



No country gives media access to those involved in serious crimes: Solangi
Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said no country in the world gave media access to those people who were involved in serious crimes. Speaking to WION News, the minister said the former chairman of the PTI had been convicted and his conviction was not set aside. (Details on Page 8)



This Stunning Silk Road Country should be on your travel list
Uzbekistan was once at the heart of the ancient network of trading routes known famously as the Silk Road that began in China and touched parts of India before reaching central Asia on its way to European provinces such as Rome and Venice. The country's ancient Silk Road history comes enriched with decades of Russian influence, as it was a part of the USSR in more recent times. (See Special Report on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rajab-ul-Murajjah 9, Monday, January 21, 2024

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 17, Issue: 282 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Ferocity

Palestinians rescue a child from under the rubble after Israeli airstrikes in Gaza City, Gaza Strip.



Photo: AP

Pakistan, Iran agree to restore diplomatic ties, return of envoys

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have agreed to restore diplomatic ties and sending back to ambassadors to their postings. Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amirabdollahian in a telephonic conversation discussed return of the ambassadors back to their postings in respective capitals. The foreign office in Islamabad said that the foreign ministers stressed over brotherly ties and bilateral cooperation. Pakistan's caretaker foreign minister urged that the respect of national solidarity and

sovereignty should be the basis of cooperation. The sides also agreed to de-escalate tensions. Iran's diplomat Syed Rasul Moosvi has welcomed contact between foreign ministers of the two countries. The foreign ministers talked after both countries exchanged drone and missile strikes in each other's territory. The tit-for-tat strikes by the two countries are the highest-profile cross-border intrusions in recent years and have raised alarm about wider instability in the region since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted on Oct. 7, Reuters reported.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong visits the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, who is currently on a visit to Islamabad, today inaugurated the CPEC Corner at the library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister said that as iron brother and trusted friend, China attached special importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to further strengthening strategic ties between the two countries. Thanking Pakistan's support to China on its core issues, Vice Foreign Minister Sun reaffirmed China's support for Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for Pakistan's economic develop-



ment, progress and prosperity. Welcoming vice Foreign Minister Sun to Pakistan, the Foreign Secretary said that Pakistan-China friendship enjoyed complete political, institutional and public support in Pakistan. Underlining the salience of bilateral friendship for regional peace and stability, he expressed Pakistan's readiness to further expand and strengthen bilateral ties in all areas of cooperation.

Israel bombards Gaza's south as leaders discuss post-war future

Agencies

GAZA: Israel ratcheted up its attacks in the south of the Gaza Strip on Saturday after its PM Netanyahu and US President Joe Biden discussed differences over a post-war future for Palestine that have suggested a rift between the two allies. Witnesses said the Israeli bombardment was again focused overnight on Khan Yunis, the largest city in Gaza's south, although Palestinian media also reported intense fire around

Jabalia in the north early on Saturday. Biden and Netanyahu held their first call since December 23 a day after the Israeli leader reiterated his rejection of any form of Palestinian sovereignty, deepening divisions with Israel's key backer over the war. While the two leaders spoke of what might come next, the reality of the war was all too clear in Khan Yunis and elsewhere in the Hamas-controlled territory. A child with a bloodied face cried on a gurney at Al-Nasser

hospital in Khan Yunis, while ambulances carrying the wounded and the dead arrived to the sound of automatic weapons in the distance. The conflict began with unprecedented attacks by Hamas that resulted in the deaths of about 1,140 people in Israel. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas in response and its air and ground offensive has killed at least 24,762 Palestinians, around 70 percent of them women, young children and adolescents, according to Gaza's health minister.

Netanyahu has said Israel expects the war to continue for months, but his comments on Thursday rejecting the two-state solution suggested a rift with key backer the United States. Biden said after Friday's call with Netanyahu, it was possible the Israeli leader might still come around. "There are a number of types of two-state solutions. There's a number of countries that are members of the UN that... don't have their own militaries," Biden

told reporters after an event at the White House. "And so, I think there's ways in which this could work." Netanyahu said on Thursday Israel "must have security control over the entire territory west of the Jordan River", which "contradicts the idea of (Palestinian) sovereignty". US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had said in Davos a day earlier that Israel could not achieve "genuine security" without a "pathway to a Palestinian state".

PPP, PTI-P join hands against Fazlur Rehman in election 24

Correspondent

DI KHAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have joined hands against Jami-ut Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rehman in election 24. According to sources, Pervaiz Khattak-led PTI-P decided on seat adjustment with PPP in two constituencies of DI Khan including NA-44 and PK-ahead of the election 24. Sources said that PTI-P will support the PPP candidate Faisal Karim Kundi whereas PPP will support Ehtisham Javed Akbar in the general elections 2024.

Ehtisham Javed, who was elected on the PTI ticket in previous elections will now contest on the PTI-P seat. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) head Pervaiz Khattak had ruled out possibility of seat adjustment with any political party in general elections 2024. It is pertinent to mention here that former Defense Minister Pervaiz Khattak launched a new political party under the name of PTI-Parliamentarians (PTI-P). Former chief Minister Mahmood Khan along with 57 former PTI lawmakers including former provincial minister, Ishtiaq, Shaukat Ali, Dr. Aasia Aad, Somi Falaknaz, Ziaullah Bangash, Ibrahim Khattak, Ahmed Hussain Shah, Javed Akbar and others are also part of the PTI-P.

SC's Justice Athar Minallah urges judges not to fear criticism

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Athar Minallah said on Saturday that the judges should not fear or be influenced by the criticism on social media. Speaking at a training workshop organized for court reporters in Islamabad on Saturday, Justice Athar Minallah maintained that any judge influenced by social media would be violating their oath. "A judge influenced by criticism would violate his oath", he said, adding that judge should be independent and should not be influenced by criticism. Referring to a historic speech by the



founder of Pakistan delivered on August 11, 1947, Justice Minallah highlighted the initiation of an endless series of censorship on the state. He said criticism is an examination for the judiciary, and while everyone has the right to criticize, they should also trust the judiciary. The Supreme Court judge

said he learnt a lot from the court reporters. Justice Minallah stated that freedom of expression is a significant thing that should not be suppressed. He highlighted that criticism on the judiciary falls into two categories: one is criticism when allegations are made that informed decisions are being made, and the other is criticism where he does not like why relief was granted. The SC judge said Pakistan would not have been split into two, if the oath was not transgressed. Justice Minallah also called for retrospection. "We should ask ourselves, where we are moving to. We want judgments according to out liking, we want a debate according to out liking."

PML-N expels Mehtab Abbasi for 'violating party discipline'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Saturday expelled its long-time leader Sardar Mehtab Abbasi for continuously violating party discipline. According to details, the PML-N also terminated the basic party membership of Abbasi - who also served as former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) governor. In a statement, PML-N Secretary General Anwar Iqbal said that Mehtab Abbasi for

continuous "violation of party discipline". "The action was taken on instructions of party president Shehbaz Sharif", he added. The development came a day after Former Sardar Mehtab Abbasi announced his support for PTI member, who is contesting as 'independent candidate' from Abbottabad's NA-17 constituency. Abbasi announced his support to PTI-backed 'independent candidate' Ali Khan Jadoon for NA-17 constituency in Abbottabad. Meanwhile, the former KP governor

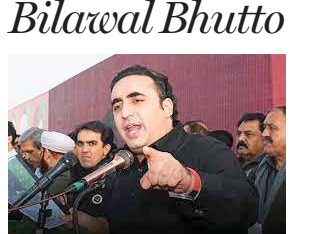
would contest election as independent candidate as NA-16 constituency. Last year in Dec, Sardar Mehtab Abbasi parted ways with PML-N while expressing concerns about the provincial leadership, saying that the leadership only thinks of itself and its structure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is over. Abbasi further said that Nawaz Sharif has a weak team and solving the economic crisis is difficult. "Today the PML-N is only limited to Punjab", he added.

Biden cancels nearly \$5b more in student debt relief

Reuters

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Friday announced student debt cancellation of nearly \$5 billion for an additional 74,000 borrowers, including more than half who earned forgiveness after 10 years of public service as teachers, nurses and firefighters. The White House announcement brings the total loan forgiveness approved by the Biden-Harris administration to \$136.6 billion for more than 3.7 million Americans. Nearly 44,000 of the borrowers approved for relief are those with a decade of public service, with close to 30,000 are people who have been repaying their loans for at least 20 years but never got the relief through income-driven repayment plans. Biden vowed to continue working to deliver student debt relief to as many borrowers as possible in the wake of the Supreme Court's June 30 ruling blocking his plan to cancel hundreds of billions of dollars in debt.

Feb 8 elections to be PPP vs PML-N contest: Bilawal Bhutto



Spokesman Report

SUKKUR: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday reiterated that Feb 8 general elections was a contest between PML-N and his party, urging the nation to vote for the 'arrow' in the upcoming polls. Addressing a public gathering in Kot Addu, the former foreign minister said that PPP completely believes in "vote power" unlike other parties who are looking towards khalai makhlooq (aliens). Bilawal Bhutto noted that all parties except the PPP represent elites which provide relief to wealthy personalities and give pain to poor people. He vowed that his party would be a 'sign of relief' for the common man if voted to power. He reiterated that the Feb 8 general election is a contest between only two political parties - PPP and PML-N.

General Elections 24

Bilawal thanks 'Jiyalas' for coming out in huge numbers in Kot Addu

By Asim Tanveer/ Faheem Soomro

KOT ADDU. MUZAFFARGARH: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering of the Party in Kot Addu, expressed his gratitude to the Jiyalas for coming out in huge numbers as well as the media despite the harsh weather conditions. The PPP has been campaigning all over the country since December in connection with the elections.



Chairman Bilawal said that he is the sole politician in the country who is only looking towards them and asking them for their vote. The rest of the politicians are expecting to be aided by the 'Khalayi Makhlooq'. Chairman Bilawal said that he is the grandson of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and has been taught that the people are the source of power. This is why, the PPP has approached the people of Pakistan to ask for their support. The country is currently going through a challenging phase, coupled with a historic

economic crisis. Inflation, poverty and unemployment are increasing rapidly and the burden is being carried by the people. The threat of terrorism is again rising and our law and order situation is becoming concerning. International conspiracies are being hatched against Pakistan and all of this is being observed by the PPP. We can combat all of these crises with the help of the people.

Chairman Bilawal said that there is no reason as to why the PPP cannot

help the country emerge from this plethora of crises. The PPP's 10-point economic charter has the solutions to the problems faced by the people. Be it Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto or President Zardari, the PPP's leadership has always represented common people, labourers, farmers and the downtrodden masses. The rest of the political parties have only ever caused harm and pain to the common people while simultaneously protect-

ing the elite and their interests. The PPP aims to put an end to this practice, and provide relief to the poor. The 10-point agenda is met with speculation when the question of implementation arises, but Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's efforts serve as a guiding light for the Party as he fulfilled his promise of 'Roti, Kapra Aur Makaan' to the people.

Raza Rabbani Khar, Muhammad Amjad Qureshi, Asif Khan Dasti, Riaz Manzoor, Mahr Irshad Siyal, Nawabzada Iftikhar, Zafarullah Laghari, Abdul Hussain Taggar, Chaudhary Adnan Khalid, Muhammad Jameel Shah, Mian Saleem Asghar, Khan Muhammad Jatoi, Alamdar Qureshi and Fareeha Batool are the Party's representatives and need to be elected, Chairman Bilawal said. Bahadur Khan too is contesting from Layyah. The PPP is the only party that feels for the people, and will be triumphant on February 8. Chairman Bilawal instructed the Party workers to go to every doorstep and apprise the people of the PPP's 10-point agenda.

Pakistan Army has secured national security: Abdul Majid Khan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

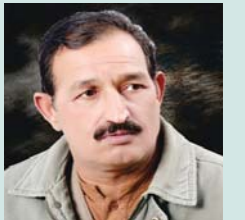
MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that the Pakistan Army has secured national security by targeting the hideouts of banned organizations in the borders of Iran. The people of Azad Kashmir, the government of Azad Kashmir and all the political parties stand with the Pakistan Army, the army chief lives in our hearts. Let the enemy know, the Pakistani forces will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to give a toothless reply to the enemies of the country. The armed forces of Pakistan pay tribute to the soldiers of Pakistan for the highly coordinated military operation against the terrorist hideouts. Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said in a statement that the very complex operation to target the hideouts of terrorists in Iran is a reflection of the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces Will always be remembered. Beware of terrorists sitting across the borders, Pakistan forces will target them in their sanctuaries to ensure national security. He said that the protection of the country's security is an absolute duty, which the Pakistan Army always performed well by offering eternal sacrifices. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, the coalition government and the people of Ajk pay full tribute to the army chief Syed Asim Munir and the soldiers of the Pakistan Army for targeting the hideouts of terrorists across the border. The strong response is a testament to the professionalism of our army. He said that Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to face internal and external challenges. Let the Hindutva Raj of India also know, any kind of conspiracy against Pakistan may suffer severe consequences. He said that the neighboring countries should understand that any kind of conspiracy against Pakistan can have dire consequences. Pakistan's defense is impregnable. We will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to defend our motherland. We will stand by our armed forces and ensure all possible defense of the homeland he pledged.



Utility Bills have become a disaster for the people: Ch. Muhammad Akram

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: President of Anjuman Tajran Press Market and Senior Vice President of Anjuman Tajran City, Chaudhry Muhammad Akram said that severe power and gas outages across the country have made it impossible for people to live. Bills have become a disaster for the people. There is an economic crisis everywhere in the country. The increase in gas prices is shameful. The life of the low-income daily wage laborer is not only miserable, but the white-collared class is also mentally crippled. He said that at present, the increase in production cost due to increase in electricity and gas prices, increase in mark-up and increase in taxes has destroyed the purchasing power of people. Moving to foreign countries for quality of life is a matter of moment for us as a nation.



Cadet College Faisalabad will celebrate International Education Day Correspondent

Faisalabad: Cadet College Faisalabad will celebrate 24 January 2024 as International Education Day. In which the importance of internal education of children will be highlighted. Eloquution competitions in English and Urdu will be conducted and prizes will be given to the winners. A friendly football match will be played between Cadet College Faisalabad and Government Higher Secondary School Awagat. Principal Danish School Jordanwala Colonel Javed Aslam (retired) and Principal Government Higher Secondary School Awagat Mr. Ghulam Rasool Shah will be the chief guests in this event.

Saghar denounces attachment of properties of Hurriyat leaders by Indian Enforcement Directorate

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: The convener All Parties Hurriyat Conference AJK and Pakistan chapter and acting chairman Democratic Freedom Party, Mehmood Ahmed Saghar has strongly condemned the attachment of properties of Hurriyat leaders by Indian Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Terming the ED authorities' action as part of the Modi government's broader campaign to crush the legitimate political voices in Kashmir, the APHC convener said that confiscation of the properties of Hurriyat leaders and activists has now become a new tool for the Indian occupation authorities to terrorize Kashmiris who have refused to follow the fascist regime's diktats.

Saghar said that the attachment of properties of Hurriyat leaders including Zafar Akbar Bhat, Qazi Yasir and others by the Indian notorious agency-the ED was an attempt to dent the public image of the Hurriyat leaders.

Such mean tactics, he said, cannot deter Kashmiris from pursuing their noble cause for which they have offered unprecedented sacrifices.

Reiterating Kashmiris' pledge to carry forward the mission of martyrs, he said that the policy of oppression and suppression won't help India any longer to hold Kashmiris hostage.

Educational Expo held in Hyderabad underlines need of adopting modern teaching methods

Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

HYDERABAD: "Education decides the fate of a nation" said mayor Hyderabad Kashif Shoro while inaugurating a one-day Educational Expo under the theme of "Open House" at Aga Khan Higher Secondary School and College Hyderabad. Student from different educational institutes of the city had reached there to attend the expo where different scientific projects, art and research work was put to display.

Mr Shoro visited different stalls and asked questions from students regarding their projects and research work. He applauded the initiative of Aga Khan Education Board for Pakistan and the authorities of AKHS Hyderabad for organizing a unique event that had attracted students, educationists as well as members of civil society from different parts of Sindh.

He said that such events would pave the way for progress and prosperity of Sindh and the way students had worked on their assignments and the collaboration of students and staff was highly commendable. Different sections were set up where a large number of people had gathered to appreciate the work of students.

The expo focused on the subjects of science, sociology, Art and culture, artificial intelligence, career counseling and sports. Academic Coordinator of the higher secondary school Zaffar Abbas said that the event aimed at engaging society into proactive and progressive thinking. He further said students of as many as 70 educational institutions had participated in the event giving the message of spreading knowledge and progressive approach for social development.

Green Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) planting grass on a green belt alongside Chak Shahzad area, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

THR strategies to achieve smoke free Pakistan

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Pakistan needs to make tobacco harm reduction (THR) part of the national tobacco control policy and engage health practitioners in cessation efforts to reduce smoking prevalence.

This was agreed at a consultation meeting, organized by Alternative Research Initiative (ARI), on the role of THR and health practitioners in ending combustible smoking from Pakistan.

The participants were informed

about the heavy burden of disease because of the combustible smoking in Pakistan, with nearly 29 million tobacco users in the country. Some estimates say the number of tobacco users has reached 31 million. The total economic cost of smoking was Rs 615.07 billion (US\$3.85 billion), in 2019, equal to 1.6% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The consultation was told that almost all of the smoking-related risk arises from the smoke: the particles of tar and toxic gases that are inhaled from burning tobacco. If smokers can find

satisfactory alternatives to cigarettes that do not involve combustion but do provide nicotine, then they would avoid almost all of the disease risk.

Inhaling a burning cigarette remains the riskiest use of nicotine, as it releases tar and gases containing thousands of toxins. These are potentially dangerous for human health, and in some cases fatal.

The speakers regretted lack of national policy on tobacco control, and added that the smokers' concerns have been ignored. Smokers in Pakistan do not consult medical practition-

ers when it comes to quitting smoking. If they decide to give up smoking, they don't know where they should seek assistance. Due to lack of the effective cessation services, less than 3% of the smokers successfully quit smoking in a year across Pakistan.

The speakers said that a smoke-free Pakistan is possible to achieve before 2030. However, for achieving this target, the government should ensure provision of effective, accessible and affordable cessation services and make tobacco harm reduction part of the national tobacco control policy.

CECOS University Hosts Grand Convocation Ceremony Celebrating Academic Excellence

News Desk

PESHAWAR: CECOS University held its annual convocation ceremony on the 20th of January, 2024, marking a momentous occasion for the graduating class of 2023. A total of 130 Graduates were part of this event and were there for the celebration of their academic achievement, beginning with the recitation of the Holy Quran and proceeding with various highlights throughout the day.

The event started with Professor Dr. Naser Ahmad, the Vice-Chancellor of CECOS University inspiring speech, reflecting on the journey of the graduates and emphasizing the importance of education in shaping a better future.



A pinnacle of the ceremony was the prestigious Gold Medal awards, bestowed upon 15 outstanding graduates who excelled in their respective

Bachelor's and Master's programs. Additionally, three exceptional individuals were honored with Ph. D. degrees, a testament to their dedica-

tion and scholarly contributions.

Distinguished guests graced the occasion with their presence, including our Chief Guest Haji Ghulam Ali (Governor of KPK), who delivered an insightful speech, motivating the graduates to pursue their dreams and make a positive impact on society. The Guest of Honor, Dr. Qasim Ullah Jan also shared words of wisdom, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and adaptability in the ever-evolving world.

President Engr. Tanveer Javed concluded the series of speeches by commending the graduates on their achievements and encouraging them to apply their knowledge for the betterment of society.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:44 am
Zohr	12:18 pm
Asr	3:48 pm
Maghrib	5:26 pm
Isha	6:53 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

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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

Mushaal deeply saddened over Yasin's uncle demise



ISLAM-ABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussean Mullick expressed her deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of the maternal uncle of illegally incarcerated Chairman Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Muhammad Yasin Malik.

Mushaal, who is also a wife of Yasin Malik, in her condolence message on Saturday, said that Muhammad Shafi, maternal uncle of JKLF Chairman, breathed his last due to cardiac arrest.

She extended heartfelt condolences to the grieving family, praying that may Allah Almighty grant highest place to the departed soul in Jannah.

The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment offered prayers to give the bereaved family especially to the mother of Yasin Malik the courage to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

'Time is the trust of Allah'

Shaheed Hakim Said urges students to make good use of time: Ms. Sadia Rashid

PPA

KARACHI: Students should embrace a wise saying of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, "Time is the trust (Amanat) of Allah, its proper use is worship." It is essential to prioritize and make good use of time. Cultivate a habit of reading newspapers and other informative books beyond the academic curriculum. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan (HFP) expressed these views during the ceremony for distributing checks and certificates for the Shaheed Hakeem Muhammad Saeed Memorial Scholarship-2024. The ceremony, organized by Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, took place at Arena Hall, Bahria Town Tower, presided over by Ms. Sadia Rashid. Renowned social worker Ansar Burney attended as the chief guest. His wife, Shaheen Ansar Burney, and HFP Director Syed Muhammad Arsalan also attended the event.

as this garners high regard from Allah Almighty. Ensure to maintain a proper sleep routine, going to bed on time and rising early in the morning. This practice will afford you more time for your tasks and contribute to good health. Avoid excessive use of smartphones," she advised.

Ansar Burney said today's guests of honour are the students present here, who have distinguished themselves academically, bringing pride to their parents. Knowledge is the legacy of the believer, and young individuals must prioritize their education. "In the eye of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, your children are the future architects of the nation. All of you have to play a crucial role in shaping the future of Pakistan." The spiritual presence of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said is undeniably felt in this assembly. According to the Quran, martyrs are alive, and we must humbly submit to this divine decree.

Ms. Sadia Rashid said the true guarantor and primary catalyst for individual and societal well-being, success, and prosperity is knowledge. "Devote your full attention to your education. Children should show respect to their elders,



the youth with the light of knowledge and fostering a valuable spirit of patriotism within them. May Allah bestow success upon Ms. Sadia Rashid in this sacred mission."

This year 2024, Hamdard Foundation Pakistan has awarded cash scholarships exceeding one crore rupees to over 250 matric and intermediate students nationwide for achieving outstanding academic

performance. During the ceremony, each matric student received a cash scholarship of Rs.25,000, while intermediate students were granted Rs.50,000 in cash.

Duty is duty

ISLAMABAD: Jan20- A sanitary worker busy in cleaning a road during heavy fog in morning hours, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik and Qatari Minister H. H. Al Nuaimi forge paths in education cooperation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (SAPM OP&HRD) Jawad Sohrab Malik held a constructive and productive discussion with the esteemed Minister of Education and Higher Education, Qatar, Her Highness Buthania Bint ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi, on various aspects of mutual cooperation and collaboration.



During the discussion, both parties emphasized the crucial role of educated women in the economy and society. They acknowledged the significance of empowering women through education and employment opportunities, recognizing the positive impact it can have on the overall development of a nation. It was highlighted that Qatar is focused on education as per their Vision 2030, aiming to enhance the quality of education and promote lifelong learning. Similarly, Pakistan is keen on exporting highly skilled and professional manpower in line with the Qatar's Vision 2030, which emphasizes human resource development and capacity building. The SAPM floated the idea of introducing a training program for the Arabic language, aimed at benefiting workers and facilitating their integration into Qatari culture.

Her Highness (H. H), the Minister of Education of Qatar, emphasized the importance of education as a fundamental pillar of national development strategy, and reiterated Qatar's unwavering focus on providing quality education and services. The consideration of the Arabic training program was welcomed as a step towards further enriching the skill set of the workforce in Qatar.

In addition, H. H also commended the Pakistan International School (PIS) and expressed continued support for the initiative to open a separate Cambridge branch of PIS, recognizing the growing Pakistani community in Qatar. This move is expected to benefit the Pakistani diaspora and contribute to the fulfillment of Qatar's national Vision 2030.

National Commission for Dignity of Women, a consultative session organized with all stakeholders



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Under the auspices of the National Commission for the Dignity of Women, a consultative session was organized with the stakeholders for the preparation of a national report regarding the establishment and promotion of strong institutions for the empowerment of women as well as their economic stabilization presented at the 61st session of CSW, a subsidiary of the United Nations With the support of UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and UNDP, the official consultation session was held in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir on Friday. Departments, civil society organizations, NGOs, gender experts, government of Azad Kashmir and various leading representatives of the media participated in the session. The session was attended by Minister of Government Professor Taqdees Gilani, Additional Chief Secretary Development and General Government of Jammu and Kashmir Ms. Midhat Shahzad, Chairperson National Commission for Women's Dignity Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson AJK Women's Commission Ms. Rehana Khan, Secretary Federal Women's Commission Inran Raza and others participated in the consultation meeting, the speakers presented recommendations before the report was presented at the United Nations meeting.

Special Guest Government Minister Prof. Taqdees Geelani said that the women of Azad Kashmir have proved their abilities in every sphere of life. They are promoting technical education to make women skilled, the women of Azad Kashmir are brave and knowledgeable.

Additional Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Ms. Midhat Shahzad said that women in Azad Jammu and Kashmir are progressive and are playing their role in all sectors, there are legislations in every sector to strengthen state institutions to empower women. In addition, NCSW has led the way in understanding the nexus of poverty and gender equality and overcoming the barriers through its partnership with Azad Kashmir and UN subsidiaries.

Addressing the event, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, Head of the National Commission for Women, in her welcome speech said that the pre-CSW consultation by NCSW and partners aimed to build on existing collaboration between the government, civil society, private sector and international organizations.

Chairperson AJK Women's Commission Ms. Rehana Khan welcomed the participants from all walks of life and said that women in Azad Jammu and Kashmir in public and private sector have achieved success in many affairs and businesses. It is important that they are recognized and supported regardless of gender. Despite awareness campaigns for women's rights, financial independence for women, employment opportunities can lead to education for women and sensitivity for men as well as better economic status.

Pak-Iran to show restraint, resolve bilateral strategic concerns

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The experts speaking at a webinar on Pakistan-Iran recent crisis urged both the governments and their state institutions to restrain and improve their bilateral ties through vigorous diplomacy. They urged the need for a larger framework for an efficient joint border management to resolve their bilateral strategic concerns including illegal trade, smuggling and the hideouts of the militants on both sides of the border.

The experts also called for people-to-people contacts to improve cultural understanding, formal trade and to soften the visa policies. They said both countries have a history of bilateral cooperation, trade and common cultural values, and they should not be compromised in the stretching scenario of a new Cold War in the region. They also appreciated the role of China

between Pakistan-Iran for de-escalation.

The webinar was organized by the Devcom-Pakistan Centre for Geopolitical Studies and DTN here on Saturday. The keynote speakers included Lt General retired Talat Masood, Ambassador retired Naela Chohan and Senator retired Farhatullah Babar. Other guest speakers were the Devcom-Pakistan Centre for Geopolitical Studies Executive Director Munir Ahmed, Lahore Garrison University chairperson International Relations Dr. Zainab Ahmed, Kinnaird College for Women Associate Professor Dr. Khushboo Ejaz, NUST Institute of Policy Studies Assistant Director Sobia Khurshed, and some others.

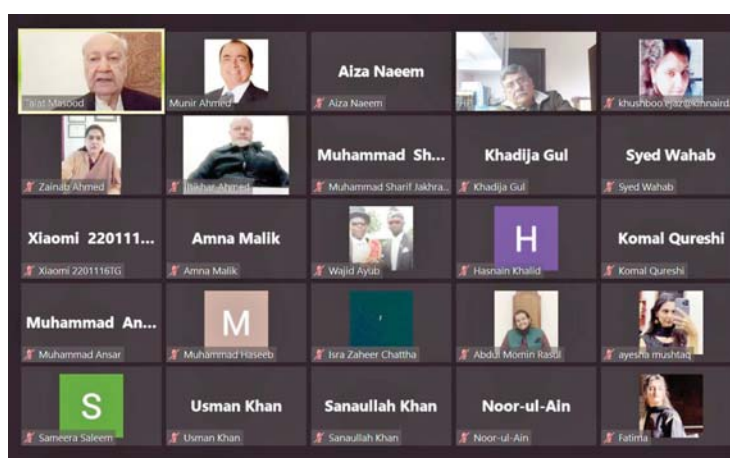
Lt General (ret) Talat Masood said Pakistan-Iran both have to work on their border management frameworks including strict security measures. Both sides of the border are unpopulated,

remain under-developed, and have meagre security and protection against the militants which are being supported by the vested-interest groups and external powers.

Ambassador (ret) Naela Chohan said the British rule deliberately left lacunas in the border division. Though they were settled down then, still many don't believe in the settled-down borderlines. It is for their own vested interests or to serve their external lords, and to create instability within the borders.

She urged for vigorous bilateral diplomatic and strategic discussions on cross-border terrorism, smuggling and other relevant challenges to restore our historic bilateral relations that both countries used to enjoy in Iran's pre-revolution era.

Senator Farhatullah Babar said what Iran did is unprecedented and Pakistan's response was also timely



and suitable. Both countries could not handle the states within their states, so facing the brunt of their own security and border mismanagement. We have to look after our own strategic interests instead of playing proxy for other

powers and creating monsters for our own society.

Devcom-Pakistan Centre for Geopolitical Studies Executive Director Munir Ahmed said: we shall appreciate the forces for adequate response to Iran,

also the National Security Committee decision to restore diplomatic ties with Iran. Pakistan-Iran 925 km border management is indeed a gigantic task which could be used by the US-supported militants to fuel up the Cold War 2.0 to deteriorate the situation in the region.

Dr. Zainab Ahmed suggested updating the border management SOPs where India can manipulate the security situation to jeopardize the Indus Water Treaty between the two countries, and also create threats for the CPEC projects.

Dr. Khushboo Ejaz said only the border management between Iran-Pakistan would determine the future of bilateral relations. India is investing in Iran's unpopulated parts and having huge trade while we are reluctant because of the US sanctions. Meanwhile, illegal trade is on the peak benefiting the elements around the border.

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‘CPEC and SIFC leading to Economic Renaissance’

Like many other Pakistanis, I have also been pondering why did CPEC touted as game changer, harbinger of development and prosperity has almost completed its first phase and has launched its second phase but inversely, the country is in deep financial and economic difficulties, country is faced with worst form of inflation, the investment is almost negligible and GDP growth is even negative hopes for growth and development in coming years is minimal.

This situation can be interpreted in two ways. One, that Pakistan could have been in even worse financial and economic situation than we are facing currently as current dire financial and economic outlook has to do with our own lack of purpose, absence of clear direction, lack of competence and efficiency, and second interpretation is that the CPEC project was not well conceived. It lacked effectiveness and therefore was not helpful in improving the financial and economic standing of the country.

This is a known and documented fact that despite its potential, CPEC has encountered several significant hurdles in Pakistan that have hindered its swift, efficient, and result-oriented implementation, subsequently impacting its anticipated contribution to GDP growth.

Political instability and governance issues have led to policy inconsistencies, adversely affecting the continuity of CPEC projects. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and red tape have resulted in

delays and escalated costs, while security concerns in certain regions pose additional risks to project timelines. Financial constraints due to high debt levels and balance of payment crises have limited the government's ability to finance these projects, increasing reliance on external borrowing.

Furthermore, the lack of a skilled workforce has impeded progress in specialized areas. Environmental and social challenges, including land acquisition and displacement concerns, have added layers of complexity.

Additionally, differing priorities across provinces have led to challenges in coordination and resource allocation, affecting uniform development. Global and regional geopolitical dynamics, especially involving key players like China, the US, and India, have also influenced investment flows and strategic prioritization.

While the initial phase of CPEC focused on establishing essential energy and infrastructure foundations, the broader economic impacts are expected to materialize more significantly in Phase II, provided these multifaceted challenges are effectively addressed.

Let us now build an argument around the second premise that CPEC was and is an effective project and helped in contributing to GDP growth while keeping the governance factor as constant. In such a

scenario where Pakistan exhibits responsible governance, efficient government functioning, a fair judiciary, a motivated parliament, and a favorable business and investment climate could significantly impact its GDP growth.

With a total investment of over \$ 62 billion in CPEC-I, a number of high value projects were initiated in all critical areas including development of coal, hydro, wind, and solar power plants such as the Sahiwal Coal Power Plant, the Port Qasim Coal-fired Power Plant, the Suki Kinari Hydropower Station, and several wind farms in Sindh province. These projects collectively added thou-

sands of megawatts to Pakistan's national grid. Substantial investment was made in transport infrastructure to improve connectivity and facilitate trade including Karachi-Lahore Motorway (M-9), Upgradation of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase-II(Havelian-Thakot section), Multan-Sukkur Motorway (M-5) and Orange Line Metro Train in Lahore. This phase developed Gwadar Port and related infrastructure, including the Gwadar International Airport, East-bay Expressway, and the development of a Free Zone to enhance trade activities.

It laid fiber optic cable from Rawalpindi to Khunjerab, which enhanced telecommunications in the northern areas of Pakistan. Metro lines, green lines, and

a 2000 km fast train to improve urban and inter-city mobility, making cities more business-friendly and enhancing trade efficiencies making Pakistan into a regional trade hub, further boosting logistics, manufacturing, and service sectors.

The completion of Phase II is expected to foster industrialization and socio-economic development. This includes the growth of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to attract foreign direct investment and boost exports. Focusing on mining, industry, green and low-carbon development, health, space cooperation, digital economy, and development cooperation. Transition towards clean and renewable energy sources anticipated to reduce Pakistan's dependence on imported fossil fuels, thereby helping to decrease the depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

There has been an increase in academic and cultural cooperation between Pakistan and China, with many Pakistani students studying in China. This interaction is expected to strengthen the bond between the two nations and contribute to Pakistan's educational growth.

Emphasizes on agricultural cooperation, including crop breeding, pest control, and the expansion of crop cultivation and plans to increase sesame cultivation and exports to China, aiming to bolster the agricultural sector. Green and low-carbon development, health, space cooperation, digital economy, and development cooperation and export of agricultural products to China.

Both CPEC-I and 2.0 will only

CPEC sees big changes in China

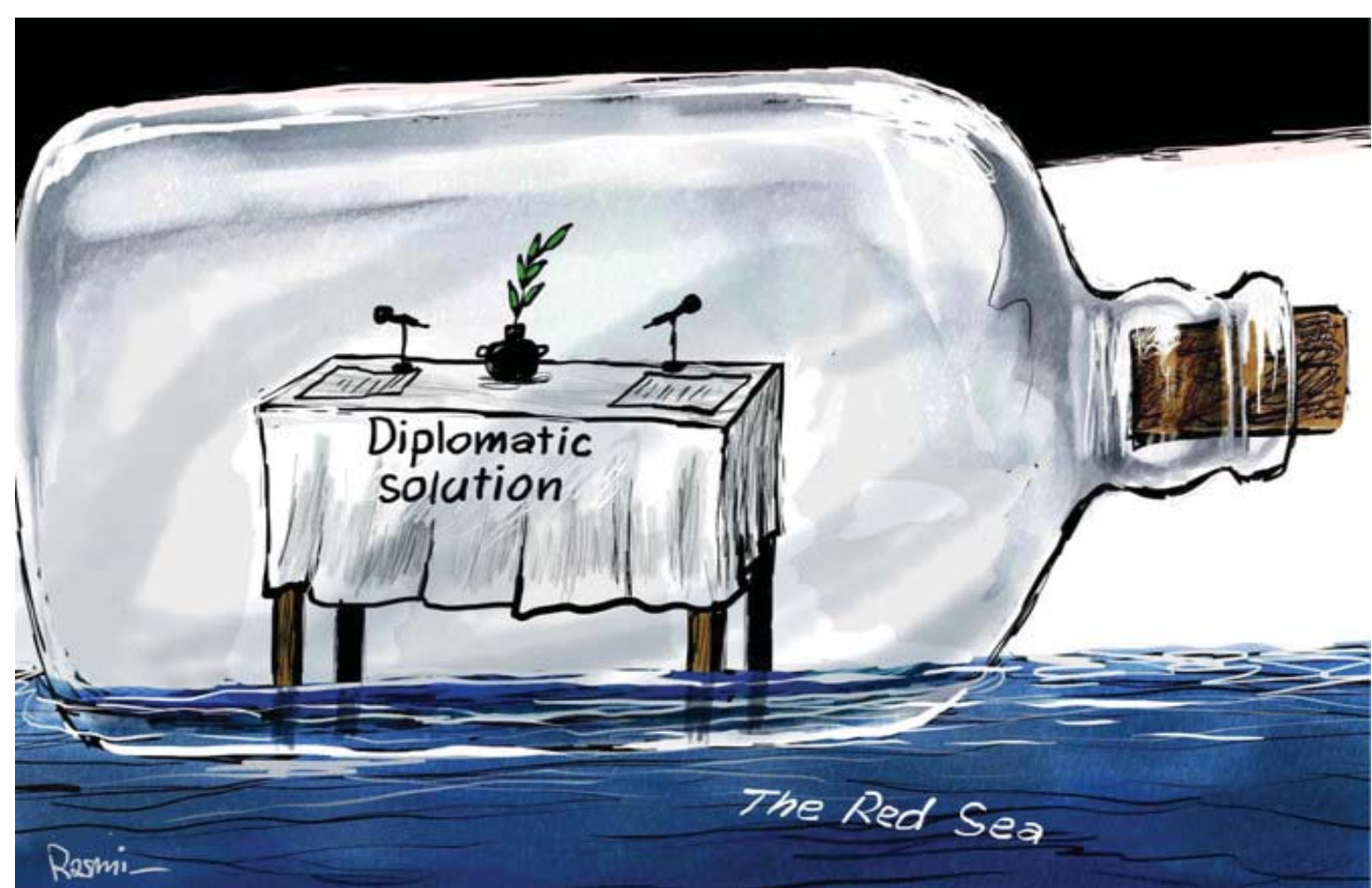
With decades of work experience, from economic trade to cultural exchange, from helping China understand Pakistan to introducing China in Pakistan, Zafar Uddin Mahmood, former special envoy for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) noted that he has gradually transitioned from being China's "guest" to becoming China's "messenger," as he gets even closer to the career he has been pursuing, said the expert during an exclusive interview with the Global Times. The journey with China began in 1976 when he arrived to study Chinese at the Beijing Language Institute (the current Beijing Language and Culture University). "I have so many memories of my school. I remember taking classes inside tents after the 1976 Tangshan Earthquake happened. I remember making many friends who were studying Chinese at our school and have now become important political figures in different countries," he said. But one of his more cherished memories was spending the eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year with his teacher's family.

At the time, ration coupons were needed for many necessities and household items in China as the country grappled with a shortage of food and materials. His teacher's family didn't eat meat for an entire year just to save up the coupons to buy beef and flour to make dumplings for the Muslim students. The teacher even bought a new pot to boil the dumplings in, as his old pot may have been used to cook pork, Mahmood recalled emotionally. "I am moved to this day. It was not his job.

Meanwhile, it showed how Chinese people treat guests and their spirit of inclusiveness despite the hardships back then. China has so many people and different ethnic groups who respect and embrace each other, which is very important," he said. "I had a strong bond with my school. The teachers didn't just teach me the language but also teach me about Chinese culture." In 1977, Mahmood began his university life in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong Province, in the same year when China's national college entrance exams, Gaokao, resumed. A special cohort of students comprised Mahmood's class, ranging in age from early 20s to late 40s. Driving force "And now China's education system has achieved great things. Take universities for example; the quality of China's higher education is top-level and the majors are becoming more and more refined, so there are specific talents in almost any field. I think this is probably the biggest driving force for China's development," Mahmood noted.



Qamar Bashir



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

Impact of Social Media on Mental Health

Sher Majam

In the contemporary world, social media has become an integral part of our daily lives. It connects us with friends and family, provides a platform for self-expression, and offers endless streams of information and entertainment. However, the rise of social media also brings with it complex challenges and implications for mental health. As clinical psychologists in Pakistan and around the world are witnessing, the digital age has given rise to new forms of stress, anxiety, and even depression. In this article, we will explore the various ways in which social media impacts mental health and offer guidance on how individuals can navigate these challenges.

One of the most significant impacts of social media on mental health is the creation of a curated online persona. People tend to showcase the best aspects of their lives on social media while concealing their vulnerabilities and struggles. This "highlight reel" effect can lead to unrealistic comparisons. Users may feel like everyone else is living a perfect life, leading to feelings of insecurity and fear. Clinical psychologists in various parts of the world often see patients who struggle with self-esteem and self-worth issues exacerbated by constant exposure to idealized online personas. The pressure to keep up with this facade can contribute to mental health problems like anxiety and depression.

The digital age has also brought

about new forms of bullying and harassment known as cyberbullying. Through the anonymity and distance provided by the internet, individuals may engage in harmful behavior they would never consider in face-to-face interactions. It is important for a psychologist, addressing the mental health consequences of cyberbullying has become increasingly common. Victims of cyberbullying often experience profound emotional distress, including anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts. This issue highlights the need for both preventative measures and therapeutic support to combat the negative consequences of online harassment.

Social media platforms constantly expose users to the lives and achievements of others. While this can be a source of inspiration, it often leads to unhealthy social comparisons. People may find themselves envious of their friends' vacations, relationships, career successes, and even physical appearances. Clinical psychologists in the world frequently work with clients who grapple with feelings of inadequacy and jealousy triggered by their social media feeds. It's crucial to recognize that what people share on social media is a highly selective and edited representation of their lives. Encouraging clients to limit comparisons and focus on their own journey towards self-improvement can be a part of the therapeutic process.

The non-stop nature of social media puts individuals under constant pressure to be available, impacting mental health. Clinical psychologists frequently assist clients dealing with the urge to

stay online constantly, causing disruptions in sleep, heightened stress, and challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. It is very important to care for your health and set boundaries for self-care. It is the duty of clinical psychologists to guide the clients from being disconnected from social media during designated periods, especially before bedtime, which can contribute to better mental well-being.

Despite the acknowledged influence of social media on mental well-being, it's crucial to acknowledge that these platforms aren't inherently detrimental. When used thoughtfully, they serve as valuable tools for communication, networking, and entertainment. Clinical psychologists must suggest strategies to assist individuals in navigating the digital era.

Conclusion:
 The way we connect, communicate, and express ourselves has been significantly altered by social media. Despite its transformative impact, this platform presents distinct mental health challenges, as noted by clinical psychologists in Delhi and globally. By grasping the psychological processes involved and adopting mindful approaches, individuals can leverage the advantages of social media while protecting their mental well-being. It is duty of clinical psychologist we to steer and assist individuals in maneuvering through this intricate landscape, fostering mental health and resilience in response to digital complexities.

Writer is student and he can be reached at shermajam00@gmail.com

Why Pakistan is unable to reap benefits of Zakah for poverty eradication?

Uzma Noreen

Poverty has been a serious issue and a huge challenge for developing countries, Pakistan is not an exception. Even though poverty rates reduced during the 1970s and 1980s but again rose in the 1990s due to poor government policies and widespread corruption. Pakistan is currently facing various economic challenges (such as record high inflation, unemployment, fiscal deficit etc.) that further exacerbate the poverty both in urban and rural areas. Out of the total nearly 100 million living below the poverty line as stated by World Bank officials, Pakistan's economic model has failed to reduce poverty, and the country's living standards have also fallen as compared to other regional countries. According to the World Bank report, the country's poverty rate increased from 34.2% to 39.4% due to a total of 12.5 million additional people falling below the USD 3.65 daily income threshold. Even though the Government of Pakistan (GOP) designed various policies and social safety nets to eradicate poverty, poverty still persists.

Pakistan, a country with a majority of Muslim population, has already possessed many divine tools in the form of zakah, sadaqat and waqf to curb poverty. Zakat has a long history of supporting social welfare and maintaining socio-economic equity among various strata of society. The fundamental pillar of the Islamic economy i.e. zakah alone addresses many of the socio-economic issues like zero hunger, no poverty, reducing inequalities, etc. The imposition of zakah has been ordained at several places in the Holy Quran and book of Hadiths. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 43 "And establish prayer, pay zakat and bow with those who bow.", Surah Al-Taubah, Verse 103 "Of their goods take alms (Zakah), that so you might purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf, verily your prayers are a source of security for them". The Holy Quran not only emphasized the imposition of zakah but also provided distributional guidelines emphasizing poverty reduction through helping the poor and needy. Zakah recipients mentioned in Holy Quran are, "The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause

of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is knower, Wise." (Holy Qur'an 9:60).

The main objective of zakah is to ensure the economic balance in the society by reducing the wealth concentration through collection and improving the economic status of deprived off individuals through distribution of funds. Historical evidence also proved that when Zakat was collected & distributed effectively, it led to the alleviation of poverty in that community.

The level of institutionalization of zakat varies widely, ranging from obligatory to voluntary contributions in different countries. In Pakistan, Zakat is largely voluntary and poorly regulated by the state. Currently, the zakah collection is managed by zakah councils (at the provincial and federal levels) under the supervision of the ministry of religious affairs, government of Pakistan. There are also many private philanthropic organizations receiving and distributing zakah amounts informally. The Zakat system in Pakistan was designed to address the issues of poverty and income inequality, however, there have been various challenges in its implementation.

The potential benefits of zakah could not be realized due to various issues like administrative inefficiencies, lack of transparency, public awareness, inability of the integration and upgradation of this system with modern financial tools, and assessment problems of various asset types etc. Further, there are also many political, religious, and governance issues in the existing system. Due to that, the great potential of Zakah as a means to reduce poverty is not being utilized. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort involving government institutions, think tanks, religious and economic scholars, civil society, and the public. Reforms in administration, upgradation to the modern financial system, increased transparency, public awareness campaigns, and regular evaluations of the Zakah institution are vital for enhancing its effectiveness in poverty eradication. The Zakat system could and should systematically improve the situation of the poor and needy – the qualified Zakat recipients, as well as contribute to a more caring and equitable society model, based on proper understanding of Zakah Is obligatory nature.

Writer is PhD Student at PIDE. She can be reached at uzma.22@pide.edu.p

This Stunning Silk Road Country should be on your travel list

Uzbekistan was once the heart of the ancient trading route between China and the Mediterranean

Charukesi Ramadurai / Spokesman Report

Khiva
Uzbekistan was once at the heart of the ancient network of trading routes known famously as the Silk Road that began in China and touched parts of India before reaching central Asia on its way to European provinces such as Rome and Venice. The country's ancient Silk Road history comes enriched with decades of Russian influence, as it was a part of the USSR in more recent times. What exists now is the residual mish-mash of centuries of cultural osmosis from the Chinese, Russians, Persians, Turkish and Arabs, and it's visible in every aspect of this fascinating society, including food, language, faith, art and architecture.

The highlights of this friendly country (which are found practically everywhere) are what I began to think of as the four Ms from the Islamic faith — mosque, minaret, madrasah and mausoleum. And for when monument fatigue strikes, you can always go camping in the Kyzylkum desert or hiking in the Chimgan mountains. Each of the silk road towns of Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand is peppered with dazzling monuments decorated with tiles of a dozen shades of blue. But here's what to do with limited time and, let's face it, limited capacity for admiring cerulean tiles. The Afrosiyob bullet train is a quick and convenient way to travel between cities.

You will likely fly into the capital city of Tashkent, but instead of lingering there, take the earliest flight out to Urgench, where Khiva is an hour away by cab. Whispers of cruel marauders and slave traders float in the sultry air of Khiva, where weary caravans once pulled up for food and shelter before setting off on the long desert road that lay ahead. But today, it's a sleepy town that tourists mostly ignore on their way to the old walled city of Ichan Kala.

Everything that is worth seeing in Khiva — and that means more than 60 monuments and museums — is contained within the Ichan Kala. This isolation makes it something of a living museum, but with souvenir shops and craft studios rubbing shoulders with splendid palaces and sacred mosques.

Stay: Check into the Orient Star Khiva Hotel, a boutique property inside the Ichan Kala, if only for the experience of sleeping in a late 19th century Islamic school where 250 scholars once studied. Your exploration of the Silk Road has already begun here at the erstwhile Muhammad Amin Khan madrasah.

Do: Just outside is the Kalta Minor, the resplendent minaret covered in a lush veneer of turquoise tiles all the way to the top — or, at least to the point where it ends abruptly because the ruler who had it built died before it could be completed. Around the corner is the Kuhna Ark, the Khan's residence and seat of governance, complete with its own throne room, reception hall, mosque and even a couple of museums.

Pro tip: Be sure to come back late in the evening to catch the sunset from the top of the watchtower at the ark (reached through a flight of narrow, steep steps). Seeing these ancient monuments coated in a dusky pink is an unmissable experience.

If you need a break from all the blues, the Juma Mosque — with its prayer hall featuring 218 carved wooden pillars — provides a clean and cool respite. The Pahlavon Mahmud mausoleum is also richly decorated and another such restful spot where the faithful come to pray.

The Tosh Havli Palace — translated rather deceptively as the simple "stone house" — is the absolute star of Ichan Kala, with some of the finest embellishments in its various rooms and courtyards, including the harem where the women lived in seclusion. The Ichan Kala is too much to take in on a single day, so go back the next day (the entry ticket is valid for two days) for a closer look at what you really liked or to check out the dozens of craft workshops hidden within the cobblestoned lanes.

Eat: Find a quiet corner on the open terrace of Terrassa Cafe & Restaurant for good local food and an aerial(ish) view of Ichan Kala. Khiva's specialty dish is the emerald green shivit oshi, pasta infused with the flavors of fresh dill, topped with beef stew and served with tangy yogurt sauce. For dinner, book a table at Cafe Zarafshon for an excellent meal in the shadow of the illuminated Islom Hoja Minaret.

Bukhara
Hailed by UNESCO as the "most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia," Bukhara hides some of the most interesting monuments of the age. Apart from the usual suspects, there are also a handful of ancient trading domes, where souvenir and craft shops now beckon travelers much the same way mounds of silks and spices did a few centuries ago.

Stay: The Shahrison Hotel is in a pedestrian-only lane in the heart of the old city, with a traditional facade and



modern rooms. It's within easy walking distance of not just the sightseeing but also the shopping. What more can you ask for?

Do: The historic center is fairly compact, easily covered on foot or by e-rickshaw. Begin with the Po-i-Kalon ensemble, complete with its own madrasah, minaret and mosque. Legend has it that the unadorned beauty of this minaret so moved Mongolian conqueror Genghis Khan that he spared it from his rampage spree across the region. On either side are the Mir-i-Arab madrasah (where hundreds of male students have been receiving an Islamic education since the mid-1500s) and the beautiful Kalyan mosque (with space for 12,000 worshippers at a time).

Carry on to the Ark, a stark, brown fifth century citadel that stands like an

elevated island looking down upon the busy town. Occupied continuously until 1920, the fortress is now an open-air museum, with an impressive mosque, palaces and open courtyards.

Walk on further to see the Ismail Samani mausoleum built in the dull tone of the desert sand, a somber contrast to the mostly multihued monuments elsewhere. Built in the first century, it lay buried in sand for hundreds of years, uncovered only in 1932 by the Russians.

Retrace your steps towards the other side of the old city, through the trading domes — try not to be distracted by the carpets and ceramics along the way — to the Lyabi Hauz complex to admire the Kukeldash madrasah. This area is

particularly lively in the evenings when locals gather for coffee and conversations in the adjoining park or at one of the al fresco cafes around the lake.

Eat: The rooftop restaurant of Minzifa hotel is known for fresh Uzbek cuisine, particularly the laghman (hand pulled noodles cooked with meat and vegetables) and manti (dumplings filled with meat or pumpkin). If you're already tired of local food, then European-style coffee and sandwiches (or pastries for those with a sweet tooth) await at Wishbone Cafe close to your hotel.

Samarkand
The name itself evokes images of the most glorious aspects of trade along the silk route, and Samarkand truly has some of the most magnificent monuments you will see



on this trip. Unlike Khiva and Bukhara in one corner, this is very much a modern city with traffic snarls and concrete buildings that belie its 2,500 year old history.

Stay: A late 19th century guesthouse converted into a family-run guesthouse, Jahongir Hotel ticks all the boxes when it comes to location and service, plus serves a superb local breakfast served in the open courtyard.

Do: Begin early in the morning at the Shahi Zinda — really, get there by 7 a.m. when it opens — for great photos without 100 rogue legs and noses bombing those memorable frames. The morning sunlight falling on these blue facades makes them shine with a muted gold glaze that will make you gasp. Go on, you can thank me later. This most remarkable of sites is a necropolis, an avenue of mausoleums, each decked in utterly exquisite blue tiles, several shades deeper than the cheerful teals and aquamarines of Khiva or Bukhara.

Your next stop should be Gur-e-Amir, the final resting place of Amir Timur (known in the west as Tamerlane), the much feared and loved 14th century ruler. The ornate walls and ceilings of this mausoleum are a fitting tribute to this most influential of Uzbek heroes and his descendants.

Finally, head to Registan Square, an open plaza fringed on three sides by the

elaborately adorned Ulugh Beg, Sher-Dor and Tilya-Kori madrasahs. Translated roughly as "sandy place," this was once a thriving marketplace, given its location somewhere midpoint along the silk route. Souvenir shops have taken over the interiors, and you might be tempted to rush past them, but it's best to slow down and savor the colors and designs on the tiles inside and outside these madrasahs.

Pro tip: Try to get there late in the day to see them in a soft glow, and stay back to enjoy the spectacular light and sound show that comes on every evening.

If you have the time, there are several other monuments worth checking out, particularly the Bibi Khanym mosque (built by Timur's favorite wife) and the Ulugh Beg observatory (built by Timur's grandson, an expert astronomer). But if you are all monumented out by then — understandably so — skip them and instead sit down with a chilled beer.

Eat: It's almost illegal to leave Uzbekistan without trying their national dish of plov — mildly spiced rice cooked with fatty beef, onions, yellow carrots and, occasionally, raisins. And locals swear by the unassuming Samarqand Osh Markazi in an outtourist part of town (best to ask your hotel for directions). For a fancier dining experience, Platan has lovely outdoor seating and serves excellent kebabs and a hearty mastava (a local meat and rice soup).

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
63,282.22	63,202.40
Day's High	Day's Low
63,911.85	63,214.86
Index Value	Change
5,395,720,982	+79.82
Percentage	Time
+0.13%	19 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,461.93	+2.84
Percentage	Time
+0.038%	19 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,674.10	+205.49
Percentage	Time
+0.55%	19 Jan, 12:34 pm GMT-5
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
35,963.27	+497.10
Percentage	Time
+1.40%	19 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	183.8
Bahrain Dinar	744.22	752.22
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	39.18	39.58
Danish Krone	40.77	41.17
Euro	305	308
Hong Kong Dollar	35.8	36.15
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.02	2.11
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	726.88	734.88
Qatari Riyal	76.92	77.62
Saudi Riyal	74.45	75.2
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.72	27.02
Swiss Franc	322.17	324.67
Thai Bhat	7.85	8
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77.3
UK Pound Sterling	355	358.5
US Dollar	279.5	281.5

ICCI and NUST discuss collaboration to improve competitiveness of industry

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, visited the NUST University and held a meeting with Lt. Gen. Javed Mahmood Bukhari Rector to discuss collaboration for improving the competitiveness of the local industry through strong academia-industry linkages.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt. Gen. Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST briefed the ICCI delegation about the role of NUST in promoting future leaders and job creators for a positive impact on society and the economy. He said that NUST has created an ecosystem to promote research, innovation, and productivity. He said that academia has cutting-edge research while industry faces practical challenges and problems, therefore, close cooperation between NUST and ICCI would help resolve issues of industry and produce innovative products for exports. He said that NUST and ICCI should join hands in students'



mentorship programs to give them practical skills and experience that would improve their employability.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry stressed for close academia-industry linkages to address industrial problems and improve the competitiveness of industry that would help enhance industrial activities and exports. He said that Indian IT graduates have reached the top positions in some big companies like Google, Microsoft, and IBM and stressed that Pakistani universities should produce IT professionals to lead the top-ranking companies of the world. He said that with better focus, Pakistan can increase its IT exports from currently around US\$ 3 billion to US\$ at least 50 billion in a few years.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice Presi-

dent ICCI said that academia-industry linkages can lead to the commercialization of academic research, promote innovations, and improve the economic growth of the country.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that ICCI and NUST should join hands to develop curricula and training programs that align with the needs of the industry.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that students prefer government jobs or migrate to foreign countries. However, universities should focus on fostering entrepreneurship in students that offers them prosperous careers. He said that in the West, students idealize business role models like Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Elon Musk and stressed that the universities in Pakistan should invite business leaders to address students that would motivate them to idealize the business role models and explore career growth in the business field to create new jobs and contribute to the economic development of the country.

Hardwork

MUZAFFRABAD: Workers of WAPDA busy in repairing of a transformer on electric pole, in the city.



Photo: Online

Two more organizations join hands with PTC for joint massive tree plantation campaign

PPA

KARACHI: Two more organizations have joined hands with the Plant a Million for Community (PTC) campaign aimed at conducting a massive tree plantation drive in Karachi in the next few years.

The PTC in this regard signed two separate memorandums of understanding with the Dream World, Resort, Hotels & Golf Course, and the Next School, in Karachi for jointly conducting the tree plantation campaign. The MoUs were signed by PTC co-founders Razzak Pardesi, Murad Soni, Dream World Executive Director Abdul Jabbar Rathod and The Next School founder Sheryar Rathod. The Dream World and the Next School

will each donate 100,000 trees for the joint plantation drive. The MoUs are also signed for launching a joint mass awareness drive and monitoring mechanism for the success of the tree plantation campaign.

Earlier, the National Forum for Environment & Health (NFEH) and the PTC signed an MoU to jointly launch the massive tree plantation campaign in the city. NFEH President Naeem Qureshi, PTC Founders and noted businessmen Razzak Pardesi and Murad Ali Soni, signed the MoU at a ceremony.

NFEH President said the plantation campaign would be launched in February and continue till October 2024 to plant 100,000 plants and saplings in the city.

ILO launches phase two of cotton workers' rights project

LAHORE: Pakistan: Building on the success of the first phase (2017-2023), the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the second phase of the programme to promote and realize Fundamental Principles and Rights (FPRW) at Work in the cotton sector.

Funded by INDITEX, the International Labour Organization launched the second phase of the FPRW project at a ceremony in Lahore today. The initiative focuses on building the capacity of cotton-growing communities to advocate for their rights and address gender inequalities in the sector, supporting the most vulnerable cotton-growing communities across Pakistan.

The cotton-growing communities in the selected areas of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan provinces will have improved access to organizing associations for farmers and trade unions under the second phase of the International Labour Organization's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) project.

The event was attended by representatives from the Government, employers' and workers' organizations, and other



stakeholders working in the cotton sector.

"In the heart of cotton-producing communities, an undeniable reality still persists – children can be found working. Also, women tend to be relegated to lower-paying tasks in some of the most demanding parts of the agricultural cycle. The battle for equality within this sector is compounded by a complex web of discriminatory factors," said Geir Tonstol, Country Director for ILO in Pakistan.

for decent work in the cotton communities, he stated that ILO promotes freedom of association and collective bargaining,

combats forced labour and child labour and advocates for a safe and healthy working environment in cotton-producing communities. He further emphasized, "realizing these standards would reduce inequality and ensure a more balanced distribution of wealth, thus contributing to sustainable economic growth. The project will also support and establish an institutional mechanism to address vulnerabilities related to fundamental principles and rights at work through social dialogue and scaling up good practices in the rural economy."

First batch of cooked beef imported from Pakistan cleared customs in Tianjin, China

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Around 3,500 kilograms of frozen boiled beef from Pakistan passed the territorial inspection of Tianjin Customs and entered the Chinese market, being the first batch of cooked beef imported by China from Pakistan.

In recent years, cooperation between China and Pakistan in various fields has been continuously strengthened. Since last year, both sides have signed protocols on the export of Pakistani cooked beef and dried chili peppers to China, achieved access to Pakistani fresh cherries to China, and reached an agreement on the export of Pakistani dairy products and animal skins to

China. An increasing number of Pakistani products of high quality and qualified companies are entering the Chinese market. In 2022, global beef consumption reached 56.961 million tons, with China's beef consumption reaching 9.87 million tons, accounting for 17 percent of the total. In contrast, Pakistan only contributes 5 percent to the world's beef consumption.

According to a report released by China Animal Agriculture Association, China's beef consumption is projected to continue increasing until 2025. It is expected that by 2035, China's beef consumption will reach 14 million tons, with a projected gap of more than 3 million tons. We learned through the import



access list published by the General Administration of Customs that Pakistani cooked beef has recently gained access. "After contacting Pakistan Organic Meat Company Limited through the online platform, we learned more about their product, then signed a cooperation agreement", Ma Weilong, General Manager of Tianjin Longing International Logistics Co., Ltd., which imported the goods, said. "Pakistan

is a viable export partner of China due to its proximity and logistics advantages. We are also the cheapest nation in providing goods to the world. The quality and price of Pakistani beef are far superior to those of many other countries", CEO of Organic Meat said. Pakistani heat-treated beef that is allowed to be imported refers to meat products that are made from boneless skeletal muscle of cattle under 30 months of age, which are pre-boned and fat-removed and then heated to an internal core temperature of above 70 degrees for at least 30 minutes. "It only took less than one day from pick-up at the port to customs clearance, which greatly saved customs clearance costs and allowed imported food to be put

on domestic shelves for sale as soon as possible," said Liu Haizhou, deputy general manager of Longing. "Beijing and Tianjin Customs attach great importance to this batch of goods. They greatly improve customs clearance efficiency through the application of automated electronic customs declaration and inspection technology," Ma said and added this is the first time we have cooperated with a Pakistani partner.

In the future, Longing will have more in-depth trade cooperation with Pakistani cooked beef factories. First batch of cooked beef imported from Pakistan cleared customs in Tianjin. First batch of cooked beef imported from Pakistan cleared customs in Tianjin.

SMAP Chairman Urges Pakistan's AI Revolution for Salt Industry Growth

PNP

KARACHI: Qasim Yaqoob Paracha, Acting Chairman of the Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SMAP), underscores the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in revolutionizing Pakistan's salt industry.

In a statement, Qasim Yaqoob Paracha outlined how AI could harness extensive social media data to comprehend consumer behavior, enabling the formulation of targeted marketing strategies and promotions. This approach, he emphasized, has the potential to promptly enhance revenue. Furthermore, he highlighted AI's capability to optimize

recruitment and training processes by identifying ideal candidates for specific roles,



ultimately enhancing overall efficiency, performance and effectively training them in the right area.

Calling upon the government to encourage AI adoption in businesses, Paracha proposed incentives such as tax breaks and research grants. He stressed that embracing AI is vital for Pakistan's long-term economic competitiveness and its ability to thrive in the dynamically changing global market.

Paracha urged the Pakistani government to prioritize the incorporation of AI across various business and industrial sectors, underscoring its pivotal role in sustaining the country's competitiveness. He asserted, "Effective integration of AI in departments like marketing, HR, research, manufacturing and sales can significantly amplify efficiency and productivity. Hence, he urged the government to concentrate its efforts on building a resource pool that leverages Pakistan's human resources, unlocking business potential, and contributing to the nation's greater prosperity."

Germany beat Pakistan in Olympics Qualifiers

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Germany downed Pakistan by 4-0 in the semi-finals of the Paris Olympics Qualifiers in Muscat, Oman on Saturday. According to details, the German team has qualified for the finals and also for the Paris Olympics.

The first goal of the game came in the 11th minute by Tom Grambusch. The second was scored by Niklas Wellen in the 17th minute. The score at the end of the first half was 2-0. Niklas Wellen struck once again and scored a goal in the 40th minute. Justus Weigand added to the tally with a goal in the 39th minute, making a 4-0 lead. Pakistan team would now play the third position match and could still qualify for the Paris Olympics by winning it. This would be the last chance for the Green Shirts to qualify for the Olympics.



Gurbaz wreaks havoc as Dubai Capitals sink MI Emirates in ILT20

A Sports

DUBAI: Rahmanullah Gurbaz scored a quickfire 81 in the run chase and powered home side Dubai Capitals to a dominating seven-wicket victory over MI Emirates in the second match of the ILT20 on Saturday.

Put into bat first, MI Emirates could only register 159/9 in the allotted 20 overs despite Muhammad Waseem's brisk half-century up the order.

Waseem stitched a crucial second-wicket partnership with Andre Fletcher and recovered the Emirates from a dismal position when they were 7/1 in the second over.

The duo added 72 runs amid their sensational partnership, which lasted in the seventh over when Akif Raja removed Fletcher.

He scored 30 off just 18 deliveries with the help of three boundaries and two sixes.

Waseem then joined forces with skipper Nicholas Pooran for a 24-run partnership but faltered after amassing his magnificent half-century.

He remained the top-scorer for the Emirates with 51 in a mere 26 balls, laced up with two boundaries and four sixes.

MI Emirates lost their way after Waseem's dismissal and began to lose wickets at regular intervals which halted the flow of runs.

Dubai Capitals' bowling attack, led by Sikandar Raza and Jason Hold-



er, who took three each, eventually managed to restrict them to a modest total.

In reply, the Capitals comfortably chased down the 160-run target for the loss of just three wickets and 24 balls to spare.

The hosts, however, had a contrasting start to the pursuit as their opener David Warner (1) fell victim to Trent Boult in the third over with just 15 on the board.

Jake Fraser-McGurk then joined Rahmanullah Gurbaz at the crease and the pair put Dubai Capitals in touching distance to their first victory in the ongoing ILT20.

They added 114 runs for the second wicket with both scoring half-centuries.

Fraser-McGurk perished in the 11th when he fired Trent Boult's delivery straight to Corey Anderson at long-off. He smashed four boundaries and as many sixes on his way to a 25-ball 54.

Gurbaz fell 10 balls later when the Capitals needed a mere 20 runs in 46 deliveries.

He remained the top-scorer for the hosts with a belligerent 81 off 39 deliveries, peppered with eight boundaries and four sixes.

Sam Billings (13*) and Rowman Powell (7*) gave the final touches to the run chase and steered their side to glory in 16 overs.

Trent Boult bagged two wickets for the Emirates while Farooqi could pick up a wicket.

RCA Karachi Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament.

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Omar Associates Semi Final and Wing 999 Pvt. Ltd moved into Quarter Final after beating in their opponents in their last Group matches of RCA Karachi Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament at various grounds.

Scores in Brief:

Omar Associates beat Har Pal Taza Chai in their last group Match by 7 Wickets at KCCA Stadium and Become Group Champion of Group "A". Har Pal Taza Chai 116/8 in 40 overs. Ali Haider 31. Waleed Azeem 2/3, Muhammad Asad 2/23.

Omar Associates 117/3 in 11.3 overs. Ram Ravi 48 7x4 2x6, Danish Aziz 23

In the 2nd Match Wing 999 Pvt. Ltd beat Sindh Police by 7 Wickets at Gulberg Gymkhana Ground and Secured 2nd Position in Group "B" to moved Quarter Final. Sindh Police 187 all out in 39.2 overs. Farooq Hassan 83 8x4 3x6, Noman ullah 31, Arshad Khan 21. Fareed Shah (mf) 3/5, Wahid Ali (mf) 3/24, Akbar Khan 2/35. Wing 999 Pvt. Ltd 190/3 in 26.4 overs. Muhammad Sohail 66 4x4 4x6, AK Muhammad 58 6x4 2x6, Arif Khan 39.

In the last group Match of the Tournament AJWW beat Rangoonwala by 9 Wickets at RLCA Gulberg Ground. Rangoonwala 112 allout in 28.3 overs. Touheed Khan 29, Saad Bin Yousuf 22, Abdullah Alam 20.

AJWW 118/1 in 13.4 overs. Abdul Basit 104 18x4. 3x6.

Memes flow in after Shoaib Malik - Sana Javed marriage



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Shoaib Malik shocked fans by announcing his marriage to Sana Javed on the social media application Instagram. The newlyweds shared their matrimonial pictures on their account.

Social media users posted popular meme videos and pictures as their reactions. Many came up with deepfake videos imagining them in different situations.

Promote sports at grassroots level under way in Punjab: Moazzam Khan



Tahir Amin Malik

In a concerted effort to promote sports at the grassroots level, Chairman Punjab Cycling Association, Moazzam Khan Klair, recently convened a special meeting with Mahmood Ahmed, Headmaster of Government High School in Jayabga, and Waseem Abbas, Chief Executive of Chairman Electronics Home Appliances.

The meeting, held at the local school in Jayabga, emphasized the integral role of sports activities in tandem with education for the holistic development of children. Moazzam Khan underscored the importance of identifying talent at the school level for the overall growth of sports, particularly cycling, in Punjab.

Addressing the attendees, Moazzam Khan Klair stated, "The development of sports in Punjab, especially in cycling, hinges on the identification and nurturing of talent from the grassroots. Schools play a pivotal role in this process, and collaboration with educational institutions is essential for the success of our endeavors."

During the discussions, all members expressed unwavering commitment and guaranteed full cooperation towards the promotion of sports at the grassroots level. The meeting concluded with a shared vision to create a conducive environment that fosters both academic and athletic excellence for the youth in Jayabga.

Ronaldo shows excitement over three Globe Soccer awards

Cristiano Ronaldo, the football maestro currently playing for Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia, expressed his gratitude and excitement over winning three awards at the 2023 Globe Soccer Awards on Friday.

Taking to Instagram after securing the prestigious awards, the Portuguese star, known for his prolific goal-scoring ability, shared some captivating photos from the awards ceremony.

In his Instagram post, Ronaldo conveyed his gratitude and pride, saying, "Proud to have won three awards today. A big thank you to all the staff, teammates, and fans who keep making me better every day!"

The post quickly garnered attention from fans and fellow players alike, with many congratulating the football icon on his remarkable achievements.

Ronaldo's stellar performance at Al-Nassr has been nothing short of extraordinary since joining the club in January the previous year. Scoring an impressive 54 goals in 59 games, the seasoned striker outperformed other notable players like Kylian Mbappe, Harry Kane, and Erling Haaland in their respective leagues.

Harmer, Stubbs lead Eastern Cape to thump Super Giants in SA20

A Sports

Stubbs backed Simon Harmer's brilliant figures of 4/18 with a quickfire half-century and lifted Sunrisers Eastern Cape to edge Durban's Super Giants in the 12th match of the SA20 here on Saturday.

Opting to bat first, the Super Giants could pile up 159/7 on the board despite Wiaan Mulder's brisk half-century at the back-end.

The home side had a dismal start to their innings as Daniel Worrall removed Quinton de Kock (7) in the second over with just 10 runs on the board.

Opener Matthew Breetzke then put together a one-sided



ed 40-run partnership with JJ Smuts and appeared in good touch but Simon Harmer got rid of the former to cause a stir in the hosts' recovery.

Breetzke scored an important 35 off 24 deliveries, hitting five

boundaries and a six.

Smuts, who was finding it hard to score freely tasted the same fate and walked back after scoring a scratchy nine.

Harmer further dented Super Giants' batting expedition as he

struck twice more in his successive overs — removing Marcus Stoinis (1) and Heinrich Klaasen (31) — and reduced them to 90/5 in 12.4 overs.

Wiaan Mulder then stood up for the home side and played a counterattacking knock which lasted till the final over.

He smashed three boundaries and four sixes on his way to a 29-ball 52 and uplifted Super Giants' total.

Harmer led the bowling attack for the Eastern Cape with a four-fer while Otniel Baartman and Worrall made one scalp each.

In return, the Eastern Cape got off to a shaky start to the run chase as they lost wickets at an alarming rate and eventually

slipped to 97/5 in 14.3 overs.

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Tristan Stubbs partnered strongly with Marco Jansen and recovered the Eastern Cape from a tight spot.

The pair put together an unbeaten 66-run partnership and steered their side over the line.

Stubbs remained the top-scorer for the Eastern Cape with a 37-ball 66 which featured five boundaries and three sixes while Jansen supported with his 14-ball 24.

Marcus Stoinis bagged two wickets for the Super Giants while Reece Topley and Keshav Maharaj claimed a wicket apiece.

Shahzaib-inspired Pakistan crush Afghanistan in U19 World Cup campaign opener

A Sports

EAST LONDON: Shahzaib Khan's magnificent century, followed by Ubaid Shah's four-fer propelled Pakistan to start their ICC U19 World Cup 2024 campaign with a crushing 181-run victory over Afghanistan here on Saturday.

Pakistan captain Saad Baig's decision to bat first paid dividends for the former champions as the national team piled up a commendable total of 284/9 on the board at the back of Shahzaib's 106.

However, the Green Shirts had a contrasting start to their innings as they were 48/2 in 12.3 overs.

Skipper Saad then joined

Shahzaib in the middle and the duo anchored the innings with a sensible partnership.

They added 92 runs for the third wicket with both amassing their half-centuries. But Saad failed to stretch his counterattacking knock and perished in the 28th over.

He scored a brisk 55 off just 52 deliveries, laced up with three boundaries and four sixes.

Pakistan U19 then endured another setback when Ahmed Hussain (8) walked back to the pavilion with 151 runs on the board in 30.1 overs.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's mainstay Shahzaib Khan was then involved in yet another vital partnership when he put together 84 runs for the fifth wicket

with Riaz Ullah, who scored 46 off 49 before falling in the 45th over.

Shahzaib stood his ground firm and kept the scoreboard ticking with Ubaid Shah (22 off 12) and finally brought up his century in the 48th over.

He finally returned to the dugout in the penultimate over after top-scoring for Pakistan with 106 off 126 deliveries with the help of 10 boundaries and three sixes.

For Afghanistan U19, Khalil Ahmed led the way with four wickets, followed by Bashir Ahmad with two while AM Ghazanfar and Naseer Khan Maroofkhal made one scalp each.

In return, Pakistan pacers, led by Ubaid Shah, dismantled

Afghanistan's batting unit and booked them on a paltry 103.

Ubaid picked up four wickets in his seven overs and leaked away just 26 runs while Muhammad Zeeshan picked 3/17 in his five.

Ahmed Hussain and Amir Hassan made one scalp each for Pakistan.

Wicketkeeper batter Numan Shah (26) remained the top-scorer for Afghanistan in dismal show with the bat while Sohail Khan Zurmati and Rahimullah Zurmati - 20 each - were the other notable run-getters.

Pakistan will now lock horns with Nepal on January 24 in their second ICC U19 World Cup 2024 fixture.



Inspection

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi is inspecting renovation project of Bibi Pak Daman's shrine in Provincial Capital.

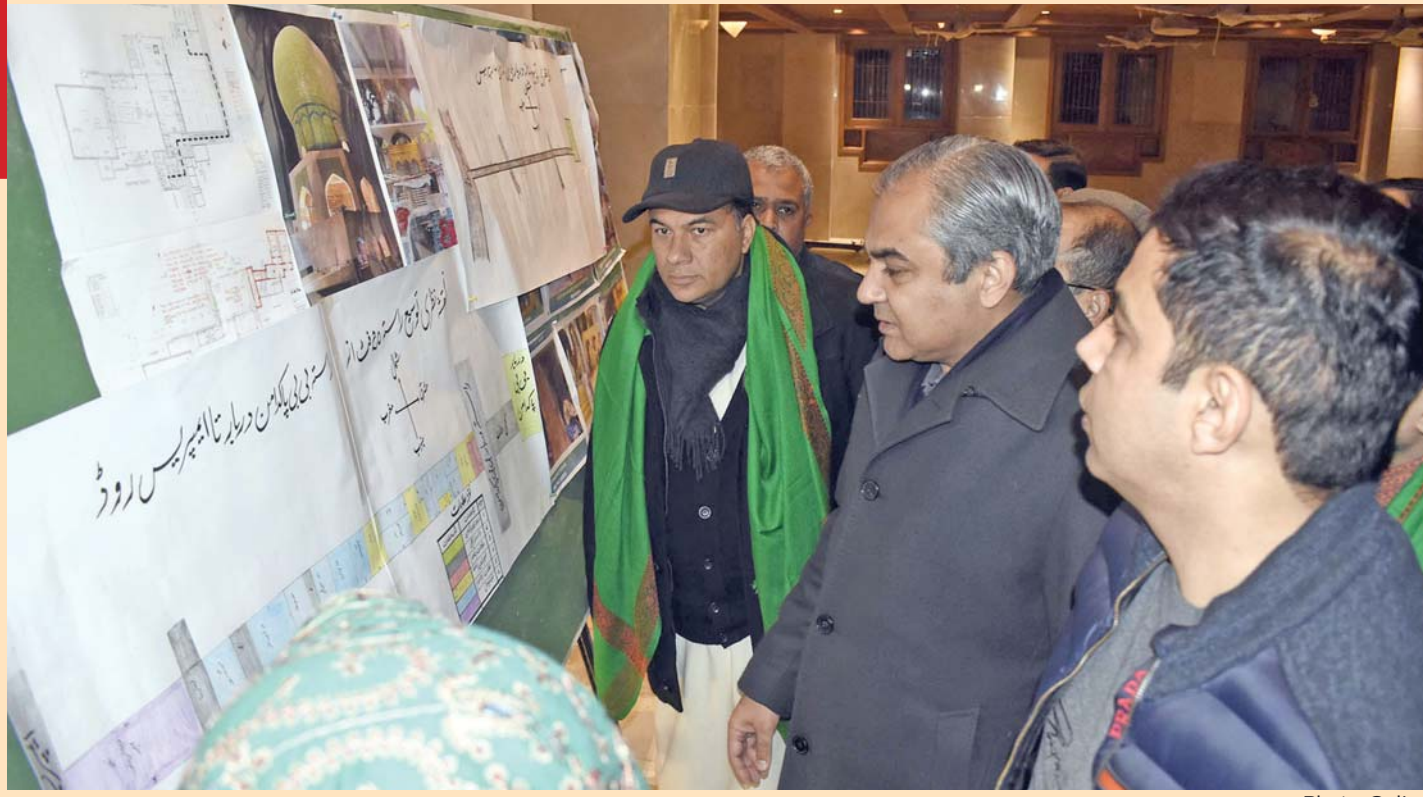


Photo: Online

No country gives media access to those involved in serious crimes: Solangi

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said no country in the world gave media access to those people who were involved in serious crimes.

Speaking to WION News, the minister said the former chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had been convicted and his conviction was not set aside. "He remains convicted and charged with serious crimes," he added. "As we speak, the PTI remains registered political parties and if people bring them in the federal and provincial assemblies the caretaker government has no problem. It's the people of Pakistan who have to make this decision," the minister remarked.

To a query, he said all political parties were being treated equally as the state had no

favorites. The state media was giving due coverage to all the political parties.

"So far, only constitutional body entrusted with holding free and fair elections is the Election Commission of Pakistan that stands committed to hold the elections on Thursday February 8, 2024," said Solangi in response to another query.

He said the constitutional caretaker government was committed to supporting the ECP in every possible way for elections and "we will support the election commission in administrative, financial and security matters."

Every political party was playing role of the victim, he said, adding "if you ask PTI they will say we are not getting level-playing field especially in Punjab and KPK and if you ask Peoples Party they will say we are not getting level-playing field in Punjab."



"Likewise, if you ask PML-N they will say we are not getting level-playing field in Sindh. If you ask Maulana Fazlu Rehman of JUI they will say we are not getting level-playing field in Balochistan and KPK due to security issues," the minister noted.

He said the caretaker government had no vested interests in any political party. "We are there to provide any kind of support to the election commission which is responsible for holding the elections and creating conducive environment."

"We should wait for the

results after elections conducted on February 8. Once people speak their mind when they go to polls to elect a party or a group of party I am sure we will get political stability," the minister said in response to another query.

He said it was written in the preamble of the constitution that the country would be run by the people's representatives through credible elections.

As regards the Pakistan and Afghanistan relation, he said it was squarely depended on the behaviours and actions of the interim government of Afghanistan.

"If they continue harbor terrorists including TTP, I am afraid the future of those relations does not seem to be right," he remarked.

He ruled out negotiation with any armed group until and unless they laid their arms and recognized the constitu-

tion of Pakistan as governing document the supreme law of land.

To another query, he said elections were on the cards both in India and Pakistan and "once we have elected governments in both countries and they got fresh mandates, we can hope that they will discuss the issues including long standing disputes both the countries have since three quarters of a century."

He said the caretaker government was born out of a constitutional process and would not do anything illegal.

The minister said many countries including western countries had taken extraordinary measures in extraordinary situations during the elections.

The incumbent fully believed in the freedom of press and expression, he said in response to another query.

Punjab chief minister reviews progress on hospitals' upgradation despite cold weather

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The mission to serve the grievd humanity is ongoing even in the severe cold weather. Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi along with the Provincial Cabinet paid a visit to the Mayo and Ganga Ram Hospitals. CM. Provincial Ministers and senior officials travelled in a coach and reviewed ongoing upgradation work in both the hospitals. The state-of-the-art emergency block of Mayo Hospital is near completion. Digital panels to control the temperature and latest facilities have been installed in the state-of-the-art operation theatres. Mohsin Naqvi along with the Provincial Cabinet inspected finishing of the upgradation work. CM witnessed reception counter of the emergency block, floor tiles and signboards for the patients and attendants. He directed to improve writing on the signboards being installed in the Urdu language so that the patients and attendants can be provided ease in their reading. Mohsin Naqvi also inspected the operation theatres and reviewed latest lights being installed in the operation theatres. CM monitored ongoing construction activities at the ground floor, first floor, second floor and third floor. He apprised that emergency block of

the Mayo Hospital will be opened in coming few days. Secretary C&W gave a briefing about progress being made on the upgradation project. Later, CM along with the Provincial Cabinet reached Ganga Ram Hospital by travelling in a coach. Mohsin Naqvi and the Provincial Ministers conducted a detailed review of the upgradation work and monitored progress being made on the upgradation work being undertaken in the wards, operation theatres and other sections of the hospital. CM inspected construction activities of the hospital. He while ordering to chalk out an immediate plan to shift the sewerage line passing inside the hospital directed to explore a comprehensive and a durable solution regarding the sewerage line. Mohsin Naqvi shook hands with the labourers working late night and commended their hard work. CM directed to speed up Ganga Ram Hospital construction work along with deploying additional labour force. Mohsin Naqvi directed to ensure high-quality in the upgradation work at any cost. Chairman P&D Board, SMBR, Secretaries, Commissioner Lahore, CCPO, VC KEMU, CEO Mayo Hospital, MS Mayo Hospital, VC FJMU, MS Ganga Ram Hospital and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Former Gilani met British HC Jane Marriott



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister and Senator Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani. Parliamentary Leader of People's Party in the Senate, hosted British High Commissioner H. E. Jane Marriott and Head of British Consulate Lahore, Clara Strandage at Gilani House Multan.

During the meeting, they discussed strengthening the sustainable relationship between Paki-

stan and the United Kingdom and expressed their desire to enhance bilateral relations between the United Kingdom and Pakistan. Pakistan's commitment to regional peace, economic relations and the 2024 general election. I had a detailed discussion about the political scenario of South Punjab.

Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani stressed that economic stability can be achieved through political stability, the two leaders agreed.

Huawei Technologies launches new HarmonyOS version

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Huawei Technologies Co unveiled a new version of its self-developed operating system HarmonyOS, as the Chinese tech company speeds up efforts to cut reliance on foreign technologies and build an indigenous software ecosystem. The move comes as Huawei announced that more than 800 million devices, including its own-brand products and devices from third-party companies, have now been equipped with HarmonyOS, up from 700 million devices five months ago, marking a significant milestone in its rapid expansion.

Yu Chengdong, CEO of Huawei's consumer business group said at a conference in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, that the native

HarmonyOS Next operating system, roughly translated as the Star River Edition, is targeted at software developers. China Daily reported on Saturday. This version is more user-friendly, smooth, secure, intelligent and interconnected, and HarmonyOS can open up a trillion-dollar industrial new frontier, Yu said and added, a genuine operating system requires a foundation and an ecosystem. HarmonyOS has evolved into an operating system running seamlessly across a diverse array of devices. HarmonyOS Next will no longer support Android apps or read Android code, according to Huawei. Highlighting its commitment to promote the ecosystem of HarmonyOS, Huawei said that over 200 leading applications have accelerated their integration into the



HarmonyOS ecosystem.

Major partners like Ant Group and China UnionPay, leveraging their innovation prowess and HarmonyOS' foundational capabilities, provide software developers with efficient end-to-end tools and expedite application development. Meanwhile, Yu said the HarmonyOS campus courses have reached 135 universities, involving 305,000 students, with 286 companies participating in HarmonyOS ecological workshops. Over 380,000 developers have obtained HarmonyOS certi-

fication. The self-developed operating system was first unveiled as an Android alternative in August 2019, three months after the US government added Huawei to its Entity List, restricting the Chinese company's access to crucial US technologies.

Since then, Huawei has been working hard to push for wider adoption of HarmonyOS, which is projected to surpass Apple's iOS as the second-biggest smartphone operating system in China in 2024, according to Canadian research firm TechInsights. Though Google's Android and Apple's iOS will continue to dominate the global smartphone operating system sector, Huawei's HarmonyOS will take some ground in China, driven by the firm's 5G smartphone comeback with the Mate 60 series,

TechInsights said in a report. Dai Wei, deputy secretary-general of the Internet Society of China, called on Chinese internet enterprises and every link in the industry chain to embrace and support the HarmonyOS ecosystem. Zhou Hongyi, founder and chairman of Chinese cybersecurity company 360 Security Group, said multiple high-quality applications under the company will join the HarmonyOS ecosystem, promising users a smoother, more intelligent and secure experience. Zhu Yonggang, president of Huawei's device cloud business, said that the HarmonyOS application ecosystem is entering its second phase, and expressed hope for collaboration with more developers to accelerate the integration of diverse industries into the ecosystem.

Four more suspects involved in Jinnah House inferno identified

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Investigators have identified four more suspects in the May 9 attack on Jinnah House, also known as Corps Commander House Lahore.

The suspects - identified as Imran Yar Khan, Ammar Baig, Ikramullah and Muhammad Bilawal - were presented before an anti-terrorism court (ATC) following an identification parade.

During the hearing, the police said the arrested accused were found present in Jinnah House on May 9 after geofencing and video evidence. The police sought 30-day physical remand of the suspects.

ATC Judge Muhammad Naveed Iqbal, after hearing the arguments, granted the police 14-day physical remand of the suspects. He also ordered the police to present the accused before the court on Feb 3.

Motorway closes temporarily due to fog

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Motorway M1, from Peshawar to Islamabad temporarily closed along with Swat Expressway from Colonel Sher Khan to Ismailia due to fog.

The purpose of closing the motorway is to prevent accidents and protect the life and property of the users of the motorway, said the spokesperson of the Motorway Police. Citizens are requested to avoid unnecessary travel during foggy hours, Spokesman Motor-



way Police said.

Complete your journey in daylight and reach your destination before the onset of fog, Spokesman Motorway Police. Use fog lights in vehicles, Spokesman Motorway Police advised the citi-

zens as said.

The spokesman also advised the citizens to avoid speeding and keep a proper distance from the next vehicle more than usual. Information can be obtained from the Motorway Police helpline 130 before starting the journey, Spokesman Motorway Police said.

Apart from this, the latest information can also be obtained from the official social media account of the National Highways and Motorway Police, spokesperson of the Motorway Police said.