popular tourism destination. The amazing winters with ice and snow activities, the comfortable summers, the

beautiful nature along the Songhua general public, are actively striv- utive added that a customer-cen-River, delicious local snacks and the rich culture are among many reasons for me to believe in prosperous tourism," he added.

Tourists are seen at an ice amusement spot at sunset on the Songhuajiang River Harbin section in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, Jan. 7, 2024. (Xinhua/Xie Jianfei)

According to Dai Bin, President of the China Tourism Academy, the spillover effect of ice and snow tourism consumption can serve as an important catalyst for local catering, retail, performance and other service industries. This, in turn, promotes investments in scenic spots, resorts and shopping areas, as well as research and development involving equipment and gear, thereby, boosting the local

economy, Dai stated. Additionally, governments at all levels in China, along with the

ing to cultivate a conducive busiic development, which will make market an unrivaled magnet for which also offered valuable expeglobal businesses.

During this winter season, Harbin's tourist-friendly initiatives, such as customized tourist maps, complimentary ginger tea with brown sugar, and non-slip mats in underground passages, have gained popularity on the internet. Beyond the surge in Harbin's ice and snow economy, the city is showcasing a "new image" of its

development to a global audience. "From the reindeer on Central Street to the artificial moon hanging over the city square, these landscapes have been tailored to the trip worthwhile in every aspect,"

tered tourism environment and ness environment for econom- a well-developed public service system became major drivers of the country's vast winter tourism Harbin's ice and snow economy. riences for other regions.

The thriving ice and snow tourism in Harbin has not only showcased the robust vitality of China's economy but also instilled confidence in Michelin and other international enterprises operating in the Chinese market, Ye said.

Harbin Ice-Snow World, built on the northern bank of the Songhua River which flows through the city, covers a record-breaking area of 810,000 square meters this winter. The French company supported the construction of ice sculptures depicting the "Temple visitor's expectations, making their of Heaven" and the "Notre Dame Cathedral" to promote cultural said Ye Fei, president and CEO of dialogue and exchanges between Michelin China. The senior exec- China and France.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share

Index Fluctuation		
Pakistan: PSX 1	00-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close	
63,919.84	64,170.57	
Day's High	Day's Low	
64,550.94	63,873.63	
Index Value	Change	
11,368,798,427	-250.73	
Percentage	Time	
-0.39%	10 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTS	E 100 Index	
Index Value	Change	
7,651.76	-32.20	
Percentage	Time	
-0.42%	10 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones I	ndustrial Average	
Index Value	Change	
37,566.68	+41.52	
Percentage	Time	
+0.11%	10 Jan, 12:15 pm GMT-5	

+0.11%	GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Avera		
Index Value	Change	
34,441.72	+678.54	
Percentage	Time	
+2.01%	10 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9	

Open Market	Forex I	Rates
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187.2	189
Bahrain Dinar	748.21	756.21
Canadian Dollar	208.5	210.5
China Yuan	39.53	39.93
Danish Krone	41.3	41.7
Euro	307	310
Hong Kong Dollar	35.99	36.34
Indian Rupee	3.39	3.5
Japanese Yen	2.12	2.2
Kuwaiti Dinar	916.08	925.08
Malaysian Ringgit	60.59	61.19
NewZealand \$	175.56	177.56
Norwegians Krone	27.33	27.63
Omani Riyal	731.38	739.38
Qatari Riyal	77.29	77.99
Saudi Riyal	74.75	75.45
Singapore Dollar	208.5	210.5
Swedish Korona	27.47	27.77
Swiss Franc	330.38	332.88
Thai Bhat	8.06	8.21

15% of companies globally have experienced cyber incidents due to insufficient cyber security investment

U.A.E Dirham

US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: According to a recent study by Kaspersky, a global cybersecurity and digital privacy company, 15% of companies globally have experienced cyber incidents due to insufficient cybersecurity investment in the last two years. Alarmingly, critical infrastructure, oil&gas and energy organizations suffered the biggest number of cyber incidents due to improper budget allocation. And when it comes to companies' finances globally, one-infive admit they do not have the budget for adequate cybersecurity measures.

Kaspersky conducted a study to discover the opinions of IT Security professionals working for SMEs and enterprises worldwide regarding the human impact on the cybersecurity in a company.

The telecommunications sector suffered 13% of cyber incidents due to budget constraints, while transport & logistics, and financial services companies each saw

When asked about the budget for cybersecurity measures, 78% of respondents globally said they are equipped to keep up with or even stay ahead of new threats. However, 21% of companies are not doing so well – 18% report that they don't have sufficient funds to protect the compa- $\ensuremath{\text{ny's}}$ infrastructure properly. At the same time, there are still companies without cost allocations for cybersecurity at all -3% claimed they don't have a dedicated budget for cyber protection needs.

To get the most out of your budget, Kaspersky recommends implementing cybersecurity products with Advanced Anomaly Control such as Kaspersky Endpoint Detection and Response Optimum. Kaspersky Endpoint Security Cloud is designed for smaller enterprises or companies that don't currently have the budget for a wide stack of cybersecurity products. The all-in-one hosted SaaS console allows just a single administrator to manage a broad range of cybersecurity tasks from one place, with a simple and easy-to-master workflow.

Businesses greatly valued Fazlur Rehman's visit to Afghanistan

Example 2 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 Wednesday that Maulana Fazlur Rehman's visit to Afghanistan is very important for Pakistan.

The visit may result in warm relations, which will lead to increased trade and reduced terrorism, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the country is at a critical juncture, but some politicians are still trying to engineer disorder.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman's visit to neighbouring Afghanistan is timely and worthy of praise.

This move could improve relations between

the two countries, which would result in increased trade and reduced tensions

The Afghan Taliban's assurance that they will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil for terrorism in Pakistan is a positive develop-

He said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman has been warmly welcomed in Afghanistan, he is being given full protocol, and he has met with the Afghan Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and other important personalities.

It is expected that Maulana Fazlur Rahman will go to Kandahar and meet with the Emir of the Taliban to pave the way for improved ties, he added.

He said that the public and the business community across the country are looking forward to seeing the positive results of



the Afghan leadership's assurances. If this will improve, billions of rupees will be saved in practices have shaken the foundations of the happens, relations between the two countries terms of security, and the people will breathe country.

He furthered that the business conditions of people involved in border trade will improve, and both governments will be able to serve the masses and improve their image inter-

Mian Zahid Hussain said that to remove misunderstandings between the two countries, other scholars also need to come forward to ensure peace and stability in the region, without which neither the relations between the two countries nor the economies of the two countries can be ideal.

He stressed that the pace of development can be accelerated with enhanced cooperation between the two countries

Such politicians intend to fool the people instead of improving the economy, and such

Meeting

LAHORE: Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) met the FPCCI delegation led by Atif Ikram Sheikh newly elected president of FPCCI, Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office, Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman of Coordination FPCCI Capital Office and others also present during the meeting.



SMEs asked to raise funds through PSX for business promotion

359.5

283

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Pakistan Stock Exchange organized an awareness seminar on Financial Literacy, Savings & Investment which was attended by a large number of the business community.

Addressing the seminar, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the 22% policy interest rate of the SBP is a major hurdle for the development of the SME sector as it has become impossible for SMEs to get loans from banks for business development. He demanded that the government should consider reducing the interest rate for SMEs, which will help promote business activities, increase investment, and improve the economy.

Sarman Hussain, Region Head (Central & North), Pakistan Stock Exchange said that the stock market provides a better option for businesses to raise funds for business development. He said that SMEs can not only raise capital by selling their shares in the stock market, but this will also promote good governance for them.



Zahid Latif Khan, CEO of Zahid Latif Khan Securities Private Limited, said that investing in the stock market is very profitable. He said that from July to December 2023, there has been a good increase in foreign portfolio investment in the Pakistan stock market, which is a manifestation of the confidence of foreign investors in Pakistan's economy. He said that Pakistan is a country of about 240 million people, but there are about 75 million bank hold-

ers in it, while the number of investors in the stock market is only 310, 000, which is not encouraging.

Fad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the issues being faced by SMEs in getting funding. He said that the high-interest rate has crowded out the private sector from credit facilities and stressed that PSX should provide attractive investment options to facilitate their growth.

Infinix Unveils E-Color Shift at CES 2024 Revolutionizing **Interactive Smartphone Color Transformation**



₿ PNP

LAHORE: Infinix, a trendy tech brand crafted for young consumers, today unveils its latest breakthrough technology, E-Color Shift at Show-Stoppers CES 2024. E-Color Shift enables mobile phone panels to change and maintain vibrant colors without consuming power. Infinix also highlighted its AirCharge and Extreme-Temp Battery concept devices aimed to revolutionize the mobile industry with the latest and greatest tech. Infinix E-Color Shift Technology

Unmatched Charging at **Performance in All Environ-**

Infinix showcased its platforms in sync with CES cutting-edge technologies,

featuring Infinix AirCharge and the Extreme-Temp Battery at the event.

Infinix AirCharge Technology In partnership with top tech suppliers, Infinix has tackled the problem of mobile phone battery failure in extreme cold by introducing the Extreme-Temp Battery.

Infinix Extreme- Temp Battery Furthermore, Infinix has launched its debut 'Infinix Carpool Show, where prominent tech and lifestyle influencers delve into upcoming mobile charging technologies and experience the innovations firsthand on their way to CES 2024. This serie will be unveiled on Infinix's official global social media

YouTube: What did we watch in Pakistan during 2023

PAKISTAN: Today, YouTube unveiled lists ranking the top trending videos, music videos, Shorts, creators, and breakout creators in Pakistan. This year's lists are reflective of the most important moments to unfold in 2023 on and offline.

In order to respond to the demand for more active content, the arrival of YouTube Shorts became a fresh breath on the platform, both for creators and users. The latter are looking for information or entertainment material that is much faster and more accurate, so a format that takes a few seconds is ideal for audiences such as millennials and Generation Z. YouTube announced that YouTube

Shorts is now averaging over 70 billion daily views. Last year, the number of channels uploaded to Shorts daily grew by over 80%, and YouTube Shorts are being watched by over 2B logged-in users every month.

Farhan Qureshi, Google Regional Director for Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, mentioned that "the top trending lists of this year reflect the cultural evolution in Pakistan, notably marked by a substantial rise in Shorts viewership and distinct fan bases forming around specific content categories such as music, dramas, and vlogs. Moreover, creators are embracing multiformat approaches in order to explore new genres and audiences.

Moving forward, we antici-

FPCCI & Scottish Chamber to Work in Tandem: Atif

Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that FPCCI & Scottish Chambers of joint ventures and broad-

Dr. Jeanette Forbes, Ambassa-KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram dor of Scottish Chambers for Pakistan, visited FPCCI Head Office in Karachi to present her plan to the prominent business personality's vis-à-vis two counterparts, he added. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon,

FPCCI is looking forward to Scottish investment and cooperation in infrastructure development, renewable energy, water resource management, financial services, food & beverages, health-

Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, former SVP FPCCI, stressed that FPCCI remains unwavering in its commitment to forge productive, reciprocal business relationships with SCC. It firmly believes in the power of strong alliances to support and promote trade activities for the mutual advancement of our nations, he added.

Dr. Jeanette Forbes, Ambassador of Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) for Pakistan, highlighted that the Scottish Cham-

the heart of Scotland's busiover 12,000 companies and more than 50 percent of the

ness network, represents ized through a memoranprivate-sector workforce. She added that a notewor-

SCC & FPCCI was formaldum of understanding (MoU) on September 26, 2022 cooperation. Despite this,

bers of Commerce (SCC), at thy collaboration between there remains much work to be done in areas such as export promotion; foreign direct investment (FDI); joint ventures (JVs) and busiaiming to strengthen trade ness-to-business (B2B) link-

Ikram Sheikh It is pertinent to note that care services and retailing

№ PPA

Commerce (SCC) will tangibly enhance their cooperation to trade promotion between the promote trade, investments, er economic relations. He SVP FPCCI, maintained that reiterated the fact that Pakistani diaspora in Scotland is already very strong and Pakistan stands a great chance to up-scale its commercial and business interests with Scot-

Hamdard Pakistan announces winners of Hakim Mohammed Said Premier League 24

KARACHI: In remembrance of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said. founder of Hamdard Pakistan and a prominent social reformer and visionary, Hamdard Pakistan organized a two-day Hakim Mohammed Said (Shaheed-e-Pakistan) Hamdard Premier League 24 cricket tourney on January 5-6, 2024, at UBL Sports Complex. Ten teams from different divisions of Hamdard, Hamdard Foundation Pakistan and Hamdard University partook in the tournament.

In the final match, the marketing division team Tigers outshone the sales and distribution team Leopards in a one-sided contest, securing an easy win and the winners' trophy. Batting first, the Tigers posted a formidable score of 77 runs, losing four wickets. Market-



ing Officer Basit Rasheed, scored an impressive 42 runs off 12 balls, earning the title of the Player of the Match.

Chasing the target, the Leopards managed only 32 runs in their limited six overs. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Pakistan, graced the trophies distribution ceremony as the chief guest and presented the winning trophy to the victorious team's captain, Shaharyar Pasha (Head of Marketing).

Ahsan Rana of Marketing was recognized as the best player and best batsman of the tournament, while Ibrahim Ahmed from the Information Technology Division's Eagles team was declared the best bowler. To encourage the players, Hamdard Pakistan's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Fatema Munir Ahmed, also attended the tournament and distributed prizes alongside Ms. Sadia Rashid.

Zaka Ashraf takes credit for rising PSL

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Management Committee (MC) Zaka Ashraf has said that the PCB has managed to sell the live-streaming and broadcast rights of two seasons of the HBL PSL 9 and 10 at record high price in the league's history under

Addressing a press conference at the Gaddafi Stadi- more stadiums for the handed to the PCB. um here on Wednesday, he said the PSL live-streaming rights were sold for 1.90 adding one match of the billion rupees showing an increase of 113 percent from the previous edition while the broadcast right were for 6.30 billion rupees, a little less than the base price, the PCB soon. which was 45 percent high-

Ashraf and provided statis- cricket. He said possession of other in future.



promotion of cricket will be added to the existing one, HBL PSL 9 featuring Peshawar Zalmi may be played at the Arbab Niaz stadium if the KPK government handed control of the stadium to

He made a er than the previous editions. mention of the Chief of the PCB Chief Operating Army Staff General Asim the land for a cricket stadium

Zaka further said that the Punjab government has also committed to hand over control of stadiums in Gujranwala and Sheikhupura to PCB. Talking about his visit to

Australia to meet Cricket Australia (CA) officials for more stronger ties between the two boards, he said the PCB and CA have agreed Officer (COO) Salman Nase- Munir, who had asked the in principle to ensure the er and PSL Commissioner Defence Housing Authori- scheduling of the PSL and Mike Baird has offered PCB Naila Bhatti accompanied ty (DHAs) managements to the Big Bash League (BBL) the Chairman MC Zaka provide land to the PCB for does not clash with each

for both the leagues, considering a large number of T20 leagues being played across the globe.

He said that as per the mutual understanding, both the boards will provide frequent tours to the Women, Shaheens, and U 19 teams, which will help players get acclimatized with the conditions in both countries.

About the pitch curators, he said the CA Chairman to send its curators to learn from the pitch curators in He said this will keep this knowledge to the others Zaka Ashraf also said in Islamabad will be shortly intact a good pool of players in stadiums across Pakistan.

HBL PSL gains in stature and wealth

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The HBL Pakistan Super League had yet another historic day on Wednesday when its live-streaming and broadcast rights saw an increase of 113 and 45 per cent for the 2024 and 2025 editions, respectively.

The ARY Communications (Pvt) Limited submitted the highest bid, pursuant to a public tender process, to broadcast HBL Pakistan Super League 2024 and 2025 in Pakistan, which saw a whopping increase of 45 per cent from the value for the last two years. A public, transparent and merit-based tender process was followed for awarding the Pakistan region PSL TV Broadcast media rights for 2024-2025.

Bids were received from Independent Media Corporation Pvt. Ltd (IMC - the parent company of Geo Entertainment Television Pvt Ltd), ARY Communications (Pvt) Limited (ARY), Pakistan Television Corporation Limited (PTVC) and Tower Sports (Ten Sports).

Meanwhile, Walee Technologies submitted the highest bid, pursuant to a public tender process, to live-stream HBL Pakistan Super League 2024 and 2025 in Pakistan, which sees a huge increase of 113 per cent from the value for the last two years.

The PCB received bids from five parties -Consortium of ARY Communications (ARY, Myco, Daraz and Tamasha), Walee Technologies, TransGroup FZE, Independent Media Australia and then pass on | Corporation Pvt. Ltd (IMC – the parent

company of GEO Entertainment Television Pvt Ltd) and Tower Sports (Ten Sports). Cristiano Ronaldo becomes player with

most games in 21st century, Messi at no 4

Cristiano Ronaldo, the maestro of football dominance, has authored yet another chapter, solidifying his status as the player with the most games in the 21st century.

However, the tale is not just about Ronaldo's triumph; it's equally the story of Lionel Messi, who narrowly missed securing a podium position in this prestigious record.

The International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS) recently unveiled the list of players with the most appearances in the 21st century, with Ronaldo seizing the top spot with an impressive 1204 official appearances.

This illustrious journey spans across renowned clubs like Sporting CP, Manchester United, Real Madrid, Juventus, Al-Nassr, and the Portugal National Team. At 38, Ronaldo's enduring dedication is evident, maintaining an astonishing average of 52 matches per year for an unprecedented 22

Omar Associates, Sindh Police, Rangoonwala win in RCA Karachi Inter Departmental Cricket League

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Three more matches decided in the RCA Karachi Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament at various cricket grounds. The highlights of the days play was brilliant Century 101 by Zohaib Abid.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Summarized Scores:

Omar Associates beat IRS FBR by 9 Wickets at KCCA Stadium IRS FBR 105 all out in 33.5 overs. Muhammad Brohi 32, Shams uddin 17 Waleed Azeem (rls) 4/21, Danish Aziz (sla) 3/16, Omar Associates 109/1 in 10.4 overs. Khawaja M. Nafay 55 6x4 3x6, Hurair Shahid 31, yasir Mushtaq 17 both not out.

In the 2nd Match Sindh Police beat Bilal Chemical by 124 runs at RLCA Gulberg Ground. Sindh Police 324/5 in 40 overs. Zohaib Abid 136 14x4 1x6, Noman Khan 72 9x4 1x6, Arshad Khan 48 not out, Farooq Hassan 28. Rizwan Ahmed 2/68. Bilal Chemical 200/9 in 40 overs. Jawed Mansoor 84 8x4,

Faizan Malik 34, Anas Raza 29, Muhammad Abbas 20 not out. Adnan Shah (sla)3/30, Farooq Hassan (rls) 3/30, Arshad Khan (sla) 3/33.

In the 3rd Match Rangoonwala beat Ibex Pakistan by 7 Wickets at RLCA Gulberg ground. Ibex Pakistan 138 all out in 38.1 overs. Muhammad Jawed 24, Abdullah Rafay 22, Arish Khan 19. Touheed Khan (sla) 3/8, Ashar Qureshi (sla) 3/26, Amir

Rangoonwala 139/3 in 12.5 overs. Muhammad Afzal 58 10x4 1x6, Huzaifa Munir 55 3x4 1x6 not out.

Deadly bowling by Muhammad Immad Paracha captured 5/9

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches decided in the A. S. Natural Stone Under-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at various grounds.

The highlights of the days play was Deadly bowling by right arm leg spinner Muhammad Immad Paracha captured 5/9. The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-V Whites beat Zone-I Greens by 8 Wickets at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. Zone-I Greens 97 all out in 38.2 overs. Muhammad Kamran 28, Hamza Alam 20. Muhammad Immad Paracha (sla) 5/9 Hazik Qureshi 2/29.

Zone-V Whites 101/2 in 17.4 overs. Yasir Razak 69 12x4. 1x6. Zubair Khan 2/29.

In the 2nd Match Zone-I Whites beat Zone-IV Greens by 8 Wickets at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-IV Greens 158/9 in 45 overs. Salah Khan 24, Hassan Farooq 23, Aun Abbas 20. Hadi Siddiqui 2/26, Roshan Alvì 2/28, Uzair Ali 2/32.

Zone-I Whites 161/2 in 25.4 overs. Dawar Malik 92 12x4 2x6 not out, Awais Kamran 60 8x4. Sharjeel Riyaz 2/24.

AJK beats Islamabad to annex PAF T20 Cricket C'ships Trophy



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) claimed PAF T20 Cricket Championships Trophy for the Blind 2024, outshining Islamabad in the final at PAF Cricket Ground E-9 Islamabad on Wednesday.

Islamabad choose to bat first after winning the toss and posted a challengable total of 259 for the loss of six wickets. Akmal and Shahzaib were main contributirs for them, scoring 88 quick 74 runs, respectively.

In reply, Kashmir chased the target just in 19.4 overs for the loss of five wickets. Cptain Nisar Ali blazing 172 off 73 balls, while losing five wickets. Shahzaib, Matiullah and Fakhar Abbas shared one wicket apiece fir Islamabad.

Nisar was named man-of-'the-match. Abbottabad's Riasat Khan was awarded best player in B1 Category, Kamran Akhtar was awarded best player in B2 Category, Muhammad Rashid was awarded best player in B3 Category and Nisar was awarded the best wicketkeeper award of the tournament.

Air Commodore Ashar Jamil, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Admin) Pakistan Air Force, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony awarded prizes to the teams.

A court in Nepal sentenced the country's highest-profile cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane to eight years in jail on Wednesday after he was convicted of raping an 18-year-old

Nepal's Sandeep Lamichhane gets

eight years imprisonment for rape

His lawyer said he would launch a

higher court appeal. Sandeep Lamichhane, 23, has

been the face of cricket in Nepal and the only player from the Himalavan country to take part in prominent Twenty20 leagues in India, Australia, Pakistan and West Indies.

as Nepal's captain and taken into to the victim. custody after police issued an arrest 2022, and was later released on bail. Kathmandu district court official

Chandra Prasad Panthi said Sandeep ing that the cricketer would appeal



Lamichhane should also pay about The leg-spinner was suspended \$3,770 as a fine and compensation

The 23-year-old was found guilty warrant for him over the assault in of rape last month and the sentence was announced on Wednesday. His lawyer said before the sentenc-

against his conviction.

We are not convinced about the decision of the court ... The court has whimsically declared Sandeep [Lamichhane] to be a convict. Sandeep will go to the higher court for justice," lawyer Saroj Ghimire told Reuters on Wednesday.

Wahab Riaz and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Minister agree to work together

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Dr Najeebullah called on Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz at the National Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwar and Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail were also present in the high-profile meeting.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Dr Najeebul-

promotion of sports culture in the two provinces and agreed to work together for the promotion of sports in both the provinces. Besides this all possible options including a bilateral player exchange programme were discussed in detail during the meeting.

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said that this kind of platforms are essential for emerging youth so that they can exhibit and polish their talent at national level before representing the country at international level. "We have shared several ideas with each other to find a suitable way out so that all the talented athletes lah thoroughly discussed the of all the provinces could be given

sufficient playing opportunities". Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports

and Youth Affairs Minister Dr Najeebullah on this occasion said that there should be sports and cultural exchange programmes not only between Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but all the four provinces of the country. "It would be very nice if Wahab Riaz leads this revolutionary initiative. In this regard, we are going to hold a meeting of all provinces to finalise a mutual sports calendar".

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Dr Najeebullah further said that sports is such a component that brings people close irrespective of their region, ethnic, religion and culture. "It is the need of the

hour to give sports a top priority to promote unity, harmony and integrity among the people of all the provinces," he added.

Adviser to CM Punjab on Sports Wahab Riaz said that there will be competitions in 18 sports disciplines under Annual Sports Calendar Programme. "We are also organising the Punjab Rising Star Games under this programme and the top performing players will be given Rs 70,000, 50,000 and 30,000 per month as stipends".

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Minister Dr Najeebullah highly appreciated the Annual Sports Calendar of Sports Board Punjab. "It is a very good initiative and it will help a lot in bringing out the



fresh talent from the grassroots will work together for the develop- bition match in the near future. He said that both the provinces um is going to conduct an exhi-

ment of sports. "Arbab Niaz Stadi- Children should be given more opportunities to play".

The Spokesman

Meeting ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet on

FTO resolves 8,128 tax-related complaints in 2023: Ombudsman briefs President Alvi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday visited the Federal Tax Ombudsman office where he was informed that the institution resolved 8,128 complaints against the maladministration of tax and customs authorities during the year 2023 as compared to 6,106 complaints in 2022.

During the briefing to the president, Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Dr Asif Mahmood Jah said that the registration of complaints increased by almost 24% as 8,076 complaints were filed

relief of Rs 17.74 billion to to Rs 7 billion in the previous

Besides Federal Tax

sors to FTO, regional heads, and senior officials of the FTO attended the meeting.

Dr Asif Mahmood Jah briefed the president about the FTO's overall performance, outreach and initiatives taken for the facilitation of taxpayers. He informed that FTO

provided free-of-charge justice to complainants against the maladministration and high-handedness of tax officials within 60 days. The average time taken for the disposal of complaints had been reduced to 44 days during the

Highlighting the achievements of FTO, he stated that in 2023, compared to 6,480 FTO was a public-relief-oriemployees teachers salaried

Ombudsman (FTO), the advi- to increase its outreach and



lishing a helpline, and raising $\;\;$ role and services in tax matters taxpayers in 2023 as compared class, pensioners, and purchas-awareness through seminars, using social media and mass complaints during the last year. ers of vehicles through its deci- and interactions with the busi-The FTO was making efforts cities of the country, he added.

messaging through cellular ness community in various companies.

ented organization that had registration of cases by open- FTO was also actively working that had provided relief of The FTO also provided provided tax relief to low-paid ing new regional offices, estab- to create awareness about its Rs 17.74 billion to complain-

FTO should further accelerate its efforts to increase the registration and disposal of complaints, besides increasing its outreach to taxpayers.

He also called for enhanced coordination between FTO and FBR for the timely implementation of its decisions, and bringing improvements in the

He remarked that an improved tax system was essential to increase tax and revenue generation in the country, which would help improve national economy, besides reducing the country's dependence on loans.

The president highly appreciated FTO's performance ants, besides addressing 8,128

He also urged the need to provide timely relief to Speaking on the occa- complainants, especially over-The ombudsman said that sion, President Alvi said that seas Pakistanis.

PM orders fast-track privatization of PIA, out-sourcing of airport services

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to pace up the privatization process of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), the national flag career. In a meeting with his Adviser on Aviation Air Marshal (retd) Farhat Hussain, the prime minister emphasized ensuring transparency in the process of privatization.

PM Kakar said privatization of state-owned enterprises was on priority for the government to save the national exchequer from further financial losses. He said the country's aviation industry had a high scope of growth through investment. The prime minister also directed the out-sourcing of airport operations in a bid to ensure improvement of services. The Aviation Adviser briefed PM Kakar about the matters of the ministry and the reform process.

PTI founder declared ineligible to contest election from NA-122

👺 Bureau Report

LAHORE: An appellate tribunal of rejected for a National Assemthe Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday rejected former Prime Minister Imran Khan's appeal against the returning officer's (RO) decision to reject his nomination papers from the NA-122 constituency.

RO's decision to reject Imran's nomial elections.

nation papers.

Khan's nomination papers were bly constituency in Lahore and his hometown Mianwali on December

The development comes on the last day to dispose of appeals filed against acceptance or rejection of nomina-Justice Tariq Nadeem upheld the tion papers for the February 8 gener-

Sindh 'grand alliance' agrees on joint struggle against PPP

👺 Bureau Report

KARACHI: As the February 8 general elections draw near, the newfound alliance in Sindh has agreed on a 'joint struggle' against Pakistan ro and ANP Sindh President Shahi People's Party (PPP) – which has a Syed and GDA's Dr Safdar Abbasi stronghold in the province.

A meeting between politicians of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQMP), Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (Fazl) and Awami National Party (PPP) was held to reached an agreement to collaborate

Sources told that the meeting deliberated on fielding joint candidates across the province and a from 'corruption, incompetence and mismanagement".

The alliance was of the view that they would fight those who believed in "horse-trading" with the power of

The meeting was attended edly.

hood, Bashir Memon and Khaildas Kohistani, MQM-P leaders Anis Qaimkhani, Javed Hanif and Hassan Sabir, JUI's Rashid Soomand Sardar Abdul Rahim.

by PML-N leaders Rana Mash-

It is pertinent to mention here that PML-N and MQM-P have already agreed on forming a grand alliance in Sindh, with both parties striking deal on seat adjustments.

Meanwhile, PML-N and GDA also discuss election alliance against PPP. and support each other in the upcoming general elections.

The agreement came during a meeting between PML-N President 'common plan of action'. The meet- Shehbaz Sharif and GDA chief Pir ing vowed to free people of Sindh Pagara, with PML-N leaders Khawaja Saad Rafique and Ayaz Sadiq also in attendance.

The primary objective of this electoral alliance was to challenge the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in its political stronghold of Sindh, report-

Supreme Court issues written order in Zulfigar Bhutto reference

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued a written order of January 8 hearing regarding a long-pending presidential reference, seeking to revisit the 1979 'controversial' death sentence awarded to former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

A nine-member larger bench - head by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice

Amin Ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Sved Hasan Azhar Rizvi, and Justice Musarrat Hilali – took up the reference for hearing.

In its order, the Supreme Court said: "In view of the forthcoming elections and as before this court, and as this court wants to hear this reference in detail, it be fixed for hearing in the third week of February 2024, which will also enable us to examine the material filed

stated that he represents Ms Sanam Bhutto, Ms Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari and Ms Aseefa Bhutto Zardari respectively, the daughter and maternal granddaughters of the late Mr Bhut-

to," it stated. It further read: "Mr Zahid important matters are coming F. Ebrahim was appointed as amicus but states that he had already been approached by Ms Fatima Bhutto and Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the paternal grandchildren of the late Mr Bhutto".

"We enquired from the learned counsel and others

any objection to Mr Zahid F. Ebrahim being counsel instead of amicus and none object"

The court said, "Khawaja Haris Ahmed was appointed as amicus but he has disclosed that his father was counsel in a contempt case of Masood Mahmood, who was co-accused/approver in the case, therefore, his name may be withdrawn as amicus."

"Mr Salahuddin Ahmed was appointed as amicus and discloses that he is married to the granddaughter of the murdered

present whether anyone has Nawab Ahmed Khan, therefore, if anyone objects to him being amicus he will withdraw. However, none present object to Salahuddin Ahmed appear-

ing as amicus. "We commenced by hearing amicus Mr. Makhdoom Ali Khan. He has also filed material contained in two voluminous bound sets."

The top court said, "If any amicus or counsel wants a copy of the report of Mr. Justice Shafi ur Rehman or of the recording provided by Geo office to provide

Apex court upholds Pervez Musharraf's death sentence in treason case

Israel conflict: FM **Spokesman Report**

China saddened

by heavy civilian

casualties caused

by Palestinian-

BEIJING: China is saddened by the heavy civilian casualties, caused by ongoing Palestinian-Israel conflict, Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson, Mao Ning said on Wednesday. "We oppose any action that violates the international law and urge parties to the conflict to earnestly implement relevant resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and General Assembly," she said during her regular briefing.

The spokesperson said that the Chinese side urged the parties concerned to reach an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire.

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday upheld the death sentence handed down to the late Pervez Musharraf, who was a military ruler as well as president of the country, by a special court.

A four-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Ameenuddin Khan and Justice Athar Minallah heard the case.

The former ruler was sentenced to death on Dec 17, 2019, by a special court under Article 6 of the Constitution.

The case was brought against him for high treason during the tenure of the Pakistan Muslim League-



sion to declare an emergency in November 2007.

The petitioner's lawyer, Hamid Khan, said in his arguhad filed an appeal against the sentence, which is a criminal appeal.

Their petition is against the annulment of the sentence by Nawaz (PML-N) because of the Lahore High Court, which

is a constitutional matter. He pleaded that both appeals should be heard separately.

The chief justice remarked that in the absence of the heirs ments that Pervez Musharraf of Pervez Musharraf, the court could not hear the petitioner's counsel as decisions should not be made based on assump-

> Musharraf's counsel Salman Safdar argued that his client's the special court.

family resides outside Pakistan, therefore they can't appear before the court. He added that his client was not the only one guilty of the offence, but the then prime minister, law minister, parliament and judges of the Supreme Court also were involved in the criminal case of November 2007.

Justice Athar Minallah remarked that if the offence of the 1999 emergency had been investigated, the action of Nov 3 would not have taken place.

During the hearing, the federal government opposed the appeal filed against the death sentence of Pervez Musharraf.

After hearing the arguments of all parties, the Supreme Court upheld the decision of

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Xi, Tunisian president Saied exchange congratulations on 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties

👺 Xinhua

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged congratulations Wednesday with his Tunisian counterpart, Kais Saied, on the 60th anniversary of China-Tunisia diplomatic

In a message, Xi said China and Tunisia, with a profound traditional friendship, have witnessed sound and steady growth of bilateral ties since they established diplomatic ties 60 years ago, no matter how the international landscape evolves.



Xi said he highly prizes the development of China-Tunisia relations and is willing to work with Saied to push for new and greater progress in bilateral friendly cooperative relations.

PML-N 'withdraws' candidate in favor of IPP's Aleem Khan

跨 Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has decided to 'withdraw' its candidate in favour of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) president Aleem Khan before the general election 2024.

According to sources, PML-N decided withdraw the candidate from NA-117 Lahore as they striked seat adjustment on another National assembly seat with IPP. Sources said that IPP president Aleem will contest elections from NA-117 whereas withdrew his nomination papers from NA-119 and decided not to contest elections against PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz. The IPP is expected



and provincial assemblies' candidates tomorrow, sources added.

Earlier today, sources reported that the issue of seat adjustment between the PML-N and the IPP still to be finalized. The Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) demanding seat adjustment on seven National Assembly constituencies from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) instead of five seats, sources said.