



Wholesale destruction' of Gaza unprecedented: UN chief

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that the 'wholesale destruction' by Israeli bombardments of Gaza is unprecedented, as he pushed for recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to statehood by everyone. "The wholesale destruction of Gaza and the number of civilian casualties in such a short period are totally unprecedented.... (Details on Page 8)



Kyrgyzstan is Gateway for Pakistani Businessmen to Eurasian Economic Union: Ambassador Ulanbek Totuaiev

Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic H. E Ulanbek Totuaiev has said that Kyrgyz Republic is gateway for Pakistani business community to reach and benefit from Eurasian Economic Union, with a population of 180 Million. There is an excellent opportunity for rapid growth of interaction between the two countries in trade-economic, investment and cultural spheres. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Joint Military Training

Group photo of soldiers of Pakistan Army and Royal Saudi Arabian Forces during a joint military training exercise in Okara



Photo: ISPR

Pakistan Army, Royal Saudi Land Forces commences in Okara Garrison

Asim Tanveer
OKARA: The joint military training of the Pakistan Army and Royal Saudi Land Forces organized by the Multan Corps commenced in Okara Garrison. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Sunday, the military forces of the two countries presented an exemplary military drill at the beginning of the joint training. On this occasion, the national anthems of both countries were also played during the unveiling of the national flags. The Garrison Commander was the chief guest of the ceremony. Through the joint training programme, the forces of both countries will have classroom sessions and the opportunity to hone their collective combat skills. At the end of the opening ceremony, the Chief Guest presented badges of joint training to the officers and men of the forces of both countries.

Pakistan's National Statement at the 19th NAM Summit in Kampala, Uganda



PPA
ISLAMABAD: Additional Foreign Secretary (United Nations) Ambassador Syed Haider Shah delivered Pakistan's national statement at the 19th NAM Summit in Kampala, Uganda. He outlined Pakistan's firm commitment to the Non-aligned Movement and its founding principles and its continued support to the Movement's efforts towards peace, equality, cooperation and well-being for all. Ambassador Haider Shah underlined that the current multi-dimensional global challenges can only be overcome through effective international collaboration. He called for urgent action to reform the systems of finance, trade, and technology to ensure balanced and sustained socio-economic growth, particularly in the developing countries. Additional Foreign Secretary also called for an early resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Ambassador Haider Shah is leading the Pakistan delegation to the NAM Summit after Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani had to cut short his official visit in view of recent developments.

Greater Israel Mission

Israel won't stop bruising Palestine only, targeting other Muslim states including KSA

Amjad Mehmood

Israel's non-stop bombing of Gaza left nearly 25,000 Palestinians martyred and over 65,000 injured including at least 8,863 children since October 7, 2023. The war is escalating outside Gaza and Palestine when Israeli forces recently attacked Lebanon's territory. The United States of America and the United Kingdom are the frontline aides to Israel and extended their unconditional support on political and military fronts. After invading Gaza, Prime Minister Netanyahu led Israeli government eyes on the West Bank as the Israeli forces carried out fresh attacks on the West Bank areas leaving nearly 368 Palestinians martyred and over 4,000 injured. Israel's war hysteria hints at the execution of a Zionist plan for the Middle East to achieve the objectives of Greater Israel. Establishment of Greater Israel is quite an old plan of Jews with certain biblical and political meanings that speckled over the years. The Israel-Palestine conflict has a history of over a century but the recent episode of Israeli bellicosity sketched



the picture of Israel's march towards employment of Zionist's bigger plan of Greater Israel. The political and diplomatic gurus including international relations experts believe that the Israeli government is inching toward their dream boundaries of Israel which is certainly not limited to Palestine only. Previously, Israel tried many times to fulfill the Zionist plan for the Middle East to expand its territories but the innocent Palestinians' blood halted them to make it happen. According to the founding father of Zionism Theodore Herzl, the concept of "Greater Israel" is a Jewish state stretching "from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates" which including the whole land of Palestine, whole land of Jordan, whole land of Lebanon, whole land of Kuwait, 70% of Syria, 45% of Iraq, 40% of Saudi Arabia, 35% of Egypt and some parts of Turkey. The Israeli occupation of Palestine's land is part of the Greater Israel plan. The global experts believe that Israel is gradually and strategically grabbing neighbors' land. While fewer also consider it as a part of US foreign policy aiming to extend US hegemonic control in the Middle East through Israel. Some of the vocal Zionists claim that Greater Israel includes land from the Nile in the West to the Euphrates in the East, comprising Palestine, Lebanon, Western Syria, and Southern Turkey. Israel's "Yinon Plan" revolves around the strategy to ensure regional superiority by reconfiguring its geopolitical surroundings through the Balka-

nisation of the surrounding Arab states turning them into smaller, and weaker states. The map shows a complete tale of Israel's occupation of 88% of Palestine's land and to grab the remaining 12% they are hunting innocent Palestinians with bombs on Gaza and the West Bank. The United Nations Report 2017 states that Israel is steadily proceeding with a plan to annex large chunks of Palestinian territory while keeping the Palestinian inhabitants in conditions of severe deprivation and isolation. Nader Alturk, Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the state of Palestine in Islamabad shared the recent map developed by the top spying agency of Israel which shows the geographical boundaries of Greater Israel. The map shows parts of Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within the boundaries of Israel. While sharing his views, Nader Alturk said Palestine is not merely the target of Israel rather Jews are following their plan to establish a greater Israel in the Arab World. To achieve their goals, the USA, UK, and other Western world are effusively supporting the war crimes of Israel. He expressed distress over the role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) which was restricted to passing resolutions and condemnation of Israeli forces' attacks on Gaza. He questioned the role of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition force led by Pakistani Former Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, a 41-nation alliance of Muslim countries headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He said the United Nations and the Western World have reasons to show their tilt in favor of Israel but the Muslim World's silence is painful for the whole Palestinian nation. Except for fewer countries, the majority of the Muslim states remained either silent or neutral rather than raising their voices at international forums to refrain Israel from executing historic war crimes. He concluded that innocent Palestinian blood halted Israel from spreading its wings in the rest of Arab World countries which is part of the Greater Israel plan therefore, the Muslim states must take proactive and concrete steps to strike out Israel from Palestinian genocide and further occupancy of Palestinian land.

Pakistan 'assures' IMF of imposing Rs18bln new taxes monthly

Commerce Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan government has reportedly assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of imposing new taxes worth Rs18 billion, monthly. The sources say, the development comes after "do more" demands of the International Monetary Fund. The government has assured the IMF of slapping additional taxes on textile and sugar to meet the expected shortfall in tax collection. The caretaker government has shared a plan with the IMF regarding the increase in taxes. The Pakistan government has planned to fix tax collection target of Rs11,000 billion. The government has proposed jacking up GST on textiles and leather goods to 18pc from 15pc. On January 17, Pakistan on Wednesday received \$700 million loan tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the nine-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA).

Plane crashes in northeastern Afghan mountains

Reuters
MOSCOW: Russian aviation authorities said on Sunday a Russian-registered plane with six people thought to be on board disappeared from radar screens over Afghanistan the previous night, after local Afghan police said they had received reports of a crash. Russian aviation authorities said in a statement the plane was a charter ambulance flight traveling from India, via Uzbekistan to Moscow on a French-made Dassault (AM. PA), opens new tab Falcon 10 jet manufactured in 1978. Police in northern Afghanistan received reports of a plane crash in Badakhshan province, a provincial police spokesperson said on Sunday. India's civil aviation authority said that the plane crash was not a scheduled commercial flight or an Indian chartered aircraft and that "more details are awaited."

Election 2024: Over 17,000 polling stations declared highly sensitive

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has categorized over 17,500 polling stations as highly sensitive, 32,508 as sensitive, and 42,500 as normal out of a total of 92,500 polling stations nationwide. Polling stations are categorized into A, B, and C groups, determined by their sensitivity levels, sources said. From over 17,500 polling stations designated as highly sensitive across the country due to concerns of potential unrest, 6,599 are in Punjab, and 4,430 are in Sindh, all set to be monitored by CCTV cameras. A total of 2,038 polling stations in Balochistan and 4,344 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been categorized as highly sensitive.

Over 55,000 cases pending before Supreme Court

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: The number of pending cases before the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan is more than 55,000 as of 16th December 2023, a report issued by the apex court read, ARY News reported. According to a quarterly report (from 17th September 2023 to 17th December 2023), the top court of the country has disposed of 859 during the period. The report, issued under Article 19-A which guarantees right to information, read that the number of pending cases was 56,503 on 17th September 2023 and dropped to 55,644 on 17th December 2023. The SC disposed of 859 cases in the three months. The apex court is issuing a quarterly report for the first time under Article 19-A. "Access to information is the right of every citizen under Article 19A," the SC maintained. It is pertinent to mention here that earlier Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa vowed to formulate a "comprehensive policy" on fixation of pending cases and formation of benches. The development was shared by Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Chairman Hassan Raza Pasha while addressing a press conference after a meeting with Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa Senior Puisne Judge Justice Sardar Tariq Masood. The apex court judges had summoned representatives of Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to discuss issues related to formation of benches, pending cases, speedy administration of justice, and fixation and hearing of cases.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari can only change the destiny: Yasin

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: President of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that for the solution of the Kashmir issue, it is necessary for Pakistan People's Party to succeed in the elections and for Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to become the prime minister. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari can only change the destiny. Lahore will once again become the stronghold of Pakistan People's Party. He expressed these views while talking to the media at the venue after Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari address. He said that the people of NA 127 voted in favor of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The



decision has been made, the arrow has been fired and the lion has been hunted. He said that the Kashmiri community of Lahore will play the

role of the first team for the success of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The appearance of former Punjab Governor Chaudhry Sarwar has sealed the success of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, he said that Zinda Dalan e Lahore has given a decision in favor of Pakistan People's Party. He said that as Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has brought the country out of diplomatic isolation, he will also bring the country out of political and economic crisis and bring political and economic stability to the country. He said that Lahore is the heart of Pakistan and this heart has started beating for the Pakistan People's Party, the success of the Pakistan People's Party.

CBD Main Boulevard Flyover to be completed in 2024: Punjab minister



News Desk

LAHORE: CBD Punjab Boulevard Walton Road Railway Crossing Flyover initiated by Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), underwent a late-night comprehensive inspection by the Provincial Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Punjab, Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir.

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin, Project Director Asif Iqbal, and representatives from the contracting team gave detailed briefing about the project's progress. Provincial Minister for Housing expressed heartfelt appreciation for the unwavering efforts of the labor force and the entire CBD Punjab team despite the late hour and extreme cold weather conditions.

The focus of the inspection was the ongoing construction progress at CBD Main Boulevard Flyover One and Flyover Two. Provincial Minister commended the dedication and hard work exhibited by CBD Punjab, emphasizing their persistence in ensuring the timely completion of the project.

Recognizing the pivotal role of this project in urban development, Provincial Minister specifically directed CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, to strictly adhere to the timeline given by Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

While expressing his views on the occasion Provincial Minister for Housing, Syed Azfar Ali Nasir said, "This project holds immense importance in our urban development plans. I commend the labor force and the CBD team for their dedication, especially for working late into the night in extreme cold weather conditions. Under the leadership of CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, I trust that we will meet the established timeline."

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin expressed his profound gratitude on the appreciation from the Provincial Minister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir. CEO CBD Punjab, stated we have deployed full workforce on the projects and are working nights. I have full confidence that we will meet the deadline given by Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi

Compulsion

RAWALPINDI: An elder woman is preparing bread (Roti) for her children on a traditional bricks stove due to gas load shedding in the city.



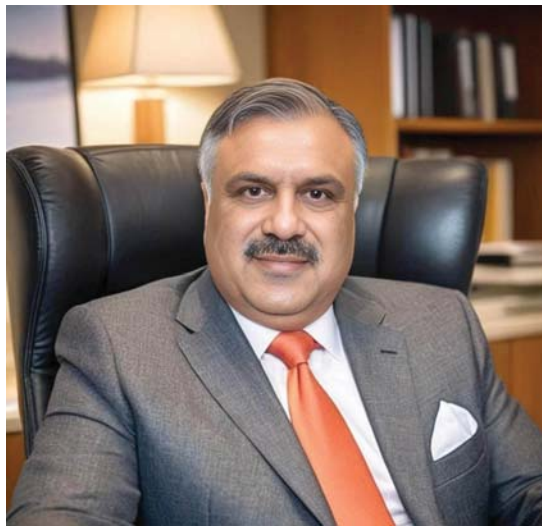
Photo: Online

IT and solar sectors can significantly boost the economy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Iftikhar Khan, the advisor to the president of FPCCI, stated on Sunday that the IT and solar sectors are both promising and ought to be encouraged. He said that these industries can boost the struggling economy by pushing IT exports to \$25 billion and lowering the cost of oil imports.

In a statement released today, Iftikhar Khan advocated for a preferred resolution of the issues facing the IT and solar industries, as well as a reduction in the tax burden on these two significant sectors to enable them to operate at full potential. Because of the intimate connection between the internet and national development, he said, taxes on the



internet and telecom sector should be lowered as well.

The business leader said that India and Pakistan both achieved independence at the same time; however, while

Indian IT exports are valued at 194 billion dollars, Pakistani IT exports are valued at less than two billion dollars, even though Pakistanis have greater qualifications than

Indians.

Iftikhar Khan stated that whereas India's economy has grown to over 3750 billion dollars, ours is at 375 billion dollars, is rapidly contracting because of several problems.

India trades with dozens of countries in its own currency but Pakistan is unable to find a global recognition to its currency.

He emphasized that we won't need to continuously plead with the IMF and friendly nations for a few billion dollars if the correct policies are implemented.

He went on to say that because we have always disregarded the demands of the modern world, many industries, including IT, solar, and wind power, have not been able to grow quickly, and everyone is trying their luck in real estate.

Bilawal to address public meeting in Chiniot

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will address the public meeting at Hockey Stadium Chiniot on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. According to this, the preparations for the public meeting are at their peak. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will give a historic address to the people at 12 noon at Hockey Stadium Chiniot. Provincial President Rana Farooq Saeed Khan, Deputy Provincial President Chaudhry Arshad Jafar from Jhamra, Sardar Usman Nawaz Bajwa from PP 98, Rana Firat Anis numberedar from PP 98 will lead a huge procession and reach Chiniot. Divisional and District Media Coordinator of People's Party Muhammad Tahir Sheikh Kashmiri Leader and Divisional President Peoples Party Azad Jammu Kashmir Faisalabad Chaudhry Muhammad Khadim Hussain and office bearers of other party organizations will participate District Chiniot President Syed Ali Raza Zaidi, Tanveer from Jhang,

NEECA launches Green Hydrogen study to help boost Pakistan's energy sector

PPA

ISLAMABAD: National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) launched Prefeasibility Study on Pakistan Green Hydrogen Energy on 18th January 2024 at NEECA building. Dr. Sardar Mohazzam, Managing Director NEECA presented the background for conducting the green hydrogen energy study in Pakistan. Mr. Stephen B. Harrison, International Expert on Green Hydrogen and Dr. Nadeem Javed, Ex-chief economist presented key contours of the prefeasibility study. Senator Dr. Musadik Malik, Mr. Masroor Ahmed, Chairman OGRA, Mr. Yousuf Siddiqui, CEO Engro Energy Limited and Mr. Nadeem Javed Bajwa, MD ISGS also expressed their expert opinion in the matter. Representatives from public & private sector and Donor agencies also attended the launching ceremony. The current power mix of Pakistan



is primarily dominant with about 64% thermal mostly based on imported fossil fuels including RLNG, Coal and RFO. Due to our reliance on imported fuel and very high Energy prices at global level, it has become difficult for Pakistan to manage reliable & cost-effective energy supply. This dependency on fossil fuels also results in the higher GHG emissions. The cost-effective solution to this problem is to harness the maximum potential of indigenous Renewable Energy (RE) resources in

the country as Pakistan has abundant RE resources, including solar and wind power. Hydrogen due to its high energy content, environmental compatibility, storage & distribution, and its ability to address intermittency of RE sources, is an essential energy vector to ensure the reliable and cost-effective harnessing of the RE resources of Pakistan.

The study identified and analyzed thirteen (13) value chain cases for financial modelling to assess their economic viability under a range of

current and hypothetical future scenarios and determined three (03) most plausible value chains including (i). Hydrogen electrolysis from hydroelectricity on the existing Ghazi-Barotha dam and admixing of the hydrogen at a low concentration into the local natural gas grid; (ii). Using solar power from the Quaid e Azam solar park to produce hydrogen on an electrolyzer for admixing at a low concentration into the local natural gas grid for use on existing equipment heating, cooking and CNG applications to incrementally decarbonize the gas pipeline network and CNG mobility; and (iii). One MW Run of the river hydro power remote micro-grid with a portion of the power diverted for hydrogen production during 10 months of hydro power generation. The hydrogen would be stored and released to a fuel-cell for 2 winter months when the hydro plant would be winterized to avoid ice damage.

A book On Sindhi Translation of Allama Iqbal's Israr-E-Khudi launched



Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

HYDERABAD: A book of eminent scholar writer and linguist Syed Qalander Shah Lakiyari, titled "Nahe Ner Nihar"- Sindhi Translation of Allama Iqbal, s poetry book Israr -e -Khudi was launched at a fascinating ceremony at Mumtaz Mirza Auditorium Hyderabad on Sunday evening.

Speakers on the occasion of book launch paid glowing tributes to Syed Qalander Shah Lakiyari for his life long service in the field of literature and education.

They said that his dedication towards his students and his innovative work in the field of Sindhi and English literature put him among the ranks of prominent figures of the country.

Zainul Abdin Laghari a noted research scholar said that it was a revolutionary move of Prof Qalander Shah to translate Persian literature substantiated by National poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal into Sindhi. "Qalander Shah pioneered the message of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and mysticism.

His student and a noted writer himself professor Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti said that One always fell short of words while sharing views about personalities like Professor Qalander Shah.

He further mentioned that Qalander Shah was able to translate Iqbal into Sindhi because he has significant command over Persian language and he understood the true meaning of Iqbal, s poetry.

Highlighting the contributions of seasoned philosopher towards society Tufail Chandio said that he gave youth the message of relentless and sustained struggle.

Dr Ali Murtaza Darejo said that compiling English to Sindhi dictionary published by Oxford was one of his notable miracles in the filed of literature.

"Qalander was a responsible author"; he commented. Secretary Sindhi language Authority Dr Ahsan Danish urged his sons Dr Sardar Shah, Qutub Al Din and Qazim Shah to compile remaining work of the illustrious scholar to preserve his "scattered" legacy.

Canadian based Sindhi Scholar Dr Wali Muhammad Shah, Arshad Sommo and Dr Mumtaz collectively mentioned that Qalander Shah was more concerned about his students and future of Sindhi. Dr Niaz Ahmed an internationally recognized author and scholar said that; through this book Shah had translated the feelings of Iqbal.

He further mentioned that the author opted classical genre of Sindhi language to give befitting meaning to Iqbal's ideas. Towards the end Dr Sardar Shah and Qutubul Din Shah thanked audience. Rasool Bux Tamimi, Dr Khalil Khumbati professor Naik Muhammad Sheikh among others were in attendance at the event.



Kharian People's Party central leader and candidate for National Assembly Ch Qamar Zaman Kaira standing with former provincial minister Ch Tanveer Ashraf Kiara is talking to journalists outside his office .

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:44 am
Zohr	12:19 pm
Asr	3:49 pm
Maghrib	5:27 pm
Isha	6:54 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
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Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
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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

One killed, six injured in different incidents

By Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: One killed while six others were injured in different incidents in various parts of Attock district on Sunday, police and rescue sources said.

In the first incident, a man in 60s was crushed to death by unknown vehicle in the limits of Hazro Police station. Local rescue officials shifted the body to tehsil headquarters hospital. The body was not identified till filing this news report. Moreover, six people were injured in three different fog related traffic incidents in the various parts of the Attock. In the first incident two persons were injured due to traffic pile up on Kohat road near Rangli village in the limits of Jand Police station in the early hours of Sunday. Police sources said that a car rammed into a passenger van due to fog subsequently another passenger van and a loader rickshaw also rammed into vehicles resultantly two persons identified as Sartaj and Adnan were injured. In the second incident, a passenger van rammed in to a dumper coming from opposite direction due to zero visibility on Rawalpindi-Fatehjang road near

PANAH workshop

Experts warn of ill effects of ultra-processed foods

Spokesman Report

BHURBAN: High intake of ultra-processed foods are among the top contributors to obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, stroke, cancer, and other non-communicable diseases. Diet related risk factors are the major killers of Pakistanis. Government should take immediate policy measures and impose excise duty on ultra-processed foods to reduce their consumption. The revenue collected through these taxes should be partially earmarked to promote public health and subsidize fruits, vegetables and lentils. In response to the escalating health concern, health experts and civil society representatives said this during a media workshop organized by the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) at a local hotel in Murree.

"Heart diseases, stroke and diabetes are among the major killers of Pakistanis and recently there is a sharp surge of these diseases in the country. High consumption of sugar, sodium, saturated fats and trans-fats are among the major diet related risk factors of these diseases" said by Munawar



Hussain, Country Coordinator at Global Health Advocacy Incubator. "It is the government's obligation to enact mandatory policies which save lives. Imposing federal excise duty on ultra-processed foods especially the sweet drinks is an evidence based policy to cut down the chronic diseases" he added.

Ultra-processed foods are the category of food products that undergo multiple stages of processing, often involving the use of industrial methods and the addition of various ingredients to enhance taste such as sugar, salt, fats, preservatives,

sweeteners, colorings, emulsifiers, and flavorings. The examples include sugary drinks including those with non-sugar sweeteners, dairy desserts, biscuits, chocolates, sweet and salty snacks, potato chips, candies, pastas, noodles, and baked foods etc.

Ms. Afshan Tehseen Bajwa the former Chairperson of Nation Commission on the Rights of Child, and Vice President PANAH said "unfortunately the Ultra-processed Foods are cheap, and healthy diet like fruits and vegetables are costly, which have shifted the consumption trends in the



favor of Ultra-processed Foods. Taxing ultra-processed foods will increase their price, reduce its consumption and ultimately the chronic disease. Further, earmarking the collected revenue to subsidize fruits, vegetables and lentils will make them affordable to increase its consumption by low income groups". She added "this would be a smart policy by the Government which may give several benefits without having any cost".

"Ministry of Health is in full support of taking all policy measures to reduce consumption of

Ultra-processed foods" said by Dr. Khawaja Masood Ahmed, National Coordinator Nutrition and NFA at Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. "Taxes on sugary drinks are inadequate and need to be increased through an immediate window to change the policy. In addition, ultra-processed products high in sugar, salt and fats need to be taxed" he added.

Sanaullah Ghumman said that for decades, PANAH has been giving awareness to its countrymen to consume healthy foods for public health. Along with aware-

ness raising, PANAH is working to advocate policies to reduce the consumption of unhealthy food items that cause heart diseases, diabetes and many other fatal diseases. Media is our strong support that helps convey our messages to policy makers and decision makers. He urged the media to help in passing the evidence based policies which are in the best interest of the public. He urged the government to increase excise tax on sugary drinks and include ultra-processed foods in the excise duty list through Finance Bill 2024-25 or early, if possible.

Election preparation

ISLAMABAD: A man walks past banner of a political party Jamaat-e-Islami candidate on a bridge in the Federal Capital, ahead of the country's general elections 2024.



Photo: Online

Malik Abrar seeks protection of private schools and colleges

PPA

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association central president Malik Abrar Hussain said that in Pakistan, more than 60 percent of children are studying in private educational institutions, where by getting better and quality education, they not only earn decent jobs but also make the name of the country and nation shine. The private sector is playing its best role in improving the literacy rate in Pakistan.

The meeting of the executive body of Rawalpindi and Islamabad of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges



Association was held yesterday in a local hotel in Islamabad. The meeting was presided over by Malik Abrar Hussain, Central President of All Paki-

stan Private Schools and Colleges Association. On this occasion, Central President of All Pakistan Private Schools Federation Kashif Mir Zane

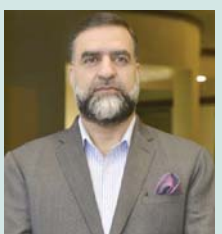
attended the meeting as a special guest. The executive members of the association from the twin cities participated in the meeting held here yesterday and the problems faced by the private education sector, their solutions and government responsibility were discussed.

On the occasion of the executive body meeting, they both leaders in their respective addresses demanded the protection of private educational institutions and said that the services of the private education sector in Pakistan are worthy of praise, which is the primary responsibility of the government of the time.

Altaf Bhat calls for international inquiry into HR violations in IIOJ&K

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Altaf Ahmed Bhat, Chairman of the Jammu & Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM), has issued a fervent call for an international investigation into human rights violations, war crimes, arbitrary killings, and forced disappearances committed by Indian occupation forces in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) region.



He further emphasized that despite 34 years having passed since the Gaw Kadal Massacre, the victims are still awaiting justice. Chairman Bhat underscored the urgent need for international attention to the grave human rights violations in the region since 1989.

According to Chairman JKSM, the figures of human rights violations from January 1989 till December 30, 2023, are staggering. During this period, there have been a total of 96,285 killings, 7,325 custodial killings, 169,038 civilians arrested, 110,509 structures arsoned or destroyed, 22,972 women widowed, 107,950 children orphaned, and 11,263 women subjected to gang rape or molestation.

In the period since August 5, 2019, when India abrogated the special status of Jammu & Kashmir, the figures are as follows: 842 total killings, 2,396 tortured or critically injured, 22,099 structures arsoned or destroyed, 64 women widowed, 175 children orphaned, and 133 women subjected to gang rape or molestation.

"It's an eye-opener for the developed world to witness how India is crushing dissent, humanity, and breaking all international and humanitarian norms in IIOJ&K. Kashmir is not just a territorial dispute; it's a matter of humanity," asserted Chairman Bhat. As the call for justice and freedom resonates, Chairman Bhat concluded, "Kashmiris will not rest until they win freedom from the Indian yoke. Massacres will not deter the Kashmiris from pursuing the noble cause of freedom."

DPO announces arrest of 6, seizure of liquor, hashish in Attock

Hussain Raza

ATTOCK: District Police Officer Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan's operations against anti-social elements are ongoing, 6 arrested, separate cases have been registered, 74 liters of liquor, nearly 3 kg of hashish and weapons, illegal pistols and 30 bore ammunition have been recovered. According to Attock police station, police recovered 60 liters of liquor from liquor seller Azmat Khan son of Mir Dad Sukna Dhok Fateh, police station City Hasan Abdal police recovered 10 liters of liquor from Faizan son of Fakhri Zaman Sukna Hassan Abdal during checking. Bahtar police station seized 4 liters of liquor from Toqeer Hussain son of Shabir Hussain Sukna Bahtar. The bicycle was stopped as suspicious and was being driven by Muhammad Allah son of Abdul Hameed Sukna Mardan. After searching him, 2400 grams of hashish was recovered. The Police of Pandigheb police station arrested Niaz Ali son of Fateh Muhammad Sukna Pandigheb along with drugs. Police team of Sadar Hasan Abdal police station recovered 30 bore pistol with ammunition from Abdul Basit, son of Wazirzada resident of Mardan, while taking action against illegal weapons, filed separate cases against the accused and decorated them with iron ornaments. On the occasion, the DPO said that the anti-social elements are the scourge of the society against whom the Attock police will continue their operations to cleanse the land of Attock from such elements. #

Faisal Khan appeals to recover missing brother

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Bakhtiarmin and Faisal Khan, residents of Dheri Kattikhel Hakimabad area of Nowshera district, have appealed to the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Army Chief and President of Pakistan to recover their brother Abid Ali Khan, who has been missing for seven months. Yes, our brother is not wanted in any court or case of Pakistan and is not involved in any kind of anti-national activities nor has any connection with any terrorist or extremist organizations, if our brother is involved in any illegal activities. So he should be produced in the court, since this incident the whole family is going through severe mental agony and the father has lost his mental balance. If possible, they

will go to any extent to recover their brother, Bakhtiarmin and Faisal Khan expressed these thoughts while holding a press conference at the National Press Club Islamabad along with their father Hameed Ali Khan and other family members. That your brother Abid Ali Khan, who is associated with the business of housing and building construction and real estate in Nowshera Hakimabad and is considered one of the respected people of the area, to my brother Abid Ali Khan dated 24th June 2023 at 11 pm from Hakimabad District Nowshera. In the presence of witnesses and CCTV, the police in uniform and some plainclothes officers detained him, but till now neither my brother has been arrested in any case nor has he been produced in any court, my brother is from Pakistan.

PIDE will unveil its reform manifesto today

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a momentous stride towards national transformation, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) is set to unveil its groundbreaking "PIDE Reform Manifesto: Transforming Economy & Society" on Monday, January 22nd, 2024 (Today), at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. Following extensive consultations with key stakeholders in Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Gwadar, and Peshawar, this comprehensive manifesto aims to chart a visionary course for Pakistan's economic and societal evolution.

According to the Press Release issued from the PIDE the event promises to be a gathering of influential voices, bringing together policymakers, practitioners, professionals,

the business community, private-sector investors, academics, analysts, researchers, policy experts, and youth representatives.

These diverse perspectives will converge in sessions spanning various themes, providing a platform for in-depth discussions and deliberations on future economic and public policy priorities. The sessions will also explore practical steps to navigate challenges and set the trajectory for sustainable development.

This unveiling marks a pivotal moment in Pakistan's journey, where collective wisdom and innovative thinking converge to shape a roadmap for a brighter future. Stay tuned for live updates, insights, and impactful discussions as PIDE takes center stage in redefining the narrative of economic and societal reform.

Wana transport Union announces support for independent

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: South Waziristan Lower, a delegation of Wana Transport Union met Taj Muhammad Wazir, an independent candidate from constituency PK-110, at the election office here on Sunday. Delegation representative announced his full support for the independent candidate. The transport union said that this time the transport union will support Taj Muhammad Wazir in the election, the delegation made it clear that the transport union had faced problems wherever it was so, Taj Muhammad Wazir has played the role of the first line without caring for his life. They said that Taj Muhammad Wazir has raised his voice for the nation at every opportunity and has not hesitated to make any sacrifice. They said, the transport union not only expressed full confidence in Taj Muhammad Wazir rather, they assured that all possible cooperation will be provided in the election.



The delegation of transport Union said that Taj Muhammad Wazir has played a role in solving all our problems and always stood with the nation. They said that he never disappointed us, this is what we demand from our entire nation that they fully support Taj Muhammad Wazir.

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 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11. Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Pak-China meet on Future of CPEC - I

Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong of China is in Islamabad to attend the 4th meeting of the CPEC-Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination marks a significant milestone in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative. Co-chaired by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, this meeting is set to evaluate significant strides in key development areas: rural revitalization, industrialization, green development, and science and technology. As both phases of the project - CPEC 1 and the ongoing CPEC 2 - enter critical stages of development, the meeting's agenda is crucial in evaluating progress, strategizing future actions, and reinforcing the corridor's role in regional connectivity and economic growth.

Iran and Afghanistan are poised to benefit from enhanced trade links and access, with Iran's potential integration into CPEC serving as a gateway to Central Asia. Whereas, Middle Eastern countries view CPEC as a lucrative investment opportunity, aiming to link their own economic ventures with Pakistan's strategic location, thus deepening economic ties and expanding their influence in Asia.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

It will take stock of the existing status of CPEC-1 & 2 given the dynamic global economic and geopolitical landscape, reviewing progress, adapt strategies to ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial development for both China and Pakistan and adjust and fine-tune the future course of action.

In the realm of rural revitalization and seeking international cooperation and investment to modernize agriculture, enhancing water management, and uplifting rural infrastructure. These initiatives, targeted over several years, aim to uplift rural economies, bridge rural-urban divides, and ensure sustainable agricultural growth, ultimately leading to enhanced food security and improved livelihoods in rural areas.

The meeting will set a future course of action for industrialization by fast-tracking establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs), designed to spur manufacturing

growth and attract foreign investments. With infrastructure development at its core, these SEZs are expected to drive job creation, boost exports, and diversify Pakistan's economic base in the coming decade.

Parallely, green development will be fast-tracked with investments in renewable energy projects, eco-friendly urban planning, and sustainable transportation. These projects, spanning multiple years, are crucial for reducing environmental impacts and achieving long-term energy sustainability.

The meeting will also channelize the collaborative efforts in cutting-edge fields such as IT, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. Establishing research centers and technology parks, these initiatives are poised to catapult both nations into a future of technological innovation and a skilled workforce.

Central to the discussions will be the integration of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in CPEC-2 aimed at fast-tracking international cooperation and attracting global investment to broaden the scope and impact of CPEC by offering potential financial solutions and attracting further investment into these projects.

The meeting is likely to focus on garnering significant interest from a range of regional and international players for CPEC-1 & 2. Nations such as Iran, Afghanistan, and Middle Eastern powerhouses including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, along with European countries, are eyeing the corridor for its vast potential in reshaping regional trade and

market accesses, particularly for land-locked regions. European countries, while cautious due to geopolitical sensitivities, recognize the corridor's potential as a new trade route, providing a more direct access to Asian markets. This could usher in a new era of economic cooperation, transcending traditional geopolitical boundaries and if managed effectively, CPEC could become a cornerstone of a new economic order in Eurasia, fostering unprecedented levels of cooperation, development, and regional integration.

The meeting is likely to value the promising opportunity Pakistan offers to transform its vast tracts of virgin, cultivable land into a hub of agricultural productivity, appealing especially to water-scarce but energy-rich Middle Eastern countries seeking to lessen their dependence on food imports.

Encompassing approximately 40%

of its total land area, or about 79 million acres, Pakistan's regions like Balochistan, Sindh, NWFP, and Southern Punjab, with their fertile alluvial soils and ample water resources, are ideal for conversion into large-scale, mechanized farming.

By establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and encouraging public-private partnerships, Pakistan can offer attractive incentives for investment, such as tax breaks and infrastructure support. This not only paves the way for a more secure food supply for investing countries but also promises significant benefits for Pakistan, including technology transfer, job creation, and enhanced agricultural output.

The initiative, encompassing agricultural research and development with a focus on arid agriculture and water-efficient technologies, has the potential to foster innovations that could benefit both regions and beyond. This strategic development in agriculture under CPEC-2 could serve as a paradigm of South-South cooperation, bolstering Pakistan's ties with the Middle East and setting the stage for mutual economic growth and regional stability.

The prospective meeting is set to delve into the untapped \$50 trillion worth of Pakistan's mineral wealth, particularly in regions like Balochistan, NWFP, Gilgit Baltistan, and Southern Punjab. These areas are rich in a wide array of resources, including copper, iron ore, chromite, rock salt, gypsum, limestone, marble, coal, gold, and rare earth metals, alongside an abundance of precious and semi-precious stones. The focus is not just on bolstering the economy but also on diversifying Pakistan's resource base, leveraging these vast reserves of both metallic and non-metallic minerals.

To be continued

BRI opens new page in development of China

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, has opened a new page in the development of China and the world. "In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed to jointly build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Since then, the Belt and Road Initiative has opened a new page in the development of China and the world," highlighted Sun Chao in her book titled "Ambassadors' views on Chinese Modernization."

"Rooted in history, the Belt and Road Initiative points to the future; Proposed by China, the Belt and Road Initiative belongs to the whole world. Our ancestors used to traverse desert miles by miles and transcend hills by hills, leaving their footprints on the new regions," she added. Sun Chao interviewed hundreds of global leaders and ambassadors to learn the vigor and vitality of the new Silk Road. Sitting face to face, she listened closely to their diversified stories and different voices. She opined that by listening the interviews, the global leaders could make the rest of the world understand China better and "we can share China's narratives well, and make positive contributions to building a community with a shared future for mankind." In a world full of uncertainty, we promote sustainable development while facing global challenges. China is a country that provides opportunities and hopes to all the people across the world. To address global issues, Chinese Modernization offers Chinese wisdom, Chinese approaches, and China's power. Moin ul Haque, former Ambassador of Pakistan to China, talking to Sun Chao for her book "Ambassadors' views on Chinese Modernization," lauded that the Belt and Road Initiative is a remarkable miracle and a huge success that China lifted over 800 million people out of poverty, which is an extraordinary achievement that Pakistan should pursue.

José Augusto Duarte, the Ambassador of Portuguese to China, once put it that China's development and prosperity are beneficial not only to the Chinese people but also to the world. Tarja Halonen, the first female president of Finland praised China has played a constructive role in globalization and a leading role in addressing global challenges. Siddharth Chatterjee, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in China said that China has made a remarkable contribution to global governance and demonstrated exemplary leadership in the past decades. Jin Liqun, President of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) mentioned that the goal of China's initiating the establishment of AIIB is to explore the most inclusive and sustainable development path in a world full of uncertainty.



Steady Environment: Peace Education as the Bedrock of Pakistan's Economic Future - I

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

In a world plagued by conflict and instability, ensuring a steady environment for development is essential to a country's economic growth. Pakistan, a nation with a rich cultural heritage and immense potential, has caught in the clutches of violence. The environment of aggression has hindered progress and impeded the country's path towards economic prosperity. To secure a brighter future, it is imperative to prioritize peace education as the bedrock of Pakistan's economic growth.

Peace education aims to cultivate a culture of non-violence, empathy, and respect among individuals, ultimately creating a society that is tolerant. Peace education focuses on teaching individuals the skills, values, and attitudes necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully, promote social justice, and maintain peace. Central to peace education is the idea that violence is not the answer to conflicts and disagreements. Instead, it emphasizes the need to find peaceful solutions that promote understanding and cooperation. By incorporating peace education into the national curriculum, Pakistan can lay the foundation for a steady environment that is conducive to economic progress.

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic society, where different groups often find themselves at

odds with one another. This lack of understanding breeds mistrust, fuelling conflict and hindering economic growth. The value of respecting diversity and appreciating in different perspectives, peace education can bridge these divides and promote inclusivity. People will be more accepting of one another, leading to stronger social cohesion and a stable environment that encourages economic engagement. These skills are not only crucial for the prevention of conflicts at the societal level but also find practical application in business and international relations. A society that is skilled in resolving conflicts peacefully is more likely to attract investment, engage in productive dialogue, and build strong partnerships with other countries. Consequently, this creates a favourable economic climate allowing businesses to flourish and promoting Pakistan's economic growth.

In today's globalized world, where economies are interconnected peace and stability play a crucial role in attracting investment and fostering economic development of Pakistan. To begin with, a society that prioritizes peaceful conflict resolution establishes a stable environment, which is essential for businesses to thrive. Investors seek stability as it reduces risks and uncertainties associated with conflicts. When a society demonstrates its ability to resolve conflicts it signals a favourable investment to attract both foreign and domestic investors, leading to increased capital flows into the country.

A society that resolves conflicts peace-

fully is more likely to engage in productive dialogue with both internal and external stakeholders. Productive dialogue fosters cooperation, trust, and understanding among different groups within the society. Societies that ensure equality and justice foster an environment of trust. By promoting gender equality, eliminating discrimination, and safeguarding human rights, a nation encourages the full participation of all its citizens in economic activities. This inclusiveness fosters innovation enhances productivity, and taps into the potential of previously marginalized groups that leads to better economic outcomes for all. When conflicts are resolved through dialogue, it allows for the sharing of perspectives and the finding of common ground. This open exchange of ideas enhances innovation, encourages creativity, and leads to the development of practical solutions to societal challenges. As a result, businesses can operate in an atmosphere conducive to growth and progress further bolstering Pakistan's economic prospects.

It nurtures a sense of responsibility towards others and encourages individuals to contribute to the welfare of society. By fostering a caring and compassionate populace, peace education struggles social inequality and promotes equal opportunities for all. This is vital for economic development as a society that ensures the well-being of its citizens invests in their education, and protects their rights is more likely to have a prosperous economy.

To be continued

Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar: What made Pakistan react quickly?

The Baloch-populated provinces of Pakistan and Iran, have long suffered from unrest and insurgency.

In the past, Iran has been accusing Pakistan that the hideouts of groups involved in extremist activities in Iran are located in the border areas of Pakistan. On the other hand, during the past few years, the activities of militants in three districts of Balochistan's Makran Division have been accused by the Pakistani authorities that the hideouts of the armed banned Baloch separatist organizations involved in these operations are located in Iran.

In the past, the two countries have relied on actions such as accusing each other and summoning each other's diplomatic staff after acts of sabotage in their respective countries, but this is the first time that the security forces of the two countries have attacked each other. Attacks have been carried out in regional limits.

On Tuesday night, Iran attacked the alleged hideouts of Jaish-ul-Adl in Panjgur, while within 36 hours, Pakistan carried out operations in Iran's Sistan and Balochistan province. And on this occasion, the friendly relation between the two countries suddenly deteriorated. Not only did Pakistan recall its ambassador from Tehran yesterday, but after that, the Pakistan Air Force carried out an air strike on the Iranian bordering area and also carried out a drone attack. Pakistan used it and other forces also took part in it, killing seven people, while the Iranian government says that they are terrorists and we have nothing to do with them.

While Pakistan's province of Baluchistan is affected by the activities of militants, on the other hand, in Sistan and Baluchistan in Iran, there have also been activities of extremism.

About 20 years ago, an organization called Jandalah claimed responsibility for acts of extremism in Iran.

The organizations operating in the Baloch populat-

ed areas of Iran are of religious extremism, while the organizations operating in Pakistan's Balochistan are the pioneers of secularism and Baloch nationalism.

Now, if we go into the background, the US which was present in Afghanistan from around 2001 to 2021, NATO forces of 47 countries were also present, but their goal was to control Pakistan from Afghanistan as well as Iran. Keeping a close eye on the activities of Russia and China and the reason for Pakistan's air strike was also that as soon as Pakistan carried out its air strike, the official statement of the US came out in which the US condemned the attack of Iran, and said that we are with Pakistan, America actually wants to play a game by placing a gun on Pakistan's shoulder so that the reputation of America is not damaged.

And the US is making every possible effort to somehow make the situation in the region worse so that the US can once again get a chance to come to Pakistan, and in Pakistan it means what the US could not do while sitting in Afghanistan because there was resistance from Mujahideen al-Qa-eda and Taliban and other militant forces too, but Pakistan is a hot cake for America and there will be no resistance from here.

The US would like Pakistan to hand over its airspace to them because Imran Khan had clearly said that Pakistan will not allow its land to be used by the US in any way, nor will it be used in the interests of the US, after which the US brought down Imran Khan's government under a conspiracy. The aim of America is to sit in Pakistan and control Iran on one side and Russia on the other side Afghanistan and China so that India which is a super ally of America and America in this region.

And whatever the US will do in this region, the biggest loss will be to Pakistan, while the benefit will only be to India, it will be to Pakistan's border area and forces, and to the people of Pakistan. It will be not only for Pakistan, but also Iran, Russia and Afghanistan as well.



Analysis

Kiran Asim

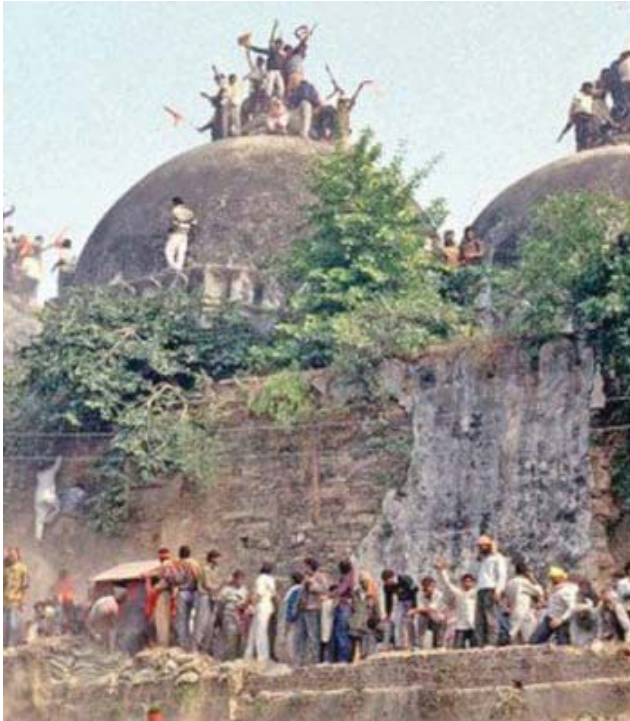
India's Ram temple symbolizes Hindu supremacy over Muslims: US media

Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: The controversial Monday's inauguration of Ram Temple atop the ruins of Babri mosque marks the culmination of a promise made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and allies, and serves as the "biggest political testament yet to Hindu supremacy over Indian Muslims," according to TIME magazine. Hindu militants stormed the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992, climbing atop the building's dome as they demolished it to clear the site for a Hindu temple.

The temple site was bitterly contested for decades with both Muslims and Hindus laying claim to it and was a flashpoint for nationwide riots that killed more than 2,000 people, mostly Muslims. A subsequent report commissioned by the Indian government found dozens of people—many of whom are now BJP political leaders—responsible for orchestrating and encouraging the attacks. The BJP benefited from stirring up Hindu nationalism around the Babri Masjid, and in 2014 swept into power, displacing the more pluralistic Indian Congress Party, Time correspondent Audrey Truschke wrote in a dispatch from New Delhi. The BJP then began to remake secular India into a Hindu supremacist state, the dispatch said. Following a second BJP national victory in 2019, India's Supreme Court, whose autonomy has been undercut by the Modi government—issued its final judgment that decided the fate of the Babri Masjid site, it said.

The court called the mosque's destruction "an egregious viola-



tion of the rule of law," but nonetheless ruled that a Hindu temple could be built on the mosque's rubble. Modi laid the

foundation stone at a groundbreaking ceremony in August 2020, and will finish what the BJP and other Hindu suprem-

acists began more than 30 years ago by consecrating the Ram temple surrounded by his Hindu nationalist peers. Still,

the event will be marked by conspicuous absences, TIME said. Leaders of the opposition Congress party will skip the festivities, in protest over what they rightly see as a consecration that is more a political ploy than a religious ceremony. Even some Hindu leaders agree, arguing that the Ram temple cannot be consecrated since it remains incomplete, and therefore violates Hindu scriptures. They also object to the participation of divisive political figures like Modi. Yet the Indian Prime Minister is pressing ahead with inaugurating an incomplete temple, even at the price of alienating Hindu religious leaders, because of India's May 2024 general election in which the BJP hopes to secure

another national victory, TIME said. "If history is any guide, this tactic of harnessing majoritarian sentiment for political gain may well succeed".

The Ram temple's inauguration portends dark times ahead not just for India's Muslims but also some Hindus who remain committed to pluralism and tolerance, the dispatch said. Hindu supremacists have long sought to reduce the broad-based Hindu religious tradition to their hateful political ideology, and the Ram temple is a "sizeable step toward that goal". Muslims are second-class citizens in Modi's India, regularly subjected to human rights violations, the dispatch highlighted. Freedom House now classifies India, once heralded as the world's largest democracy, only "partly free" on account of the "rise in persecution affecting the Muslim population." And there are signs that the Ayodhya temple may only mark a new era of the Hindu supremacist war on mosques, the dispatch said. There are numerous cases in Indian courts seeking to demolish more of them in favour of building Hindu temples in Varanasi, Mathura, and other cities. "Such demolitions may unleash more violence on India's beleaguered Muslim minority, and further cement the feeling that the country is for Hindus, and Hindus alone," TIME said.

Meanwhile, CNN reported that Ayodhya's 500,000 Muslims are in a state of "grief and anxiety" as the inauguration nears. The leading TV network quoted 65-year-old Maulana Badshah Khan as saying that he fears a repeat of the religious violence that erupted more than 30 years ago, when Hindu

nationalists destroyed the 16th century mosque. Badshah Khan said he believes the event is a clear sign of how Muslims are becoming marginalized under the leadership of Modi's BJP. "The wounds of Babri Mosque's demolition will always be there. Even if we feel despondent about voicing them," he said. "The temple holds the symbolic value of showing the Muslims their place in New India," Badshah Khan added. Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center, a Washington-based think-tank, wrote in Foreign Policy, a prestigious magazine, wrote, "The event also fulfills another of Modi's signature promises, all tied in some way to Hindu nationalism. "The first such pledge he fulfilled was the 2019 revocation of Indian-administered Kashmir's special autonomous status, giving New Delhi more control over the Muslim-majority region. The second, in 2020, amended a citizenship law to allow refugees who fled to India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, or Pakistan for religious persecution to qualify for Indian citizenship, but excluded Muslim refugees." Kugelman pointed out that Modi has cleverly framed Ram temple with messaging around social welfare and development, Kugelman said. In recent days, he has also inaugurated several infrastructure projects in Ayodhya and linked Rama's life story to uplifting the poor. "This enables him to amplify two of his major campaign themes and perhaps also to present a softer Hindu nationalism to those outside his core base who may be tougher to win over."

Kyrgyzstan is Gateway for Pakistani Businessmen to Eurasian Economic Union: Ambassador Ulanbek Totuiaev

Spokesman Report

Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic H. E. Ulanbek Totuiaev has said that Kyrgyz Republic is gateway for Pakistani business community to reach and benefit from Eurasian Economic Union, with a population of 180 Million. There is an excellent opportunity for rapid growth of interaction between the two countries in trade-economic, investment and cultural spheres. Ambassador said this in his keynote address at a forum "Pakistan Kyrgyzstan Relations—Present Status and Way Forward" hosted by Mr. Tazeen Akhtar of International Journal "Pakistan in the World".

Dean of Diplomatic Corp, Ambassador Turkmenistan H. E. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador Azerbaijan H. E. Khazar Farhadov, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Mr. Saqib Rafiq, Former Chairperson National Commission of Rights of Child Afshan Tehseen Bajwa, Chairperson COPAIR, Aamna Awan, Naveed Ahmad Khan, Rubab Tabassum were also present.

Rector of Salymbekov University of Bishkek Mr. Esengaldi Zhumadilov and Vice President of the University also attended the forum. Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, Executive Director Inter-board Coordination Commission IBCC, Mr. Ateeq Virk Director Virtual University Islamabad and Mr. Tayyab Chatha, Education Expert talked on the opportunities in education sector.

Mr. Saqib Rafiq briefed the participants about business conducive environment in Pakistan in general and in Punjab in particular. He said we have set up business facilitation center in Rawalpindi only to help business community and start ups for easy business doing. He offered complete support to Kyrgyz businessmen for joint ventures and investment opportunities. Kyrgyzstan is actively developing country with liberal laws, where the new initiatives are every day being implemented for the growth of the nation and fruitful cooperation with foreign partners.

Ambassador Totuiaev shed light on the topic as well as the perspectives of Kyrgyz-Pakistani cooperation in various spheres. He said, "Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan are linked by warm bonds of friendship and cooperation, which are based on close historical, cultur-



al and religious ties. Pakistani companies might be interested in opening ventures and investing into various projects on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, which will provide them an excellent opportunity for growth of capital and obtaining access to the market of Eurasian Economic Union."

Ambassador shared, "Pakistani companies might be interested in opening ventures and investing into various projects in Kyrgyz Republic, which will provide them an excellent opportunity for growth of capital and obtain-

ing access to 180 Million people market of Eurasian Economic Union.

"Especially fruitful can be investment to the projects in hydro power plants, as well as projects in developing renewable energy sources, taking into consideration rich water resources of Kyrgyz Republic and its membership to CASA-1000 project, which is aimed to bring surplus electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan hydro power stations in summer times to Pakistan through the territory of Afghanistan."

Mr. Totuiaev added, "Kyrgyz

and Pakistani entrepreneurs can definitely have mutually beneficial cooperation in textile, pharmaceutical, construction, mining, agriculture, food industry, tourism and many other spheres, increasing bilateral trade volumes and opening joint ventures."

One of the major obstacles for the development of trade-economic connection as well as the cooperation between countries of the region, is the difficulties with logistic roots. The projects of construction of railway connection between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and China, between Uzbekistan

and Pakistan through Afghanistan can be helpful in this regard.

Ambassador suggested Pakistani businessmen to more actively use the potential of the Quadrilateral Transit Transport Agreement between Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which provides a shortest road link through Kyrgyzstan to Central Asian states and further to Russia and Europe. At the same time, Pakistan can play a vital role as a gateway for Central Asian states providing the shortest way to the open sea.

Kyrgyzstan, last year has

opened trade house in Lahore and also working on opening electronic trade platforms. Ambassador is hopeful that similar trade houses will be opened in other large cities of Pakistan, such as Karachi. Several Pakistani businessmen are already successfully working in Kyrgyzstan, making investments in such spheres as air companies, education, construction, textile and production of construction materials.

Ambassador stressed that today the world is passing through difficult times, taking into consideration, for example, conflict between

Russia and Ukraine. Due to this, we can assume, that there may be significant geopolitical changes with the division of the world into two parts.

In this regards, I consider it important for the countries of the region to unite and more actively cooperate in political, economic and cultural dimensions in order to create stable and prosperous regional interconnections. Therefore, I call Pakistani businessmen and investors to actively cooperate with Kyrgyzstan. Ambassador invited the Pakistani business circles to more actively interact with Kyrgyz businessman because such cooperation can be beneficial for both sides.

Today the government of Kyrgyzstan is actively working on the development of economic sphere and promotion of the investment climate of the country, especially, in terms of attracting investments of foreign countries and countries from abroad for active and fruitful cooperation with Kyrgyzstan.

In order to perform these goals, the National agency for investments under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic started working in the country, which is intended to have cooperation with all foreign investors in order to successfully implement perspective projects in different spheres on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.

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

Increase in power, gas tariffs proved fruitless: Shahid Rasheed Butt

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the policy of continued increases in the tariffs of electricity and gas and endless price hikes in the price of fuel has proved to be unproductive.

The experience failed to reduce circular debt and help resolve other problems but compromised the quality of life of most people, he said. Because of uncontrolled inflation, most people are struggling to bring food to the table while ignoring important matters like health and education, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that it has become difficult for the majority to fulfil the need for food as inflation continues to increase, breaking all



previous records. He warned that if the situation remains the same, there will be no middle class in the country. The business leader said that month-

ly income has become insufficient for many people who are looking for other sources of income to deal with inflation, but only some are fortunate enough.

He said that people all over the country have long been annoyed by paying for the mismanagement, incompetence, and corruption in the electricity, gas, and oil sectors.

Electricity, gas, and oil are constantly being stolen across the country, but effective action has never been initiated against the thieves, which causes the institutions and the masses to suffer, he observed.

The government allows institutions to raise the price to deal with the problem of theft and losses, which increases the pressure on the people and the business community, he observed.

He said that not only is electricity and gas being stolen across the country but also smug-

gled oil is openly available everywhere, and there is no one to stop this illegal trade, which is causing a huge loss to the economy.

He observed that the crisis of inflated electricity bills has led to protests nationwide as people are struggling to pay astronomical bills.

One of the major reasons behind the disturbance is electricity theft because of corrupt elements in the various departments involved in the power distribution system.

According to Power Division data, electricity theft has caused the national exchequer to lose Rs 500 billion, he informed.

Several methods have been introduced to overcome power theft, but all have failed because of a lack of practicability and implementation.

Mr Butt said that in such a grim situation, expecting foreign investors to prefer Pakistan for investment is a pipedream.

Traditional oil machine

KARACHI: A vendor is busy making mustard oil with traditional machine at his roadside workplace in the Provincial Capital.



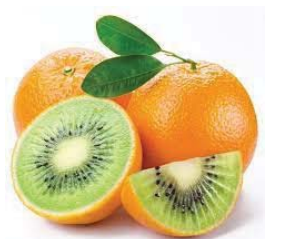
Photo: Online

'Genetically Modified Organisms' face varied regulations across nations

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of Ministry for National Food Security & Research has said that Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) refer to organisms whose genetic material has been altered in ways not occurring naturally, these modifications serve various purposes, including enhancing crop resilience to pests or diseases, boosting nutritional content, and improving tolerance to environmental conditions.

The Spokesperson said that different countries exhibit varying regulations and attitudes towards GMOs, with strict import and cultivation regulations, divergent public perceptions, and complex trade dynamics due to differing standards across nations. He said that Pakistan adopted UN sponsored Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) which came into force in January 2000, Pakistan signed CPB in 2005 and ratified in 2009, the CPB allows production, import/export, transportation and



release of modern Biotech products albeit under a set protocol.

Pakistan, a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol for which Ministry of Climate Change is the focal point, however, its national implementation involves multiple ministries, including Climate Change, National Food Security & Research, and National Health Services Regulations & Coordination in GMO oversight, the spokesperson added. He said contrary to perceptions, commercial cultivation of GMO cotton has been permitted in Pakistan since 2008, demonstrating its presence in the food chain with a commendable safety record, no adverse reports linked to GMOs in Pakistan have surfaced, emphasizing their history of safe use.

Country's economic conditions require long-term policies, national harmony: Ahsan Bakhtawari

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the current economic conditions of Pakistan require unity, long-term policies and national harmony on the economic front. The business community of Pakistan supports government policies. There will be elections in the country next month, we hope that the newly elected government will not only continue with the current policies but will also include highly important measures including privatization in its priorities.

He expressed these views while addressing a dinner hosted by businessmen Nawaz Basra and Syed Sadat Hussain Shah the previous day. The dinner was given in honor of the extension of the term of President Islamabad Chamber by one year and United Business Group Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari on victory of the FPCCI elections. Prominent personalities of Islamabad business community attended the dinner.

In his address, the President ICI said that with the concerted efforts of the government and institutions, Pakistan is coming out of the economic crisis. The formation of the National Investment Council and other measures have given confidence to the business community, which is reflected in the stabilization of the rupee value, the stock market and other economic indicators. The IMF program was used very well



by the previous government and the current caretaker government.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that UBG has always followed a positive and constructive policy. We achieved the target of victory in the Federation elections under the leadership of SM Tanvir with the same thinking. He said that for the development and prosperity of Pakistan, the Federation will work closely with the government and policy making institutions.

Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik said that Islamabad Chamber has achieved historic successes under the leadership of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for the

past one year. The basic focus of the current body of the Chamber is service.

Addressing the dinner, Nawaz Basra said that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the President Islamabad Chamber on the extension of his term and to Zafar Bakhtawari on winning the Federation elections.

Sadat Shah said that the achievements of the office bearers of the organizations should be appreciated. There is no doubt that Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has changed the environment of Islamabad Chamber as President.

Usman Basra, Ajmal Baloch, Yusuf Rajput, Azhar Iqbal, Zahid Rafique, Rana Qaisar Shahzad, Maqbool Hussain, Shafiq Safati, Khalid Chaudhry, Babar Chaudhry, Tahir Abbasi and others attended the dinner.

Foreign investors should not be forced to leave country

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Economy Watch, Dr. Murtaza Mughal, said on Sunday that driving away foreign investors from the country should be stopped as it is hurting the masses and investment climate.

Over two dozen pharmaceutical companies have left Pakistan over the last few years. With the closure of the remaining companies, many medicines, including life-saving medicines, will become scarce, he said.

Scarcity of medicine always leads to smuggling, and patients end up paying double or triple the price for drugs in the black market, he added.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said in a statement issued here today that it is an

open fact that the product quality of the local pharma industry is not what it should be. Their exports are also limited to a few African countries, while they are kept from entering the European and American markets.

Therefore, foreign companies selling quality products in the local market should not be discouraged so that the people can be saved from trouble and they can get quality medicines.

He said that local companies should be given a deadline to improve their quality, and foreign companies should be allowed to do business in Pakistan until the quality of locally manufactured medicine is improved.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that Pakistan is the third-most diabetic country



in the world, with almost 26% of adult patients having the condition. However, one American insulin manufacturer is so irritated with Pakistan that it

is closing its operations.

He warned that a public health crisis is already in the making, while the departure of the US-based multinational company may result in a catastrophic crisis.

In such a situation, the authorities have remained unconcerned, which is surprising, he said, adding that the unbridled bureaucracy has forced twenty-six multinational companies to leave the country in a few years, which merits an investigation.

If the remaining four multinational companies leave Pakistan the masses will be at the mercy of those local producers who will happily exploit the consumers.

With increasing drug shortages putting more and more lives at risk,

the government's ostrich-like response to drug pricing is puzzling.

He said that this blind spot has existed through successive governments but has now reached catastrophic heights, and the implications of this approach are terrifying.

The absence of a steady availability of medicines at rational prices forces patients to not only buy medicines in the black market at prices well above what local manufacturers are demanding, but they also carry a great risk of consuming medicines that may be spurious, even counterfeit, he said.

There seems to be no one to stop the elements from playing with the health sector, as the effectiveness of the regulator of this most important sector is an open secret.

Malik Iftikhar urges people to buy 'Made in Pakistan' products



PPA

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former president Iftikhar Ali Malik has urged the people to buy 'Made in Pakistan' products to promote the local market that will curtail the import bill and keep the foreign reserves in good shape.

Talking to a traders delegation led by Muslim Khan Bunerri here Sunday, he added that economically, prioritizing locally made products bolsters the country's industries, generates employment opportunities and increases economic growth. "When people choose Pakistani goods over imported ones, it strengthens the domestic market contributing to a more robust and self-reliant economy. It also leads to a positive cycle of increased investment, innovation and competitiveness," he argued.

Iftikhar Ali Malik suggested enhanced collaboration between public and private sector to make this initiative successful. He added that government must formulate policies which support local industries, while businessmen must ensure the quality and competitiveness of their products, that align with the ethos of 'Made in Pakistan, Buy Pakistani, Be Pakistani.' He said it symbolizes a collective effort to build a stronger, more self-reliant and culturally rich Pakistan. Embracing this slogan can contribute to a thriving economy.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said "Be Pakistani" encourages a shared responsibility for the country's well-being, and also promotes a sense of unity and collective pride, transcending regional, linguistic and ethnic differences. He asserted, "Choosing products made within the borders reflects a commitment to the nation's progress, sending a powerful message about solidarity and patriotism to the world."

Caretaker Minister Dr Malik meets MD IFW Expo in Berlin



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kauser Abdullah Malik met Managing Director, IFW Expo & Management of DLG International Stefan

Kresse, on sidelines of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) held in Berlin, Germany. They discussed issues related to the usage of modern technology in agriculture, Pakistan Embassy in Germany posted on X on Sunday.

National Women Lacrosse Championship continue in Abbottabad in full swing

Sports Desk

ABBOTTABAD: The First National Women's Lacrosse Championship and International Official Coaching Course was launched with great fanfare at Kunj Stadium in Abbottabad, which includes four days of coaching and training for young players part of the Games from all four provinces including Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Executive Director Asia Pacific Lacrosse Union Chris Jinno graced the occasion, who specially came from Japan to see the first-ever National Women Lacrosse Championship in the hilly resort of Abbottabad. Before the start of the matches, the players were introduced to him. President KP Lacrosse Association Ijaz Daudzai, Secretary KP Lacrosse Association Tafoor Zareen, District Sports Officer Nouman Tanoli, players and officials were also present.

On the second day, more matches are being played in the Championship wherein strong Balochistan, a team having more players from the Hazara Community, defeated Islamabad by 2-0. Nazia and Sabreen scored

one goal each from Balochistan while Aiman slammed in a beautiful goal from the top of the Circle Area for Islamabad.

In the second match, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Red team defeated strong Punjab by a close margin 3-2. Both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab played well and raided each other territories with some fine moves. Pari, Ruba and Subhana scored one goal each for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while for Punjab Zakira and Irum reduced the margin.

In the third match, Balochistan defeated Sindh by 2-0. Nadia and Nosheen scored one goal each, while the Sindh team could not score any goals despite making some good attacking moves. On this occasion, Tafoor Zareen said that this event will be an important signal for the promotion of lacrosse across the country and this game will be promoted in the country. More matches will be held on Sunday in a style that will be introduced across the surface.

Pakistan Lacrosse Federation and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Lacrosse Association organized a lacrosse coaching and referees course at Kunj Foot-

ball Stadium in which Asian Pacific Lacrosse Union Executive Director Chris Jinno gave special training to the players and officials.

On the occasion of the lecture, he said that there is no lacrosse game in Pakistan, but Pakistan holds an important position in the world of sports and this is the reason why the World Lacrosse Federation has given him a task and responsibility to introduce this game not only in Pakistan but in every province and every nook and corner so that young players should come forward and play Lacrosse, a 1000-year-old American Game.

He said, "We will take all measures to promote it. Equipment for this game is not available in Pakistan, so I have brought 20/20 sticks for men and women so that the players can be exposed to this game in a modern way."

He further said that the Pakistan Lacrosse Federation and KP Lacrosse Association have taken important steps very early which will surely give the sport a key status soon but also help to bring forward its players. He also thanked the Pakistan Sports Board, the President Pakistan Lacrosse Federation, District Admin-



istration Hazara, and the government of KP for making this thing a reality and now players are playing Lacrosse very enthusiastically in the hilly resort of Abbottabad.

He also thanked the government and the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for providing full support for the promotion of this sport in Pakistan. Ghis Jinno also assured all-out

support from the World Lacrosse Federation and World Lacrosse Community around the world, because Pakistan is a very important country in the world of Sports.

Sindh beats Balochistan in the opening match of the Essa Lab bilateral Sindh-Balochistan Men Softball Series

KARACHI: In a superb display of talent, the Sindh softball team defeated Balochistan by one inning and 2 runs in the opening match of the second Essa Laboratories Sindh Balochistan bilateral softball series at KMC Sports Complex, Kashmir Road, here on Saturday. Balochistan scored 9 runs in their scheduled 5 innings, Hafiz Moez, Shah Rukh, and captain Ahmed Yar Khan scored 2 runs each. Shahzeb Mustafa of Sindh took four catches while fielding brilliantly.

Sindh scored 11 runs in four innings. Captain Shiraz Asif, Hafis Kashif, Shahzeb Mustafa and Saad Asif scored 2 runs.



Earlier, the President of Sindh Softball Association, Professor Dr. Farhan Essa, along with the Chairperson of Special Olympic Pakistan, Ronak Lakhani, opened the series by hitting the ball.

On this occasion, the Secretary General of the Softball Federation of Pakistan, Asif Azeem, POA individual member

Syed Waseem Hashmi, Balochistan Softball Association Senior Vice President Naseem Khan, Sindh Softball Association Secretary Women Wing Tehmina Asif, Vice President Dr. Hina Jamshed Khan, Combaxx Sports General Manager Zubair Macha were present. Dr. Farhan Isa welcomed the guest team Balochistan

and said that the objective of the bilateral series is to bring out the softball talent of the players of both provinces. Both teams are composed of young players. We hope to see the best matches.

Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani said that softball is the most popular sport in America, Europe, and Asia. This sport is also gaining popularity in Pakistan very rapidly. Very soon the game will be introduced at the level of special children of Pakistan, she added.

Dr. Hina Jamshed Khan said that she will soon organize a series between the women's teams of the two provinces.

Abid Hussain appointed Lahore Region Cricket Association as a new Manager

Tahir Amin Malik.



Abid Hussain a distinguished cricket organizer and President of Khizar Cricket Club was appointed by Lahore Region Cricket Association as a new

Manager Cricket operation. Abid Hussain expressed gratitude to LRCA President Khawaja Nadeem Ahmed for the appointment and he conveyed his optimism about the region's cricketers excelling at both national and international levels under the leadership of Kh. Nadeem Ahmed. Abid Hussain also emphasized that under the guidance of Kh. Nadeem Ahmed he promoted club cricket and grooming the Jr. Talant. Particularly in under-13 and under-16 categories which he considers the true Nurseries for discovering and developing future cricket stars for Pakistan. Abid said I am enthusiastic to grow Lahore cricket and with the support of the cricketing community we can achieve significant milestones.

LCCI Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt Exposes Escalating Overbilling Crisis in Lahore's Industrial Sectors

Tahir Malik

In a latest development, office-bearers of various industrial areas have visited Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry and brought to the notice of chamber Vice President, Adnan Khalid Butt the escalating issue of overbilling in industrial areas across Lahore. It is agreed upon the cost burden on industries has surged, with Lesco once again resorting to exorbitantly charging extra units.

Amidst the struggle for survival, industrial areas under Lesco's jurisdiction are facing the brunt of overcharging. Adnan Khalid Butt expressed deep concern over the financial strain on businesses already grappling with economic challenges.

This revelation aligns with a comprehensive 14-page report by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra). Triggered by widespread complaints from consumers during July and August 2023, the investigation uncovered a troubling pattern of overcharging and malpractice within the country's power distribution companies, known as Discos.

The Nepra report boldly states, "There is [not a] single Disco in the country who is charging bills in 100% correct manner." The findings point towards a systemic issue across all Discos, indicating a serious flaw in the revenue management process, spanning from meter readings to penalties.

Adnan Khalid Butt's advocacy adds a crucial industry perspective to the larger discourse surrounding the electricity billing crisis. As Vice President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, his voice amplifies the concerns of businesses grappling with the financial repercussions of unjust billing practices.

This revelation not only puts Lesco under scrutiny but highlights a broader challenge faced by all Discos. The industry and regulatory stakeholders must collaborate to rectify this issue, ensuring fair and accurate billing practices to sustain the economic stability of businesses in Lahore and beyond.

Pak hockey team fails to qualify for 2024 Olympics

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan failed to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics as it lost to New Zealand in the third-place game of the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers tournament at Oman Hockey Stadium on Sunday.

According to details, New Zealand beat Pakistan by 3-2 in a nail-biting contest to win the bronze medal in the event. Pakistan team displayed top-notch and maintained the lead for three quarters in the game.

Abu Bakr Mahmood scored two goals for Pakistan through a penalty corner and penalty stroke in the 18th and 24th minutes of the match.

Meanwhile, New Zealand scored two field goals and a penalty corner in the 24th, 52nd and 58th minutes of the match. Pakistan secured fourth position in the event and Pakistani goalkeeper Abdullah Ishtiaq showcased brilliant skills in the game.

New Zealand got eight penalty corners against Pakistan, and scored only one goal, while Pakistan got two penalty corners and scored one goal. Pakistan's journey ended with a fourth position in the Olympic qualifiers.

Pakistan Hockey Team Management included Head Coach Olympian Shahnaz Shaikh, Manager Olympian Dilawar Hussain and Assistant Coach and Consultant Olympian Shakeel Abbas.

However, 10 players of the Pakistan hockey team would stay in Oman to participate in the FIH Five-Sided World Cup to be held from January 28 to 31.

Fair Deal Inter Football Academy organates Football Tournament to support young talent



Fair Deal Inter Football Academy organized Football Tournament. Held in Fair deal Academy G-11 Islamabad. Outstanding talent we have in Pakistan in the young generation, the need of the time is support of CDA Local Administration. And especially the Government. Growing up generation will be the future of Pakistan. Healthy environment affects our lives. And when they are physically healthy their minds will be healthy. These positive activities need proper support and promotion. CEO Fair deal Academy Saqib Anjum Coach Qasim Butt and parents personal support makes this possible. This is happening without any government support or local administration support we need their presence at this positively and activeness at this platform

High-flying Athletic stumble at Valencia

AFP

BARCELONA: Athletic Bilbao's top four finish ambitions were dented in a narrow 1-0 defeat by Valencia on Saturday in La Liga. Valencia triumphed over their third-place visitors in an even battle, with Hugo Duro's header splitting the sides at their Mestalla stadium.

Ernesto Valverde's Athletic were unbeaten in 14 matches across all competitions and had won their previous six.

However, they came up against another in-form side in Ruben Baraja's sturdy Valencia, who ground out their fourth consecutive La Liga victory to move seventh.

"The worst thing is we had control of the game, we got up there well but didn't make many dangerous chances," said Valverde.

Sergi Canos went off injured for the hosts early on, while Valencia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili made two saves from Nico Williams.

The winger's brother Inaki Williams is away at the Africa Cup of Nations with Ghana and Athletic missed his dynamism in attack.

Oihan Sancet fired narrowly off-target for Athletic after the break, before Duro missed a huge chance from close range for Valencia.

However, two minutes later he broke the deadlock by nodding Jose Gaya's looping cross beyond the reach of Unai Simon in the 61st minute.

Mamardashvili made a superb save to thwart Unai Gomez as the Basques chased the leveller, but Valencia held firm as Athletic suffered only their fourth top flight defeat.

Faisalabad, Sargodha set up Rising Punjab Games Hockey title clash

Tahir Malik

Faisalabad and Sargodha division teams stormed into the final of the Rising Punjab Games 2024 Hockey Championship after winning their respective semifinal matches at National Hockey Stadium on Sunday.

On the other hand, Gujranwala and Faisalabad division teams also reached the final of the Volleyball Championship after defeating their respective oppo-

nents Lahore and Sahiwal in the semifinals at Nishitar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall on the same day.

The final competitions of both Rising Punjab Games hockey and volleyball championships will be played on January 22 (Monday).

The first semifinal in the Rising Punjab Games Hockey Championship was played between divisional teams of Lahore and Faisalabad. After playing a 1-1 draw in the stipulated time,

the Faisalabad team defeated the strong Lahore team by 3-1 in the penalty shoot out contest.

Awais, Abdullah and Naveed sent the ball into the net for Faisalabad while Lahore's only goal was scored by M Ammad.

The second semifinal was played between Sahiwal and Sargodha division teams in which Sargodha emerged winner by a narrow margin of 2-1. Sargodha's Rana Waleed and Basharat struck one field goal each in

the 2nd and 48th minute respectively while Sahiwal's only goal was scored by M Abid in the 56th minute through a penalty stroke.

In the Volleyball Championship, Gujranwala shocked a strong Lahore division team by 3-0 in the first semifinal match with the score of 25-23, 25-14 and 25-20 while Faisalabad division team outplayed Sahiwal by 3-1 in the second semifinal clash with the score line of 22-25, 25-16, 25-15 and 25-11.

Pakistan squad to return home from New Zealand on Tuesday

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's T20I squad is set to depart from Auckland, New Zealand on Monday and reach Pakistan on Tuesday after a brief layover in Dubai.

The players will leave for their respective cities from Dubai, meanwhile, Pakistan's T20I captain Shaheen Afridi and wicketkeeper Azam Khan will stay in the city to partake in the ongoing ILT20, where they are both part of Desert Vipers.

Ifthikhar Ahmed and Sahibzada Farhan will reach Peshawar from Dubai, while Aamir Jamal and Usama Mir will depart for Lahore and Sialkot respectively.

Haris Rauf, Zaman Khan and Muhammad Nawaz along with coaches Umar Gul and Yasir Arafat will leave for Islamabad, whereas, Saim Ayub and



Haseebullah will touch down in Karachi.

Babar Azam, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Mohammad Rizwan and Abbas Afridi will depart separately from the squad as they will depart from Christchurch for Dhaka on Monday to participate in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

For the unversed, Pakistan lost the T20I series against New Zealand 4-1 after they registered a 42-run win in the fifth T20I in Christchurch today.

Pakistan defended the lowest successful total in New Zealand during the fifth match of the series today as they bowled the host on a meagre 92 while defending 134.

Public gathering

KARACHI: Workers of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) hold party flags during a public gathering (Jalsa) of MQM At Bagh-e-Jinnah in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Wholesale destruction' of Gaza unprecedented: UN chief

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that the 'wholesale destruction' by Israeli bombardments of Gaza is unprecedented, as he pushed for recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to statehood by everyone. "The wholesale destruction of Gaza and the number of civilian casualties in such a short period are totally unprecedented during my mandate," he said in an address to the latest summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which concluded in Kampala, Uganda, on Saturday.

The UN chief said, the refusal to accept the two-state

solution for Israelis and Palestinians and the denial of the right to statehood for the Palestinian people is unacceptable. "This would indefinitely prolong a conflict that has become a major threat to global peace and security; exacerbate polarization and embolden extremists everywhere," he said. "This summit falls at another moment of deep division, human rights, international law, the Geneva Conventions, and the UN Charter are being flouted with impunity. I will not relent in my call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and an immediate unconditional release of all hostages," he added. Leaders from the 120-member NAM met



amid deep division globally, including rising geopolitical tensions, climate catastrophe, widespread poverty and raging conflict in Sudan, Ukraine and Gaza. Although humanitarian workers are doing their best to deliver aid, they face constant bombardments and daily dangers, amid enormous constraints posed by damaged roads, communication blackouts and access denials. Meanwhile, disease and hunger are deepening,

he said. He said people are dying not only from bombs and bullets, but from lack of food and clean water, hospitals without power and medicine and gruelling journeys to ever-smaller slivers of land to escape the fighting. "This must stop. I will not relent in my call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages," Guterres said. "And we must do all we can to prevent spillover of this conflict across the region — in the West Bank, across the Blue Line between Israel and Lebanon, and in Syria, Iraq and the Red Sea." The NAM was established in the midst of the Cold War, when

leaders of newly independent countries sought a neutral stance and avoided joining either of the two major power blocs, headed by the United States and the defunct Soviet Union. Guterres said the "swirl of uncertainty and instability" in the world today offers new opportunities for countries and the organization to lead the way towards deeper cooperation and shared global affluence the theme of the summit.

As global affluence depends on peace which requires institutions that reflect today's world, he pointed to the need to reform bodies such as the UN Security Council which is "paralyzed by geopolitical divisions that block effective solutions."

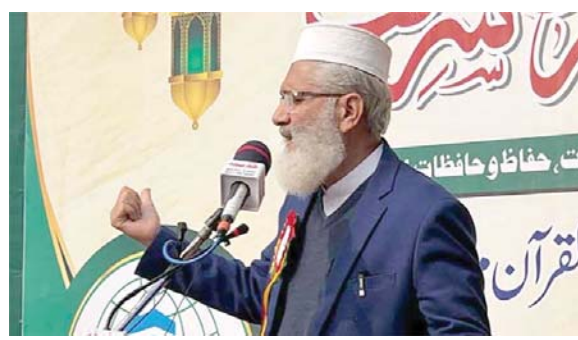
Siraj asserts national progress requires breaking free from family-led parties

Habib Ullah

MARDAN: Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq stated on Sunday that on Feb 8, the people of Pakistan will shape the future by rejecting what he described as "political jokers" through their votes.

In an indirect reference to the PML-N and PPP, Siraj asserted that national progress was not possible without liberation from the two parties led by powerful families.

While speaking during a ceremony here, Siraj stated that if the JI came into power, they would dismantle the system inherited from the British, eliminate the exist-



ing VIP culture and introduce reforms in the bureaucracy.

The JI chief expressed his commitment to eradicating non-development expenditures and using these funds for orphans and disabled individuals.

He promised to provide employment to unemployed youth and ensure education for all. He promised establishment of separate educational institutions for women.

He regretted that poor policies of politicians in power had

kept 20 million children out of schools.

Siraj asserted that his party, upon gaining power, would strengthen the economy by eliminating interest from financial institutions, adhering to Islamic principles.

Siraj said that the ruling elite stood exposed and the nation was fed up with the false claims of former rulers who made empty promises without showing any performance.

He criticised the PPP, stating that their 15-year rule in Sindh had shown no progress.

He highlighted that despite being in power for the past three decades, the perfor-

mance of Nawaz Sharif-led PML-N was zero in reality.

Siraj also blamed the former ruling parties for burdening the state with a debt of Rs80 trillion.

According to the JI chief, an annual corruption of Rs5,000 billion occurs in Pakistan.

Siraj deplored that the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank had been imposed, compounding the hardships of the common people.

He also noted that the economy had deteriorated, the Pakistani rupee had devalued and institutions had weakened.

Maryam says no member left PML-N at time of crisis



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz said that no member left PML-N when the party was in crisis.

As per details, an independent candidate from NA-119 Muhammad Waseem called on PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz and announced withdrawal from General Elections 2024 in her favour.

Muhammad Waseem also announced to joining the PML-N along with his colleagues. Maryam

Nawaz, who herself is contesting the election from NA-119, congratulated Muhammad Waseem and said that he has joined the caravan of 'development'.

She said that the whole country had suffered from 2018 to 2022 due to incompetence of the then government. The PML-N Chief Organiser said that her party is working on an agenda to serve the people for the next five years.

Maryam Nawaz asked the people to support Nawaz Sharif in relieving people from inflation and other issues. She said that Pakistan was flourishing during the reign of Nawaz Sharif but the process was halted.

"The whole world gives examples of progress and development Pakistan had under Nawaz Sharif," she added.

Bilawal seeks support from PTI workers



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari sought support from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers, assuring them that he would bury the politics of revenge.

Addressing a public gathering in Lahore in connection with PPP's campaign for the General Elections 2024, Bilawal said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is now taking revenge from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), adding

that the PPP is against any sort of political discrimination.

The PPP Chairman said that the politics of 1990s cannot be prevailed in 2024. He urged the youth not to

'waste' their votes and exercise their right for the best option.

Meanwhile, Bilawal once again censured the 'old' politicians and said that the country cannot be left on mercy of those politicians who already had many opportunities to serve Pakistan but 'failed' miserably.

The PPP Chairman said these 'old' politicians had served as prime minister or chief minister for several times but did 'nothing' for the common men. "The likes of Showbaz and Wasim Akram Plus were imposed on Punjab," he added.

President for blacklisting bank fraudsters, directs banks to refund Rs 2.74 million to victims

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the Banking Mohtasib to take up the matter of banking frauds with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to get the essential standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued, so that the proven fraudulent personnel's CNICs could be blacklisted, placed at the central negative list, besides ensuring that no banking/financial facility could be extended to them by the banking industry. The president issued these directions while rejecting two separate representations filed by the Unit-



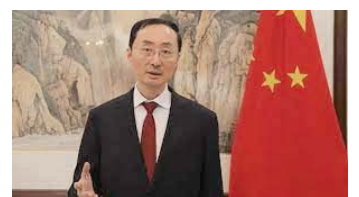
ed Bank Ltd (UBL) and Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAL) directing the banks to pay Rs 1.9 million and Rs 0.744 million respectively to their customers who fell victim to online banking fraud at the hands of fraudsters, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

4th Meeting of CPEC Joint Working Group on Int'l Cooperation and Coordination

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The 4th meeting of CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) was held today in Islamabad. The meeting, which was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Sun Weidong, exemplifies the commitment of both countries to foster international cooperation and coordination including on CPEC.

The two sides reviewed with satisfaction the progress made since the third meeting of the Joint Working Group held virtually on 21 July 2022. The meeting underscored CPEC's pioneering role in strengthening international and regional connectivity while appreciating the open and inclusive nature of this flagship project. Noting that Pakistan and China were All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and iron brothers, the Foreign Secre-



tary reaffirmed the importance of CPEC in promoting win-win cooperation and sustainable development. He also emphasized on welcoming interested third parties to explore mutually beneficial avenues of cooperation.

Recognising the evolution of CPEC, the two sides agreed to enhance focus on high quality advancements in industry, agriculture, information technology, and science and technology, and ensuring tangible socio-economic benefits for the people. They rejected the disinformation campaigns and distorted reporting on CPEC and stressed the need to counter fallacious narratives and misinformation.

Pakistan-American envoy discusses global peace, arts and culture with Mushaal Mullick

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani-American businessman, Shahid Ahmed Khan, Advisor to the President of United States Joe Biden on Arts and Culture, on Tuesday called on Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, SAPM/Minister of State for Human Rights and Women Empowerment here in Islamabad.

During the meeting, topics of mutual interest especially related to global peace and interfaith harmony were discussed. Furthermore, they both explored the potential avenues where they can join hands and contribute towards the Global Peace, in particular to resolve disputes in Kashmir, Palestine and Ukraine. Moreover, the relationship between respect for human rights and global peace, specifically, highlighting the human rights violations of POWs/detainees in IIOK, Palestine and Ukraine and their effects on the Global Peace and Security also



came under the discussion. Both stressed upon collaborative efforts to work on cultural diplomacy as Art transcends all boundaries and can play as an effective tool for reconco conflict resolution. Ideas to explore and preserve the rich heritage and culture of Pakistan and Kashmir came into discussion.

Sabien Hussein Mullick Focal Person SAPM also participated in the meeting.

PTI ready to talk to everyone on fair elections: Barrister Gohar

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that PTI is ready to talk on fair elections 2024 with everyone.

In an interview with an international news network, the PTI senior leader said that the party has fielded more than 800 independent candidates across Pakistan.

He said that its isolating a political party from the spectrum will cause damage to the democracy as PTI is ready to hold talks with everyone for the free and fair elections in the country.

The statement came after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed candidate from PP-118 in elections 2024 and former minister Khayal Ahmed Kastro was arrested outside a local court in Faisalabad.

He was arrested by the police from outside a local court where he appeared for bail in the case pertain-



ing to May 9.

In another incident, PTI local leader Shah Khalid was shot dead in broad daylight in Swabi district. Two armed motorcyclists opened fire on the vehicle of PTI leader, killing him on the spot. His body was taken to the hospital for further medical examination.

It is pertinent to mention that on 14th January, the PTI announced that its candidates would contest elections independently following the Supreme Court's (SC) decision setting aside the Peshawar High Court (PHC) order that reinstated "bat" as the party's electoral symbol.