



Finance Minister stresses to lower revenue-expenditure gap

Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs on Thursday said that a comprehensive overhaul of the government's fiscal apparatus is vital to lower the revenue-expenditure gap. Bold reforms would lead to a new era of development and prosperity in the country, the minister said. (Details on Page 8)



Aseefa Champions Progressive Change in Province-wide Election Campaign

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has been vigorously campaigning across Sindh in preparation for the upcoming general elections. Her recent rally in Tando Mohammad Khan, accompanied by local candidates Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Aijaz Hussain Shah Bukhari, and Khurram Karim Soomro, marks a significant highlight in her provincial tour, which so far has included stops in Tando Allahyar, Tando Jam, Nawabshah, Sanghar, and Malir. (Report on Page 2)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Call on

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND: Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, His Highness Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on sidelines of the World Economic Forum on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Terrorist hideouts of BLA, BLF struck in Iran: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Thursday said Pakistan carried out effective strikes against hideouts inside Iran used by terrorists responsible for recent attacks in Pakistan. "In early hours of 18 January 2024, Pakistan carried out effective strikes against hideouts inside Iran used by terrorists responsible for recent attacks in Pakistan. The precision strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons. Maximum care was taken to avoid collateral damage," the military wing said while sharing details about operation Marg Bar Sarmachar. The ISPR said that hideouts used by terrorist organisations



namely Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) were successfully struck in an intelligence based operation, code name 'Marg Bar Sarmachar'. "The targeted hideouts were being used by notorious terrorists including Dosta alias Chairman, Bajjar alias Soghat, Sahil alias Shafaq, Asghar alias Basham and Wazir alias Wazi, amongst others," it added. Pakistan Armed Forces remain in a perpetual state of readiness to ensure safety of Pakistan citizens against acts of terrorism, it said. "Our resolve to ensure that

PM Kakar calls urgent NSC meeting today amid rising tensions with Iran



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Amid strained ties between Pakistan and Iran, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will convene a meeting of the National Security Council on Friday (today). According to sources, the NSC will meet at 2:45 pm, with the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff committee, army chief, naval chief, and chief of the Pakistan Air Force in attendance. Sources said the NSC will discuss the prevailing post-attack situation as Pakistan retaliated against the unprovoked violation of its airspace by Iran and targeted militant hideouts in the neighbouring country. In the backdrop of the tense

situation prevailing between Pakistan and Iran, PM Kakar cut short his Davos visit and is reaching home on the night between Thursday and Friday. The caretaker prime minister had to reach Pakistan on Jan 22 after concluding a visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Thursday that Pakistan had targeted terrorist hideouts in Iran's Sistan-Balochistan province early in the morning. Sources further said that officials from the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs will also attend the NSC meeting, which will review the future Pak-Iran relations. The meeting will also review the law and order situation in the country, besides affairs relating to the conduct of the general elections slated for Feb 8. The participants will also be briefed about the operation carried out against Baloch militants inside Iran.

Operation 'Marg Bar Sarmachar': Pakistan strikes terrorist hideouts in Iran

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office said on Thursday Pakistan struck terrorist hideouts inside the Iranian border a day after Tehran violated the country's airspace and launched strikes in Balochistan. "This morning Pakistan undertook a series of highly coordinated and specifically targeted precision military strikes against terrorist hideouts in Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. A number of terrorists were killed during the Intelligence-based operation - codenamed 'Marg Bar Sarmachar', the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on

Thursday. "Over the last several years, in our engagements with Iran, Pakistan has consistently shared its serious concerns about the safe havens and sanctuaries enjoyed by Pakistani origin terrorists calling themselves Sarmachars on the ungoverned spaces inside Iran. Pakistan also shared multiple dossiers with concrete evidence of the presence and activities of these terrorists," the statement said. "However, because of lack of action on our serious concerns, these so-called Sarmachars continued to spill the blood of innocent Pakistanis with impunity. This morning's action was



taken in light of credible intelligence of impending large-scale terrorist activities by these so called Sarmachars. "This action is a manifestation of Pakistan's unflinching resolve to protect and defend its national security against all threats. The successful execution of this highly complex operation is also a testimony to the professionalism of the

Pakistan Armed Forces." "Pakistan will continue to take all necessary steps to preserve the safety and security of its people which is sacrosanct, inviolable and sacred," said MOFA. The Foreign Office said that Islamabad fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adding that the sole objective of today's act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest which is paramount and cannot be compromised. "As a responsible member of the international community, Pakistan upholds the principles and purposes of the UN Charter

including territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states. Guided by these principles, and in exercise of our legitimate rights within international law, Pakistan will never allow its sovereignty and territorial integrity to be challenged, under any pretext or circumstances." "Iran is a brotherly country and the people of Pakistan have great respect and affection for the Iranian people. We have always emphasized dialogue and cooperation in confronting common challenges including the menace of terrorism and will continue to endeavour to find joint solutions," the statement added.

China offers to mediate between Pakistan and Iran, stresses need for showing calm

News Desk

BELJING: China on Thursday said it was willing to mediate between Pakistan and Iran following an exchange of cross-border strikes and urged the two sides to exercise calm and de-escalate the tensions. "The Chinese side sincerely hopes that the two sides can exercise calm and restraint and avoid an escalation of tension," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a regular press conference. "We are also willing to play a constructive role in de-escalating the situation if both sides so wish," she said. The remarks come as just hours after Pakistan struck the hideouts of outlawed Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) in Iran - a move that came in response to the earlier provocative Iranian cross-border missile strike. The remarks come as just hours after Pakistan struck the hideouts of outlawed Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) in Iran - a move that came in response to the earlier provocative Iranian cross-border missile strike.



Statement of the Foreign Ministry of Iran regarding the recent incidents on Pakistan border

News Desk

TEHRAN: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns Pakistan's unbalanced and unacceptable drone attack on non-Iranian villagers on the border of the two countries. At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran adheres to the policy of good neighborliness and brotherhood between the two nations and the two governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. It does not allow enemies to strain the amicable and brotherly relations of Tehran and Islamabad. The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the security of its people and its territorial integrity as a red line and strongly expects the friendly and brotherly government



barracks and headquarters located in the heights of the region, kilometers away from residential areas—a procedure which is part of the inherent duties of the border forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran to "proportionately deal" with any "imminent terrorist threat" against the people and citizens of the country. It is emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran differentiates between Pakistan's friendly and brotherly government and armed terrorists. The Islamic Republic of Iran always adheres to its policy of good neighborliness and does not allow its enemies and terrorist allies to strain these relations, especially when the genocide and crimes of the Zionist regime are the foremost issue affecting the Islamic world.

'CAA directs Pakistani airlines to not use Iranian airspace'



KARACHI: The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has directed Pakistani airlines to not use Iranian airspace. According to sources, the Civil Aviation Authority has asked the Pakistan-bound airlines to use the Muscat (Oman) route. However, the CAA sources said that strict monitoring of the flights from the western direction including Iran has been initiated. Sources said that the Iranian airspace has not been closed for commercial flights yet and no ban has been imposed on flights coming to Pakistan from any side.

PM Kakar cuts short Davos trip

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will cut short his visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos, FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Thursday. "PM Kakar has decided to cut short his visit in view of the ongoing developments," foreign ministry spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a press conference. Similarly, Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, who is in Uganda to attend a ministerial meeting of the non-aligned movement, had also decided to return to the country. Baloch said that that Pakistan desired peaceful relations with all countries, including Iran. Separately, caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi said the government had lodged a protest with Iranian authorities over the "unprovoked violation" of its airspace.

Former president warns off firm response to hostile intentions towards Pakistan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former president Asif Ali Zardari stated on Thursday that if any country looks at Pakistan with ill-intentions, it will receive a befitting response. In a statement released here, the co-chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party said that Pakistan is a peace-loving country, but those contemplating an attack on this nation will now think a hundred times. Zardari's comments came after Pakistan targeted separatist Baloch militants inside Iran on Thursday in a retaliatory strike two days after Tehran in a unilateral move attacked the bases of another group within Pakistani territory. The former president said that Pakistan has consistently advocated for global peace and has worked tirelessly to maintain harmony worldwide.

Former PM Yousaf Raza Gillani's conversation with the media in Multan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani has said that political stability will bring economic stability in the country. There should be no ambiguity in holding general elections after the announcement of Election Commission, President of Pakistan and Chief Justice. The manifesto of the People's Party will represent the people and the upcoming election will be in favor of the People's Party. This time Shah Mehmood will miss me in the next election. He has expressed these views yesterday while talking to the media at his residence on the occasion of former League ticket holder Malik Zafar Raan's joining the People's Party. According to the details, former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani has said that I thank Malik Zafar Raan, his family and his colleagues. Today all these colleagues have returned to their home. I am also grateful to him for supporting me and my panel. He said that we will make the People's Party successful. The mani-



festos of the People's Party will represent the people. The upcoming election will be in favor of Pakistan People's Party. In response to a question, Yousuf Raza Gillani said that there should be no ambiguity in holding general elections after the announcements of the Election Commission, President of Pakistan and Chief Justice. The former prime minister said that the economic conditions of the country are not good, while the improvement in the country's

economy will come from stability in the country's politics. Answering the question regarding Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Yousuf Raza Gillani said that this time Shah Mehmood Qureshi is missing.

Food Department issues orders against substandard meat, milk, ghee, snacks in AJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The Food Department/Food Authority has issued orders regarding delivery and sale of slaughtered meat, substandard milk, non-certified oil, ghee and substandard snacks (snacks) etc. from outside districts in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The order issued by the Director/Secretary Food Authority, Department of Food/Food Authority states that slaughtered meat is being bought and sold within the state limits from outside Azad Jammu and Kashmir, which is against the norms of hygiene. Also, there is no confirmation about whether such meat is halal or haram, nor is it confirmed when and where this meat was slaughtered/frozen. Therefore, bringing and selling slaughtered animals/poultry meat from outside districts within the boundaries of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is prohibited. Only live animals/poultry etc. will be allowed to be brought from outside districts and slaughtered and sold within Azad Kashmir limits. Outside Azad Jammu and Kashmir, milk is brought for sale within the state limits which takes a lot of time during transportation. Due to non-observance of safety measures and rules of transportation (chiller) etc. as per scientific principles, it becomes fatal and due to lack of satisfactory testing and certification of such milk, its quality and safety is doubtful. Therefore, bringing milk from outside districts and selling it in Azad Jammu and Kashmir is prohibited. All food items can be entered/sold in Azad Jammu and Kashmir only if an authorized dealer/agency/representative of the respective companies is appointed for the purchase and sale of these items in the districts of Azad Kashmir and all dealers/agencies (especially oil, Ghee, Snacks (Snacks) and other food related businesses) should be registered with the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Food Authority and analyzed by an accredited laboratory.

Inter-ministerial committee on Azad Jammu and Kashmir held



Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: An extraordinary meeting of the inter-ministerial committee on Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was held here today, which was jointly chaired by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq and Federal Defense Minister Gen (ret'd) Anwar Haider Ali. The meeting was attended by top officials of the federal government and ministers including senior minister Colonel (Rtd) Waqar Ahmad Noor, Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chaudhry Arshad Hussain and Chief Secretary Dawood Muhammad Bareech. During the meeting, financial and administrative matters of Azad Kashmir were discussed at length.

JKSM condemns unjust Modi-led BJP gov't actions to suppress IIOJK plebiscite struggle



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM) Altaf Ahmad Bhat on Thursday strongly condemned the recent actions taken by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) against the Senior Kashmiri Leader Muhammad Akbar Bhat in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir IIOJK. The provisional attachment of properties worth rupees fifty million under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was a clear indication of the Modi-led BJP government's persistent efforts to suppress the ongoing legitimate Kashmiris freedom struggle.

In response to these actions, Chairman JKSM Bhat termed the all allegations baseless followed by subsequent actions of the ED are nothing except an attempt to tarnish image and undermine the noble cause of the ongoing Kashmiris freedom movement.

"I and my elder brother Muhammad Akbar Bhat have been active in the ongoing right of self-determination movement since childhood in IIOJK. I have been targeted by Indian military establishment particularly and forced to leave Srinagar. By the grace of God I established business in Pakistan from where I supported needy students

From IIOJK from my business income, Bhat added saying his commitment to the education of the youth and rehabilitation of displaced people of IIOJK remained unwavering despite the various challenges he and his family faced in IIOJK.

Regarding Al Jabbar Trust, Chairman JKSM Bhat said that the Trust was established for charitable purposes which remained instrumental in aiding those in need particularly students and widows of IIOJK.

During the 2014 flood in IIOJK our family in Srinagar extended assistance to the affected individuals through the donations of local businesses community and other family members who paid from their own businesses. However, Indian military establishment imposed unwarranted restrictions, leading to the halt of operations, and Al Jabbar Trust was closed in 2015 by Indian authorities significantly hampering our ability to provide timely aid during the time of crisis in IIOJK.

Jammu and Kashmir Forum France demands end to mistreatment of overseas Kashmiris

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Forum France, member of the Central Executive Council Muslim League-N Azad Kashmir and former coordinator of Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir for Europe Chaudhry Naeem Akhtar paid tribute to the CPO Police Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani and his force for bringing accused suspects involved in the murder of a young British citizen of Kashmir Chaudhry Tassir Mehmood from Dadial Azad Jammu and Kashmir last day to justice. Chaudhry Naeem Akhtar showed the serious wave of grief and concern in term of increasing day by day crimes demanded that government of Pakistan and the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir should jointly provide security to overseas Kashmiris on their return home. They are standing with the state but the way overseas Kashmiris are being treated on their return is alienating the new generation from the relationship of love and compassion for those living abroad while meeting their loved ones on their return to motherland. He said that the immigrants are the valuable capital of the country and the backbone of the economy. He strongly demanded the government of Pakistan and the government of Azad Kashmir to take action against the unpleasant incidents that happened to the overseas Kashmiris on their return home. He added that Government to take measures on emergency basis to prevent unnecessary harassment, and fool-proof security arrangements should be made on the routes from Islamabad Airport to Azad Jammu and Kashmir so that no untoward incident takes place in the future.

Child labour

ISLAMABAD: A young child mechanic is busy in repairing a cycle tyre puncture outside his workplace in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Seminar on forced marriages in Muzaffarabad AJK

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Under the auspices of the National Commission on Status of Women, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, a seminar was organized in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir, regarding the prevention of early forced marriages, with Azad Kashmir Minister as the chief guest. Higher education was Zafraqbal Malik. In the seminar Leader of the Opposition Khawaja Farooq Ahmed, Government Minister Prof. Taqdees Gilani, Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson State Commission on the Status of Women Rehana Khan, Federal Secretary Women Commission Imran Raza from various walks of life. People belonging to participated. Various sessions were

organized in the seminar, in which three groups of the participants did group work and gave presentations on Poverty alleviation with gender perspective, strengthening institutions for gender equality and mobilizing financing for women empowerment. Speaking at the seminar, Chief Guest Zafraqbal Malik said that many problems arise from Umri's marriage. The Holy Quran is the complete code of life, even in Shariat, children must be wise and mature at the time of marriage, the minimum age for marriage should be 18 years. Let me present the bill, I assure the full support and support of the bill on behalf of the government. He thanked Chairperson Women's Commission Nilufar Bakhtiar and said that the mission of the Women's Commission will be completed. The literacy rate here is 84 percent. Leader of the Opposition Khawa-

ja Farooq Ahmed said that a young girl does not understand how to play her role in the society after marriage, a young girl is not mentally capable of raising children. He said that girls are ahead of boys in education.

Addressing the seminar, Government Minister Professor Taqdees Gilani said that a lot of work needs to be done regarding child rights and women's rights in Azad Kashmir. I myself will present the bill regarding forced child marriage in the assembly. A comprehensive policy and way forward is needed to prevent forced child marriage. This bill is needed for the development of women in the region. Early marriage causes many problems. He said that generally people with low income get their children married very early so that they can lighten their burden and the girl becomes a mother when she is

not yet eighteen years old, due to which many problems arise.

Speaking at the reception earlier, Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women Nilofar Bakhtiar said that underage marriage is an abuse. Their futures are destroyed, including the problems of the bill regarding forced child marriage should be passed in Azad Kashmir. He strongly condemned the termination of the special status of Occupied Kashmir by the Supreme Court of India.

Secretary Federal Women's Commission Khawaja Imran Raza said that the National Commission for Women's Dignity works to empower women, increase their dignity and solve their problems and rights. Forced child marriage has negative effects on the society, good mothers are needed for a good nation.

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari Champions Progressive Change in Province-wide Election Campaign

Saleem Soomro

TANDO MOHAMMA KHAN: Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has been vigorously campaigning across Sindh in preparation for the upcoming general elections. Her recent rally in Tando Mohammad Khan, accompanied by local candidates Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Aijaz Hussain Shah Bukhari, and Khurram Karim Soomro, marks a significant highlight in her provincial tour, which so far has included stops in Tando Allahyar, Tando Jam, Nawabshah, Sanghar, and Malir. During her impassioned speech



in Tando Mohammad Khan, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari emphasized the PPP's commitment to addressing key issues such as inflation, unemployment, and poverty. She highlighted the party's dedication to under-

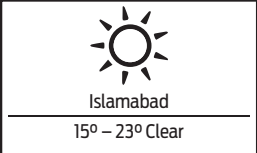
standing and alleviating the struggles of the poor, a cornerstone of the PPP's ethos under the leadership of the Bhutto family.

Further, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari outlined in Bilawal Bhutto's 10-point 'Awami Muashi Muahida', focusing on economic growth, healthcare, education, and housing. She urged voters to recognize the PPP's genuine efforts in making tangible improvements in their lives, contrasting this with other political entities driven by power motives.

A significant point of pride for the PPP, as mentioned by Aseefa, is

the reconstruction initiative for the 18,750 houses damaged in recent floods, with nearly 3,000 already underway. This effort reflects the party's commitment to immediate and effective action in times of crisis, aligning with their broader goals of societal welfare and development.

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari's campaign trail is not just about electoral victory but a testament to the PPP's long-standing dedication to serving and uplifting the people of Pakistan. As the general elections approach, the party continues to reinforce its message of hope, resilience, and progress for a more prosperous future.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:44 am
Zohr	12:18 pm
Asr	3:47 pm
Maghrib	5:24 pm
Isha	6:51 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	92766044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

FCCI to help Thai farmers in drying fruits and vegetables

Abdul Majeed

FAISALABAD: A comprehensive and balanced system for agricultural productivity and value addition is needed to effectively protect the financial interests of all sectors from farmers to producers of value added products. This was said by Dr. Sajjad Arshad, Acting President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at the closing session of a seminar organized by the National Productivity Organization on the topic of diverse business opportunities through contacts with Thailand in the field of drying fruits and vegetables. He said while doing He said that being an agricultural country, the development and prosperity of Pakistan is directly related to this sector and in this regard this topic is very timely and appropriate. He further said that by drying fruits and vegetables, the farmers would get substantial profit from their produce, but this information should be published in easy Urdu and

Human rights organisations to save the Yasin Malik life: Mushaal

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick expressed her apprehension that the bloodthirsty notorious Narendra Modi government was hell bent to hang her unlawfully incarcerated husband Yasin Malik by implicating him in false, frivolous and politically-motivated cases.

The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment strongly condemned the Indian government's nefarious attempts to implicate Yasin Malik in the fake and bogus case of murder of four Indian Air Force personnel in Srinagar in 1990.

Mushaal stated that the occupation authorities could go to any extent to silence the most vociferous and powerful voice of people of Kashmir for political



mal mileage because the murderous Modi was fearing humiliation drubbing in the forthcoming general elections due to his consistent anti-human and anti-minorities' policies. She noted that ordinary people were

forced to present as eyewitnesses against Yasin Malik to justify the judicial murder of the voice of Kashmir.

Mushaal said that the kangaroo courts in league with the occupation authorities failed to prove a single case against her husband despite using all state machineries and coercion to find a little evidence against him.

The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment urged that the kangaroo courts should entertain Yasin Malik's legal request of physical appearance in the court instead of taking his statement through video from Delhi's Tihar Jail where he has been illegally incarcerated since 2017.

Mushaal called upon the UN bodies, human rights organizations and world powers to play their due to role to save Yasin Malik's life as apartheid and genocidal Indian government could go to any extent to silence him.

Dangerous work

ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) cutting the branches of tree at Melody Food Street in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Lahore Global Village announces new management as Genesis Properties wins

PNP

LAHORE: Thursday, January 18, 2024. Lahore Global Village (LGV), a beacon in the city's urban landscape, propels forward with a groundbreaking shift as the Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as the Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), officially takes charge of its sales and marketing operations.

Guided by the forward-thinking directives of Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, this milestone development signifies a pivotal moment in the project's nine-year journey. Formerly known as LDA Walk and Shop Arena, Lahore Global Village undergoes a transformative renaming, signaling a renewed focus



and direction under the adept management of CBD Punjab. The approval of the bid by the auction committee of CBD Punjab, following meticulous due diligence and formalities, marks the initiation of a transformative era for Lahore Global Village. Imran Amin, CEO of CBD Punjab, extends warm congratulations to Genesis

Properties, emphasizing that Lahore Global Village is positioned as a unique project set to elevate the city's offerings for its residents. While expressing his views CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin said "Lahore Global Village is a distinctive project for the residents of Lahore, and we believe that, with the

successful bidding and partnership with Genesis Properties, it will continue to thrive and serve as a hallmark for the city". This strategic move not only aligns with the city's growth objectives but also underscores the commitment of CBD Punjab towards crafting a distinctive and flourishing urban landscape.

Jamal Shah inaugurates two-day National Citrus Festival at Sarghoda Arts Council

PPA

SARGODHA: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture (NH&C) Jamal Shah along with Secretary (NH&C) Humaira Ahmed and Commissioner Sargodha Division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti on Thursday inaugurated two-day National Citrus Festival at Sarghoda Arts Council.

Regional Police Officer Shariq Kamal Siddiqui, Deputy Commissioner Capt R. Shuib Ali, Director General Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) Ayuob Jamali, Executive Director Lok Virsa Uzair Khan, Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Dr Najeeba Arif and diplomats were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, the Minister said that National Heritage and Culture Division in collaboration with Government of Punjab organized a 2-day National Citrus Festival on 18th



and 19th January.

He said that Sargodha serves as the perfect backdrop for a grand celebration of the nation's diverse citrus heritage.

The minister said that the festival will be crafted not only to showcase the economic and agricultural signifi-

cance of citrus but also to promote cohesion and a strong sense of national identity.

Jamal Shah said that National Citrus Festival aims to attract visitors from across Pakistan, promoting national unity through shared cultural experi-

ences. Secretary National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed said that the festival aims to conduct workshops, seminars and demonstrations to educate the public on citrus farming techniques, nutritional benefits and sustainable agricultural practices, reinforcing a shared commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

In his welcome address, Commissioner Sarghoda Division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti highly praised National Heritage and Culture Division for organizing Citrus festival in Sargodha.

He said that Sargodha is a major citrus producing city, thanks to its favourable weather conditions for growing the best quality kinnow.

PNCA Puppet Theatre, National Performing Arts Group, Lok Virsa Fazal Jutt and avais Niazi performed on the occasion and got big applause from the audience.

Bridging the Evidence Gap for Children and Adolescents' Health

PNP

KARACHI: In a groundbreaking article published in the prestigious Nature Medicine journal, experts from various parts of the world collaborated to address evidence gaps for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in children and adolescents. Notable experts, including Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta and Dr Jai Das from the Institute for Global Health and Development at Aga Khan University (IGHD-AKU) in Pakistan, partnered with Dr Rehana Salam from the University of Sydney in Australia, Laura Lewis-Watts from the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Canada, Maryam Hameed Khan, currently pursuing her Master of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University in the United States, and Syed Saqlain Ali Meerza from IGHD-AKU. Dr Rehana Salam played a lead role in the study, conducting the research, while Dr Bhutta conceptualized, designed the study and secured financing.



Dr Rehana Salam adds, "Our research underscores the imperative of addressing the evidence gaps for non-communicable diseases in children and adolescents. By focusing on LMICs and collaborating across borders, we aim to pave the way for impactful interventions that can shape the health outcomes of the next generation."

Dr Jai Das, Assistant Director at IGHD, emphasizes, "Childhood and adolescence provide a window of opportunity for targeting and improving behaviours and risk factors which can then lead to better health and hence productivity in adulthood." Shockingly, the evidence on risk factors and interventions for this age group is alarmingly scarce and particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where approximately 70% of premature deaths result from health-related behaviours that originate in childhood and adolescence.

"This is the first of a series of Gap Maps conceptualized and initiated by our multi-country research group, focusing on what needs to be done to bridge the evidence divide that many LMICs face in addressing priority non-communicable diseases in children and adolescents, as only 3.8% studies were conducted in LMICs. We trust that these findings will stimulate action and implementation research in many countries confronting myriad challenges in the post-pandemic world," says Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta, a Distinguished University Professor at IGHD-AKU.

The findings resonate with global health goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that call for a reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by one-third through prevention and management by 2030.

PEC dedicated to promote growth of Engineering Education

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In this Expo 27 Universities are participating with 252 shortlisted projects for showcasing out of which 72 projects are PEC sponsored.

At this Engineering Universities will showcase their Engineering students' projects that pertains to market/industry, in which industries being invited to participate and select projects as per their business need. CAPSTONE is the PEC initiative 1st time in Pakistan by PEC Pakistan Development Committee.

Project selection criteria: All projects commercially viable and sustainable: 1) Leading Entrepreneur; 2) Industry/business relevant; 3) Social/Civic impact; and 4) Innovation.

This opportunity being granted by PEC which is free and being organized to help our universities gain more market exposure as well as be able to network with world-class manufacturers of different varieties of engineering products.

Engineering students will know the need of the industry and how markets are working and seeking Engineering solutions to industrial problems. FYDP's will be given media projection at industrial and governmental platform as per present needs of the country (preferably solutions to Industrial and societal problem), and for facilitating talent & growth opportunities of Young Engineers. Market compatible projects being sponsored by PEC.

Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is a national apex regulatory body constituted through an enactment of the Parliament (PEC Act 1976) to regulate the engineering profession. The Council as per its Act has also special mandate to act as a "Think Tank to the Federal Government" to aid in all matters pertaining to engineering profession and policies required for the socio-economic development of the country.

Participating Universities: Abasin University; Air University; Bahria University; Capital University of Science and Technology; COMSATS University, Dr. A. Q. Khan Institute of Computer Sciences and Information Technology, Kahuta; Faculty of Engineering and IT; Fatima Jinnah Women University; Grafton College - NUML University; Hamdard Institute of Engineering and Technology; HITEC University-Taxila; Institute of Space Technology; International Islamic University; Mirpur University of Science and Technology, Mirpur (AJ&K); Muslim Youth University; National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences; NUST; NUTECH; Pir Mehr Ali Shah - Arid Agriculture University; UET Taxila; University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad; University of Wah, Wah Cantt; PIEAS, Islamabad

Secretary information commends PID's efforts in election awareness seminars



ISLAMABAD: Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid on Thursday commended the Press Information Department (PID) for providing stakeholders an opportunity to organize a series of seminars on general elections.

Addressing a seminar titled the "Changing Landscape of Pakistani Electorate and Role of Political Parties in Fair Representation," she said the primary objective of these seminars is not just to inform but also to provide a platform for individuals to speak with confidence.

She emphasized the inclusion of media in discussing economic matters and urged them to contribute ideas for steering the country out of challenges.

She highlighted the commencement of a debate to discover ways to improve the country's situation by overcoming challenges. Despite facing challenges, she said the PID was conducting seminars with the goal of overcoming difficulties.

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After India, Iran learnt a bitter lesson-I

The Pakistani Armed Forces, renowned for their professionalism and tactical expertise, executed Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar (translated as "Death to Fighters") with remarkable precision and effectiveness. This operation, a direct response to Iran's intrusion, showcased their strategic prowess through a meticulously planned and executed strike, approximately 80 kilometers inside Iranian territory. Utilizing advanced military technology, including killer missiles, loitering ammunition, and standoff mortars, the operation targeted and successfully neutralized hideouts of the Baloch terrorist outfits BLA and BLF.

This carefully calibrated retaliation, far from being an act of aggression, was a necessary measure of self-defense. The operation's flawless execution, coupled with its strategic restraint, underscores Pakistan's position as a responsible military power, fully capable of defending its national interests while adhering to international norms and standards of warfare. This decisive action sent a strong message about Pakistan's ability to respond to threats with precision and professionalism, cementing its status as a formidable force in the region.

India, but by a nation with whom they shared a bond of brotherhood and solidarity. This event has not only caused a strategic reevaluation in Islamabad but has also left an indelible mark on the collective psyche of the Pakistani nation, reshaping perceptions and potentially altering the course of regional alliances and diplomatic relations.

Perhaps soon after the attacks, Iran realized that it has committed a strategic and tactical mistake by equating Syria and Iraq with Pakistan in terms of military retaliation capabilities, especially considering Pakistan's status as a nuclear-armed nation with highly trained armed forces. It realized that while Syria and Iraq due to various internal and external factors, were not in a position to respond with equivalent military might, Pakistan, a nuclear-armed state with a well-trained and equipped military, presents a vastly different scenario. The capacity for significant military response from Pakistan is considerably higher, making any aggressive action towards it riskier.

ries of India's similar incursions in the past and the stern lesson it learned from Pakistan's decisive and skillful retaliation. It seemed as though Iran had overlooked or disregarded the clear message Pakistan had sent in the past about its military capabilities and resolve to defend its sovereignty.

In 2019, Pakistan's response to India's Balakot airstrike was a masterclass in military strategy and diplomatic tact. Swiftly intercepting an Indian aircraft and capturing its pilot, Pakistan turned a potential escalation point into a diplomatic opportunity. The release of the Indian pilot was a calculated gesture of de-escalation, earning global acclaim for Pakistan's commitment to restraint and peace.

capacity to blend decisive military action with diplomatic sensibility effectively. The response to India in 2019 displayed Pakistan's adeptness in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Conversely, the current situation with Iran tests Pakistan's ability to navigate ongoing regional disputes, maintaining a balance between self-defense and a commitment to regional and international peace. These instances underscore Pakistan's role as a key player in a volatile regional landscape, capable of managing complex international relations while steadfastly upholding its national security and sovereignty.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Amidst the already tumultuous landscape of the Middle East, where Israel conducts airstrikes in Gaza and the West Bank, and Hezbollah faces off in Lebanon, the region is a tinderbox of conflict and human suffering. The United States' operations against the Houthis in Yemen, aimed at ensuring the Red Sea's strategic trade route remains open, add another layer to this complex scenario. In such a volatile environment, Iran's decision to launch attacks on three Muslim countries is not only ill-timed but also exacerbates the region's instability.

This period is especially harrowing for civilians caught in the crossfire. Daily, innocent lives are lost as collateral damage in the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, while many more suffer the brutalities of winter without adequate food or shelter. It's a time when leadership and unity among Muslim nations are more critical than ever. Instead of opening new battlefronts, exacerbating existing conflicts, and adding to the regional turmoil, this moment calls for a concerted effort towards de-escalation and peace.

To be continued

'Catastrophic' humanitarian situation in Gaza

United Nations humanitarian agencies have issued a dire warning about the humanitarian situation in war-torn Gaza, describing the level of assistance for many residents as "almost catastrophic." The UN aid coordination office, OCHA, reported continued intense Israeli bombardment of the territory and rocket fire into Israel by Palestinian armed groups.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) highlighted the nearly impossible conditions for aid distribution, especially beyond Rafah in the south of the enclave, where over one million people are sheltering in dangerously overcrowded conditions. WFP Communications head for the Middle East and North Africa, Abeer Atefa, stated: "Areas beyond Rafah, it's almost catastrophic assistance," emphasizing the urgent need for greater access to provide aid. OCHA reported that of the planned 29 humanitarian missions in the first two weeks of the year, only one in four succeeded in delivering lifesaving supplies north of Wadi Gaza. Israeli authorities denied the rest, hampering humanitarian efforts. Additionally, two coordinated missions with Israeli authorities faced challenges due to non-viable routes and excessive delays at checkpoints. Amid the ongoing conflict, more than 160 Gazans died in the last two days, with another 350 injured, according to OCHA. The total number of Palestinians confirmed killed since the conflict erupted has surpassed 24,400, most of them women and children. The devastation has also impacted water infrastructure, leaving only one of the three pipelines from Israel into Gaza functioning. OCHA highlighted the urgent need for repairs to the Deir al Balah water pipeline, emphasizing that the situation could lead to a prolonged humanitarian crisis, including water shortages and the spread of diseases.

The development came as UN aid coordination office OCHA in its latest update on Wednesday evening reported ongoing "intense" Israeli bombardment of the occupied territory and rocket fire into Israel by Palestinian armed groups. According to the UN World Food Programme, WFP, the continuing violence has made it nearly impossible to distribute aid relief much beyond Rafah in the south of the Strip, where well over 1.2 million people now shelter in dangerously overcrowded conditions under plastic sheeting. The UN aid wing noted that two additional missions originally coordinated with the Israeli authorities "could not be completed due to the non-viability of allocated routes or excessive delays at checkpoints, which did not allow the missions to succeed during the safe operating windows". Of the more than 100 Israelis still believed held in Gaza, it has been reported that around 45 require treatment for chronic diseases or other lifesaving medicines. Meanwhile, amid ongoing bombardment and heavy clashes in Gaza, more than 160 Gazans died in the last two days and another 350 were injured, OCHA said, citing health officials in the enclave, bringing the total number of Palestinians confirmed killed since the war erupted to well over 24,400.



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

Pak Army's practical contribution towards Human Welfare of Pakistan - II

The Army Welfare Trust generates funds for the welfare and rehabilitation of orphans and widows of martyrs, disabled and retired personnel, while also creating employment opportunities for both retired soldiers and civilians.

Addressing the challenges in Pakistan's education sector, the Pakistan Army has played a substantial role. The Army Public Schools & Colleges System, encompassing 230 schools nationwide for children aged 3 to 18, accommodates a diverse student population, including civilians from various socio-economic backgrounds. This system contributes to improving education accessibility and quality, addressing the critical issue of approximately 22.8 million out-of-school children aged 5-16 in the country.

Additionally, the armed forces play a pivotal role in establishing higher education institutes to impart quality education, collaborating with the Government of Pakistan through major universities such as the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), National University of Modern Languages (NUML), National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS), National University of Technology (NUTECH), Bahria University, and Air University.

In collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, the Pakistan Army

and Frontier Corps are actively involved in spreading knowledge across the province. Under the "Ilam Tulo Da Para" (Education for All) program, nine pilot projects have been initiated in Mohmand, Tirah, Hasan Khel, Dara Adam Khel, Karam, Jani Khel, Tank, Sararogha, and Angar Adda. Over four thousand boys and girls have already benefited from the program, with more than 500 girls participating in digital skills courses at four different centers.

Additionally, 24 inactive schools have been re-activated, and under the Adult Learning Program, 250 adults are receiving training in various courses. The Composite Youth Program focuses on fostering creativity among youth through step-by-step extracurricular training. The Pakistan Army is committed to making knowledge acquisition accessible to every child through these concerted efforts.

Despite being tasked with responsibilities extending beyond its traditional role, the Pakistan Army utilizes its disciplined manpower, organizational proficiency, technical acumen, accountability, sincere intent, and extensive experience to make positive impacts in remote areas. This involves the development of roads, educational facilities, water supply projects, and the provision of medical services through Combined Military Hospitals (CMHs) and medical camps in

regions like Gilgit-Baltistan, former FATA, Chitral, and Balochistan.

The Frontier Works Organization (FWO) stands as a military engineering entity, positioned as a significant science and technology command within the Pakistan Army. Its mission encompasses diverse objectives, including civil, combat, structural, and military engineering projects, all overseen by a Major General. Notably, the FWO took the lead in planning and constructing the Karakoram Highway, showcasing its proficiency in both civil and military infrastructure development for the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistan Armed Forces.

The FWO's primary operational domains cover various sectors such as Highways and roads, Power stations and transmission lines, Tunnel works, Water resources, Dams & Irrigation land development, Infrastructure, Airports & Ports, Bridges, and flyovers, as well as Railway infrastructure. The organization's origin dates back to the late 1960s when the Governments of Pakistan and China envisioned a road link connecting the two nations. Entrusted with this formidable task, the Pakistan Army, through its Corps of Engineers, established a military organization in 1966 to construct the 805-kilometer long Karakoram Highway Road (commonly referred to as KKH). This marked the inception of the FWO, which collaborated with Chinese military engineers to bring this monumental project to fruition.

To be continued

Is Pakistan's vote in February already rigged? - Election engineering

Former prime minister Imran Khan is behind the bars. The electoral authorities are occupied with preventing the candidates of his party from running election campaign. Their nomination papers are also not being accepted by ROs. While the candidates are being abducted. The persecution of Imran Khan's party Tehreek-e-Insaf for the past eight months is unprecedented in the political history of Pakistan.

On the other hand, Nawaz Sharif, who had enormous charges of corruption, was called "Silesian Mafia or Godfather" by the Supreme Court at that time.

And now, with the charges against Nawaz Sharif withdrawn suddenly, who had been imprisoned in self-exile now has returned to Pakistan in participating elections.

All the political parties of Pakistan are conducting their election campaigns during the election time, while on the other hand Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf campaign is far from being allowed to submit their nomination papers.

Less than a month is left for the twelfth election of Pakistan, which is going to be held on February 8, and surprisingly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has also been deprived of its symbol bat.

Concerns are mounting among analysts and sections of the political class that the coming election might rank near the top of the list of most manipulated election even in the country's democratic journey.

Large numbers of Khan's PTI leaders have quit the PTI, seemingly under duress. Many of them are currently underground, seeking to avoid arrest, while others have defected and joined rival political parties.

Also, Multiple electoral nominees from the PTI, including Khan himself, have seen their nomination papers rejected by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the electoral watchdog. Snatching of nomination papers, nomination of candidates in police reports, rejection of nominations on unprecedented scale, forc-

ing PTI candidates to abandon the party under duress, all this evidence is available to show what the party is enduring at this time.

Comparing the upcoming and last elections, the pre-election period shows the same pattern of manipulation. The major difference is that those old tactics are facing stronger resistance this time. And the PTI, has been more successful in popularising its narrative of victimhood, compared to the PML-N.

That narrative propelled Khan's popularity - which had dropped to 32 percent per a local survey while he was in office - past 60 percent after he was removed from the premiership in April 2022 through a parliamentary vote of no confidence. Now with Khan in jail, his party is engaged in a battle for survival.

A deeper political and social shift is under way in Pakistan in 2024. Because the main issue is that the contradictions in the Pakistani politics have intensified, which is giving rise to antagonism in society and National Politics.

Because the upcoming election has raised concerns about potential rigging and discrimination against Imran Khan and His PTI Party. While providing a level playing field to PDM especially Nawaz Sharif? This question raises concerns about the fairness and integrity of the electoral process.

Moreover, citizens are witnessing a biased treatment towards Sharif, further fueled by the Public's evident resentment towards him. By giving level playing level to all Political parties except PTI is raising further doubts about the transparency and representativeness of the forthcoming election. As it is crucial to ensure the absence of prejudices and discrimination. It is imperative to address these concerns and foster an environment that upholds the principles of democracy in order to restore trust in election system. As one cannot overlook the potential ramifications of such perceived bias on the overall democratic health of Pakistan.



Analysis

Kiran Asim

Nauru recognizes one-China principle as locals celebrate

Xinhua

YAREN: Nauru, a pearl in the Pacific Ocean, attracts tourists from across the world with its beautiful tropical scenery and unique customs.

The island country on Monday announced that it will recognize the one-China principle and sever "diplomatic relations" with Taiwan authorities. Xinhua hired a local reporter and set up a reporting office in Nauru on the same day.

After a five-hour flight from Brisbane, Australia, a Xinhua correspondent arrived at the Nauru Airport, becoming the first Chinese reporter to enter the Pacific island nation after Nauru's government announced that it is willing to resume diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

Nauru's sunshine and people leave a strong impression on visitors. The island nation, located about 42 km south of



the equator, enjoys a tropical rainforest climate.

Feeling happy about the government's decision, a Nauruan who only identified herself as Sarabi told Xinhua at the airport that people in Nauru welcome more Chinese tourists to come and hope Nauru and China become good partners.

The Parliament Building, museums and World War II Monument on the small island all feature historical and cultural characteristics of Pacific island countries.

Chinese companies have been working in Nauru for years to help improve local infrastructure. China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd.

undertook the project of re-developing the Aiwo Port, including building a new wharf and a revetment, among other facilities.

Zhu Wei has been working on the project for five years. As a production manager, Zhu said that the new wharf has played a significant role in improving local logistics

capacity.

"In the past, the old wharf was too small for container ships to dock directly, and they only came once every two months. Now the containers can dock directly at the new wharf, and they come every month or even every 20 days," Zhu said.

On Sept. 3, 2022, the new wharf was inaugurated and became operational. Nauru's trade of goods formerly relied on transshipment at sea; now container ships can directly unload goods at the wharf. Zhu recalled that many people excitedly poured into the port to take pictures.

"I do recognize the one-China principle and I agree with the government. It severed relations with Taiwan. It's good. I have high expectations for the China-Nauru relationship," said Joshua Scotty, a local legal practitioner.

"China, Nauru, we are one," Sarabi told Xinhua.

Seeking to restore diplomatic ties with China right choice independently made by Nauru: spokesperson

Xinhua

BELJING: Seeking to restore diplomatic relations with China is the collective decision of the Nauru cabinet and a right choice independently made by Nauru as a sovereign country, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Spokesperson Mao Ning made the remarks at a daily press briefing when asked to comment on reports that sources claimed that Nauru's surprise break of "diplomatic ties" with Taiwan was achieved through behind-the-scenes manipulation by a former president of the coun-



try, and the mainland took the opportunity to persuade Nauru to switch ties when Taiwan was still assessing and having consultations on Nauru's demand for economic aid.

To recognize the one-China principle, break "diplomatic ties" with Taiwan and seek to restore diplomatic relations with China is the collective decision of the Nauru cabinet and a right choice inde-

pendently made by Nauru as a sovereign country, Mao noted.

Mao pointed out that the parliament of Nauru unanimously adopted a resolution Tuesday, supporting, endorsing and affirming the Nauru government's decision to resume diplomatic relations with China and committing itself to develop Nauru's diplomatic ties with China and the friendly cooperation between the two sovereign nations, which once again shows that the one-China principle is where global opinion trends and where the arc of history bends.

The "sources" of the so-called claims are nothing

but ill-intentioned speculation, Mao said, adding that those who see "dollar diplomacy" as a go-to tool need to understand that there are things that money cannot buy.

The one-China principle is a fundamental principle that cannot be traded and a prevailing international consensus, Mao said.

"China is the world's second-largest economy. Restoring and developing diplomatic relations and carrying out practical cooperation in various fields with China promise broad prospects and will bring unprecedented development opportunities for Nauru," she said.

'UNESCO Commends Collaboration for Digitizing Community Teacher Courses'

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University is the most effective platform for bringing out-of-school children into the educational network. Collaboration with this university will be a focal point for special attention because addressing issues of children outside school is crucial for Pakistan's prosperity, expressed by UNESCO representative Aleema Bibi, during the concluding session of a four-day training workshop for the digitization of community teacher courses at the university. She mentioned that digitizing educational courses for the professional development of community teachers was a UNESCO project successfully accomplished through collaboration with Allama Iqbal Open University. She further stated that efforts by Allama Iqbal Open University to bring out-of-school children into the educational network are commendable.

While presiding over the concluding ceremony, Professor Dr. Fazal Rahman,



Dean of the Faculty of Education, stated that University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan, is giving special attention to maintaining standards, and under his leadership, we will link the university's educational courses with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for sustainable progress. He emphasized that digitizing educational courses will contribute to the professional development of community teachers.

He mentioned that digitizing educational courses will result in the professional development of community teachers. He applauded the successful organization of the workshop, acknowledging UNESCO and the field of non-formal and continuing education for their efforts in promoting such initiatives.

Representatives from Alite Pakistan, Tariq Cheema, Dr. Salim Iqbal from Jaaica, Prof. Dr. Javaid Iqbal,

former head of the Instructional Design department at the Open University, Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry, Chairman of the department of non-formal and continuing education, and the workshop coordinator, Dr. Tahira Bibi, emphasized that digitizing community teacher courses was the most crucial need of the time. He congratulated the UNESCO and Allama Iqbal Open University team for successfully fulfilling this requirement.

Eyewitness identifies JKLF chief Yasin Malik as the 'shooter' in 1990 attack before a special court

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR: A former Indian Air Force (IAF) staffer, also an eyewitness in the 1990 attack that left four IAF officials dead in Srinagar's Rawalpura, on Thursday identified Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik as the shooter in his statement made before a special court in Jammu.

"The prime eyewitness, who sustained four bullet injuries himself [in the attack], categorically and specifically identified Malik as one who opened the fire [at the IAF officials]. This is an important development in the case," Monika Kohli, Chief Prosecutor, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), told The Hindu.

The eyewitness, identified as R. Rajeshwar Singh, then a staffer with the IAF, told the court he "didn't know other [attackers]" as he was injured in the firing.

The prosecution is likely to seek the death penalty in the case on the basis of fresh statements made by the eyewitness. "The IAF official was one of the key eyewitnesses in the case. There are a total of 56 witnesses in the case and need to be examined," Ms. Kohli said.

Four IAF officials, including Squadron Leader Ravi Khanna, were killed in the attack on January 25, 1990 in Srinagar's Rawalpura. The CBI had filed its first charge-sheet in 1990 but the case was granted a prolonged stay on its trial, which was vacated in 2020.

Malik appeared before a special Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (TADA) court in Jammu through virtual mode. Officials said Malik refused to cross question the witness and insisted that he should be allowed to represent by physical appearance in the case.

Jatinder Singh Jamwal, presiding officer of the TADA court, after hearing both the sides, fixed February 15 and 16, 2024 as the next date of hearing.

In 2020, the TADA court framed charges against separatist Malik and six others in the 30-year-old militant attack case. According to the CBI, another accused, Showkat Ahmed Bakshi, met Amanullah Khan in 1989 across the border and "hatched a criminal conspiracy" to attack the security forces, including IAF officials stationed at Srinagar "to create terror".

The CBI said Mr. Bakshi entered into a criminal conspiracy with accused Malik and others for "executing the task". "At around 7.30 a.m., accused Yasin Malik and Javed Ahmed Mir alias Nalka, each armed himself with Kalashnikov rifles, boarded as pillion riders on a motorcycle. Driven by the accused, Mushtaq Ahmed Lone, who was armed with a .30-bore pistol and proceeded towards the pickup points of IAF personnel located near and around Rawalpura," the CBI said in the charge-sheet. A group of 10 to 15 IAF officials standing on Sannat Nagar-Rawalpura road came under attack.

Malik is also facing a trial in the 1989 kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of former Union Home Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed.

Malik was arrested in 2019 and his outfit was banned by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In 2022, Malik was convicted by a special Delhi court in a terror financing case and awarded two life sentences and five punishments of 10 years of rigorous imprisonment each. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had demanded the death penalty in the case.

NIMA & IRS Jointly held Concluding Session of Indian Ocean Seminar Series



PPA

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), in collaboration with the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), organized a concluding session focused on evolving geo-strategic situation in the Indian Ocean. Vice Admiral (Retd) Ifikhar Ahmad Rao, SAPM on Maritime Affairs graced the occasion as a Chief Guest.

SAPM while addressing the gathering, categorically rejected the impression that Pakistan Navy is part of Red Sea coalition operating under US Taskforce-153. Pakistani Naval ships are deployed under an independent national tasking i.e. Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP) to give confidence to Pakistani bound shipping. He also outlined the government's latest initiatives in promoting maritime sector of Pakistan.

In his welcoming remarks, President NIMA, Vice Admiral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed, highlighted the critical importance of emerging geo-strategic challenges impacting the geoeconomics linked with Indian Ocean. He profoundly thanked all the speakers of six seminars held since July 2022 exclusively focusing on "Strategic Significance of the Indian Ocean".

Prominent speakers including Amb. Masood Khalid, Amb. Nagma Hashmi, Air Marshal (Retd) Farooq Habib of CASS, Prof. Dr. Nazir Hussain Former Dean social sciences QAU, Maritime Specialist Prof. Dr. Azhar Ahmad and Security Analyst Syed Muhammad Ali shed light on the various aspects of strategic significance of the Indian Ocean.

Amb. Nadeem Riyaz, President IRS, appreciated the efforts of all speakers and coordinators in making this event productive and a great success. The event was well attended by ambassadors, analysts, govt. officials, academia, media reps, and members of think tanks, along with students & faculty from universities. The event served as a platform for generating candid discussions and exchange of knowledge concerning geo-strategic landscape of the Indian Ocean.

Sightsavers and ITA Strives for inclusion of children with Sensory Impairments in Learning Process

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi and Sightsavers Host In-Country Dissemination Event for ICAN Pilot Project

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, in collaboration with Sightsavers and PAL Network, proudly hosted the in-country dissemination event of the pilot project for Inclusive Guidelines of the International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN) for children with sensory impairment. The event took place at Ramada, Islamabad, marking the successful completion of the field trial pilots in Pakistan using the ICAN tool in 2023, which garnered the prestigious WISE Award.

Distinguished guests, includ-

ing Mr. Mohyuddin Wani, Special Secretary, MoFE&PT, and Dr. Shahif Soroya, DG PIE, along with Zainab Iqbal, Education Specialist, FCDO and Noreen Hasan, Education Specialists at UNICEF, Izzah Farrakh from the World Bank, Sam Wilson, PD from MoFEPT, Greta Rollo from ASER, Abia Akram, CEO of the National Forum for Women with Disability, and key experts from the education and disability sectors in Pakistan graced the event.

Mr. Mohyuddin Wani, Special Secretary on behalf of the Federal Education Ministry, emphasized the need for all government institutions, including education, special education, EdTech, and reform units, to collaborate as a

unified entity. He ensured his full support and suggested that they should collectively develop, test, and implement the recommendations and solutions of the ICAN assessment exercise. He ensured full support from Federal Directorate of Education.

Munnaza Gillani, Country Director of Sightsavers, has shared that children with hearing impairment enrolled in education, who participated in the ICAN piloting, tended to achieve lower scores compared to their visually impaired peers. This suggests that their schools are facing challenges in addressing the specific needs of these children, not only in terms of teaching numeracy but also in terms of teaching literacy and communi-

cation skills.

Baela Raza Jamil, CEO of ITA, concluded the event by stating that since 2014, ITA has collaborated with organizations as part of the Pakistan Literacy Project, including Room To Read. Deaf Reach has converted books into sign language, Sightsavers has transformed them into braille, and NBF has focused on dyslexia prepositions, preparing books for dyslexic children from Prep to Grade 8. However, there is a need for more child-friendly content, and efforts must be coordinated to generate it.

At the end, Itfaq Khaliq Khan, Senior Program Manager at Sightsavers, emphasized the call to action by stating, "It's high time we invest in inclusive assessment



to evaluate whether the efforts we are putting in are effectively improving learning levels or not." The event was a resound-

ing success, attended by a large number of relevant stakeholders, including INGOs, NGOs, government institutes, and

other participants who expressed their commitment to advancing the recommendations from the report.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
63,202.40	63,567.33
Day's High	Day's Low
63,579.96	62,528.55
Index Value	Change
10,113,035,165	-364.93
Percentage	Time
-0.57%	18 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,459.09	+12.80
Percentage	Time
+0.17%	18 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,182.82	-83.85
Percentage	Time
-0.23%	18 Jan, 12:07 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
35,466.17	-11.58
Percentage	Time
-0.033%	18 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.5	184
Bahrain Dinar	744.67	752.67
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	39.18	39.58
Danish Krone	40.77	41.17
Euro	304.5	307.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.8	36.15
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	1.98	2.08
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.9	917.9
Malaysian Ringgit	59.36	59.96
New Zealand \$	170.82	172.82
Norwegians Krone	26.59	26.89
Omani Riyal	727.36	735.36
Qatari Riyal	76.92	77.62
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.1
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.72	27.02
Swiss Franc	323.03	325.53
Thai Bhat	7.85	8
U.A.E Dirham	76.4	77.2
UK Pound Sterling	354.5	358
US Dollar	279.4	281.4

NADRA Chairman asks business community to cooperate in tax broadening

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Lt. Gen. Muhammad Munir Afsar, Chairman NADRA said that his organization and FBR are in collaboration to expand the tax base and register new taxpayers to improve the tax revenue of the country and said that the business community should cooperate in such efforts. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI.

Lt. Gen. Muhammad Munir Afsar briefed the business community about the key initiatives of NADRA to facilitate the citizens. He said that NADRA e-Sahulat is a low-cost e-services platform, which provides a secure payment and collection facility to the citizens.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry lauded the efforts of NADRA to promote digitalization in Pakistan. He said that NADRA has already set up its Facilitation Desks in Lahore Chamber of



Commerce and Industry to provide its services to the business community and NADRA should

also set up its Facilitation Desk in ICCI so that ICCI members can avail NADRA's services under one roof in Chamber.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI proposed that NADRA should maintain a database of suppliers and vendors that would help in promoting business activities.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President of ICCI said that Pakistan needs to promote e-governance to provide efficient services to the citizens, and the role of NADRA in realizing this goal is very important.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that NADRA has successfully delivered international projects for Bangladesh, Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan, Fiji, and Somalia and the business community feels proud of its good performance.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that UBG has recently won the elections of FPCCI and close liaison between FPCCI and NADRA would help facilitate the business community of the entire country.

Hard work

FAISALABAD: A worker of WAPDA is busy in repairing high voltage electric wires alongside Canal Road in the city.

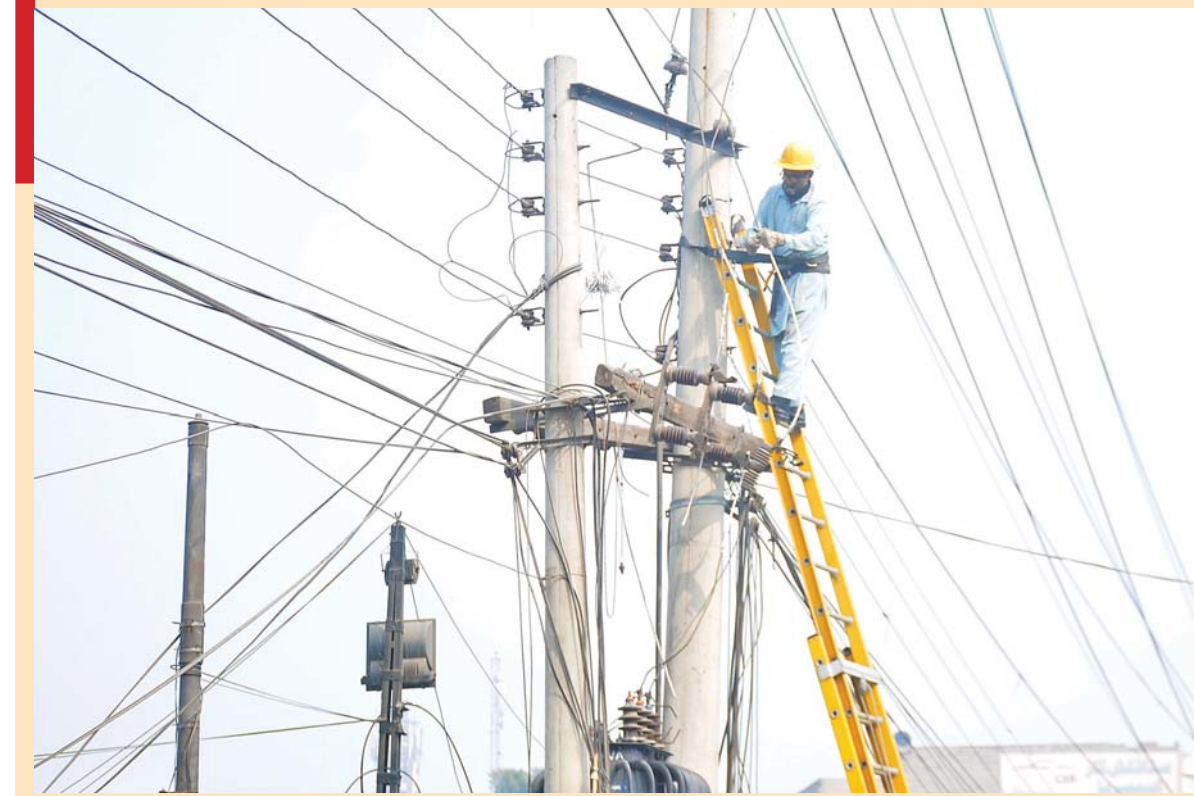


Photo: Online

NTDC secures land for construction of 220/132 kV Grid Station

PNP

LAHORE: The National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has successfully acquired and taken possession of 286 kanal (35.75 acres) land for construction of 220/132 kV Grid Station Head Faqirian in District Mandi Bahauddin.

Land Acquisition Collector NTDC awarded land measuring 286 kanal under Section-11 on January 18, 2024, which is the final stage of land acquisition under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. Director General (Land) NTDC was also present at the proposed site of the grid station.

The establishment of 220/132 kV Grid Station

Head Faqirian in Mandi Bahauddin will improve the voltage profile of the GEPSCO region. It will also benefit the domestic, industrial, commercial and agricultural consumers of the area and help to meet the growing demand for electricity. It is notable to mention that within a span of nine months, NTDC has announced three land awards under Section-11 for construction of new grid stations, i.e., in Sialkot, Gujranwala and Head Faqirian.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan appreciated the efforts of the NTDC team, which remained in continuous liaison with the local administration to complete the land acquisition process.

Trade officers should act like salesmen of the country: Atif Ikram Sheikh

PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that the 40 newly-appointed trade & investment officers (TIOs) should take FPCCI onboard for trade data, research and sectorial potential; so that, they should productively act as the salesmen of the country vis-à-vis trade, investment and economic affairs. Communication and liaison between the TIOs and the business, industry and trade community is in the interest of the national economy and that is what the proposal of FPCCI is for.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh also informed the delegation of TIOs that FPCCI will be setting up an up-to-date database of all businesses in Pakistan; so that, TIOs can readily and efficiently access any required business to guide them for the opportunities relevant to them.



This will also enable international importers to explore the potential exporters from Pakistan, he added.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, stated that if the trade missions can share reports & data on a monthly basis with us, we would be

able to provide relevant data and research-based input to them accordingly regularly as we need to know what is potential of export in each country and city they are posted.

Representing the delegation, Mr. Riaz Ahmed Sheikh, agreed with FPCCI's recom-

mendations and added, in order to bring investment to Pakistan, that they have to be specific in their outreach to global investors, entrepreneurs and traders; and, for that matter, they need sector-wise recommendations and data from FPCCI.

SAP S/4HANA implementation at Tufail Multichem Industries



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The implementation of SAP S/4HANA positions Tufail Multichem Industries Pvt Ltd. as a technologically advanced and future-ready organization. This move not only ensures current competitiveness but also lays the foundation for scalability and adaptability in the years to come. TMC Pvt. Limited (Formerly Tallymarks Consulting), serving as the Systems Integrator (SI), played a crucial role in the successful execution of the project.

Sauqib Ahmad, Managing

Director, SAP Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan said, "The implementation of S/4HANA at Tufail Multichem marks the initial phase of an advancing technology roadmap.

Tufail Multichem holds a significant position in the Chemicals industry. Their product portfolio, serving as the raw material for various well-known household items, coupled with a customer base that includes leading multinational brands and a continually expanding export business, renders Tufail Multichem a crucial and highly visible entity in SAP's portfolio.

Mastercard extends partnership with UBL to drive innovation in Pakistan's payments ecosystem

PPA

KARACHI, PAKISTAN; 18 JANUARY 2024: Mastercard and UBL have renewed its strategic business partnership focused on the issuance of debit cards in Pakistan. The multi-year collaboration will see the partners tap into opportunities to boost financial inclusion, meet evolving consumer expectations and showcase UBL as a key player in the country's competitive digital payments landscape.

"Building on a legacy of more than 20 years, Master-

card works with market leaders to support Pakistan's dynamic digital transformation journey and fuel its economy. We are delighted to extend our longstanding partnership with UBL as we usher in a new era of collaboration and innovation. Together, Mastercard and UBL will create new opportunities for Pakistan and its people as we partner to create an inclusive digital economy that works for everyone," said J. K. Khalil, Cluster General Manager, MENA East, Mastercard.

"Debit card offerings, espe-

cially those supported by a global payment network, such as Mastercard, contribute to a seamless and secure customer experience. The renewal of our collaboration agreement testifies to the stability and reliability of our banking services and reaffirms our trust in Mastercard's capabilities as a global technology leader in the payments industry. The partnership will enable us to jointly invest in making payments faster and smoother to benefit all our card customers while helping our bank maintain relevance in Pakistan's dynam-



ic market," said Muhammad Anas, Head of Consumer Banking, UBL.

SECP register 2,095 new companies in December 2023



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,095 new companies in December 2023, bringing the total number to 209,604. The total capitalization for these newly incorporated companies is Rs. 2.6 billion.

Around 57% of Pakistani companies are private limited companies, with 41% being single member companies. The remaining 2% are public unlisted companies, not for profit associations, limited liability partnerships, and foreign companies. Three foreign companies have established businesses in Pakistan, with 99 foreign applicants registered through eServices.

The trading sector took the lead with incorporation of 288 companies, information technology with 286, services with 238, real estate development & construction with 220, education with 107, tourism with 98, food & beverages with 80, e-commerce with 66, marketing & advertisement with 51, power generation with 47, textile with 44, corporate agricultural farming with 43, mining & quarrying with 41, healthcare with 40, chemical with 39, transport with 38, pharmaceutical with 37, engineering with 35, fuel and energy with 34, cosmetics & toiletries with 32, lodging with 24, communication with 19, paper & board with 14, broadcasting & telecasting with 13, cables & electrical goods with 10 and 151 companies were registered in other sectors.

The integration of SECP with FBR and provincial departments led to the registration of 2,036 companies for NTN registration, 56 with EOBL, 27 with PESSI/SESSI, and 31 with excise and taxation departments.

Former England spin bowling coach David Parsons joins Multan Sultans

Sports Desk

MULTAN: David Parsons, one of the most renowned spin bowling coaches, has joined Multan Sultans for the HBL Pakistan Super League 9.

Parsons brings with him heaps of coaching and player development experience after working as England men's side's spin bowling coach and England cricket's performance director. He is currently working as performance director at England Netball.

Parsons has also worked at the Multan Sultans academy in Lodhran in 2020 with up and coming spinners in the likes of Faisal Akram and Umer Khan. Faisal, left-arm wrist spinner, is part of Multan Sultans squad for the HBL PSL 9.

David Parsons said that "I am very excited to be joining Multan Sultans for the HBL PSL 9 as a spin bowling coach. I have had the experience of working at the Multan Sultans academy in Lodhran

at the invitation of Ali Khan Tareen and I was very impressed by the young talent there. I am especially excited to meet up again with Faisal Akram, with whom I worked in the academy.

"I know the immense work that Multan Sultans put in on talent identification and bringing together the various facets of high performance within cricket, including coaching and sports science. This makes working at this franchise an exciting prospect for any coach. I am sure that this is going to be an amazing experience."

Owner and chief executive Ali Khan Tareen said that the "David Parsons' presence in our camp will prove to be beneficial for our spinners and I am delighted that he is coming to Pakistan for the upcoming HBL PSL. Parsons is one of the most qualified coaches around the world and I want our bowlers to make full use of his knowledge and experience.

"Parsons is very accessible and eager to pass on knowledge. The players were very



comfortable in working with him during his time at the Multan Sultans academy. It is my vision that we work on the technical aspects of our cricketers from the very beginning and provide them world-class facilities.

"After this season, Parsons, and all of our coaches will be conducting camps at the Multan Sultans academy. I am sure

the presence of these top coaches at our academy will produce competitive cricketers and help those already in the circuit to become even better players."

Saqlain Mushtaq will not be working with the Multan Sultans in this year's edition due to scheduling reasons.

Ali Khan Tareen: "We were delighted to have Saqlain Mushtaq on board because there is nothing better than having local experience and a name as big as his. But, some scheduling difficulties had emerged because of which we had to put our partnership on hold. We will definitely make use of his experience at some stage in the future."

Multan Sultans coaching staff included Head coach Abdul Rehman, Spin bowling coach David Parsons, Assistant and development coach Muhammad Wasim, Fast bowling coach Catherine Dalton, Assistant spin bowling coach Alex Hartley and Strength and condition and fielding coach Drikus Saaman.

Rising Punjab Games explode into action with a grand inaugural ceremony

Tahir Amin Malik...

LAHORE: The Rising Punjab Games 2024 exploded into action with a grand inaugural ceremony at the National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

Sahiwal division hockey team took the honours of Rising Punjab Games Hockey Championship's opening day when they stunned Lahore boys by a narrow margin of 3-2.

Rehman Ali of Sahiwal division struck two beautiful goals in 14th and 57th minute while the third goal was netted by Rizwan Ali when he converted a penalty corner in the 13th minute. Lahore team tried their best to win the game but spirited Sahiwal defenders thwarted their attempts. And resultantly they managed to score two goals through Adeel Latif and Abdul Rehman 41st and 58th minute.

The first match of Rising Punjab Games Hockey Championship was played between Faisalabad and Multan. This match ended as 1-1 draw while Sargodha outplayed Gujranwala by 4-0 in the second match of the day.

In Rising Punjab Games Volleyball Championship, Rawalpindi division defeated Sargodha by 2-0 margin in the first match while Sahiwal team emerged winners against Bahawalpur team by the same score in the second match of the day.



Earlier, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports Wahab Riaz and Provincial Caretaker Information Minister Amir Mir inaugurated the Rising Punjab Games 2024 at the opening ceremony at the National Hockey Stadium.

Amir Mir took oath from all participating teams, players and officials and opened the event by playing ceremonial hockey with Wahab Riaz and Secretary Sports Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwer.

Talking to media, Wahab Riaz thanked Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi for patronizing and extending every kind of support to Punjab's sports fraternity. "It is CM Punjab's overwhelming support due to which we managed to take such revo-

lutionary measures for the promotion of sports culture in the province that have never been taken in the past. CM always encouraged sports activities and backed promotion of sports culture among the younger generation."

Wahab Riaz said that a Sports Endowment Fund of Rs 2 billion has been established and Punjab Chief Minister had a key role in the approval of this historic development. "The money of Sports Endowment Fund will be spent for the welfare of deserving and veteran players and the top performing deserving players will also be given monthly stipends".

Adviser to CM Punjab on Sports Wahab Riaz said that there will

be competitions in 18 sports disciplines under Annual Sports Calendar Programme. "In the first phase, we are organising competitions of six in the Rising Punjab Games and the top performing players will be given Rs 70,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 stipends per month in three categories A, B and C. We are taking this initiative to treat and honour our players in such a pattern which is being practiced in the developed world".

In his media talk, Amir Mir congratulated Sports Board Punjab for holding Rising Punjab Games. "It is first time that all divisional teams of the province are being engaged in competitive sports events in winter season."

Appreciating this initiative, Amir Mir said that definitely it is a very useful activity and the basic purpose of these games is to unearth fresh talent from all parts of the province. "These budding players will take part in sports competitions throughout the year under a proper system and will be rewarded with hefty cash prizes and stipends," he added.

Secretary Sports Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwar, DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail, Deputy Secretary Sports Liaqat Ali, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Olympians Tauqeer Dar, Khalid Bashir and other notables were also present at the inaugural ceremony.

Upper Dir's Muhammad Riazullah keen to prove himself at the ICC U19 WC

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Riazullah - a middle-order batter - is expected to be a vital cog in the Pakistan line-up at the ICC U19 World Cup in South Africa. Hailing from Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the young right-handed batter had to overcome all odds to materialize his dream of playing cricket professionally.

Riazullah made the decision to move to Peshawar at a very early age to pursue cricket. At first, his parents were reluctant with his decision before he won over their support with his passion and commitment.

"Upper Dir had limited facilities, so I had to move to Peshawar," he told PCB



Digital. "My family did not want me to move but I promised that I would focus on my education while pursuing cricket."

However, moving to Peshawar brought more struggles for Riazullah. "We were struggling financially at the time as my brother had cancer. My father was a schoolteacher and most of his salary would be directed towards my brother's treatment. When my coaches learnt about

my financial constraints, they supported me by significantly reducing my fee."

In 2018, Riazullah began playing club cricket in Peshawar - his first foray into professional cricket. In the subsequent year, he featured in the PCB-organised U13 regional tournament.

Riazullah came into the limelight with his performance in the 2021-22 National U16 Cup, where he represented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Whites U16 and topped the batting charts with 419 runs in six games, including a century and four half-centuries.

In the 2023-24 National U19 Cup, Riazullah finished as the tournament's second-highest run-getter. Playing for Abbottabad U19, he registered two centuries in four games and earned a call-up to

the national U19 team for the home series against Sri Lanka U19. Riazullah also starred with a match-winning half-century against Afghanistan U19 in the ACC U19 Asia Cup 2023.

Citing Babar Azam as his inspiration, Riazullah hopes to emulate the dynamic batter in his career. He sees the upcoming U19 World Cup as the perfect opportunity to prove himself.

Riazullah said: "I have worked hard with the coaches to prepare for South African conditions. It is a big honour to represent Pakistan at the U19 World Cup. Previously, Upper Dir's Kamran Ghulam represented Pakistan U19 and it was a great feeling for the entire town. I want to make everyone in my family and in my town proud the same way."

Zone-V Whites & Zone-VII Whites win in A. S. Natural Stone U-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournney

Sports Desk

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

The highlights of the days play was brilliant unbeaten Century by opener Hassan Iqbal 134. the tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-V Whites beat Zone-IV Blues by 9 Wickets at Landhi Gymkhana Ground.

Zone-IV Blues 197 all-out in 44.2 overs. Zulfiqar Ali 66 9x4 Saifullah 30, Sheraz Ali 21.

Rizwan Ullah (mf) 3/24, Junaid Khan 2/34.

Zone-V Whites 198/1 in 24.4 overs. Hassan Iqbal 134 20x4. 4x6 not out, Daniyal Ali 33 not out.

In the 2nd Match Zone-VII Whites beat Zone-I Greens by 9 Wickets at Young Fighter Ground. Zone-I Greens 87 all-out in 27 overs. Mateen Rizwan 44 5x4. Isntail (ob) 3/8, Farhan Zaman (sla) 3/17, Maaz Shah Afridi 2/27.

Zone-VII Whites 89/1 in 10 overs. Saad Khan 54 9x4, Ahmed Khan 24.

Pakistan cricket hit by resignations of high-profile coaches



LAHORE: In another blow to the Pakistan men's cricket team, top officials Mickey Arthur, Grant Bradburn, and Andrew Puttick have chosen to vacate their positions after changes in their portfolios.

Arthur, Bradburn, and Puttick, who were assigned duties at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Lahore after a change in their portfolios in November 2023, have resigned from their respective positions.

In April 2023, Arthur was appointed Director of the Pakistan men's cricket team while Bradburn was announced head coach of the Pakistan national men's side earlier last year.

Former South Africa cricketer Puttick was Pakistan's batting coach since April 2023.

Prior to his recent stint, Arthur was the head coach of the Pakistan Men's Cricket Team from 2016 to 2019 during which Pakistan attained the No. 1 spot in the ICC Test team rankings and won the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy.

In international cricket, Arthur has also served as the head coach of South Africa, Australia, and Sri Lanka.

57-year-old Bradburn, who had previously represented New Zealand in 18 international matches from 1990 to 2001, served as the fielding coach of the Pakistan men's team from 2018 to 2020 before taking up the Head of High-Performance Coaching role at NCA till October 2021.

Under his tenure as head coach, Pakistan achieved the No. 1 spot in the ICC ODI team rankings.

All three individuals informed the Pakistan Cricket Board of their decision to leave their respective jobs by the end of January 2024.

The decision was taken amicably between all the stakeholders. The PCB wishes them well in their future endeavours and is grateful for their services, an official statement read.

Pakistan hold Malaysia to reach semi-finals of Paris Olympic Qualifiers

MUSCAT: Pakistan Men's Hockey Team on Thursday, qualified for the semi-finals of the ongoing Paris Olympics Qualifiers after holding Malaysia for a 3-3 stalemate in their last pool match.

The national team made it to the knockout stage for maintaining a superior goal average than China.

Notably, China succumbed to a 6-0 thrashing against Great Britain earlier today, which meant that Pakistan only had to avoid the defeat against Malaysia.

Khan Sufyan, Ahammad Butt, and Rana Waheed scored for Pakistan in the 3-3 stalemate while Sasri Fitri, Abu Kamal, and Ashari Farhan netted for Malaysia. Pakistan will now take on Germany in the semi-final of the Paris Olympics Qualifiers on January 20 while Great Britain will take on New Zealand in the other semi-final.

The Green Shirts are now just one victory away from securing their place at the global event.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan had an unwanted start to their campaign as they suffered a 6-1 defeat from Great Britain.

However, the side soon regrouped and staged a sensational comeback in their second fixture as they outclassed China by the scoreline of 2-0.

Pakistan and China both played defensively in the first half, not allowing any goal, however, the Green Shirts created some brilliant chances in the third quarter.

Kaspersky predicts key cybersecurity threats targeting children in 2024

Abid Saeed

Experts from Kaspersky, a global cybersecurity and digital privacy company, explore some of the key cybersecurity trends parents should be aware of, and provide tips on how to safeguard their children's online activities.

According to a UN research, about 80 percent of young people claimed they interact with AI multiple times a day. With the development of AI, numerous little-known applications have emerged with seemingly harmless features. However, AI apps, specifically, chatbots can easily provide age-inappropriate content when prompted.

According to latest online statistics, 91 percent of children aged 3-15 play games on any device. For some games,

unmoderated voice and text chat is a large part of the experience. With more young people online, criminals can virtually build trust in the same way they would in person. Firstly, cybercriminals gain the trust of young players by luring them with gifts. Once they have the confidence of a young gamer, they then obtain their personal information by suggesting that they click on a phishing link.

The development of FinTech industry for kids also marks the appearance of new threats. An increasing number of banks are providing specialized products and services tailored for children, including banking cards designed for kids as young as 12. Yet, with the introduction of banking cards for children, the latter also become susceptible to financially motivated

threat actors and vulnerable to conventional scams. Using social engineering techniques, cybercriminals might exploit children's trust by posing as peers and requesting the sharing of card details or money transfers to their accounts.

According to Kaspersky, the number of smart home threat cases with children being potential targets, will increase. Despite the increasing number of cases of threats to smart home devices, manufacturers are not rushing to create cyber-immune tech that preemptively prevents potential exploits of vulnerabilities. This also means children can become tools for cybercriminals in an attack.

As children mature, they develop greater self-awareness, encompassing an under-



standing of their personal space, privacy, and sensitive data, both offline and in their online activities.

This is why parents now require the skill to discuss their offspring's online experience and the importance of parenting digital apps for online safety while respecting personal space.

If an app is unavailable in

your region, young users will look for alternatives, which is often a malicious copy. Even if they turn to official app stores like Google Play, they still run the risk of falling prey to cybercriminals.

"As we can see, many of the trends that are playing out in society are also affecting children, making them poten-

tial targets for attackers. This includes both the development and popularity of AI and smart homes, as well as the expansion of the world of gaming and FinTech industry. Therefore, it is crucial to teach children the basics of cybersecurity from an early age how not to fall into the trap of cybercriminals, what cyberthreats can occur during gaming, and how to properly protect your personal data. All this is now a must-have knowledge not only for adults, but also for the youngest users," comments Usman Qureshi, Country representative in Pakistan for Kaspersky.

Kaspersky experts are convinced that protecting children from cybersecurity threats in 2024 requires proactive measures from parents by staying informed about the latest

threats and actively monitoring their children's online activities, parents can create a safer online environment for their kids. Kaspersky experts have developed the Kaspersky Cybersecurity Alphabet with key concepts from the cybersecurity industry. In this book, your kid will get to know new technologies, learn the main cyber hygiene rules, find out how to avoid online threats, and recognize fraudsters' tricks.

You can download the PDF version of the book. To secure children from downloading any malicious files, Kaspersky advise to install a trusted security solution on their device. With the right tools such as Kaspersky's digital parenting app Safe Kids, parents can effectively safeguard their children against cyber threats in the digital age.

Group photo

KARACHI: VCNS Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami in a group photo with National stakeholders and participants of Exercise Sea Guard 24 on Thursday.



Maritime Security Exercise Sea Guard-24 culminates at Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy maiden Maritime Security Exercise SEA GUARD-24 concludes with a debrief session at Karachi. Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

While addressing the session, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ovais

Ahmed Bilgrami appreciated the efforts put in by all stakeholders in making the exercise a success. He also underscored that this exercise clearly demonstrates PN resolve to address prevailing simmering issues with a tangible way head to ensure security in maritime zones of Pakistan.

The aim of exercise was to overview response procedures against maritime security inci-

dents and to identify gaps and propose ways to improve the response mechanism. Exercise SEA GUARD-24 gave an opportunity to fortify and rejuvenate the bond of diverse maritime stakeholders of Pakistan ranging from shipping, fishing, law enforcement and private entities through a common pedestal of Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC).

EX SEA GUARD served as a platform for all stakeholders to engage in tactical exercises, exchange best practices and foster mutual understanding. Senior officials of Federal and provincial stakeholders from MOD, MOMA, MoI, MoF, Ministry of Narcotics Control, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, Anti-Narcotics Force, Pakistan Maritime Security Agen-

cy, GPA, KPT, Port QASIM, BYCO Petroleum, in addition to various prominent figures from private sector and fishing community attended the closing session of the exercise. The participants were presented with analytical review of the practical scenarios as well as challenges and recommendations accrued from Table Top discussions conducted at JMICC.

Senate body informs transit agreement reached with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Commerce was informed that the transit agreement has been reached with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on Thursday.

The committee updated that Afghanistan has not signed an agreement. The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce was held in Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Zeeshan Khanzada. Pakistan's position is that Afghanistan should not charge a fee for transit trade.

In the meeting of the Standing Committee, serious concern was expressed over the increas-



ing price of onion in the country. When the members of the committee recommended a ban on onion export, the Federal Secretary for Commerce Muhammad Sualah Ahmad Faruqi said that they cannot impose a ban immediately in the context of price fluctuations. "We have increased the minimum export price of onion to \$1200.

He said that the price of onion has not increased due to exports. In the meeting of the Standing Committee, review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee during the last three years, Senator Zeeshan Khanzada, Senator Faisal Saleem Rehman, and Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir introduced in the Senate

meeting held on November 6, 2023, the amendment bill of imports and exports, 2023. In the committee meeting held on October 9, 2023, the UAE ban on meat imports from Pakistan was reviewed in detail.

In the meeting of the standing committee, the implementation of the recommendations given by the standing committee during the last three years

was reviewed in detail. Secretary Commerce told the committee that on the recommendation of the standing committee, minerals, marble and fisheries sector have been included in the priority sectors. He also informed the standing committee about the assistance provided in various ways for these sectors including the co-sector, sub-sector, and road map.

Governments of Pakistan and Dubai ink more than \$3 billion investment pact

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communication, Railways and Maritime Affairs Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar, and Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC), Government of Dubai signed two Inter-Governmental Framework Agreements on cooperation in railways, economic zones and infrastructure. Agreement signed at the World Economic

Forum in Davos covers cooperation in development of a dedicated freight corridor, multi-modal logistics park, and freight terminals.

DP World will carry out infrastructure improvement at Qasim International Container Terminal, Pakistan's leading trade gateway, and plans to develop an economic zone near the terminal to strengthen bilateral relations in the marine and logistics sectors. It will be inclusive of potential establishment of a Dedi-



icated Freight Corridor and Economic Zone near Karachi. A second framework agree-

ment was signed with Pakistan's Ministry of Maritime Affairs to dredge the navigation channel. DP World will carry out the capital dredging on behalf of the Government of Dubai. This framework agreement will also see the development of an economic zone at Port Qasim, which aims to attract more than US \$3 billion of foreign direct investment. DP World, on behalf of the Government of Dubai, will carry out the development of the economic zone, with the aim of maximising economic activity in Pakistan.

Over 17,800 candidates to contest 2024 elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Over 17,800 candidates, including 11,785 independents, are flexing their muscles to try their luck in National and provincial assembly seats in the country's general elections in 2024.

According to the detailed list of candidates unveiled for the approaching general elections scheduled on February 8, 2024, a total of 5,121 candidates are in the fray for 266 National Assembly seats.

Out of these, 6,031 candidates have political party affiliations. In the race for National Assembly seats, 4,807 are males, 312 are females, and two are transgender. Additionally, a total of 12,123 males, 570 females, and two



transgender candidates will compete for provincial assembly seats.

According to data from the ECP, the National Assembly has 1,780 male candidates affiliated with political parties, while 93 females have party tickets, making their combined total 1,873.

Yet, the count of independent candidates for the lower house of parliament is nearly twice as high, comprising 3,027 males, 219 females, and two transgender, totaling 3,248. In the electoral

competition for general seats in the four provincial assemblies, 3,976 males have party affiliation, with females numbering 182, making the overall total 4,158.

In contrast, the count of those independently contesting without party affiliation stands at 8,537. This includes 8,147 male candidates, 388 female candidates, and two transgender candidates participating across the provincial assemblies.

As indicated by Form-33, Punjab sees a collective of 6,710 candidates participating, encompassing both genders, affiliated with parties or contesting independently for the provincial assembly's general seats. Similarly, in Sindh, the overall count of male and female candidates is 2,878, inclusive of those affiliated with parties and independent

contenders.

In the quartet of provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands out as the sole region where two transgenders are vying for general seats. In addition, there are 1,763 male candidates and 63 females, bringing the total to 1,834. Similarly, in Balochistan, the collective count comprises 1,273 male candidates with affiliations and independents, including 1,233 males and 40 females.

In terms of appeals, the appellate tribunals received a total of 2,373 appeals contesting the acceptance and rejection of nomination papers. Out of these, 178 appeals were against the acceptance of nomination papers, and 2,195 were against rejections. Among the total appeals, the tribunals accepted 1,611 and rejected 762.

Israeli minister declares 'bloodbath' in Gaza Strip, again incitement to kill more Palestinians



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the continued incitement to kill more Palestinians under false pretexts and pretexts and to target civilians wherever they are. At the forefront of these toxic and racist inflammatory statements is the extremist fascist Minister Ben Gvir broadcasting to the soldiers of the occupation army and the extremist settlers, in which he assured them of his support for shooting any person. (Terrorist) Even if the lives of the soldiers are not in danger, knowing that Ben Gvir is trying to demonize all Palestinians and treat them as terrorists, in the ugliest call to deepen extrajudicial killing and commit massacres practiced by the occupation army in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The Ministry believes that what the Tulkarm and Nour Shams camps have been subjected to for more than 36 hours is a brutal copy of what the Gaza Strip is being subjected to in terms of comprehensive destruction

and targeting of civilians, including children, women, ambulances, medical teams and health centres, in a frantic Israeli call for help and calls from the ruling extreme right to expand the spiral. Violence and igniting more fires in the conflict arena, in light of committing more massacres in the Gaza Strip, targeting entire residential squares over the heads of their residents, abusing citizens, imposing displacement on them, and suffocating them with more collective punishments in the occupied West Bank. It has become clear to those countries that want to understand that the ongoing episodes of genocide and comprehensive destruction of Palestinian lives are the direct and continuous Israeli translation of the self-defense argument. Here the ministry wonders: How much do these countries want from the blood and lives of the Palestinians until they review themselves and are convinced of the necessity and importance of an immediate ceasefire, at least in a humanitarian manner, and are they waiting for the displacement of millions of Palestinians to realize Netanyahu's true goals for the war?

Pakistan envoy hails EU recommendations on Indian incursions in Jammu and Kashmir

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: The Ambassador of Pakistan to European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg Amna Baloch expresses gratitude to the EU parliamentary recommendations for shedding light on the alarming situation and human rights abuses in IIOJK.

The recent EU parliamentary recommendations of 17th January 2024, to the Council, Commission, and Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning EU-India relations, reaffirms Pakistan's enduring stance on resolving the Kashmir issue in accordance with UN resolutions. It condemns violence against minorities in India, calls for accountability of the perpetrators, and highlights concerns about Internet restrictions and illegal detention of political prisoners in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

This document not only exposed India's fascist designs but also brought the brutalities of the Indian government against oppressed Kashmiris to the limelight.



The Ambassador stated that regional peace hinges on the settlement of the Kashmir issue in line with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and UN Security Council resolutions.

Emphasizing Pakistan's role as a beacon of hope for Kashmiris, the Ambassador expressed her resolve to continue raising the Kashmir issue in all international forums including the European Union. It is pertinent to mention that Ambassador has been actively raising the issue of Kashmir and Human rights violations in IIOJK in her interactions with the European leadership across all institutions.

Finance Minister stresses to lower revenue-expenditure gap



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs on Thursday said that a comprehensive overhaul of the government's fiscal apparatus is vital to lower the revenue-expenditure gap. Bold reforms would lead to a new era of development and prosperity in the country, the minister said.

Effective implementation of ambitious reforms will depend on

addressing critical underlying institutional, governance, and structural constraints, said Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, during the keynote address on Pakistan's economic challenges and the way forward, said a press release issued here.

She highlighted five key areas that have increased the vulnerability of Pakistan's economy to domestic and global shocks: first, unsustainable fiscal policy due to revenue gaps and unproductive expenditure, second, fiscal unsustainability has enhanced government recourse to public debt which has increased.

The third, climate shocks as the global warming model predicts that Pakistan's weather patterns will become even more volatile and extreme in the decades ahead, with an average increase in temperatures by 1.3% to 4.9% by 2090; fourth, the lack of innovation and diversity in the structure of the economy; and fifth, the failure to integrate Pakistan's economy with the rest of the world.