



Engineers playing key role in country's development: President

President Dr Arif Alvi stressing the significance of engineering expertise in every sector of life, underscored the need for continued support and recognition of the engineering community to propel the nation towards sustainable growth and prosperity. Addressing an event titled "PEC Engineers' Excellence Award 2022" held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said the Pakistani engineers had, in the past, played key role in the development of the gulf countries. (Details on Page 8)



Maryam Nawaz says KP not an experiment site for politicians

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief organizer Maryam Nawaz said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is not an experiment site for politicians. Addressing a public gathering in Mansehra, the PML-N leader lashed out at the previous PTI government saying that they promised five million homes, billion tree Tsunami but did not fulfill any of their promise. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

China's Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong meets COAS Gen Asim Munir at GHQ on Monday.



Photo: ISPR

China's vice FM visits GHQ, discusses defence ties with COAS

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Sun Weidong, Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at GHQ today.

During the meeting matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed.

Chinese vice Foreign Minister said that Pakistan and China are all weather strategic partners. He acknowledged Pakistan's efforts towards regional peace and stability and also conveyed the Chinese satisfaction on security arrangements for CPEC projects.

COAS thanked the visiting dignitary for his warm remarks and said that relations between Pakistan and China are founded on a common understanding of regional peace, stability and prosperity for the people of both countries.

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China's Vice FM visits GHQ, meets CJCS



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: China's Vice Foreign Minister (FM) Sun Weidong on Monday visited General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi and held a meeting with Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) Gen Sahir Shamshad.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations, matter pertaining to bilateral defense cooperation, regional and international security issues were discussed during the meeting between Chinese Vice FM and CJCS Gen Sahir Shamshad.

Pakistan fully committed to success of CPEC: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Monday said that Pakistan was fully committed to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and stressed the need for both sides to continue to work closely to ensure timely completion of the ongoing projects. He was talking to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong who paid a courtesy call on him.

The prime minister welcomed



the Chinese vice foreign minister as well as members of his delegation and said Pakistan deeply valued its all-weather, strategic, cooperative partnership with China.

Recalling his visit to Beijing for the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in October 2023, he said that he was deeply touched by the warm sentiments of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang towards Pakistan. He also conveyed his best wishes for the Chinese leadership. In addition to Pakistan-China relations, the regional situation also came under discussion during the meeting. The Chinese vice foreign minister thanked the prime minister for the courtesy call and briefed him regarding various meetings held during the visit.

He conveyed special greetings of the Chinese leadership to the prime minister. He said China and Pakistan were "iron-brothers". He assured that China would always remain a reliable partner in Pakistan's socio-economic progress.

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Finance Minister lauds World Bank's continuous support for Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr Shamshad Akhtar and Country Director World Bank (WB) for Pakistan, NajyBinhassine on Monday met to discuss, review and finalize the financing for two World Bank-funded operations in Pakistan.

The operations include additional financing of US\$ 250.0 million for an ongoing World Bank-funded programme titled "Crisis-Resilient Social Protection Programme (CRISP)", being implemented by Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), said a news release here.

The program aims to



support the development of a more adaptive social protection system that will contribute to any future crisis resilience among poor and vulnerable households.

The second WB-funded operation includes Pakistan: "Resilient and Accessible Microfinance (RAM) Program" worth US\$175.0 million to help enhance access to microcredit and support the resilience of the microfinance sector and its borrowers.

Considering the impor-

tance of interventions planned under the CRISP program, Dr Shamshad Akhtar gave go-ahead signal to engage the World Bank additional financing of US\$250 million for the program in principle.

She, however, desired to convene another meeting next week to formalize the program contours.

She also desired to invite the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in the

next meeting to finalize the program modalities.

The World Bank team apprised the Finance Minister about the broad contours of the RAM program, its funding volume and objectives.

The meeting was informed that the microfinance sector of Pakistan has shown resilience and continued to grow despite multiple exogenous shocks.

However, sector growth and resilience have been shaken by deep and contin-

ued shocks and are currently being impeded by 3-cross cutting constraints including Capital, Liquidity, and Climate Shocks.

The proposed program will help to not only overcome the constraints of the microfinance sector but also ensure a more resilient, inclusive and growing microfinance sector in Pakistan.

It was proposed that such interventions would best be supported by mobilizing local resources instead of foreign loans.

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ECP instructs political parties to wrap up campaigns on midnight Feb 6, 7

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has directed political parties and candidates across the country to conclude their election campaigns by midnight on February 6 and 7, 2024. The ECP, through a notification, has referred to Section 182 of the Elections Act 2017, which prohibits political activities after the mentioned time.

The ECP cautions that candidates engaging in political activities after the deadline will face legal consequences. Additionally, the ECP appeals to the media and the public to collaborate for a free, fair, and transparent election process.

Security forces kill seven terrorists in Zhob IBO: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Security forces on Monday shot dead seven terrorists in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Zhob district of Balochistan province, ARY News reported, quoting Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

According to the military's media wing, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Sambaza in Zhob.

Seven terrorists were killed in the operation of the security forces while weapons and ammunition were recovered from their possession.

The clearance operation was underway in the area against possible terrorist hideouts, the



ISPR said, and added that forces are ready to root out terrorism from the country.

Earlier in May, three Pakistani Army soldiers and three children were martyred in a suicide attack in the North Waziristan area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. According to the ISPR, the suicide attack in the Miranshah area of the North Waziristan district claimed the lives of three soldiers and three innocent children.

Election oversight committee head briefs CEC on polls preparations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Communications, Railways, and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar, serving as the convener of the Election Oversight Committee, discussed election preparations with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan and briefed him about upcoming polls arrangements of both federal and provincial governments.

In the meeting held at the Election Commission Secretariat, Ashraf Tarar emphasized that the committee's primary goal is to oversee elec-

tion security, address obstacles in arrangements, and ensure measures for peace, additional security, and the implementation of ECP directives to conduct transparent and well-coordinated elections.

During the meeting, the CEC commended the cooperation of federal and provincial governments made for election preparations. Giving suggestions to the minister, he urged him to visit the four provincial capitals for meeting with caretaker provincial governments, chief secretaries, and the Inspector general of police (IGPs) to assess election arrangements.

China supports Pakistan, Iran to bridge differences through dialogue: Wang Wenbin

Spokesman Report

BELJING: China on Monday said it supported Pakistan and Iran in bridging differences through dialogue and consultations, as both countries were friendly neighbors and its good

friends. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin during his regular briefing said, "I want to stress that Pakistan and Iran are friendly neighbors, and both are good friends of China. China is committed to

upholding regional and international peace and stability and supports Iran and Pakistan in continuing to bridge differences through dialogue and consultation."

Responding to a question about China's Vice Minister Sun

Weidong's ongoing visit to Pakistan and Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu's phone call with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani last night, he said that China maintained close communication with Pakistan and Iran.

When asked if was China mediating between Pakistan and Iran?, he said, "We would like to continue to play a positive and constructive role in improving the relations between Iran and Pakistan based on the needs of the two countries."

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's addresses party workers in Sahiwal

Asim Tanveer and Faheem Soomro

SAHIWAL: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering During Election Campaign in Sahiwal. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he is grateful that the Jiyalas of Sahiwal have come to this gathering despite the harsh weather.

Chairman Bilawal said that Pakistan is currently going through challenging times. The PPP is the only party which can solve the problems faced by the people whereas all other parties and politicians who are contesting these elections are doing the politics of hate and division. If they come to power then they will victimise their political opponents. The way poverty, inflation and unemployment are on the increase we cannot resolve these issues if we continue to be divided. I am contesting to bury the politics of hate and division, Chairman PPP said. We need the ideology of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at this difficult period of our history. The 10-point Awami economic agreement which we have

presented is the key to solve these problems. We will deal with poverty and inflation through this agenda. We will have to tread the same path as Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto when it comes to looking after the farmers, labourers and youth and confronting poverty and inflation. We had introduced the Benazir Income Support Programme for our women and we will not only extend this programme also provide interest-free loans so that the women of our country can start their own businesses and contribute in the country's economy. We will also introduce the "Benazir Kissan Card" for the farmers of Sahiwal and Pakistan. The PPP's philosophy has been that "Kissan Khushhal, Pakistan Khushhal". We will provide crop insurance for the smaller farmers. We will give the financial help to the farmers through the "Benazir Kissan Card" instead of giving subsidy of 1500 billion rupees to the elite.

The PPP will provide help to the labourers through "Benazir Mazdoor Card" so that they get their rights. This facility will be extended to every kind of labour force. We will also provide the "Youth Card" to the young population to help them financially for a year



and also aim to provide them training and other facilities to acquire expertise. We will look after the youth till they get employment. We think that health is the right of every citizen. We will provide a system of health which allows for the establishment of free healthcare institutions all over

the country, a feat we have already achieved in Sindh. We will establish universities and campuses for the youth at their doorstep in their own district. These are all promises included in the 10-point Awami economic agreement.

Chairman Bilawal said that he

will change the fate of the country. If the people wish for a new leadership then they should stamp the arrow of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. If they believe that those engaging in the traditional form of politics should sit at home, then too, the symbol of the arrow is to be stamped. Chairman

Bilawal said that he desires to complete the incomplete mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. When the PPP will be victorious, the people will be victorious. We will together complete the mission of Quaid-e-Azam and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Chairman PPP resolved.

Compaign

KARACHI: A view of banner of Pakistan People's Party on a wall in the Provincial Capital, ahead of the country's general elections 2024.



Photo: Online

Muslim Conference to play robust role for ideological defense of Pakistan: Sardar Attique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan ex-Premier of AJK, President Muslim Conference has set strengthening ideological defense of Pakistan as an ambitious future robust role of his political platform to lend fresh force to the ongoing Kashmir struggle in Jammu and Kashmir. Keeping in view the extraordinary geographic location of Pakistan in South Asia and constant regional constraints the ideology of Pakistan needs fresh determined boost, he said in his address to senior party cadre special meeting Monday at



mazar of Ch Ghulam Abbas here. Ch Ghulam Abbas was the Supreme Head of AJK Govt and veteran Kashmiri leader founder of Muslim Conference in Jammu and Kashmir in earthy thirties of past century.

Pakistan, he said, is an inspirational source of strength for

the struggling people of Kashmir who are advancing their cherished cause of accession of Jammu and Kashmir state to Pakistan braving heavy Indian atrocities being carried out by India's one million armed forces occupying Kashmir today. Since December 1989 1,50,000 Kashmiris have

laid down their lives besides destruction of their properties by the Indian forces, he added.

Sardar Attique Khan lauded the resumption of diplomatic ties both by Pakistan and Iran saying the two brotherly nations have had to bear the international responsibilities in unison.

Special party meeting was addressed among others by MC Secretary General Mrs Meherunnisah, Vice-President Major (rtd) Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Sardar Mushtaq Nayyar, Raja Latif Hasrat and several others. A unanimous resolution read out by Sardar Mushtaq Nayyar reiterated Muslim Conference role in advancing

Kashmir's accession to Pakistan as priority number one for the geographic and ideological completion of Pakistan.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan praised the role of Pakistan armed forces in making the defense of Pakistan invincible. Whole nation acknowledges their utmost dedication for making Pakistan stronger, he added.

He cautioned that to win over his 2024 elections Indian premier Narindera Modi was bent upon staging some vicious adventure in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan saying people were fully conscious of this looming danger and were determined to thwart it.

US Consul General calls on CM Punjab

PPA

LAHORE: US Consul General Ms. Kristin K. Hawkins called on Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office. She praised the CM for his people-friendly initiatives. She commended Mr Naqvi for being an extremely dynamic and hardworking chief minister, noting that everyone appreciates his efforts. Under the leadership of Mohsin Naqvi, the provincial caretaker government has effectively served the people, and whenever we see CM Mohsin Naqvi, he is found doing some work.

CM Naqvi expressed interest in benefiting from American expertise, particularly in increasing wheat production in agriculture. He expressed a desire to affiliate Punjab's educational institutions with the University of California, to enhance the construction of small houses in Punjab, inspired by the California model. The CM also highlighted the smog challenge, emphasizing the importance of identifying its causes. Every effort was made in a short period to serve the people effectively, he added.

The US Consul General expressed readiness to collaborate with Punjab in the fields of education and commerce. She expressed a desire to further promote bilateral cooperation under the California-Punjab Sister States relationship agreement.

The meeting involved discussions on enhancing mutual relations and cooperation in various sectors.

Provincial Ministers SM Tanvir, Amir Mir, chairman P&D and others were also present.

AJK to express solidarity with people of Occupied Kashmir on February 5: Minister

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that on February 5, there will be a full expression of solidarity with the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The people and government of Azad Kashmir stand with their brothers and sisters in Occupied Kashmir. The struggle for independence will continue till dawn of independence. The Government of Pakistan and the Pakistan Army have always represented Kashmiris at the international level. Armed forces pay tribute to Pakistan. Martyrs of Kashmir are our foreheads. The aggression of Indian forces in Occupied Kashmir is a major threat to peace in the region.

Several reports of international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Asia Watch, have written in detail on India's barbaric brutality. India should take strict action against violations of religious, political and human rights. Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majeed Khan has said that Pakistan government has taken great measures in every period to highlight Kashmir freedom movement worldwide. On February 5, the government of Pakistan expressed its solidarity with the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said that on February 5, like the rest of the country, the people and the government of Azad Kashmir will also celebrate with the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. On this day, we will renew that we stand with the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir like a lead wall. are standing He said that he will continue to achieve the goal of independence. The current coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq will highlight the voice of the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir all over the world.

Entrepreneurship stimulates employment growth, creates job opportunities for the rural communities; speakers

Rafiullah Mandokhail

ZHOB: 'Although unemployment is considered to be the most challenging social problem in poverty-hit Balochistan, but 'Balochistan Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship Program' financed by the World Bank to promote enterprise development and livelihoods supports the local entrepreneurs and individuals to enhance profitability, job creation and income is a blessing for the province,' said the speakers at a seminar entitled 'Citizen Engagement and Awareness Seminar' held at the Cultural hall here. The seminar was attended by male and female community members, journalist Rafiullah Mandokhail and people from different walks of life.

District Coordinator BLEP Afzal Khan in his keynote speech said that organizing the seminar was aimed at creating awareness and providing information to the youth on employment opportunities through entrepreneurship.

In order to promote livelihoods through enterprise development and job creation, BLEP has been implemented in eight targeted districts in Balochistan including Zhob and neighboring Sherani districts. The project is financed by the World Bank and executed by the Planning and Development (P&D) department Balochistan,' he said.

Aleem Khan President (IPP) starts the election campaign in Khanewal Constituency PP 209

Waqar Paracha

KHANIWAL: Central President of Istahkam Pakistan Party Abdul Aleem Khan started the election campaign in District Khanewal PP 209 with a press conference and said that it is an honor for me to contest the election from the seat of late former MPA Abdul Razaq Khan Niazi. President Aleem Khan said, I thank Ayaz Khan Niazi, I will try to work for the betterment of the people of the constituency and the region. I thank the people and the supporters from the bottom

of my heart. After this election, stability will come after the victory of Pakistan Party. During the press conference, he said that agriculture is our backbone. Jahangir Khan Tarin will do better for agriculture. It is also respected that my mother belongs to Mian Chanu. We have enough resources that we can make Pakistan a developed country. 300 free units will be given to the farmers with less cultivation, and those who do not have houses will be given 3 marla plots to the homeless by using the land. There is stability in the Pakistan Party will



also hold rallies. Build flats in all slums so that their living standards will improve.

All political leaders should follow our manifesto because our manifesto is the common man's manifesto. New ones are

being built in all the government schools, water filtration plants are being installed in all the government schools in my constituency, and they have been adopted. There are no good schools and colleges

in this area. God willing, good schools and colleges will be built. Roomsh are also being built by Abdul Aleem Khan I personally think that PTI should have been allotted the mark Training and salaries of teachers need to be improved After the election we will decide which party to go with PTI Legal initiatives have been ignored since May 9 is a red line for us. Country is important before now. Democracy is later. Tributes to martyrs in press conference. Gali and included Perjamail Shah in his caravan.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:44 am
Zohr	12:19 pm
Asr	3:50 pm
Maghrib	5:28 pm
Isha	6:55 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

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9215759-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

AIOU introduces Imam, Khateeb, IFTAA certificate level courses

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has recently offered certificate courses in "Iman and Khateeb" as well as IFTAA. The purpose of these courses is to train imams and khutba as per modern-day requirements so that they can play a more effective role in society. The duration of the certificate courses is 6 months, while the post graduate diploma in IFTAA lasts for one year. Admissions for these programs are open and can only be applied for online via the university's website www.aiou.edu.pk. Admission form and prospectus are available on the website. According to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, these courses have been introduced to train and strengthen Imams and Khateeb in their respective domain. These courses aim to make them aware of contemporary religious problems and their solutions. He congratulated Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies on the introduction of these courses.

Wasi Shah urges proactive role of youth for environmental protection

KARACHI: The Caretaker Minister of State for Tourism and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Syed Wasi Shah on Monday urged youth to actively engage in government's efforts aimed at alleviating impacts of climate change. He was addressing the closing ceremony of Prime Minister's Green Enovate Conference on liquid and solid Waste Management. The conference was jointly organized by Prime Minister Youth Programme Green Youth Movement (GYM) and Higher Education Commission Pakistan at IBA University Karachi. The state minister underscored the need of raising awareness about climate change, its grave implications, measures to subside its impacts and engagement of youth for the purpose assured every possible support for the cause of improving the environment.

TDCP invites Foreign Ambassadors to promote Cholistan Desert Rally 2024

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) in collaboration with Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation-PTDC hosted an Awareness & Outreach program at Islamabad for foreign ambassadors in Pakistan to showcase the Cholistan Desert Rally 2024, South Asia's biggest motor-sports event and cultural festival. The program aimed to highlight the tourism potential of southern Punjab and attract international participants for the upcoming rally. The Cholistan Desert Rally is an annual event organized by TDCP in the midst of the Cholistan Desert of Bahawalpur Division. The rally covers a distance of over 500 kilometers and features various categories of vehicles and drivers. The rally also showcases the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of the region, which is home to historical forts, temples, shrines, and wildlife. The Awareness & Outreach program was attended by

Commissioner Bahawalpur Dr. Ehtasham Anwar, MD-PTDC Rana Aftab-ur-Rehman, General Manager Operations TDCP Wahid Arjumand Zia and several foreign ambassadors and dignitaries. The guests were given a complete brief of the rally and its significance for the promotion of tourism and socio-economic development in southern Punjab. They were also shown the official promo and the dedicated website of the rally, as well as the trophy that will be awarded to the winners. Manager Operations TDCP Wahid Arjumand said, "We are delighted to have the opportunity to share our vision and passion for tourism with the foreign ambassadors. The Cholistan Desert Rally is not only a thrilling sports event, but also a platform to showcase the diversity and richness of our culture and heritage. We invite the international community to join us in celebrating this unique and spectacular event." Commissioner Bahawalpur Mr. Ehtisham Anwar said, "The



Cholistan Desert Rally has become a symbol of pride and identity for the people of Bahawalpur Division. The rally has brought positive attention and

recognition to our region, which has a lot to offer to the tourists. We welcome everyone to visit Bahawalpur and experience the glorious heritage of the Bahawalpur

State." MD-PTDC Rana Aftab-ur-Rehman said, "We are grateful to the foreign ambassadors for their interest and support in promot-

ing Pakistan's soft image. The tourism sector of Pakistan can give a boost to the economy and create employment opportunities for the local communities. We are committed to providing sustainable and quality tourism services and facilities to our guests." The foreign ambassadors appreciated the efforts made by TDCP and the Punjab Tourism Department to highlight the tourism glory of southern Punjab. They expressed their admiration for the Cholistan Desert Rally and its cultural and environmental aspects. They also expressed their willingness to participate and promote the event in their respective countries. The Cholistan Desert Rally 2024 is scheduled to take place from February 20-25 February, 2024. The rally is open to all national and international drivers and enthusiasts who want to experience the thrill and adventure of the desert. The registration and details of the rally can be found on the official website: www.cdr.tdcp.gov.pk.

Plantation

ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) busy in sapling plants on a green belt in front of Parliament House in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

China's Journey: Rising Above Challenges, Embracing Sustainable Growth

In the complex web of global economic intricacies, we witness the ascent of a nation that has not only carved out a remarkable success story on its own soil but has also emerged as a towering force on the global stage. China's journey is a continuation, where resilience, determination, and a commitment to navigate challenges have transformed it into a beacon of economic prowess. At the forefront of this transformative journey is the National Financial Regulatory Administration (NFRA), the driving force behind China's unwavering dedication to financial openness and security. This commitment is not merely a statement of intent; rather, it lays the groundwork for a robust and secure economic foundation upon which the nation's prosperity is built. As we delve into the intricate landscape of global economic dynamics, we find China navigating challenges with steadfast determination, spearheaded by the visionary initiatives of the NFRA. China's dedication to financial openness and security takes center stage as the NFRA strategically coordinates efforts to attract foreign investors while propelling the global expansion of Chinese firms. The commitment extends further with a bid to attract high-quality financial resources from around the world. China opens its doors to foreign institutions, encouraging their involvement in sectors such as wealth management, elderly care, healthcare, and non-performing asset disposal. This strategic move not only fosters international collaboration but positions China as a magnet for expertise and distinctive features from diverse corners of the globe. Highlighting confidence in China's market potential, global banking giant Standard Char-

tered announces plans to invest \$300 million by the end of 2024. The investment is strategically aligned with the nation's vision for diversified and sustainable financial services. Standard Chartered's focus areas include wealth management, retail banking, corporate and institutional banking, sustainability, and risk management. This substantial investment signals a robust partnership between the international financial sector and China's thriving economic landscape. The indomitable connection between China and Pakistan assumes a pivotal role, spotlighting a relationship founded on mutual solidarity and unwavering commitment. At the forefront of this robust alliance, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong emphatically reaffirms China's steadfast support for Pakistan, underscoring its significance on vital matters. This includes a dedicated commitment to upholding principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and fostering economic development within the region. This enduring friendship extends beyond diplomatic rhetoric; it serves as a cornerstone of China's foreign policy, embodying shared values and goals. Rooted in a history of collaboration and trust, the bond between these two nations transcends geographical boundaries, acting as a catalyst for mutual growth and prosperity. As China and Pakistan continue to stand shoulder to shoulder on the global stage, this enduring friendship stands as a testament to the strength of diplomatic ties and the potential for



Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

shared success in the realms of economic development and international cooperation. China's investment in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) yields tangible results. In December 2023 alone, Pakistan received \$56.9 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) from China. With a cumulative investment of \$292.8 million in the first six months of FY 2023-24, China remains the leading investor. Completed projects, including highways, power plants, and industrial parks, underscore the transformative impact of the CPEC initiative on regional development. China's GDP growth of 5.2 percent in 2023 surpasses not only annual targets but also the estimated average global growth of 3 percent. Premier Li Qiang underscores China's role as the world's largest growth engine, emphasizing global cooperation. Analysts commend China's steady economic growth, citing vibrant services sector spending, high-end manufacturing, and progress in foreign trade activities. As China strides into 2024, the outlook is optimistic despite global challenges. Projections from international organizations signal China's significant potential for expansion. Experts suggest a GDP growth target of 5 percent, highlighting China's ability to guide green consumption and investment as part of its commitment to sustainable development. China's steady progress has not only transformed its domestic landscape but has also become a beacon of hope and cooperation worldwide.

For Pakistan, this global symbol holds immense significance. As Pakistan seeks to navigate its own set of challenges and envisions a future of sustained prosperity, aligning with China offers a strategic pathway toward realizing these goals. The deepening collaboration between China and Pakistan signifies more than just economic ties; it represents a shared commitment to inclusivity, cooperation, and a sustained pursuit of prosperity. For Pakistan, this partnership with China is not merely a transactional alliance; it is a strategic choice that aligns with its vision for economic growth, technological advancement, and social development. In joining hands with China, Pakistan looks forward to leveraging the economic strength and global influence of its ally. The collaboration aims to bring about transformative changes, bolstering sectors such as infrastructure, technology, and trade. Furthermore, Pakistan seeks to tap into the lessons of success from China's own development journey, embracing the possibilities that arise when two nations come together for mutual benefit. In essence, the unfolding tapestry of global progress sees China not only as a testament to the possibilities of economic strength but also as a partner in the pursuit of global well-being. As Pakistan charts its course for the future, collaboration with China becomes a cornerstone, weaving a narrative of shared progress, prosperity, and a brighter future for both nations. (The author is Secretary General at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Pakistan-China Friendship Association and a Media Consultant based in Peshawar, can be reached at syed.gilani@gmail.com.)

Director General of Sindh Food Authority Commends Sunridge Foods for Fortification & Exemplary

PPA



ISLAMABAD: Agha Fakhar Hussain, the Director General of the Sindh Food Authority (SFA), and his team carried out a thorough assessment of food processing facilities during their visit to Sunridge Flour Mill and Unity Foods Edible Oil Refinery at Port Qasim. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate and applaud the hygiene, safety, and quality standards implemented by these leading entities in the food industry. Mr. Hussain, DG Sindh Food Authority, praised Sunridge Flour Mill for its outstanding commitment to hygiene policies and stringent food safety measures. He expressed, "The impressive hygiene standards and food safety measures observed at Sunridge deserve recognition. We aim to raise awareness about the adoption of such rigorous hygiene practices and food safety measures among industries in Sindh." Mr. Hussain underscored the importance of highlighting such exemplary practices for other food businesses. He expressed, "Following our visit to Sunridge, we aim to use their example to inspire and guide other food businesses and industries, showcasing Sunridge as a model to follow." The Director General looks forward to fostering a continued connection with Sunridge Foods, expecting them to not only maintain their current standards but also lead in adopting new innovations and rules for the entire industry. The visit exemplifies Sunridge Foods' dedication to providing fortified products and upholding the utmost standards of food safety and hygiene, in alignment with international standards.

Speakers for capacity building of women political leaders at grass-root level

PPA



ISLAMABAD: Creating an enabling environment to build capacity of women leaders in politics at the grass-root level is crucial to increase their participation and representation in higher power corridors, said the speakers at a Master class titled "Women's Campaign Readiness Program", organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and partners here on Monday. Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI remarked that empowerment of women calls for increasing their effective participation in power corridors and their representation should be supported with sufficient financial allocation. He stressed that the capacity of women leaders should be built from grassroots level which is only possible by engaging with them. He said that only they can enlighten us about the challenges that confront them especially when conducting electoral campaigns, media engagement and different challenges due to media engagement. Senator Seemi Ezdi addressing the session, said that when it comes to political activism and engagement, women face additional challenges as they are engaged in domestic work and must look after their families as well. Senator Fawzia Arshad said that there is no denial that women face much more challenges in politics than their male counterparts, but they must remain positive and become saviors rather than victim. Senator Naemna Kishwar Khan urged that local government systems should be strengthened for effective service delivery to the people. Ms. Aisha Sayed, Former Member National Assembly shared her journey into politics and stressed that beginning political journey from the grass-root level equips women leaders with diverse experiences and knowledge of the issues of the common public. Abdullah Khalid, Project Coordinator, SDPI shedding light on the initiative taken by SDPI informed that the program has been designed with the aim to build capacity of women to increase their active and efficient role in political and electoral reforms. He informed that the training curriculum is based on the need assessment conducted in consultation with political parties as key stakeholders. Participants of the Masterclass comprised of elected and aspiring local government representatives from Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
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 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
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 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Pak-China meet on Future of CPEC - II

Efforts will include public-private partnerships, comprehensive geological surveys, and international technical collaborations. This approach aims to bring substantial foreign investment and advanced mining technologies to Pakistan. The exploitation of these mineral reserves is expected to significantly boost Pakistan's GDP, spur new industrial sectors, and lead towards energy self-sufficiency, setting the country on a path towards a diversified and robust economic landscape.

Hopefully, the meeting will also focus on exploitation of Pakistan's extensive coastline along the Arabian Sea, a gateway to untapped economic opportunities, poised for transformation through CPEC-2 and SIFC. This coastline, strategically situated on major shipping routes, holds immense potential for boosting maritime trade and shipping industries, both cargo and passenger.

Additionally, the region's natural beauty offers significant prospects for tourism development, from luxury resorts to eco-tourism. The fertile marine life along the coast presents opportunities for a sustainable fishing industry, capable of bolstering food

security and export revenues. However, tapping into this wealth requires considerable investment in infrastructure, sustainable practices, and an integrated approach to coastal development.

CPEC-2 and SIFC are ideally positioned to catalyze this transformation. They can drive infrastructure development by building advanced harbor facilities, upgrading existing ports, and establishing new maritime routes.

developing Pakistan's coastal areas could be profound. It promises not only enhanced economic growth through trade, tourism, and fisheries but also a significant upliftment of local communities. The creation of a myriad of job opportunities across sectors will lead to improved living standards and community development. Furthermore, a vibrant coastal economy will bolster Pakistan's international standing as a key mari-

time player and a desirable tourist destination. This strategic development, if executed with foresight and sustainability, has the potential to reshape the socio-economic fabric of Pakistan, bringing prosperity and growth while preserv-

Analysis



Qamar Bashir



Babri Mosque

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on Monday a grand new Hindu temple built on the ruins of a historic mosque in the town of Ayodhya, in a religious spectacle taking place ahead of elections in the country.

The temple, built at an estimated cost of \$217 million, lies atop the debris of the 16th-century Babri Mosque, which was torn down in 1992 by Hindu mobs who believed it was built on temple ruins marking the birthplace of Hinduism's Lord Ram.

The site has long been a religious flashpoint for the two communities, with the mosque's demolition sparking communal violence throughout India that left 2,000 people dead, most of them Muslims.

The construction of the temple is a central promise of Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, and the opening has turned into a massive national event attended by more than 7,000 special guests and watched by millions across the country in various live screenings planned by the government.

"This is the temple of India's vision, India's philosophy, India's direction. This is the temple of national consciousness in the form of Ram," Modi said in a speech.

"The construction of this temple of Lord Ram is also a symbol of peace, patience, mutual harmony, and coordination of Indian society. We are seeing that this construction is not giving birth to any fire, but to energy."

Though the temple is still under construction, Monday's ceremony was widely seen as Modi delivering on a crucial Hindu nationalist pledge and was expected to increase his chances of clinching a record third successive term by drawing on the religious sentiment of Hindus, who make up 80 percent of India's 1.4 billion population, as the nation heads to elections between April and May this year.

The Ram temple has also sparked concerns over the future of secularism in India.

"We have lost the constitutional way of life. We have by all practical purposes declared that we are no longer a secular state and that means the end of rule of law, that also means the end of democracy because Modi has been behaving more in monarchical fashion," India, with Modi as its head, was "no longer a secular state," said Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, who wrote the book on the Lord Ram temple project titled "The Demolition, The Verdict, and The Temple."

"The construction of Ram temple cannot be a moment of glory for Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. It's meant for Hindus, and the BJP will go to Hindus and ask for rewards and the rewards are votes.

SIFC's role in attracting both local and international investment is crucial, particularly in initiating public-private partnerships for diverse projects, ranging from tourism to marine conservation. The socio-economic impact of fully

time player and a desirable tourist destination. This strategic development, if executed with foresight and sustainability, has the potential to reshape the socio-economic fabric of Pakistan, bringing prosperity and growth while preserv-

This groundwork promises to offer an advantageous starting point for the new administration, which will have the opportunity to propel these initiatives forward. Leveraged by the collective wisdom and intellectual contributions of representatives from across Pakistan, the new government will be well-positioned to elevate these projects to new heights, thereby catalyzing significant qualitative and quantitative uplift in the lives of the Pakistani people.

Writer is former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC



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

Mature Response on Iranian Aggression - I

Pakistan, endowed with a strategic geopolitical position and a wealth of cultural heritage, has consistently played a pivotal role in international diplomacy. Over time, the nation has exhibited notable diplomatic acumen in navigating intricate global challenges, forging alliances, and contributing to regional peace and stability.

Actively fostering strategic partnerships worldwide, Pakistan has cultivated particularly strong ties with China, resulting in a robust economic and strategic collaboration, exemplified by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative. In addition to this, Pakistan has maintained enduring alliances with nations like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United States, skillfully balancing relations in a complex international landscape.

Pakistan's diplomatic endeavors have frequently focused on promoting peaceful resolutions to regional conflicts. The nation has played a pivotal role in facilitating talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, aiming to bring stability to Afghanistan. Moreover, Pakistan has advocated for dialogue between India and Pakistan to address longstanding disputes, emphasizing the significance of diplomacy over confrontation.

A key pillar of Pakistan's foreign diplomacy lies in its commitment to global counterterrorism efforts. Actively participating in international collaborations, Pakistan shares intelligence and coordinates efforts with various countries. The nation's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism have gained recognition from the international community, underscoring its responsible role in addressing global security challenges.

Pakistani troops have a strong tradition of contributing to international peacekeeping missions under the United Nations, deploying to conflict zones worldwide to provide stability and support conflict resolution efforts. This reflects Pakistan's steadfast commitment to global peace and security.

The humanitarian dimension of Pakistan's diplomacy is evident in its response to various crises. Actively

participating in providing humanitarian assistance to countries affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and health emergencies, Pakistan has solidified its standing as a compassionate and responsible global actor.

Economic diplomacy holds a central position in Pakistan's foreign relations strategy. Actively seeking foreign investments, trade partnerships, and economic collaborations, the country engages in regional and global forums such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to create a conducive environment for economic development.

Effectively leveraging its soft power, including rich cultural heritage, arts, and literature, Pakistan has employed cultural diplomacy initiatives like exchange programs, film festivals, and educational partnerships to showcase its diversity and foster understanding among different cultures.

Pakistan consistently demonstrates a mature and civilized demeanor in its interactions on the global stage. The approach of a civilized nation to foreign relations reflects its dedication to diplomacy, collaboration, and responsible global citizenship. A mature foreign relations strategy is marked by a nuanced comprehension of international dynamics, a commitment to peace, and a focus on collaborative solutions to worldwide challenges.

Pakistan is recognized as a peaceful nation that refrains from interfering in the affairs of other countries. The country's campaign against terrorism has been a multifaceted and intricate endeavor influenced by both domestic and international factors. Positioned as a frontline state in the global fight against terrorism, Pakistan has encountered numerous challenges, but it has also made substantial progress in addressing extremism and fostering regional stability.

Pakistan's involvement in the anti-terrorism effort traces back to the 1980s Soviet-Afghan War, where it played a crucial role in supporting the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation. However, the aftermath saw the emergence of extremist elements in the region, finding refuge and backing in the porous border

regions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The events of September 11, 2001, marked a pivotal moment for Pakistan's role in global counter-terrorism. In response to international pressure and recognizing the threat to its own stability, Pakistan became a key ally in the War on Terror. This decision resulted in heightened military operations and counter-terrorism measures within Pakistan's borders.

Several military operations, including Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad, were conducted to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries and dismantle their infrastructure in tribal areas and urban centers, respectively. These efforts significantly degraded the operational capabilities of various militant groups. In recognizing the necessity for a comprehensive approach, Pakistan implemented socio-economic and educational reforms to address the root causes of extremism. Initiatives focused on poverty alleviation, education, and employment opportunities aimed to create an environment less conducive to the recruitment of individuals into terrorist organizations.

Pakistan actively sought international cooperation in its fight against terrorism, collaborating with neighboring countries, particularly Afghanistan, and engaging in information-sharing with global partners. Despite occasional challenges in relations with the United States and Afghanistan, Pakistan remains dedicated to regional stability and countering transnational terrorist threats.

However, the war against terrorism in Pakistan has not been without challenges. Internal challenges include the existence of terrorist safe havens, a complex socio-political landscape, and the necessity for sustained economic development. External factors, such as strained relations with neighboring India and Afghanistan, have occasionally impeded collaborative efforts. The future of Pakistan's anti-terrorism efforts hinges on sustained actions across multiple domains, including continued military operations, intelligence sharing, regional cooperation, and addressing root causes such as poverty and lack of education. As geopolitical dynamics evolve, maintaining a delicate balance in international relations will be crucial for Pakistan's success in countering terrorism.

To be continued

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

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

When individuals have access to quality healthcare, adequate nutrition, and other necessities, they are better equipped to lead productive lives. Good health acts as a catalyst for economic growth by reducing absenteeism, increasing worker productivity, and lowering healthcare expenses. Moreover, societies that prioritize healthcare can better ease the impact of pandemics, epidemics, and other health crises enabling them to sustain economic activities even in difficult times.

Education is the cornerstone of societal development and economic growth. Investments in education facilitate the development of human capital, fostering innovation, and encouraging creativity. By offering quality education to all members of society, a nation expands its talent pool, improves workforce skills, and attracts investment. This creates an environment conducive for innovation and entrepreneurship leading to economic diversification and a higher standard of living for its citizens. As we move forward, it is crucial for policymakers, businesses, and citizens to recognize the vital role played by societal well-being in fostering economic develop-

ment. When a majority of citizens have access to economic opportunities, they become active participants in the economy-driving consumer spending innovation, and entrepreneurship. By ensuring the well-being of citizens, societies can create the necessary conditions for growth, innovation, and sustainability.

Pakistan's economic future lies in a steady environment, free from the shackles of violence and conflict. Peace education, as the bedrock of this environment, offers a comprehensive framework for fostering understanding, tolerance, and conflict resolution skills among individuals. By incorporating peace education into the national curriculum, Pakistan can thrive economically attracting investment. By investing in renewable energy sources, reducing carbon emissions, and adopting sustainable practices, a nation can mitigate the impact of climate change on its economy. This leads to long-term stability and resilience, ensuring economic prosperity for future generations. Moreover, peace education creates a society that actively works towards inclusive growth and equal opportunities for all its citizens. Therefore, it is crucial that Pakistan takes the necessary steps to prioritize peace education as it paves the way for a prosperous and peaceful future.

Writer is Postdoctoral Fellow in International Islamic University Islamabad

Pakistani, Chinese children celebrate Chinese New Year with joy, unity

Xinhua

ISLAMABAD: As the mercury falls to single digits in Pakistan's federal capital, Islamabad, making the weather chilly and foggy on Sunday, a hotel hall decorated with traditional Chinese red lanterns was a source of warmth and coziness for people gathered to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year.

Buzzing with slogans of "Long Live Pakistan-China Friendship," the hall was filled with people from both Pakistan and China, including teachers, students, and volunteers.

During the event, a dazzling array of performances, including traditional dances, sitcoms, and Kung Fu, by Pakistani and Chinese children, filled the hearts of the audience with joy, peace, and harmony.

The gala was kicked off by a classical dance, "Flying Swallow," performed by Chinese girl Liu Huijun. "The flying swallows symbolize the return of spring to the earth. I hope to bring New Year blessings to Pakistani friends through this dance," she said.

Donning a glittery golden gown, Sidra Sajjad, an 8-year-old student and

dance performer, was all smiles when she was inquired about her dress and performance during the event.

"Today I am wearing my best golden gown to perform a song that highlights the strong and sweet friendship between Pakistan and China ... My Chinese friends have also performed, and the traditional dresses they were wearing truly enticed me," Sajjad told Xinhua.

Sobia Adnan, director of Islamabad China-Pakistan Youth One Heart Step and Cure Home (ICOSH), a China-funded orphanage in Islamabad, where the majority of Pakistani children who joined the gala came from, said that the Chinese New Year celebrations light up the faces of orphans as they are relishing moments of joy and happiness together with their Chinese friends.

"Both cultures of Pakistan and China are humane and beautiful ... The gala can prove that we are the one and forever friends. We are thankful to the Chinese people for being a ray of hope for these underprivileged children in Pakistan," she said.

Shifa Butt, who instructs Pakistani

children to perform a dance called "Mother," said that the gratitude expressed by this dance is similar to the Chinese filial piety culture and that both countries' cultures promote positive values.

The dance performed by Pakistani children also moved a Chinese boy, Ma Yusheng, who performed a so-called "Kemusan" dance, the latest internet hit in China, translated as "Subject Three" dance, pushing the gala to a new high. "I have been rehearsing hard for several days, just hoping to bring you joy today, and my performance is not bad!" he said.

Speaking to Xinhua on the occasion, Asma Munir Salman, a school leader of Great Maple School, Rawalpindi, said that attending such cultural events has always been exciting and exhilarating.

"Both countries' children used music and art to demonstrate the concepts of cultural mutual learning, peace and inclusiveness, which set a good example for the world today ... We are very happy to be here at this event and we all know that culture, music, and arts have no boundaries and borders," she said.

In her school, Salman said many



Pakistani students are learning Chinese language, culture and Chinese martial arts, adding that the way children are accepting each other's cultures is heartening as it fosters global understanding and promotes peaceful relations among nations.

Talking to Xinhua, Ma Bin, president of the China-Pak Educational Cultural Institute (CPECI), who organized the event, said the purpose of the party is to let children from both countries share the joy and peace of the Chinese New Year.

"Chinese cultural thought has always advocated cultural equality and inclusiveness. We hope that children from both countries can appreciate each other's culture through mutual exchanges and artistic performances," he said.

Biggest Data Migration – K-Electric Signs Agreement with SAP

PPA

ISLAMABAD: K-Electric has decided to upgrade its SAP platform to S/4HANA Rise which is a Cloud Computing SAP software. The purpose of this data migration on cloud is to enhance the overall productivity of the company. The agreement was signed between Systems Limited, SAP and K-Electric, during SAP's Discovery Day event, held in Karachi. K-Electric will shift the entire SAP landscape onto the Cloud, making it one of the largest data migrations in the region.

Moonis Alvi, Chief Executive Officer, K-Electric; stated, "At K-Electric, we remain committed to placing our customers at the heart of all our endeavors. As the sole vertically integrated enter-



prise in Pakistan's power sector, we hold the distinctive capacity to generate, transmit, and distribute power to our extensive customer base. The signing of this agreement with SAP and Systems Limited,

marks a pivotal milestone, heralding the most expansive data migration within the regional power sector."

Asif Peer, Group CEO & MD, Systems Limited, further commented, "Our

association with K-Electric in this monumental and substantial data migration stands as a source of immense pride, underscoring the dedication and proficiency of our adept team. Undoubtedly,

ly, this represents a turning point for K-Electric operations and our responsibilities and adds to SAP's achievements in Pakistan."

Sharing his thoughts, Saquib Ahmad, Managing Director, SAP Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, remarked, "This agreement stands as a significant triumph for SAP's contribution to the digital transformation of Pakistan and marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of Pakistan's energy utility sector.

SAP solutions have provided ease in business operations, with increased transparency and customized solutions to the requirements of the company.

Systems Limited will be deploying the state-of-the-art S/4HANA Cloud computing system at K-Electric.

Pakistani envoy, Czech minister review ties



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ambassador to the Czech Republic Ayesha Ali met with Deputy Minister for Interior Lukas Hendrych here on Monday. They discussed possibilities to further enhance cooperation between Pakistan and the Czech Republic.

In a post on X, she said she had an excellent meeting with the Deputy Minister. "We discussed all matters of mutual interest particularly enhancing Pakistan-Czech Republic cooperation," she added.

China to magnify literary exchanges with South Asia

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Centre for China-South Asia Literary Exchanges of China Writers Association (Chengdu) was launched in Chengdu to enhance literary exchanges between China and South Asian countries through forums, seminars, training, mutual translation of literary works from both sides, etc. According to Hou Zhiming, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group and Executive Vice Chairman of the Sichuan Writers Association, the Center will be built into an international platform for writer exchange, literary work mutual translation and publication, literary exhibition, regional literary research, literary copyright trade and protection between China and South Asian countries, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday.

Additionally, an international book fair for South Asian literary works, the China-South Asia Literature Forum and the China-South Asia Literature Training Seminar for Youth will be held soon.

Walee takes over Operational Management of Snack Video Pakistan

PPA

PAKISTAN : WALEE, MENAP's largest creator economy player, is thrilled to announce a landmark strategic move - the take over of operating rights for the Snack Video platform in Pakistan. This take over not only strengthens Walee's position in digital content, live-streaming, AdTech, and gaming services but also revolutionizes the creator economy in the region.

Muhammad Ahsan Tahir, Group CEO of Walee, shares his vision "We're embarking on a transformative journey. This take over signifies a quantum leap in our capabilities, allowing us to bring unparalleled digital experiences to Pakistan. Our focus will



be on leveraging Snack Video's dynamic platform to introduce cutting-edge content,

advanced AdTech solutions, and immersive gaming experiences. We are particular-

ly excited about integrating Augmented Reality features, offering an unmatched brand-

ing experience to advertisers and brands in Pakistan."

Owen (秦扬), Head of South Asia and South East Asia at Snack Video, comments on the partnership:

Enhanced Branding and Advertising Solutions: With its unique Data Management Platform, Walee will offer hyper-targeted advertising, unprecedented contextual marketing, and enhanced campaign monitoring, setting new standards in the advertising realm.

Commitment to the Creator Economy: As a pioneer in Pakistan's creator economy, Walee's investment will empower both digital and analog creators, addressing challenges in the media supply chain and fostering inclusive growth.

PIDE Unveils Groundbreaking Reform Manifesto

PPA

ISLAMABAD :The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has unveiled a game-changing report named the "PIDE Reform Manifesto" at the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad. Based on the research done by the Institute in the last four years, and the various conferences, seminars and consultative meetings, this manifesto is not just a document; it is a visionary roadmap poised to revolutionize both the economic landscape and societal fabric of Pakistan. Delving into the core imperative of implementing substantial reforms, the manifesto is a compelling call to action for a brighter future, shaping a narrative of progress and transformation in the heart of Islamabad.

As the chief guest of the ceremony, Caretaker Federal Minister of Information, Murtaza

Solangi, announced that the upcoming elections would take place on Thursday, February 8, 2024. Minister Solangi reassured the public that all assumptions and rumors surrounding the elections had been addressed, creating an environment of transparency and credibility in the electoral process.

Minister Solangi also called for democratic attitudes within political parties, asserting that fostering such values is pivotal for the country's progress. With a hopeful tone, he expressed confidence that these collective efforts would lead to solutions for the real problems facing the nation.

In his opening remarks Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), said that the economic challenges facing Pakistan persist despite 24 IMF programs, leaving the nation on the brink of default

and trapped in a cycle of current account and fiscal deficits. Excessive government regulation, particularly from a bureaucratic system inherited from colonial times, hampers the formal market, with the government's interference estimated at 64% of the economy.

Despite these challenges, hope lies in Pakistan's youthful population, yearning for change. Dr. Haque's proposed deep reforms advocate for a complete overhaul of governance structures, including the bureaucracy, judiciary, and democratic systems, to harness the potential of the 21st century.

Dr. Durre Nayab, Pro Vice Chancellor PIDE, highlighted the critical challenges facing Pakistan, emphasizing that addressing the changing demography and managing the escalating debt burden requires sustained and elevated economic growth.

According to PIDE estimates, the demographic bulge is projected to persist until 2056, necessitating the addition of over two million new jobs annually for the next thirty years.

In a candid statement, Dr. Ahmed Waqar Qasim, Senior Research Economist PIDE, highlighted the significant challenges posed by Pakistan's civil bureaucracy, operating within a system devised during colonial times. Emphasizing the outdated nature of bureaucratic structures and policy processes, he expressed concern over their incapacity to effectively address the complexities of the modern world.

Dr. Qasim further highlighted the bureaucratic hurdles impeding growth, innovation, and development. Unnecessary regulatory burdens, dead capital, and policy control hinder progress, creating a management system resistant to professionalization



and modernization. The PIDE Team conveyed crucial insights. In a stark depiction of Pakistan's economic challenges, a recent report underscores the nation's ongoing struggle to stabilize its economy, despite undergoing 24 International Monetary Fund (IMF)

programs. The document highlights a troubling investment climate characterized by excessive and unwise government regulation, which has effectively hampered the formal market and elevated the informal sector as the primary source of economic opportunities.

The event served as a convergence point for a diverse array of stakeholders, bringing together policymakers, practitioners, professionals, the business community, private-sector investors, analysts, academics, researchers, policy experts, and youth representatives.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
63,939.41	63,282.22
Day's High	Day's Low
64,090.88	63,139.72
Index Value	Change
9,933,180,552	+657.19
Percentage	Time
+1.04%	22 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,487.71	+25.78
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	22 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
37,991.59	+127.79
Percentage	Time
+0.34%	22 Jan, 11:49 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
36,546.95	+583.68
Percentage	Time
+1.62%	22 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	183.8
Bahrain Dinar	744.15	752.15
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	39.32	39.72
Danish Krone	40.88	41.28
Euro	305	308
Hong Kong Dollar	35.79	36.14
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.02	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	906.1	915.1
Malaysian Ringgit	59.32	59.92
New Zealand \$	170.82	172.82
Norwegians Krone	26.7	27
Omani Riyal	726.76	734.76
Qatari Riyal	76.87	77.57
Saudi Riyal	74.45	75.2
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.75	27.05
Swiss Franc	322.25	324.75
Thai Bhat	7.87	8.02
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77.3
UK Pound Sterling	354.5	358
US Dollar	279.3	281.3

Numerous SOEs causing economic harm: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, President All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that continued high inflation has made life very difficult for the people.

He claimed that it is incorrect to attribute the inflation to the IMF's requirements because numerous state-run businesses are partly to blame for the current state of affairs.

According to Mian Zahid Hussain, we should take responsibility for our own economic shortcomings as they are the cause of the lender's strict requirements.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that electricity, gas, and

oil prices have increased tremendously. At the same time, interest rates were also raised to a record level of 22%, which badly affected people and the business community.

However, these measures improved the country's financial affairs, which were on the verge, he added. In addition, he said, the government should have taken some steps to relieve the commoner, but this did not happen.

The business leader said indirect taxation is also a problem for the man on the street. The share of these direct taxes in total revenue is still between 75 and 80 percent.

Indirect tax is easy to collect but increases inflation and poverty, while collecting direct tax is difficult but does not affect people experiencing poverty.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the ratio of the direct tax rate in the country is very low, and



there seems to be a need for more will among authorities to increase it.

He noted that efforts to reduce mismanage-

ment, corruption, incompetence, and losses in electricity, oil, and gas have not succeeded for decades. The questionable policy of continuously increasing the price of these items has been adopted, increasing poverty in the country.

The high cost of power, gas, and fuel is hitting production and exports, and it has not made any significant difference to the losses of these sectors, while circular loans reached Rs 6,000 billion.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that continued borrowing from banks, without increasing production, has increased inflation in the country. At the same time, the private sector has been crowded out of the debt market.

Because of the election, the party that comes to power will have to abandon harmful policies; otherwise, the country's economic situation will further deteriorate.

Traditional Tea

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is pouring traditional Kashmiri tea in cups for customers at his roadside set-up during cold weather, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

National Level Operation against Non-Duty Paid/Counterfeit Cigarettes

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Designated teams of Inland Revenue Service Officers (FBR) have successfully conducted a National Level Operation against illicit tobacco trade. A total number of 1,377 Packerites (13.77 Million cigarette sticks) of non-duty paid/counterfeit cigarettes of local as well as

of foreign brands have been seized/confiscated.

Member Inland Revenue Operations, Mir Badshah Khan Wazir supervised the whole exercise. It was further resolved that any sort of evasion of Government's revenue shall be dealt with iron hand and culprits shall directly be liable for penal proceedings.

PTCL, Huawei conduct 50G-PON trial to pioneer Next Generation Fiber Optic Broadband in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the country's leading broadband service provider, proudly announces the successful completion of the country's first successful trial of 50G-PON technology, marking a historic stride towards the introduction of next-generation fiber-optic broadband services in Pakistan. This groundbreaking achievement is a result of PTCL's strategic partnership with Huawei, a global leader in information and communication technology.

50G-PON, defined by ITU-T as a next-generation Passive Optical Network-based broadband technology, is set to revolutionize Pakistan's digital landscape. With significantly higher capabilities than the existing GPON and XG(S)-PON technologies, 50G-PON delivers an astounding 50 Gbps per PON port. The technology is poised to reshape future requirements related to Industries, Enterprises, Campuses and Home Environments, as the advancement unlocks the infinite potential for bandwidth-intensive & low-latency next-generation services. Key use cases include evolution towards Holographic Technologies, XR based Metaverse in home & workplace, Smart Manufacturing based on 3D Machine Vision, Remote Surgery and Medical Clinics, High Performance

Gaming, etc. It will also be a valuable tool for business and enterprise services, and is well-suited to serve Smart Campuses, Video Production Studios, Edge Data Centers and Cloud-Centric SMEs and SoHos, etc.

One of the remarkable features of 50G-PON technology is its ability to coexist seamlessly with GPON and XG(S)-PON over the same physical and passive optical network. This will allow PTCL to provide significantly higher broadband speeds for its customers through an on-demand service upgrade request.

Group Chief Technology and Information Officer (GCTIO), PTCL & Ufone 4G, Jafar Khalid, expressed his enthusiasm on this momentous occasion, stating, "PTCL has achieved another milestone by delivering Pakistan's first-ever trial of 50G-PON technology. In our ongoing commitment to lead the market in offering next-generation broadband services, PTCL's collaboration with Huawei on 50G-PON is a massive step towards the future evolution of fiber broadband in Pakistan."

As PTCL continues to spearhead innovations in the telecommunications sector, the successful trial of 50G-PON technology and its eventual commercial realization reaffirms our dedication to providing cutting-edge solutions that will propel Pakistan into a digitally advanced era.

DG NADRA visits ICCI to discuss opening of NADRA Facilitation Desk in Chamber

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Zulfqar Ahmed, Director General, Islamabad, NADRA visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to discuss the feasibility of opening the NADRA Facilitation Desk in ICCI.

Zulfqar Ahmed said that the role of the business community is very important in the economic development of the country and NADRA is ready to open its Facilitation Desk in ICCI premises to facilitate businessmen in NADRA-related services. He said that the NADRA Desk in ICCI would also provide e-Sahulat services to facilitate the business community in payment and collection transactions. He said that ICCI should also approach the Passport Office to start its services in the NADRA Facilitation Desk so that the business community can also avail of both services in ICCI. The e-Sahulat is a network of active franchisees connected with telcos and banks to facilitate in payment and collection transactions.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry thanked Chairman NADRA for taking prompt action on ICCI's proposal for opening a Facilitation Desk and sending a senior officer to ICCI to study its feasibility. He said that the availability of the NADRA



Facilitation Desk in ICCI would be a great positive development for the benefit of the business community. He said that ICCI would also coordinate with the Passport Office to provide services of both organizations from the NADRA Facilitation Desk.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI also welcomed the initiative of NADRA to open its Facilitation Desk in ICCI and said that it would save time of the business community in availing of NADRA services.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI, and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that ICCI has already opened Facilitation Desks of some other organizations, and the opening of NADRA Facilitation Desk would be another great achievement to facilitate the business community. Mian Akram Farid, Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Rizwan Cheena, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Ms. Shumaila Siddiqui, and others were also present on the occasion.

Rising challenges to legitimate tobacco sector, industry decries lack of enforcement measures

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Representatives from PTC on Monday expressed deep concerns over the sustainability of its business as a result of inappropriate policy measures and the alarming rise in illicit trade.

The recent data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) Index, has highlighted a significant and concerning trend within the legitimate tobacco sector.

According to the latest statistics, the production of the legitimate tobacco sector has fallen four times more than the overall LSM Output during July '23 to November '23, however, the consumption of cigarettes has remained stagnant. This distressing

trend underscores the adverse impact of policy decisions that have disproportionately affected the legitimate tobacco industry. A comprehensive and balanced approach to ensure a level playing field for the legitimate tobacco sector is imperative to ensure long term sustainability.

Despite the implementation of a Track & Trace System (TTS), rising incidence of fake stamps being affixed on counterfeit packs of leading cigarette brands was also a key issue shared by the representatives. "Around 850 million counterfeit cigarette sticks are currently being sold all across Pakistan including major metro cities like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. This figure stands equivalent to 42.5 million packs featuring fake stamps,

resulting in substantial loss of approximately PKR 5.7 billion to Pakistan", said Qasim Tariq, Senior Business Development Manager.

Rising counterfeit draws seri-



ous questions on the efficacy of the much-lauded track and trace system which is yet to be implemented across local cigarette manufacturers in Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK). The representatives urged the

Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) with jurisdiction to conduct extensive enforcement at retail level against this rising menace.

The representatives also shared their concerns about a recent misleading report making rounds in the media pertaining to missed revenue collection of the FBR. The claims made in the report, are not only false but also raise questions regarding the intentions behind publishing such a report. The report claims that the illicit sector is less than 10% across Pakistan. It is surprising that this number goes against even what the FBR itself claims of illicit trade being more than 36.2% for the period in question.

Secondly, the report claimed that government revenue declined due to fiscal changes in the excise struc-

ture but stops short of revealing the complete picture. Between 2012 - 2016, the government switched to a 2-Tier structure from a 3-Tier Structure which was implemented in Pakistan since 1992. This caused revenues to fall by more than 25% due to above inflation excise increase in 2015-16 and illicit trade hovered close to 50% of the market, as it is today. To curb the menace of illicit trade the government decided to re-introduce a 3-Tier system which not only increased revenues by more than 40% but also discouraged illicit cigarette trade.

Extensive government-led national anti-illicit trade strategy, effective fiscal measures and strict enforcement against illicit trade across the value chain with key focus on retail level is the need of the hour.

PPL-funded Women Vocational Training Centre in Punjab commences operations



PPA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Limited-financed Women Vocational Training Centre (WVTC) in District Okara, Punjab has commenced operations.

An amount of Rs. 50 million has been allotted by PPL for the project over a five-year period with the first tranche of Rs. 10 million already handed over to Behbud Association of Pakistan (BAP), the implementing partner. The project will impart vocational training to around 3,000 women, enabling them to earn livelihood through sale of their products.

SCCI meeting held

SIALKOT, JAN 22 (APP): A meeting of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Departmental Committee on Employers and Workers/Vendors Disputes was held.

Committee Chairperson Lubna Tabasum chaired the meeting and discussed important issues related to disputes between employers and workers. Moreover, a representative from the labour department, Sialkot, was also present in the meeting and assured the department's full cooperation with the members of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). During the meeting, various suggestions from the committee members were given in order to develop a dedicated system for the facilitation of the members of the chamber. It was decided that meetings with officials of the labour department, social security, and Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) would be planned soon, so that joint efforts for the betterment of the Sialkot business community could be materialised.

Mohsin Naqvi appointed as new PCB chairman

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Monday appointed Mohsin Naqvi as the Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). According to the sources, the interim PM approved the resignation of Zaka Ashraf from the position of Chairman of PCB and named Mohsin Naqvi as the new head of PCB. It is pertinent to mention here that



Mohsin Naqvi is currently performing the duties of caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab.

Last week, after serving for at least seven months as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee chairman Zaka Ashraf stepped down from his position. Sources told that Zaka Ashraf submitted his resignation as Chairman Management Committee and Member Board of Governor (BoG). In a statement, Ashraf said he was working for the betterment of Pakistan cricket. However, expressing disappointment over the working conditions, he said he was unable to work amid such circumstances. "It's not the prime minister's prerogative to nominate new chairman," he added. Ashraf-led PCB Management Committee was formed in July 2023 for four months, by caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar, using his prerogative as patron of the PCB.

Faisalabad clinches Rising Punjab Games hockey, volleyball titles

Tahir Amin Malik

Faisalabad division hockey and volleyball teams with some marvelous performances won Rising Punjab Games 2024 hockey and volleyball titles at Nishtar Park Sports Complex on Monday. Faisalabad edged out Sargodha by 3-2 in a nerve-wrecking hockey final at the National Hockey Stadium while in volleyball championship, Faisalabad outplayed Gujranwala division by 3-0 with the set score of 25-17, 25-23 and 25-12 at Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall. Faisalabad edged out Sargodha by 3-2 in a nerve-wrecking hockey final at the National Hockey Stadium while in volleyball championship, Faisalabad outplayed Gujranwala division by 3-0 with the set score of 25-17, 25-23 and 25-12 at Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall. Wahab Riaz awarded winners' trophy and cash prize of Rs 25 lakh to Faisalabad hockey team while the runners up Sargodha team pocketed Rs 15 lakh. Talking to media at hockey championship, Wahab Riaz said the top performing players in the Rising



Punjab Games will be given Rs 70,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 stipends per month in three categories A, B and C. In the final hockey match, Faisalabad team managed to open their account in the 27th minute after a hard struggle when Hassan scored a beautiful goal with his field effort. Sargodha's Rana Waleed responded in

the very next minute when netted a field goal to level the score. Five minutes later, Faisalabad again took the lead when Naveed converted a penalty corner in the 33rd minute. Faisalabad's Abdullah Yousef strengthened his team's position by scoring another field goal in the 39th minute to make the score 3-1. Both the teams attacked each other's goals several

times in the next 15 minutes, however, Sargodha managed to reduce the goal deficit in the 55th minute when Basharat scored a field goal. In volleyball championship, Dr Asif Tufail awarded the winners' trophy and cash prize of Rs 15 lakh to Faisalabad division volleyball team while the runners up Gujranwala team got Rs 10 lakh cash prize.

Sana Javed 'proud' of husband Shoaib Malik



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Actress Sana Javed praised her cricketer husband Shoaib Malik for scoring 13,000 runs in Twenty20 cricket. Shoaib Malik became the second cricketer, and Asia's first, to cross the 13,000-run mark in the shortest version of the game. The veteran Pakistan batter set the milestone while batting for Fortune Barishal against Rangpur Riders in the third game of the Bangladesh Premier League 2024 at Dhaka's Shere Bangla National Stadium. Sana Javed reacted to Shoaib Malik's achievement by saying that she was so proud of him. It is pertinent to mention that Shoaib Malik shocked fans by announcing his marriage to actress and model Sana Javed on social media. The couple shared the wedding pictures on Instagram. His announcement proved the speculations on his divorce from India tennis star Sania Mirza true. The veteran cricketer has represented Green Shirts in 124 T20Is and scored 2,435 runs with nine half-centuries to his name. He batted at an average of 31.2 and strike rate of 125.6. The spinner bagged 28 wickets in the shortest format. Earlier, he announced his availability for the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the United States. On the acting front, Sana Javed has worked on super-hit projects. Her performances in dramas 'Dunk', 'Ruswaai', 'Aitraz', 'Paiwand', 'Goya', 'Pyarey Afzal', 'Meenu Ka Susrul', 'Mera Pehla Pyar' were met with positive reviews from both critics and fans.

Isiah Pacheco's touchdown that changed Kansas City Chiefs' AFC future



The Kansas City Chiefs Sunday advanced into the American Football Conference (AFC) Championship Game after crushing the Buffalo Bills with a close 27-24 win. As expected by fans, the face-off was quite thrilling but one of the highlights of the game was when running back Isiah Pacheco scored a remarkable touchdown, turning the game around for the Chiefs. A former standout at Rutgers Scarlet Knights, Pacheco scored a four-yard touchdown run with 14:20 remaining in the fourth quarter to give the Chiefs a 27-24 lead over the Buffalo Bills, USA Today reported. It was the game-winning touchdown for the Chiefs, who advanced to the AFC Championship Game. As of the midpoint of the fourth quarter, Pacheco had 86 rushing yards and a touchdown on 13 carries. The hard, physical run saw Pacheco withstand a tough tackle at the end but momentum saw him cross the goal line.

National Women's T20 Tournament: Lahore, Quetta, Multan register wins

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Lahore, Quetta and Multan registered wins in the fifth round of matches of the National Women's T20 Tournament, which saw action unfold at three venues across Islamabad and Rawalpindi. At Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, aided by Bismah Maroof's undefeated half-century, Lahore won a close encounter against Karachi as the former secured the game by just nine runs. At Ayub Park Ground, Tuba Hassan's all-round efforts allowed Quetta a comfortable win against Peshawar. In Islamabad, Multan inflicted a seven-wicket defeat over Rawalpindi, on the back of a four-wicket haul by Noor-ul-Iman and an unbeaten half-century by Gull Feroza. Karachi v Lahore at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi. In the match that was live-streamed on PCB's YouTube channel, Fatima Sana won the toss and invited Lahore to bat first. Karachi's captain provided an early breakthrough by dismissing opening batter Sadaf Shamas for just a run.

Syeda Aroob Shah cut short the 48-run second-wicket partnership between Sidra Amin and Bismah Maroof as the former fell for a 35-ball 41 that included an impressive tally of seven boundaries. In the next over, captain Nida Dar was caught and bowled by Maham Manzoor after scoring 12 off 7 with the help of a four and a six. Iram Javed was trapped leg-before for a duck by Aroob to bring Lahore to 89-4 in 13 overs. Wicketkeeper-batter Sidra Nawaz (13, 12b, 2x4s) was the next batter to fall, courtesy of off-spinner Rameen Shamim. Bismah (54 not out, 47b, 6x4s), with an unbeaten half-century, was the highest scorer for Lahore and was adjudged player of the match as well. Ayesha Zafar (17 not out, 10b, 1x4, 1x6) was the other contributor with the bat as the side ended up with 149-5 in 20 overs.



Usman Khawaja to auction 'All lives are equal' shoes for children of Gaza

Australia's left-handed opener Usman Khawaja on Monday, announced to put his 'All lives are equal' and 'Freedom is a human right' shoes on auction to support the oppressed children in Gaza. Talking to Instagram, Khawaja announced that he was putting his shoes on auction, due to end on February 12, with the proceeds to be donated to 'Unicef Children of Gaza' appeal. "Hey everyone. Want to announce I'm auctioning off my shoes! It ends 12th February," wrote Khawaja. "It ends 12th February. All proceeds will go to 'Unicef Children of Gaza' appeal. "The kids need your help now more [than] ever and as always thank you for your support and generosity. All you guys have been amazing."



PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas M/s (1) Samina Ibrahim (2) Seema Asif (3) Shaqufta Tahir (4) Shahnzay Ibrahim daughters (5) Zanib Khatoon widow of Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim, co.allottees of plot No.43-C, Block-C, Satellite Town Scheme, Rawalpindi (02 Kanal) have appointed General Power of Attorney to Sardar Imran Ibrahim s/o Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim vide registered deed at No. 852/4 dated 23-02-2023 from Sub Registrar (U), Rawalpindi. Furthermore General Power of attorney holder wish to transfer shares alongwith own share of the above mentioned plot to M/s (1) Ch. Muhammad Khalid (2) Ch. Bilal Ashraf (3) Ch. Muhammad Abdullah sons of Ch. Muhammad Ashraf. If anyone have objection of above advertisement submit their objection within fifteen days of this advertisement otherwise objection will not be entertained.
Deputy Director Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency Sub Region Rawalpindi

Pakistanis unlikely to witness FIFA World Cup qualifier at home

KARACHI: Football enthusiasts in Pakistan may miss the opportunity to witness Pakistan's FIFA World Cup qualifier against Jordan on home turf, as the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has confirmed that Islamabad's Jinnah Stadium falls short of the global governing body's standards. In a statement released on Monday, the PFF conveyed that it is actively exploring alternative venues to ensure the game takes place at a neutral location. "In collaboration with the Pakistan Sports Board, the Pakistan Football Federation has been dedicatedly working on preparing Jinnah Stadium for the upcoming March match



against Jordan," PFF stated. "Regrettably, despite our best efforts, the current standard of Jinnah Stadium does not meet FIFA requirements," it added. The PFF highlighted a significant challenge related

to lighting conditions, stating, "As the March game is scheduled to be held under lights and coincides with Ramadan, meeting FIFA's lighting standards with the current setup has posed difficulties." Citing the January 21 dead-

line for venue submission and a commitment to upholding the game's integrity, the PFF affirmed its decision to explore alternative options. "We will be in contact with the Jordan Football Association to discuss arrangements for a neutral venue for the home leg," the statement added. Jinnah Stadium previously hosted Pakistan's home game in the FIFA World Cup qualifier against Tajikistan in November, drawing a crowd of 24,000 spectators cheering for the national team. While Pakistan's next home match against Jordan is scheduled for March 21, this recent development has left football fans in Pakistan disappointed.

Sindh wins title of 2nd Essa lab Sindh-Balochistan Bilateral Men Softball series in style



Sports Desk

KARACHI: The Sindh men's softball team won the title of the 2nd Essa Laboratories Sindh Balochistan bilateral softball series in style. In the third and decisive match of the series played at the KMC Sports Complex Kashmir Road, Sindh scored 10 runs in their allotted 5 innings. Faraz Aijaz, Samir Zulfikar and Arbaza Ijaz scored 2 runs each. Balochistan team managed to score 5 runs in five innings. Captain Ahmed Yar Khan and Osama bin Shuja scored 2 runs. Sindh won the series 2-1 in style. In the prize distribution ceremony, the Chief Guest Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Saleem Rajput along with Sindh Softball Association President Professor Dr. Farhan Essa and Secretary General of Softball Federation of Pakistan Asif Azeem distributed trophies, awards and certificates to the players of both teams. Shiraz Asif was the best catcher of the series, Osama bin Shuja, was the best batter, Faraz Ijaz, the pitcher and Hafiz Moez were declared the best fielder of the event. Speaking on this occasion, Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Saleem Rajput said that during the series, the players of Balochistan and Sindh were very impressed with the excellent game as well as the exemplary discipline. The softball game is included in the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. Commissioner Saleem Rajput appreciated the efforts of Dr. Farhan Essa, Asif Azeem, CEO of Combax Sports, Omar Saeed, Colgate Palmolive's Fatima Siddiqui and Fruit Nation's Iftikhar Ahmed for the development of softball and termed it as a national service. We have 4 years during which we can make the best team of Pakistan to reach the Olympics, he added. Syed Waseem Hashmi, Naseem Khan, Muhammad Zeeshan Merchant, Tehmina Asif, Ahmad Ali Rajput, Ghulam Muhammad Khan and others were also present.

PU students win cycling championship

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab university Women's cycling team clinched the trophy in 11th All Pakistan Interuniversity women cycling championship 2023-24 at Kinnaird College for Women University Lahore. Thirteen teams participated in the championship in which Ms. Uswa from Punjab University was the best cyclist of the championship. Similarly, PU Gymnastic Team got 2nd position in 20th All Pakistan Intersarsity Gymnastic Championship 2023-24 at Government College University Lahore. Twelve teams participated in the event. PU Director Sports Prof Dr Zafar Iqbal Butt congratulated the teams and officials on the achievements.

Faisalabad wins tennis sports league

Sports Desk

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad region won the Prime Minister Talent Hunt Table Tennis Sports League here on Monday. Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh and Vice-Chancellor Government College University Prof Dr. Nasir Amin distributed prizes among the winning teams. The concluding ceremony of the sports league was held at Government College University in collaboration with Directorate of Sports, Government College University Faisalabad and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. Boys teams from five regions of Punjab participated in the event. The Faisalabad region won first position, Lahore region second and Multan/Bahawalpur region remained third.

Who is Nick Dunlap? Amateur who won PGA Tour for first time since 1991

Nick Dunlap became the first amateur to win a Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour event since Phil Mickelson in 1991, as he beat South Africa's Christiaan Bezuidenhout to claim The American Express title on Sunday. Dunlap, who was participating in his fourth PGA Tour event in California after missing the cut in his previous three, holed a six-foot par putt towards the end, the BBC reported. "It's so cool to be experiencing this as an amateur," said the emotional American golfer. "Whether I made or missed that, if you had told me come Wednesday night that I had a putt to win this tournament, I wouldn't have believed you."



Mickelson, a six-time major winner, posted on X: "Such an impressive performance by Nick Dunlap. Congratulations on an incredible win." Dunlap is just the seventh amateur to win a PGA Tour event but his stock is already high after last year emulating Tiger Woods to become the second player to win both the US Junior Amateur and US Amateur titles. In his final round at Pete Dye Stadium Course in La Quinta, the University of Alabama student struggled with a double-bogey six and a three-shot lead. However, he responded with three birdies in nine holes, closing with a two-under 70 to hold off a charging Bezuidenhout. Sadly, despite winning the cup, Dunlap will not receive any prize money because he is an amateur, and the \$1.5 million winner's cheque will be going to Bezuidenhout. When asked by reporters if the next natural step was to turn professional, he replied: "I don't know. I have to take a second to let what just happened sink in a little bit. That's a decision that's not just about me. It affects a lot of people, and obviously, I'm going to try to enjoy this."

Addressed

President Dr Arif Alvi addressing the Pakistan Engineering Council Engineers' Excellence Awards 2022, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday.



Photo: PID

Engineers playing key role in country's development: President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday stressing the significance of engineering expertise in every sector of life, underscored the need for continued support and recognition of the engineering community to propel the nation towards sustainable growth and prosperity.

Addressing an event titled "PEC Engineers' Excellence Award 2022" held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said the Pakistani engineers had, in the past, played key role in the development of the gulf countries. He said Pakistan needed more engineers in various sectors to ensure sustainable development.

He said Pakistan produced only 250,000 engineers annually which was not enough for the country's need. Out of these, a sizable portion seek immigration and go abroad after graduation. In comparison, the president said that

India produced over 1.5 million engineer per year.

President Alvi said the human resource had been a big challenge for the country as in other sectors like health, the country needed more human resource. "There are only 150,000 working nurses against the total demand of 0.9 million nurses in the country." Similarly, he regretted that an alarming number of around 26 million children were currently out of school in the country who would become a big burden in future for the society.

He said despite challenges, the Information Technology sector of the country was showing good performance which was evident from the fact that over 2.2 million free lancers were earning their bread and butter along with foreign exchange for the country.

He said to increase the number of engineers and to educate the out of school children the government needed huge resources. The resources, he said

could be managed by bringing reforms in the taxation system. However he said decades had passed since various financial institution including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and others had been recommending Pakistan to tax the wealthy people. Despite making policies we could not force the elite of the country to pay their due taxes." The president said "Only words do not make sense, we need implementation not words". He pointed out that the country's tax to GDP was too low at around 9% which needed to be enhanced.

President Alvi said the world was moving towards abundance of food and resources while we were still stuck up in scarcity of resources.

"We need champions in every sector to achieve the goals of sustainable development," he said adding amnesty schemes never worked as the government introduced amnesties every year which yielded no results.

FM Jilani, Chinese vice FM discuss bilateral ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Monday here reaffirmed the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and held an in-depth discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relations including CPEC and bilateral economic and financial cooperation. The Foreign Minister appreciated the contributions of the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister in deepening Pakistan-China friendship and commended China's unflinching support to Pakistan on all issues.

Expressing satisfaction at the steady development of CPEC, Foreign Minister Jilani emphasized the significance of CPEC for Pakistan. He said that Pakistan



would continue making efforts for the realization of CPEC's full potential for shared benefits. He appreciated China's readiness and support for all CPEC projects in Pakistan. Thanking the Foreign Minister for the generous hospitality, Vice Foreign Minister Sun highlighted that as iron brother and a reliable friend, China accorded immense importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to even deeper cooperation in all fields.

Govt committed to support pharma sector: Nadeem Jan

City Desk

LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan has emphasized the government's proactive efforts to enhance support for the pharmaceutical industry, marking the commencement of a new phase with the establishment of a Pharma Park in Pakistan.

He was addressing the ground breaking ceremony of two pharma units of Zenith Group of Companies at Sundar Industrial Estate, here on Monday.

Faiz Hameed submits response in Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's removal case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former ISI chief Lt. General (r) Faiz Hameed on Monday submitted his response to Supreme Court (SC) in connection with ex-Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's petition challenging his removal.

Supreme Court (SC) had issued notice to former ISI chief Lt. General (r) Faiz Hameed, IHC chief justice Anwar Khan Kasi, former registrar of the Supreme Court Arbab Muhammad Arif and retired brigadier Irfan Ramay in ex-IHC judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's petition against his removal.

In his response to Supreme Court's order, the ex-ISI chief rejected the accusation leveled against him for using his influence in Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's removal as IHC judge.

Faiz Hameed denied any meeting with the former IHC judge saying that Siddiqui neither in his speech and nor

in judicial council made any mention of the meeting.

He told Supreme Court that he never said "Our two-year efforts will go into waste". The accusations leveled by Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui are baseless, Faiz added.

The Ex-ISI chief Lt. General (r) Faiz Hameed submitted his reply to Supreme Court through Khawaja Haris.

The former IHC chief justice Anwar Khan Kasi and Brigadier (r) Irfan Ramay also submitted their response to Supreme Court and rejected the accusation leveled against them by the Ex-Judge IHC Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui.

On December 15, a five-member bench led by CJP Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan conducted proceedings on the plea of Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui against his removal as IHC judge.

Maryam Nawaz says KP not an experiment site for politicians

Correspondent

MANSEHRA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief organizer Maryam Nawaz said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is not an experiment site for politicians.

Addressing a public gathering in Mansehra, the PML-N leader lashed out at the previous PTI government saying that they promised five million homes, billion tree Tsunami but did not fulfill any of their promise.

She urged the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to vote for the right people as it is the land of sensible people.

Commenting on the incarceration of PTI leaders, the senior organizer of PML-N said that they are repenting the outcome of their own wrongdoings.

The PML-N supremo and former prime minister

Nawaz Sharif also criticized past government for ruining the country's economy and depriving Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of development projects.

"Nawaz Sharif left better Pakistan but now it is detracted", the PML-N supremo said while addressing a public gathering in Mansehra, KP ahead of the February 8 general elections.

The ex-prime minister said that had he not been removed from power in 2017, the people of Mansehra would have been gifted an airport and a metro project.

He regretted that development work on the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway was stopped by the past government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

The former prime minister kicked off PML-N's election campaign from Hafizabad, Punjab, on January 18.

Pakistan & China for enhanced cooperation in IT, agriculture, HR development

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have reiterated their desire for enhanced cooperation in the areas of economy, information technology, agriculture, and human resource development for the mutual benefit of the two friendly countries.

This was discussed during a meeting between the visiting Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Mr Sun Weidong, who along with his delegation called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr Jiang Zaidong, was also present during the meeting.



Welcoming the delegation, the President said that China was a very dear friend that had always supported Pakistan during difficult times. He

highlighted that CPEC projects had contributed to the economic development of Pakistan, besides helping meet its energy needs.

The President remarked that Pakistan and China held similar views on various regional and international issues and cooperated at different fora. He reiterated that Pakistan would continue to support China on all core issues, including the "One China" Policy, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang, and the South China Sea. He said that Pakistan was grateful to China for supporting Pakistan's national development and its principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Security, law & order situation in Islamabad under control: ICCPO

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan on Monday said that security and law and order situation in the Federal Capital was firmly under control. The ICCPO, in a video message, said that there was nothing to worry about the Capital's security situation. Everything was under control and the people should not disrupt their daily routine lives.

Dr Akbar, in the message issued in the wake of closure of numerous educational institutions in Islamabad on the pretext of security concerns, said maintenance of security was a two-way process requiring the active cooperation of the masses. Encouraging the residents of Capital to remain vigilant, he urged them to stay connected with the social media handles of Islamabad Police for timely updates. He cautioned against giving credence to rumours.

No difficulty in tracking those involved in anti-judiciary campaign: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that tracking those who were involved in the malicious campaign against the superior judiciary was not a difficult task for the professionals in the departments concerned. According to the minister, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had monitored around 500 social media accounts operating both within the country and abroad in this regard.

Speaking in a television talk show on private media, he said the anti-judiciary campaign was being probed and nobody would be allowed to run malicious propaganda against the honourable justices. This was a serious violation of the law and the constitution, he said vowing strict action against the involved individuals. He said the orchestration of a

malicious campaign had nothing to do with the freedom of expression which had its limits.

The federal minister said the law would take its course if any political group was involved in orchestrating the campaign against the judiciary. As regards the recent internet outage, he said the internet disruption had nothing to do with politics. Instead, it was a technical issue since the work on the web monitoring system was underway. To a query, he said Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani was a veteran diplomat who played a critical role in defusing the tension between Iran and Pakistan. Pakistan attached great importance to its relationship with Iran, he said, adding positive messages had been exchanged between the two countries following the tension. He said both countries had mutually agreed that their envoys might return to their respective posts by 26 January 2024.



THE MISSING PIECE IN CRACK DOWN AGAINST TAX EVADERS

1st July 2022 was the implementation deadline set by the Government of Pakistan of the comprehensive Track and Trace System for the Cigarette Industry. However, even after the passage of 18 months, FBR has been unable to implement it.

Currently more than 200 cigarette brands, which have a market share of more than 50%, are being sold openly in the market without the tax stamps causing an annual loss of Rs. 300 billion. A nationwide crackdown against these tax evaders in the cigarette industry is a need of the hour.

STOP
TAX
EVADERS

#AbKhasaraNahinGawara

*The above tax stamp is a sample image only.

BEHTAREEN
پاکستان

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube icons