



AJK PM announces new programs to boost state's economic and social development

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the government would spare no efforts in promoting good governance, establishing merit and supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law in the state. The AJK premier said this while talking to a delegation... (Details on Page 2)



Lt. Gen. Asif Ghafoor asks business community to invest in backward areas

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited the National Defense University (NDU) and congratulated Lt. Gen. Asif Ghafoor on his appointment as the President of the University. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan... (Details on Page 6)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

New hope

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses Pakistan National Youth Convention 2024 on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Youth, guardians of nation, country's bright traditions: COAS

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday said youth were the guardians of the bright and sublime traditions of the nation and country, the epitome of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam's visionary leadership. Addressing 'Pakistan National Youth Conference' at Jinnah Convention Center, he said: "It gives me great pleasure to address the future builders of Pakistan and Shaheen of Iqbal."



ers! If a transgressor brings news, you should firstly confirm it." The establishment of Pakistan was just like the Tayyaba state (referring to Islamic State of Medina), that were founded under the sublime banner of Kalima-e-Tayyaba, the Army Chief said.

The Army Chief said the establishment of Pakistan highlighted the core issue that Islamic culture and civilization were different from Hindus in all respects and Muslims might not adopt Western civilization and culture. The youth, he said should have immense confidence in their country, nation, culture, civilization and themselves. "The youth should be sure that they are scion of a great homeland and nation," he added. He said Pakistan Army could fight against terrorists, but the cooperation of the entire nation was imperative in that regard.

The COAS said that the main objective of social media and propaganda was to spread uncertainty, chaos and despair, whereas social media news verification was critical as without research and positive thinking, society remained chaotic. Citing verses of the Holy Quran on disinformation, he said: "Allah Almighty says: 'O believe-

ers! If a transgressor brings news, you should firstly confirm it." The establishment of Pakistan was just like the Tayyaba state (referring to Islamic State of Medina), that were founded under the sublime banner of Kalima-e-Tayyaba, the Army Chief said.

"Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with abundant natural resources, agriculture and young manpower," he added. He said that a Muslim always offered gratitude to Allah Almighty for patience in turbulent and good times adding, "Our forces are always ready against any kind of threat and conspiracy. If Pakistan exists, so we do, if there is no Pakistan then we are nothing." He said that Pakistan would not compromise on its sovereignty. He urged the youth for having full faith in the bright future and maintaining the legacy of the ancestors. During the address of COAS, the students also raised slogans of Pakistan Army Zindabad, Pakistan Zindabad and Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad.

PM Kakar urges youth to counter propaganda, embrace role in national security

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar affirmed on Wednesday that as responsible citizens, the people of Pakistan must reject and collectively fight the

vicious propaganda onslaught unleashed by the enemies against Pakistan in the recent past.

While addressing the Pakistan National Youth Convention 2024 as the chief guest, the prime minister said that the

youth could play a constructive role in dealing with this emerging national security challenge, provided they remained focussed and fact-checked all details through authentic information from state institutions, rather than falling prey to propaganda.

PM Kakar appreciated the role of the armed forces in the fight against the menace of terrorism with full commitment and professional excellence. He stated, "We, as a nation, have fought the menace of terrorism most valiantly, offering unpar-

alleled sacrifices."

Kakar emphasised that Pakistan's successes in the war against terrorism would not have been possible without the participation and support of the youth, who make up 65 percent of the country's population.

Only JI can fix country's problems: Siraj



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq has said only the JI has the formula of development of the country.

He said the people should reject all three parties - PML-N, PPP and PTI - that were the cause of miserable condition of the country.

"The treasury is empty and millions of people are bearing the unprecedented inflation in the country. Feb 8 is the day to correct the course for the nation," he stated.

The JI emir said the success of the JI would be the success of a common man in the upcoming election.

He urged the nation to vote for the JI to put the country on the path of growth and development.

PTI-backed candidates to remain loyal even after elections: Barrister Gohar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan expressed his confidence in the candidates, who are contesting elections independently after the party's bat was stripped off, saying that they would remain loyal to PTI even after elections.

He said independents would have three days to join any political party, adding that the PTI also has a "Plan C" that would be disclosed after the polls.

While responding to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's claim to form the government with the help of independents, Barrister Gohar said that the former has been taught that governments can also be formed through horse-trading.

He said that the PTI was trying to make the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) realise that candidates contesting elections independently will lead to 'horse trading' and corruption.

Pakistan landed in crisis after my ouster: Nawaz Sharif

Bureau Report

NANKANA SAHIB: Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan landed in crisis after he was ousted from the prime minister's office.

Addressing a public gathering in Nankana Sahib, the former prime minister questioned why a prime minister who made Pakistan a nuclear state, was jailed and convicted.

He claimed that five judges ousted him for not taking salary from his son and later it landed the country in an economic crisis.

The PML-N supremo promised to bring positive change for the people of Nankana Sahib, saying that the Nankana Sahin will be turned into a model city with a boy's degree college and state-of-the-art cricket stadium.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has finally officially announced that its party manifesto will be unveiled on January 27. The manifesto committee, led by Senator Irfan Siddique, was established by PML-N in October to formulate the party's vision.

PIA air hostess slips away in Canada

Bureau Report

KARACHI: An air hostess of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) sneaked in Canada when a PIA flight PK 781 touched down at Toronto airport, Dunya News reported.

Air hostess Faiza Mukhtar was deputed at PIA flight PK 781. She vanished in Toronto when the flight landed at the Toronto airport.

According to a PIA spokesman, her disappearance could not be noticed until the flight returned to Pakistan.

The flight took off from Islamabad and when it reached Canada, a flight attendant, Faiza Mukhtar, slipped away in Canada and her disappearance came to light when she failed to report to the authorities concerned, the spokesman said, adding an inquiry had been launched.

Disappearance of PIA crew members is not unusual. Many incidents of slipping away of attendants of PIA occurred in the past. Two flight attendants slipped away in Canada after the national airline's flight from Islamabad reached Toronto. The flight attendants - Khalid Afridi and Fida Shah - reached Canada from Islamabad by flight PK 772 and slipped away in Canada.

PTI founder offered me presidency three times: Asad Qaiser



Aman Khattak

SWABI: Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser on Wednesday asserted that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan had offered him the presidency three times.

Addressing a public gathering in connection with the election 2024, the PTI leader said that deposed premier Imran Khan offered him presidency, but "I refused due to protocol".

Asad Qaiser further said that he took the position of National Assembly Speaker for the construction and development of his constituency.

British HC message on International Day of Education

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Inclusive quality education is vital for peace and, development and to break the cycle of poverty. Girls and boys both have an equal right to education to be able to fulfil their dreams.

Around 26 million children are out of school in Pakistan. Those who are in school are not learning enough.

Since 2014, the UK has directly supported around 5.8 million children to gain access to a decent education across Pakistan. I am glad that this



journey continues with the government and development partners.

Every child deserves good education. And this International Day of Education, we vow to make this happen.

Hearing of Toshakhana references against political stalwarts adjourned till Feb 13



APP

ISLAMABAD: The hearing of Toshakhana references against former president Asif Ali Zardari, and former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Yousuf Raza Gilani was adjourned due to the unavailability of the judge.

ings on Wednesday.

Details indicate that the hearing of Toshakhana references against former president Asif Ali Zardari, and former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Yousuf Raza Gilani was adjourned due to the unavailability of the judge.

SC bars JUI candidate from contesting election from NA-252

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed the appeal of JUI candidate Abdul Hafiz Loni while upholding the verdict of the election tribunal which had rejected his nomination papers from the constituency of NA-252.

Headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, a three-member bench of the court heard the appeal of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's candidate Abdul Hafeez Loni.

The court, while upholding the decision of the Election Tribunal and the Balochistan High Court, rejected the appeal of the JUI candidate.

During the proceedings, the petitioner's lawyer took the stance that his client had completed his sentence announced in a graft reference, and requested the court to allow Loni to contest the elections.

CJP Isa noted that the petitioner had spent only two years and two months in jail, while the NAB court had sentenced



him to 10 imprisonment.

He remarked that the petitioner had said that he had been out of jail for eight

years and he had not even paid the amount of fine.

The CJP further remarked that such people should not represent the people of Balochistan and should sit at home instead.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that the property of the petitioner should be confiscated if he did not pay the fine.

The court, subsequently, dismissed the appeal.

AJK PM announces new programs to boost state's economic and social development



Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the government would spare no efforts in promoting good governance, establishing merit and supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law in the state. The AJK premier said this while talking to a delegation, which was led by member Legisla-

tive Assembly Chaudhry Muhammad Ismail, here today. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister congratulated Chaudhry Muhammad Ismail for being declared successful as a member of the Legislative Assembly as a result of the recount of votes. The PM said that the government, in collaboration with the coalition partners, have taken a number of initiatives to raise the standard of living of

the people and ensure uniform development in the region. He said that people's tax money would be spent only on the welfare of the people. He said that unemployed youth would be given interest-free loans under the Akhowat scheme so that they could be able to start their own business. The Prime Minister said that biometric systems have been introduced in all government institutions to

ensure timely and full attendance of employees in offices. He said that the government was utilizing all available resources to provide quality education, health facilities and all other amenities of life for the people. Assembly member Chaudhry Muhammad Ismail, while congratulating the PM, assured him of his full cooperation and support. He also appreciated the PM for his pro-people policies.

Traditional chair

ISLAMABAD: A street vendor is carrying handmade bamboo Mura on his shoulders for selling purpose in a street of sector G-8, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Negative Effects of Freezing Dollar Accounts after the Nuclear Explosions are Still Visible: Marth

Quatul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Chief Manager State Bank of Pakistan, BSC Multan Javed Iqbal Marth said that the negative effects of freezing dollar accounts after the nuclear explosions are still visible today. The main reason for the failure of government schemes is their misuse by bank Accounts Holders. It is dangerous to rank banks in Pakistan. Due to the strict policies of the State Bank of Pakistan, no bank has run away with people's money. On this occasion, President of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan Mian Rashid Iqbal, former President Khawaja Muhammad Hussain, Naveed Ahmed Chughtai Saliha Hassan and other members were present. Javed Iqbal Marth said that if a stable government comes in the country after the recent election, then the situation will improve a lot. Account holders are



reluctant to speak out against banks even though banks harass them. An app has also been developed for filing complaints against banks so that problems of account holders can be resolved quickly. A solar policy was formulated

for the development of the country's agriculture, which expanded its scope to include the industry. The solar policy has also been misused in agriculture due to which the agriculture sector Javed Iqbal Marth said that the

main reason for the failure of various government schemes is the misuse of these schemes by the banks and they do this in a "legal way".

On this occasion Mian Rashid, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan Speaking, Iqbal said that State Bank of Pakistan has recently created a separate help desk for LC's related issues and their resolution and has appointed Additional Director Exchange Policy Department as the focal person. In this context, State Bank of Pakistan Multan. Similarly, a help desk should be set up at the local level. Issues related to LC's can be resolved. State Bank of Pakistan short term financing facility where repayment of markup is due in 90 days should be extended to 365 days. Further, the mark-up for this year should be deferred and frozen and paid in four installments next year where the principal amount can be repaid as usual.

Elder's tube well huge affected by explosives attack in Wana

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: South Waziristan: An explosive device encased in plastic exploded on a solar tubewell near Malik Hazrat Noor Wazir in the Wana area of Spin, however, no casualties were reported.

The explosive attack took place at around 1:35 last night.

In this regard prominent Elder Hazrat Noor Ji Khel Wazir said that I have no personal enmity with anyone and neither am I involved in any other activities, due to which this incident happened to me.

He said that last year, one of my fielder's vehicles was set on fire by unknown people at night, which has not yet been found.

On the other hand, as soon as the police received the informa-



tion, SHO Spin Dam Police Station Saifullah Wazir along with his police team reached the scene of the incident.

Police said that we have collected evidence and investigation into the incident has been started.

DPO South Waziristan Lower Farmanullah said that orders have

been issued to the police to arrest the unknown suspects involved, hopefully, some significant progress will be made.

The DPO said that if any accused is found involved in the explosives explosion incident and so punishment will be given according to the law.

Gulalai Wazir vowed to resolve major issues of Waziristan

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Former MNA Ayesha Gulalai Wazir, who is contesting as an independent from constituency NA-42 South Waziristan for the first time in history, held a big election rally in Wana bazar on Wednesday.

The bodies were attended by thousands of tribals.

Addressing the election gathering held on this occasion, Ayesha Gulalai said that I will raise my voice in every forum for the poor people of Waziristan, while removing the backwardness of the downtrodden people here is one of my priorities.

She said that we will work for quality education here so that the boys and girls of Waziristan can get education.

She said that if I am elected from here, I will try hard for the improvement of education.

She said that the February 8 elections are of great importance in the country of history.

Bhat protests India's Republic Day celebrations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Kashmiri Leader and Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Salvation Movement Altaf Ahmed Bhat vehemently opposes India's Republic Day celebrations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Senior Kashmiri leader Altaf Ahmed Bhat in a statement issued in Islamabad today has emphasized the outright rejection of India's Republic Day festivities by the people of Jammu and Kashmir, citing India's failure to comply with UN Security Council resolutions on the Kashmir dispute. In solidarity with his fellow Kashmiris, he underscored their resolute pursuit of freedom, a fundamental right acknowledged by the United Nations under the principle of self-determination.

Bhat condemned India for allegedly coercing participation in Republic Day celebrations through military and police force, accusing the country of manipulating the international community's perception of the ground situation in the occupied territory.

He voiced concerns about the actions of the Indian government, labeling it a "racist regime" involved in daily killings, targeting pro-freedom parties, banning Islamic educational institutions, and confiscating ancestral properties of Kashmiris.

Expressing deep reservations about the dismissal of Muslim employees, persecution of youth and students, and the heavy military presence in the region, Bhat characterized India's Republic Day as nothing more than a Black Day in Kashmir. He drew attention to the substantial military deployment, with over nine one million forces' personnel stationed in the region for over seven decades, patrolling the disputed area continuously.

Altaf Ahmed Bhat urged the global community to recognize the plight of the Kashmiri people and called for a just resolution to the long-standing Kashmir dispute, emphasizing the need for international attention to address the human rights concerns and ensure a peaceful and equitable future for the region.

Commissioner Faisalabad hails Turkish Consul General for 'promoting green' in the city

Abdul Majid

Commissioner Faisalabad Silwat Saeed was met by Mr. Durmus Bastug, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey at the Commissioner's office. Commissioner Faisalabad welcomed the Consul General and informed about the historical, cultural and geographical aspects of the division. Faisalabad is the third largest city of Pakistan, Manchester, the textile hub and the demand for its textile products is worldwide. The commissioner informed about the situation of agriculture and crops. A state-of-the-art business facilitation center is working to provide services under one roof for the launch of the city. In the next phase, a public transport system is being introduced in the city. Running electric buses will ensure environmental protection. The Commissioner said that the urgent and timely measures to prevent smog have achieved encouraging results. The Commissioner informed the importance of the University of Agriculture. Invitation to visit. Commissioner Faisalabad showed the model of the clock tower in the Commissioner's office to the Consul General and informed about the history of the clock tower. The Commissioner also received a commemorative shield from the Consul General. He thanked and said that the visit to Faisalabad is memorable and on the invitation of the Commissioner, a detailed visit is planned in the future.



Bahawalpur Museum is the Best Masterpiece of Regional Culture and History: Aneeq Ahmed

Asim Tanveer

BAHAWALPUR: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed has said that Bahawalpur Museum is the best masterpiece of regional culture and history. The way the museum has displayed the history of the state is admirable. He expressed these thoughts on the occasion of his last visit to the museum. He said that the manuscripts in the manuscripts and calligraphy gallery of the museum are rare and worth seeing, and the Islamic art gallery of the museum is the best representative of the Muslim arts and crafts. Earlier, Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani briefed them about the state of Bahawalpur and the historical background of the establishment of the museum and the cultural and literary activities taking place here. Aneeq Ahmed said that the state of Bahawalpur is one of the most important states of the subcontinent and the first state to be integrated into Pakistan. The artefacts of Bahawalpur state in the museum show the state's prestige. Meanwhile, the Federal Minister highly appreciated the display of antiquities and the classification of the galleries and appreciated the active role of the museum management. Public Relations Officer Nadia Noreen gave a detailed briefing to the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed about the role and usefulness of the museum and antiquities in the region.



Tanzawal to support every political party that promises to establish Tanzawal district

News Desk

TANAWAL: The officials of the first organized and active National Movement of Tanawal District said that they will support every political party which, in case of success in the elections, has given a written promise to notify the establishment of Tanawal District within a period of one year after taking oath from the Assembly. Along with doing this, he will assure to present his effective and logical action plan in a clear and concrete manner at the public level. The only solution to end the deprivations and backwardness of Tanawal in the establishment of Tanawal district.

President Dr Riaz Ahmed Tanoli, Chief Advisor Professor Abdul Razaq Adil and other officials said in their joint statement that the general elections to be held in the country on February 8 this year will prove to be an important milestone for the country. Nominated election representatives must make the establishment of Tanawal district their top priority.

They demanded for the early establishment of Tanawal district and said that regardless of political affiliations, support will be given to every political party which, in case of success in the elections, would establish Tanawal district within one year after taking oath from the assembly. In addition to making a written promise in advance to notify the establishment of the organization, he will also assure to present his effective and logical plan in this regard in a clear and concrete manner to the public.

Expressing disbelief and regret over the promises made by political figures in the past regarding the establishment of Tanawal district, they said that the residents of Tanawal are angry at the failure to provide this basic, constitutional, legal and democratic right to the people of Tanawal.

We also appeal to the conscious people of Tanawal to play their role for the achievement of Tanawal district and make them believe that the only solution to end the deprivations and backwardness of Tanawal lies in the establishment of Tanawal district. It is also our social, conscious and moral duty imposed on us to ensure the establishment of Tanawal district for a better future of the coming generations.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:43 am
Zohr	12:20 pm
Asr	3:52 pm
Maghrib	5:30 pm
Isha	6:57 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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261107-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80

Hub71-backed ABHI establishes Abu Dhabi HQ



PNP

LAHORE: Hub71-backed ABHI, an embedded finance platform founded in Pakistan, is advancing to its next growth stage by establishing its global HQ in Abu Dhabi with support from the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) to grow its international operations. Badr Al-Olama, Director General of ADIO, said: "ABHI is a great example of how fast companies can start, scale and succeed in Abu Dhabi. By being part of the Hub71 tech ecosystem for a year, the company is now collaborating with ADIO to rapidly accelerate its growth and expansion beyond Abu Dhabi." Founded in 2021, ABHI is considered one of the world's most promising innovative companies and was named one of the World Economic Forum's 2023 Technology Pioneers. It provides Earned Wage Access (EWA) to employees, which allows them to withdraw their earned salary any day, and offers employers payroll solutions and SME financing. It is currently servicing more than 500 companies across the globe. ABHI has also been selected as one of the Future 100 companies in the UAE, an initiative by the Ministry of Economy and the Government Development and the Future Office.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick calls for unity and action on child rights

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has called for collaborative efforts to enforce child rights. She was addressing the launching ceremony of National Commission on the Rights of Child NCRC's strategic plan 2023-26 and policy brief on child trafficking. The strategic plan brought together key stakeholders, child rights experts, and voices from civil society to shape the strategic vision of the NCRC. Focal Person to SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick and daughter of Mushaal Hussein Mullick and Yasin Malik, Raziyah Sultana, also attended this event concerning the rights of children.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister emphasized the importance of a united front against the challenges faced by the nation's youth. She highlighted the rapidly changing socio-economic landscape and the evolving challenges to child rights. She emphasized the need for foresight and adaptability. She said

that through strategic vision outlined in the NCRC's plan we would be able to witness a tangible improvement in the enforcement of child rights by 2026. She said that the strategic vision presented by the NCRC and its Chairperson Miss Ayesha was not merely an aspiration but a promise to the future of Pakistan.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick emphasized the pivotal role of evidence-based practices, collaborative partnerships, and transformative strategies in establishing a robust foundation for enduring change in the realm of child rights. She appreciated NCRC for its commendable efforts in providing a comprehensive guide to combat child trafficking and addressing the issue proactively. She emphasized that the strategic plan unveiled by the NCRC reflects the Commission's unwavering commitment to confronting specific challenges related to child rights aggressively.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick expressed sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who actively contributed to shaping the NCRC's strategic plan. She further highlighted that the recognition of child



rights was a shared value that served as a unifying force, binding the nation together in its pursuit of a bright future for children. She was accompanied by focal person SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick at the event.

Broken hearts

ISLAMABAD: Relatives of Balochistan missing persons carrying their luggage as they finish sit in protest (Dharna) in front of National Press Club in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Shaping Minds, Empowering Futures: OxfordAQA's Official Unveiling in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Oxford University Press is delighted to announce the official launch of OxfordAQA, one of the leading international examination boards in Pakistan through an enlightening event amongst top tier educationists including school heads held at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. Successful launches for the same have already taken place in Lahore and Karachi. This expansion marks a significant milestone in OxfordAQA's commitment to providing high-quality, internationally recognized assessments to students around the world.

Speaking at the event, Arshad Saeed Husain, Managing Director, Oxford University Press, shared the reasons for the excitement around



these qualifications. "The launch of OxfordAQA in Pakistan is a momentous occasion for the education sector. This collaboration between Oxford University Press and AQA, the UK's largest provider of academic qualifications, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to our students, preparing them to compete on the global stage with future-ready skills. Also speaking at the event, Jamie Kirkaldy, Head of Teaching and Learning Support asserted OxfordAQA's commitment to fairness and

equality in qualifications. He said, "The OxfordAQA examination board ensures that exams are accessible to all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, fostering a level playing field for academic success. OxfordAQA also provides ongoing high-quality professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching skills and stay abreast of the latest educational trends. This focus on continuous improvement extends to the overall educational ecosystem.

Participants at the launch events agreed that OxfordAQA represents a huge opportunity for learners and educators alike and enjoyed the interaction with representatives from Oxford University Press and OxfordAQA to discuss the future of education.

Warner Music partners with leading Pakistani music company Giraffe

PNP

LAHORE: Warner Music Group (WMG) has partnered with Pakistani music and audio production companies, which was co-founded by Xulfi, the stage name of celebrated artist Zulfikar Jabbar Khan, and CEO Muhammad Ibrahim.

Muhammad Ibrahim adds: "For us at Giraffe, this partnership is exciting on many levels and is, in a way, a testament to Giraffe's long-standing commitment to fostering a conducive environment, ultimately benefiting both existing performers and a new wave of Pakistani artists. We look forward to signing and developing our talent by delivering the best-in-class service, as well as continuing to produce innovative content."

Simon Robson, President, International, Recorded Music, Warner Music Group, concludes: "This is a landmark moment for Warner Music as we work with Giraffe to establish a presence in Pakistan. The combination of its local A&R experience and our global network will mean we can offer talented artists from Pakistan a chance to shine on an international stage."



SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik commends OPF Girls College student

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), Jawad Sohrab Malik, celebrated remarkable academic accomplishment of Miss Basimah Usman, a student of OPF College, at OPF Head office Islamabad. The event took place in the presence of her family, faculty, and peers at OPF College. Miss Basimah Usman, who secured the highest marks globally in the Urdu Cambridge IGCSE, June 2023, and was honored with the prestigious Outstanding Cambridge Learner Award.

In his capacity as the Chief Guest, Mr. Jawad Sohrab Malik conveyed heartfelt congratulations to Miss Basimah Usman for her extraordinary dedication and academic excellence. He emphasized that this achievement not only reflects the high standards of education at OPF College but also showcases the immense potential and talent of Pakistani students on the global stage.



AIOU holds 67th BASR meeting



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The 67th meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) yesterday. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, presided over the meeting. The Directorate of BASR organized the meeting and the Director BASR, Prof. Dr. Syed Amir Shah, presented a detailed report on the implementation of the decisions made during the previous meeting and the agenda for the current session. A total of 15 students from different departments presented synopses during the meeting, including 6 scholars from the Department of History, 4 from the Department of Educational Planning, Policy Studies and Leadership, 4 from the Department of Nutritional Sciences and Environmental Design and 1 scholar from the Department of Statistics.

All four Deans, prominent scholars, subject specialists, supervisors, heads of departments and a permanent member of the board, Prof. Dr. Yusuf Khushk was also present at the meeting. Prof. Dr. Tanveer Anjum, Prof. Dr. Mujeeb Ahmed, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran, Prof. Dr. Malik Ghulam Behlol, Dr. Asma Sohail and Dr. Wajiha Shahid were the subject specialists. The research topics were approved with minor changes. The board directed some PhD scholars to refine the synopses further and present them in the next meeting. VCAIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood asked the deans, and heads of the departments that considering the current situation, students should be given such topics which can contribute to the country in any aspect.

Call to devise a country specific policy for localization of RE industry

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Stressing the need to develop a long-term Integrated Energy Plan based on Renewable Energy Transition that may resolve the issue of circular debt and remove economic uncertainties, experts at a high-level policy discourse has suggested devising a country specific policy for the localization of RE industry.

The suggestion was made at a roundtable discourse titled: "Energy Reforms Agenda and Priorities for Pakistan post-2024 Election" organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here.

Highlighting the potential solutions

to affordability, reliability, and accessibility, ex-chairman of NEPRA Tauseef H. Farooqi recommended to diversify the power generation mix by increasing the share of renewables for a sustainable energy portfolio, reduce reliance on imported fuels to increase resilience to vulnerability to external factors such as exchange rates and global conflicts and tackle losses and theft in the power sector.

Senior Public Policy Advisor Dr Khaqan Najeeb said a small team in the Ministry of Power with clear targets to meet power transition can help in this regard. "We need to have small human resource, finance and energy experts to resolve IPPs deficit, petrol and diesel

prices deregulation, and privatization of power sector," he maintained. NEPRA and OGRA should come as market makers, he said, and stressed the need to engage external expertise.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said challenges like energy, economy, and digital transformation are ahead, therefore, the new government will have to move towards the solution of these issues with a practical and pragmatic approach. He was of the view that connecting the dots reveals that all challenges are intertwined, thus no issue can be addressed in isolation.

SDPI Research Fellow Dr Khalid

Waleed, who also moderated the session, said that the energy landscape of Pakistan is dominated by affordability crisis, therefore, reliance on renewable energy should be the priority of the new government.

Tanveer Mirza, a representative of Wind Industry, suggested enacting legislation to ensure policy continuity for over a decade or so to achieve desired dividends.

CEO of PRIED Badar Alam said the policy discourse needs to bring public at its center to ensure inclusive policy development. The new government will have to come up with a plan for a decentralized energy industry to ensure cost efficient solutions.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Mature Response on Iranian Aggression - III

Pakistan is deeply saddened by Iran's actions, considering that terrorist organizations like BLA and BLF have campuses in Iran, and Kulobushan Yadav had been operating from there. It is a significant mistake on Iran's part to assume that Pakistan will overlook this incident. In response, the entire nation of Pakistan demanded a strong and similar response from the state. Pakistan has reserved the right to provide any kind of response. The Foreign Office summoned the Iranian High Commissioner, recording a robust protest. Pakistan also recalled its ambassador from Iran and expelled the Iranian Ambassador from Pakistan. The world has expressed deep concern over this aggression and condemned the incident.

It's important to highlight that incidents of infiltration and terrorism are occurring within Iranian borders. In January 2023, four security personnel lost their lives during a terrorist activity on the Iranian side, outside the border in Panjgur district. Additionally, in April 2023, terrorists attacked Pakistani forces in Kech on the Iranian side. Notably, Iran's security agencies are not in alignment, leading to significant diplomatic challenges for the Iranian government.

During these actions, certain political elements exploited social media in a reprehensible manner for their political agenda, making unfounded attempts to defame the Pakistani forces. Some political groups within Pakistan also engaged in defamatory activities against the country. It is crucial to emphasize that Pakistan never adopt a stance similar to that of Iraq and Syria. Instead, it takes every necessary step to ensure its national security and integrity, reflecting the sentiments of the Pakistani nation. While Pakistan values the principle of co-existence with its neighbors, it remains vigilant regarding its national security requirements.

A day after Iran acknowledged

conducting a missile and drone attack in the Pakistani province of Balochistan, Islamabad responded by launching airstrikes on militant targets within Iranian territory, according to sources in Pakistan. The airstrikes took place in response to Iran's deadly missile and drone strike in Balochistan, prompting Pakistan to assert its right to retaliate against what it termed an "illegal act." In response to the attack on Balochistan, Pakistan initiated Operation Deadly Sarmachar a day after Iran admitted to the assault.

According to ISPR, in early hours of 18 January 2024, Pakistan carried out effective strikes against hideouts inside Iran used by terrorists responsible for recent attacks in Pakistan. The precision strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons. Maximum care was taken to avoid collateral damage. Hideouts used by terrorist organisations namely Balochistan Liberation Army and Balochistan Liberation Front were successfully struck in an intelligence based operation, code name 'Marg Bar Sarmachar'. The targeted hideouts were being used by notorious terrorists including Dosta alias Chairman, Bajjar alias Soghat, Sahil alias Shafaq, Asghar alias Basham and Wazir alias Wazi, amongst others. Pakistan Armed Forces remain in a perpetual state of readiness to ensure safety of Pakistan citizens against acts of terrorism. Our resolve to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan is respected and safeguarded against any misadventure, remains unwavering. We reaffirm our determination to defeat all enemies of Pakistan with the support of the people of Pakistan. Going forward, dialogue and cooperation is deemed prudent in resolving

bilateral issues between the two neighbouring brotherly countries.

As per the Foreign Office spokesperson, Pakistan conducted targeted operations in the Sistan province of Iran, focusing on specific terrorist shelters, resulting in the elimination of numerous terrorists. The spokesperson added that these terrorists had been residing in areas devoid of the Iranian government's control.

It is emphasized that Pakistan, situated in a complex geopolitical landscape, has consistently invested in robust defense capabilities to ensure its security and contribute to regional stability. The nation possesses the capacity to respond effectively to any threat or attack, with defense capabilities evolving over the years, encompassing various strategic elements, including conventional military strength and nuclear deterrence.

Pakistan's well-equipped and professional military branches, namely the Army, Navy, and Air Force, continually upgrade their equipment, training, and capabilities to meet evolving security challenges. The military's commitment to defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity is evident in its preparedness and operational effectiveness. The nation's strategic location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East enhances its defense capabilities, allowing it to play a pivotal role in regional security and contribute to international counterterrorism efforts.

Pakistan's demonstrated commitment to combating terrorism is evident in comprehensive counterterrorism operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Raddul-Fasaad, which have successfully targeted and dismantled terrorist networks, contributing to both national security and

regional stability. The nation possesses a credible nuclear deterrent, serving as a crucial component of its defense strategy to deter potential aggression and maintain regional stability.

The Pakistan Air Force plays a pivotal role in defending the nation's airspace, utilizing modern fighter aircraft and air defense systems. The development of indigenous capabilities, such as the JF-17 Thunder fighter jet, underscores Pakistan's commitment to self-reliance in defense production. The Pakistan Navy, responsible for securing sea routes and contributing to maritime security, reflects the nation's dedication to safeguarding its maritime interests.

Acknowledging the evolving nature of modern threats, Pakistan has invested in cybersecurity and information warfare capabilities to secure its digital infrastructure and counter cyberattacks. In addition to securing its borders, Pakistan actively participates in international peacekeeping missions, contributing to United Nations efforts and showcasing its commitment to global peace and security.

Readers, Pakistan emphasizes its commitment to peace and non-interference in the internal matters of other countries. The nation actively works to eliminate terrorists within its borders and ensures that its soil is not used for terrorism activities elsewhere. Pakistan's initiatives against terrorism and its peaceful stance are well-documented. While possessing the capability to respond to aggression, Pakistan strives for peace, demonstrating maturity and responsibility in its responses. The mature approach from the Pakistani Government and Pak Army aims to reduce the likelihood of further casualties and confrontation. Despite the recent incident with Iran, the belief remains strong that issues will be resolved through dialogue, reinforcing the commitment of both countries to work together for prosperity, development, and peace.

Threatens global peace

The United Nations chief warned Israel on Tuesday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rejection of a two-state solution will indefinitely prolong a conflict that is threatening global peace and emboldening extremists everywhere.

In his toughest language yet on the Israeli-Hamas war, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told a ministerial meeting of the U. N. Security Council that "the right of the Palestinian people to build their own fully independent state must be recognized by all, and a refusal to accept the two-state solution by any party must be firmly rejected."

The alternative of a one-state solution "with such a large number of Palestinians inside without any real sense of freedom, rights and dignity ... will be inconceivable," he said. Guterres also warned that the risks of regional escalation of the conflict "are now becoming a reality," pointing to Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Pakistan. He urged all parties "to step back from the brink and to consider the horrendous costs" of a wider war.

Netanyahu's rejection of a Palestinian state in any post-war scenario opened a wide rift with Israel's closest ally, the United States, which says the war must lead to negotiations for a two-state solution where Israel and the Palestinians can live side-by-side in peace. That goal is supported by countries around the world, as ministers and ambassadors reiterated Tuesday.

Uzra Zeya, the State Department's undersecretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights, told the council, "A key component of U. S. diplomacy is to pursue a pathway both to a Palestinian state and normalization and integration between Israel and other regional states."

"The goal is a future where Gaza is never again used as a platform for terror, and a future where Palestinians have a state of their own," she said, reiterating the Biden administration's call on Israel to do more to protect Palestinian civilians.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov countered that American diplomacy "oscillates between vetoing resolutions about the ceasefire and at the same time calling for a reduction in the intensity of hostilities in Gaza."

"Without a doubt this serves as carte blanche for the ongoing collective punishment of Palestinians," Lavrov told the council.

Secretary-general Guterres repeated his longstanding call for a humanitarian cease-fire — an appeal with overwhelming global support.

But Israel's U. N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan again rejected a cease-fire, saying Hamas, which carried out a brutal attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, is committed to attacking again and destroying Israel, and a halt to fighting will only allow the militants "to regroup and rearm."

He urged the Security Council to "eliminate the root" of the conflict, which he said was Iran.



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

Broken Promises, eroding trust and Disillusionment in Politics - II

When people are constantly bombarded with negative portrayals of politicians in the media, it's only natural for their trust to waver. The constant exposure to scandals and unethical behaviour can create a sense of disillusionment among the public. They start questioning the integrity and sincerity of politicians, wondering if they can truly be relied upon to fulfil their promises and act in the best interest of the people.

The 24/7 news cycle and the rise of social media also contribute to the amplification of negative news. A single misstep or controversial statement by a politician can quickly go viral and be shared extensively, perpetuating a negative image and further eroding trust. The constant exposure to such incidents can create a perception that politicians are inherently untrustworthy, regardless of their actual intentions or accomplishments.

It is important to recognize the impact that negative news and media influence can have on trust in politicians. To rebuild trust and bridge the gap between politicians and the public, it is crucial for politicians to prioritize transparency, accountability, and consistency in their actions and communications. Similarly, media outlets should strive for unbiased reporting, presenting a balanced perspective that allows the public to form their own opinions based on accurate information.

Ultimately, addressing the root causes of public distrust in politicians requires a collective effort from both politicians and the media. Only through open and honest dialogue, responsible reporting, and a genuine commitment to serving the interests of the people can trust be

restored and the disillusionment be overcome. Lack of transparency and accountability: Factors contributing to the erosion of trust

One of the primary issues is the lack of transparency regarding decision-making processes and the allocation of public resources.

This lack of transparency not only breeds mistrust but also creates opportunities for corruption and unethical practices. When politicians are not held accountable for their actions, they may engage in self-serving behaviours, prioritizing personal gain over the welfare of the people they are meant to serve. This only deepens the disillusionment felt by citizens and further erodes trust in the political system.

Ultimately, the lack of transparency and accountability within politics is a significant driver of distrust among the public. By addressing these factors head-on, politicians can begin to rebuild trust and bridge the gap between themselves and the citizens they serve.

The impact of political scandals on public trust
 The impact of political scandals on public trust cannot be underestimated. They have the power to shake the very foundations of a democratic system, as citizens question the integrity and honesty of their elected representatives. When politicians are embroiled in controversies involving corruption, bribery, or illicit activities, it sends a clear message to the public that their interests and well-being may not be the top priority.

One of the main reasons why political scandals have such a profound impact on public trust is the betrayal of the implicit social contract between politicians and the electorate. Citizens place their trust in politicians to make decisions

and enact policies that serve the greater good and advance societal progress. When this trust is shattered by scandalous behaviour, it leads to feelings of betrayal and a sense that politicians are more concerned with personal gain than serving the public.

Political polarization and its impact on trust
 Political polarization has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, and its impact on trust in politicians cannot be overlooked. The divide between political ideologies has widened, leading to a climate of extreme partisanship and ideological rigidity. This polarization has created an "us versus them" mentality, where individuals align themselves with a specific political camp and view those from opposing parties as adversaries rather than fellow citizens with differing perspectives.

In such a polarized environment, trust in politicians becomes a casualty. People often feel that politicians prioritize their party's interests over the needs and concerns of the general public. The constant bickering, gridlock, and inability to find common ground further erode trust in the political system.

In short, our exploration of broken promises and disillusionment has shed light on the underlying reasons behind the widespread distrust in politicians. From unfulfilled campaign pledges to scandals and corruption, it is evident that the erosion of trust in our political leaders is not without cause. However, understanding the root causes of this distrust is the first step towards demanding accountability and effecting positive change. By holding politicians to higher standards, encouraging transparency, and actively participating in the political process, we can strive towards a more trustworthy and responsive government. Let us remember that our collective voice has the power to reshape the political landscape and restore faith in the leaders who serve us.



M. Ameer Hamza

Elections 2024-lofty promises hollow economy... - II

These promises often give the impression that Pakistan's economy is already functioning at an optimal level, that the human capital of the country has suddenly achieved peak efficiency and productivity, and that business, investment, trade, and other processes have reached the highest levels of proficiency. The underlying assumption in these manifestos is that the mere act of a political party coming to power will lead to an instantaneous resolution of the myriad difficulties faced by the Pakistani people.

This is unfortunate that political parties, well aware of the precarious state of the economy, continue to make grandiose pledges, despite knowing the inherent challenges in realizing these goals. The stringent conditions imposed by the IMF and other international donor agencies further tighten the constraints under which the country operates, leaving an extremely narrow window for actual policy implementation.

This reality poses a significant challenge for the incoming government. While the electoral promises aim to address the country's pressing needs and aspirations, their feasibility in the face of fiscal constraints and external obligations remains a major question.

Pakistan's economic landscape is dominated by a daunting external debt burden of \$77.5 billion, due over 2023-2036, creating a precarious financial situation. In the immediate term, the country faces hefty repayments, including \$1.4 billion to Chinese institutions and Saudi Arabia, alongside \$15 billion in short-term and \$7 billion in long-term debt. The first quarter of FY24 alone sees obligations totaling hundreds of millions to various creditors. Compounding these challenges is the staggering circular debt, with PKR 2.5 trillion in the power sector, PKR 570 billion in gas,

and state-owned entities hemorrhaging Rs. 750 billion annually.

Inflation rates reflect these economic stresses, soaring from 12.37% in 2021 to a staggering 37.97% in May 2023, driven by global commodity prices, currency depreciation, and political instability. While a slight deceleration is predicted, with an average of 23.33% in 2024, easing to 17.30% in 2025, and 10.14% in 2026, these figures remain alarmingly high. The Pakistani Rupee's trajectory mirrors this turmoil, depreciating significantly from 2020 to 2023, with predictions of continued fluctuations between 250 to 300 in the coming years. In today's digitally connected era, the heightened awareness and access to information among the people of Pakistan, fueled by social media and various information sources, have become a critical factor that political parties seemingly overlook in their election strategies. The electorate is increasingly capable of scrutinizing the feasibility of the promises made against the backdrop of Pakistan's challenging financial and economic situation. They understand the constraints any incoming government will face, especially the stringent conditionalities of the IMF program and the looming threat of default if Pakistan opts out of it. This awareness leads to a growing recognition that many of the promises might be more aspirational than achievable. In light of this, it is imperative for political parties to reconsider and rationalize their manifestos, aligning them more closely with the country's real economic capabilities and constraints. This shift towards more grounded and realistic political pledges could be a crucial step in fostering a more informed and pragmatic political discourse in Pakistan.

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



Qamar Bashir

China's human rights achievements widely acclaimed, says ambassador

Xinhua

GENEVA: China has won international acclaim for its achievements in the cause of human rights during the regular Universal Periodic Review (UPR) conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council, China's top diplomat in Geneva Chen Xu told Xinhua on Tuesday.

China's candid, pragmatic attitude and its efficient, orderly organization were appreciated by all parties, said Chen, who heads a Chinese delegation for the review.

Chen, permanent representative of China to the UN office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, underlined the importance of the UPR mechanism, saying it is a platform for states to conduct candid exchanges on human rights issues on an equal footing within the UN's framework, and to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation.

In his address to the review, Chen introduced China's remark-

able achievements in the cause of human rights, announced 30 new initiatives to safeguard human rights, which cover such fields as enhancing people's well-being, strengthening legal safeguards for human rights, promoting international cooperation in human rights and supporting the work of the UN human rights mechanisms.

The vast majority of countries recognize China's unremitting efforts and historic achievements in promoting and safeguarding human rights, and are willing to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning with China in human rights, the diplomat said.

Chen noted a wide range of constructive recommendations put forward by representatives of various countries, which believe that the development of human rights in China has contributed valuable wisdom from a region with a different civilization.

But several countries, he added, disregarded the truth and made groundless accusa-

tions against China based on ideological bias, rumors and lies. China has already stated its solemn position in response, Chen stressed.

Speaking of the significance of China's human rights development to the international community, he said that China has taken a path of human rights development that conforms to the world trend and suits China's national conditions, providing an excellent model for the development of international human rights endeavors.

That has boosted the confidence of countries from the Global South in independently choosing their own path of human rights development, making crucial contribution to the improvement of global human rights governance, he said.

He said many countries supported China's relentless efforts to promote and safeguard human rights, hailed China's advancement in building of a strong country and national repu-



vention on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization, with human rights better safeguarded, and expressed their wish to learn more about China's experience and practices for the achievements.

Many representatives of devel-

oping countries said in their statements that China's path of human rights development was in line with China's national conditions and the aspirations of its people, providing a brand-new option for countries, especially develop-

ing countries, to explore the path of human rights development on their own, according to the ambassador.

The key to China's human rights development is the leadership of the Communist Party of China and socialism with Chinese characteristics, which determine

the socialist nature of China's human rights endeavors, guarantee that the Chinese people are the masters of the country, and ensure equality in the sharing of human rights and the fundamental interests of the greatest possible majority of the people continue to be safeguarded and developed, Chen said.

Many countries congratulated China on securing and beginning its sixth term as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, and expected China to play a leading role in global human rights governance and to uphold international justice, the diplomat said.

China will firmly stand in solidarity with the Global South, share weal and woe with developing countries, put forward more initiatives and proposals in line with the common interests of developing countries, and promote global human rights governance toward greater fairness, justice, rationality and inclusiveness, Chen said.

Nutech secures 1st position in 4th Federal Engineering Capstone Expo 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) recently hosted its 4th Federal Engineering Capstone Expo 2024 at the Pak China Friendship Center in Islamabad, showcasing outstanding engineering innovations from across the country. The expo highlighted the remarkable achievements and contributions of various universities, with NUTECH, a leading technology-driven research university, emerging as a standout participant at the event.

Committed to advancing society through education, research, and innovation, NUTECH proudly participated in the PEC Expo 2024, demonstrating its commitment to excellence in engineering. Out of 38 participating universities nationwide, NUTECH's Civil Engineering Department stood out from the competition by securing the 1st position in the civil and allied category. Additionally, the Computer Engineering Department at NUTECH achieved remarkable success by securing both the 1st and 2nd positions in the computer and allied category.

NUTECH's outstanding performance at the expo is a testament to



the university's dedication to fostering innovation and excellence in engineering education. By producing industry-leading research and fostering cutting-edge advancements, NUTECH has established itself as a key player in the field of engineering, setting new standards for quality and innovation.

The PEC Expo 2024 provided a valuable platform for NUTECH to

showcase its groundbreaking engineering projects and initiatives, further solidifying its position as a pioneer in engineering education and research. The university's remarkable achievements at the event are a reflection of its commitment to preparing the next generation of engineering leaders and contributing to the advancement of the engineering industry in Pakistan.

NUTECH extends its gratitude to the Pakistan Engineering Council for organizing the expo and providing an opportunity for universities to showcase their engineering innovations. The university remains dedicated to furthering its mission of driving technological advancement and making meaningful contributions to the field of engineering.

Pakistan, Russia sign MoU on Physical Culture and Sports



Spokesman Report

MOSCOW: Today Pakistan and Russia signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Ministry of Sports of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Field of Physical Culture and Sports. The MoU was signed in Moscow by Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia Muhammad Khalid Jamali and Russian Minister for Sports Mr. Oleg Matytsin.

The MoU envisions bilateral cooperation in a wide range of sporting endeavours including elite and mass sports, sports for disabled persons, sports science and education, sports technology and infrastructure. The MoU includes cooperation through trainings, seminars and exchange of sports delegations and sports development programs

Uzbekistan-China: the centuries-old foundations of modern successful cooperation

Dunyo

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of China Xi Jinping have repeatedly met at multilateral summits, reciprocal state, official and working visits of the two heads of state have taken place, and a number of telephone conversations have been held.

The state visit of President Xi Jinping to Uzbekistan in September 2022, as well as state visits to China by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in May 2017 and 2023 have given a powerful impetus to the development of bilateral relations.

High-level bilateral interaction is also characterized by dynamic and sustainable cooperation. Inter-parliamentary cooperation has intensified. In May 2017, an inter-parliamentary group on cooperation between the Oliy Majlis and the National People's Congress (NPC) was established. A fruitful inter-parliamentary dialogue is being maintained and a mutual exchange of visits by parliamentary delegations has been established.

Within the framework of governmental exchanges, official visits of Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov to China and Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang to Uzbekistan were held in 2019, as well as an online meeting of the heads of government in June 2021. In August 2022, the 6th meeting of the Uzbek-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation was held online.

In October 2023, Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov visited China to participate in the closing ceremony of the XIX Asian Games, during which he met with Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

Over the past seven years, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of China Xi Jinping have repeatedly met at multilateral summits, reciprocal state, official and working visits of the two heads of state have taken place, and a number of telephone conversations have been held.

The state visit of President Xi Jinping to Uzbekistan in September 2022, as well as state visits to China by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in May 2017 and 2023 have given a powerful impetus to the development of bilateral relations.

High-level bilateral interaction is also characterized by dynamic and sustainable cooperation. Inter-parliamentary cooperation has intensified. In May 2017, an inter-parliamentary group on cooperation between the Oliy Majlis and the National People's Congress (NPC) was established. A fruitful inter-parliamentary dialogue is being maintained and a mutual exchange of visits by parliamentary delegations has been established.

Within the framework of governmental exchanges, official visits of Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov to China and Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang to Uzbekistan were held in 2019, as well as an online meeting of the heads of government in June 2021. In August 2022, the 6th meeting of the Uzbek-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation was held online.

In October 2023, Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov visited China to participate in the closing ceremony of the XIX Asian Games, during which he met with Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China



Li Qi

The mechanism of inter-ministerial political consultations has been established and is successfully functioning. A total of 17 rounds of meetings have been held in this format. Effective dialogue between the foreign ministers is also maintained within the «Central Asia-China» format.

In November 2023, the first Strategic Dialogue between the foreign ministers of the two countries was held in Beijing. On the margins of this event, a business forum was held in Guangzhou and a round table with business representatives of the two countries was held in Shanghai.

Today, China is Uzbekistan's largest economic and trade partner. In January-November 2023, the volume of trade turnover between our countries totaled \$12.2 billion, exceeding the same figure in the previous year by 34 percent.

Since 2011, within the framework of the Uzbek-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, the two sides have been discussing issues of development and prospects for further expansion of practical interaction.

China is also one of Uzbekistan's largest investors. The total

volume of absorbed Chinese investments for 2017-2022 is almost \$11 billion. Direct Chinese investments are working today in many sectors of our country's economy, including chemical industry, oil and gas, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, agrarian sector, light industry and others. The number of Chinese companies involved in the implementation of major investment and infrastructure projects in the country is steadily growing. To date, 2,125 enterprises with Chinese investment are operating in Uzbekistan. In 2023, 601 new enterprises were established.

Poverty reduction is also an important area of bilateral cooperation. In this area, Uzbekistan is working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China. In late December, the first meeting of the subcommittee on poverty reduction within the Uzbek-Chinese Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee was held.

Visiting the Syrdarya region last April, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said that Syrdarya should become a "region of advanced innovations" in industry, business, agriculture, education and medicine. In this process, it was proposed to use

the vast experience of China, which has made unprecedented progress in industry, agriculture, education and medicine.

In June 2023, a business forum "Syrdarya-China" was held in the city of Gulistan with the participation of 250 representatives of leading Chinese companies, including "Huawei", "TBA", "CC7" and others. As a result of the forum, about 30 agreements totalling \$322 million were concluded.

One of the key areas of China-Uzbekistan cooperation is also transport and communications. It fully meets Uzbekistan's interests in transforming from a "landlocked country" to a "land-linked country", as well as the concept of China's "One Way, One Road" initiative aimed at reviving the Great Silk Road economic way.

Thus, within the framework of this initiative, the Angren-Pap railway line with the longest tunnel in the country and Central Asia as a whole was built in Uzbekistan with the participation of Chinese partners. The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan transport corridor is becoming an international artery crossing the mountains. All four routes of the Central Asia-China gas pipeline pass through Uzbekistan, setting a benchmark for friendly cooperation between the neighboring countries.

The role of the Great Silk Road, which has connected our regions for centuries, symbolized peace, cooperation and openness between East and West, and served mutual trade, cultural and scientific exchange. Since then, Uzbekistan and China have continued to share friendship and the richness of their cultures.

Today, young people in Uzbekistan are showing inter-

est in learning Chinese, and the Chinese are also learning Uzbek. This promotes the exchange of knowledge and cultural ties. For example, the Confucius Institutes established at the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies and the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages have become key centers for the study of Chinese culture and language.

At the same time, there is interest in learning Uzbek in China, and it is successfully taught at institutions such as the Central University of Nationalities and the Beijing Foreign Studies University, while the Shanghai University of International Studies, one of China's prestigious educational institutions, has a specialized chair in Uzbek. This interest is reflected in the growing number of students from China studying at Uzbek universities, which facilitates the exchange of knowledge and cultural ties between the two countries.

The «Uzbekistan-China» Friendship Society, established in 1998, also contributes to strengthening friendship and cooperation between the Uzbek and Chinese people.

On 18 May 2022, the Year of Culture and Art of the People of Central Asia and China was officially launched in Xi'an as part of the first Central Asia-China Summit. A number of cultural events, concerts and festivals, exhibitions, tour exchanges and presentations of Uzbek culture took place within the framework of this year.

Thus, in May 2023, a concert of the orchestra of the State Academic Big Theatre named A. Navoi was held at the «Beijing Opera House» in Beijing.

In September 2023, Uzbek Culture Minister Ozodbek

Nazarbekov took part in the 6th International Silk Road Expo, which was held in the city of Dunhuang in China's Gansu Province.

And in September 2023, the opening of the exhibition "Archaeological Cooperation - "One Way, One Road" was held in the museum of the Imperial Palace "Gugong" in Beijing, where Uzbekistan was represented by 18 exhibits from the "Golden Fund" of the country's historical heritage.

In turn, "Days of Chinese Culture" were held in October 2023 as part of the visit to Uzbekistan by the Chinese Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Over 380 athletes from Uzbekistan successfully participated in 39 sports at the XIX Asian Games, which were held in Hangzhou from 23 September to 8 October 2023. Uzbekistan ranked fifth in the medal standings, winning 22 gold, 18 silver and 31 bronze medals.

Expansion of economic ties also contributes to the growing interest in Uzbekistan, its history and traditions in China. Thus, last year, more than 40,000 Chinese tourists visited our country.

In short, today Uzbekistan and China have reached a qualitatively new level of partnership and cooperation. According to the leading Chinese English-language newspaper «Global Times», 2023 has become a landmark year in the history of China-Uzbekistan relations. In this regard, the upcoming state visit of our head of state to China will strengthen the successes and achievements of bilateral interaction and open up further prospects of fruitful cooperation for the benefit of the people of the two countries.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
64,822.43	64,454.22	
Day's High	Day's Low	
65,063.08	64,460.94	
Index Value	Change	
18,166,627,600	+368.21	
Percentage	Time	
+0.57%	24 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,527.67	+41.94	
Percentage	Time	
+0.56%	24 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,002.71	+97.26	
Percentage	Time	
+0.26%	24 Jan, 12:21 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
36,226.48	-291.09	
Percentage	Time	
-0.80%	24 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	183.8
Bahrain Dinar	744.69	752.69
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	39.32	39.72
Danish Krone	40.9	41.3
Euro	302.5	305.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.81	36.16
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.02	2.11
Kuwaiti Dinar	910.01	919.01
Malaysian Ringgit	59.36	59.96
New Zealand \$	170.83	172.83
Norwegians Krone	26.68	26.98
Omani Riyal	727.32	735.32
Qatari Riyal	76.87	77.57
Saudi Riyal	74.45	75.2
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.75	27.05
Swiss Franc	322.33	324.83
Thai Bhat	7.87	8.02
U.A.E Dirham	76.4	77.2
UK Pound Sterling	356	359
US Dollar	278.9	280.9

Lt. Gen. Asif Ghafoor asks business community to invest in backward areas to bring prosperity

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited the National Defense University (NDU) and congratulated Lt. Gen. Asif Ghafoor on his appointment as the President of the University. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan and Ajmal Baloch, President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajaran were in the delegation.

Talking to the delegation, Lieutenant General Asif Ghafoor, President, National Defense University Islamabad lauded the important role of the business community in the economic development of the country. He said that the business community of Pakistan should invest in the backward areas of the country including Balochistan, which will improve the local infrastructure, create new jobs, reduce poverty, and bring prosperity to the people. He said that the business community should fully cooperate with the



incoming government and give suggestions to create a favorable business environment so that through public-private sector efforts, Pakistan can be taken out of difficulties and put on the path of sustainable economic development.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the security and development of Pakistan depend on a strong economy and the business community would work with the government to improve the economy. He said ICCI may be given a permanent seat in the National Security Workshop and ICCI members may be invited to the important programs of NDU to share their success stories for the motivation of the students.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, appreciated the efforts of NDU in the field of education and research to produce future leaders in the public and private sectors and assured of the support of the business community to promote NDU's mission and objectives.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, and Ajmal Baloch President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajaran also spoke on the occasion and assured that the business community would always support all endeavors of the government to make Pakistan a strong economy in the region.

Performance of PML-N comparatively better, may win elections: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that inflation and unemployment have rocked the entire population of Pakistan.

The public is apathetic towards the upcoming elections because of their issues. However, he said the PML-N may win the elections as its economic performance has remained better than rival political parties.

Mian Zahid Hussain stated that the upcoming election would not be as warm as it once used to be because of a lack of interest on the side of the populace, who are preoccupied with their own problems.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the problems of water, electricity, gas, employment, and inflation have consumed all the energies of the public. Hence, numerous people seem indifferent to the upcoming elections.

Conversely, he added, the business community is hoping that the election would improve the nation's political stability and boost the economy.



Mian Zahid Hussain said the country has suffered from a severe economic crisis for many years. The commoner is struggling to get the basic needs, and it has become challenging to pay the electricity and gas bills and to feed the family.

In these circumstances, what can the public care about who forms the next government and who will sit in the opposition as all they have to worry about is food, medicines, and children's fees?

The business leader further said that the people know that their effects result from the wrong choices of politicians, which the

politicians also feel.

The current government has reduced the prices of petroleum products, but because of mismanagement and profiteering, the people have not benefited from it.

He further said that a large section of the business community believes that this time, the PML-N will form the federal and Punjab governments, and it will be able to provide some relief to the people.

Many believe that PML-N is more focused on the economy than other political parties; therefore, it will be better positioned to revive the economy and provide relief to the people.

It is expected that in the era of PML-N, employment opportunities will be created for the people, attention will be paid to development projects for public welfare, all political parties will be taken on board, and the principle of live and let live will be followed.

He noted that inflation and unemployment would be significant challenges for the post-election government, which will be difficult to deal with; however, if the economy and economic reforms are prioritised above all else, smuggling and hoarding are discouraged, the situation will improve.

Jubilee Life becomes Official Insurance Partner for HBL PSL Season 9



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Jubilee Life Insurance, the largest private sector insurance company in Pakistan, partnered with Pakistan Cricket Board as the Official Insurance Partner for HBL PSL Season 9. The announcement was made at the Gadafi Stadium, Lahore, and was attended by Syed Usman Qaiser, Head of Marketing and Brand Management, Jubilee

Life Insurance, Naila Bhatti League Commissioner HBL PSL, and Sohaib Sheikh, Director HBL PSL.

This is the 7th consecutive year that Jubilee Life has partnered with HBL PSL as the Official Insurance Partner. The partnership has been lauded by both sides as a significant opportunity for the mutual growth and development of the two brands. The HBL PSL Season 9 is set to begin on February 17 in Lahore.

Signing of Exploration Licenses and Petroleum Concession Agreements (PCAS)

PPA

ISLAMABAD: OGDCL's focus on aggressive exploration strategy resulted in acquiring of exploration blocks. OGDCL participated in Government announced Bidding Rounds for new Exploration Blocks in June, 2023 and November, 2023. OGDCL won four Exploration Blocks as Operator with 100% Working Interest and two Exploration Blocks as JV partners. The financial investment by OGDCL would be around 12 Million USD.

A signing ceremony of Petroleum Concession Agreements (PCAs) and Exploration Licences (ELs) for the Blocks was held on 24th January, 2024 at 1030 hours at SIFC Secretariat, Prime Minister Office, Islamabad. Signing Ceremony was graced



by Minister of Petroleum, Director General SIFC. The ceremony was chaired by Secretary Petroleum, DGPC, MD/CEO OGDCL and other members.

MD OGDCL signed the PCAs of Sehwan EL (Sindh), Zindan-II EL (Punjab),

Kotra East EL (Baluchistan) and Murra-di EL (Sindh) with 100% Working Interest. Two non-Operated PCAs were also signed. Saruna West EL (Baluchistan) and Gambat-II (Sindh) with OGDCL's 30% Working Interest.

First-ever Pakistan mobile summit is all set to take place

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Mobile Summit, the first all-encompassing mobile conference in Pakistan, is set to take place on January 29th at Serena Hotel, Islamabad. Presented by TECNO and Powered by Jazz, the summit is designed and produced by Brand Spectrum Pakistan. This event promises to be a groundbreaking showcase of innovative technologies, insightful discussions, and collaborative networking opportunities in the dynamic mobile industry landscape.

The summit will be inaugurated by the esteemed Minister of IT and Telecom, Dr. Umar Saif. It is proudly supported by key government entities such as the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), Tech Nation Pakistan and the Pakistan Mobile Phones Manufacturers Association. TECNO Mobile and Jazz stand as the primary sponsors for this significant event happening for the first time in the history of Pakistan.

FPCCI, Employers' Federation agree on ways to improve GSP+ compliance

PNP

KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has said that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) have agreed, in principle, to converge their policy advocacy; skills development & awareness and research & development resources to enable Pakistan to continue to capitalize on its GSP+ status with the European Union (EU) as new EU parliament and EU Commission will be in place by June 2024; and, there might be some review or policy changes in rules framework for Pakistan's GSP+ status.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting

President FPCCI, explained that Pakistan should remain on course on EU requirements on human rights; labor rights; environmental standards and good governance. These are principally the four areas where Pakistan's performance comes under review.

Malik Tahir Javed, President of EFP, highlighted that the Employers' Federation is focused on industrial relations; skills development and labor laws under the guiding principles and conventions of International Labour Organization (ILO); and, playing the role of a bridge between government and the employers from across all regions and sectors of Pakistan's economy.

Syed NazarAli, Secretary General of EFP, briefed on the National

Skills Passport (NSP) program of the Government of Pakistan; where skilled workers without educational diplomas & certifications are acknowledged and documented through this identity card type document.

Mr. Ravi Peiris, Senior Specialist on Employers' Activities, ILO, stressed that FPCCI's support is absolutely imperative in compliance on international labor conventions and growth of Pakistan's exports as FPCCI represents the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan.

Mr. Majid Aziz, former President of EFP, mentioned that various chambers and associations are on board with EFP; nonetheless, FPCCI is the most important stakeholder of



EFP programs from the trade side for being the apex body.

Aflatoxin Control is the Key to Boosting Pakistan's Agricultural Exports: Dr. Malik

PPA

ISLAMABAD: PR&P, PARC, A significant dialogue on regulatory harmonization in Pakistan for Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) and Bio-pesticides was held, aiming to improve food safety standards in the country. The event brought together four major partners, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI), Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), and representatives from the private sector specially Raffan Maize Product Co. Ltd. The primary focus of the dialogue was to facilitate the availability and regulation for Aflatoxin biological control technology for maize, which had demonstrated promising results in field trials.

Addressing the dialogue, Dr. Kauser Abdulla Malik, the esteemed chief guest, emphasized the significance of aflatoxin control in enhancing Pakistan's agricultural exports. He commended the collaborative efforts of CABI, USDA and PARC in this domain, recognizing their dedication to ensuring food safety. Dr. Kauser further highlighted the importance of exploring innovative techniques to minimize the reliance on nitro-based fertilizers, alongside promoting the use of organic fertilizers, in response to the challenges posed by climate change.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), emphasized the significance of Aflatoxin Control in both bolstering export potential and safeguarding the nation's public health. He underscored the ongoing efforts of PARC scientists in developing biological control methods for Aflatoxin in various crops such as Chillies, Maize, Rice, and Ground nuts.

Ms. Jessica Mudjitaba-Fernandez, Program Manager, USDA, stated that Collaboration is crucial in tackling the challenges posed by Aflatoxin contamination. She emphasized that by working together, USDA, CABI, PARC, and the private sector can pool their expertise and resources to develop effective strategies for Aflatoxin control, ensuring the safety and quality of agricultural products in Pakistan.

Shaheen, Hasaranga lead Desert Vipers to first win in ILT20 2024

A Sports

DUBAI: Wanindu Hasaranga backed Shaheen Shah Afridi's 3/22 with a quickfire 42 and powered Desert Vipers to their maiden victory in the ongoing ILT20 2024.

The star-studded side registered a comfortable six-wicket victory over Gulf Giants in the seventh match.

Put into bat first, the Giants struggled against the ruthless bowling attack of the Vipers and put up a modest total of 160/6 on the board.

The Giants had a dismal start to their innings as Mohammad Amir and Shaheen Afridi struck in quick successions to leave them reeling at 7/2 in 2.2 overs.

Following the slump, Chris Lynn and Jordan Cox anchored the innings with a counterattacking 89-run partnership.

Lynn dominated the stand by dominating the Vipers' bowlers and brought up his half-century in the process.

The right-handed batter, however, failed to stretch his gutsy knock and fell victim to Tymal Mills in the 13th over.

He top-scored for the Giants with a 42-ball 63 which featured seven boundaries and three sixes.

Shimron (11) Hetmyer joined Cox for a



brief 26-run stand before both perished in successive overs as the Giants slipped further to 124/5 in 16.2 overs.

Cox remained a notable run-getter for the Giants with a cautious 32. His 29-ball knock included one boundary and a six.

Chris Jordan added brisk 14 runs at the death, majorly dominated by Shaheen, who returned for his second spell to add two more to his wickets tally.

Shaheen Afridi led the bowling attack for the Vipers with 3/22, while Moham-

mad Amir, Tymal Mills and Hasaranga made one scalp each.

In return, the Vipers chased down the 161-run target for the loss of just four wickets and eight balls to spare.

The Vipers had a contrasting start to their innings as they lost their captain Colin Munro (6) in the third over with just 14 runs on the board.

His partner Alex Hales also failed to impress and fell in the sixth over after a scratchy 21 off 20 deliveries.

Coming out to bat at number four, Hasaranga soon turned the game on its head with belligerent hitting.

The all-rounder smashed four boundaries and two sixes on his way to top score for the Vipers with a 19-ball 42.

He put together an important partnership with Adam Hose before falling victim to Dominik Drakes in the 13th over.

Hose was involved in yet another crucial partnership for the Vipers when he put together 51 runs for the fifth wicket with Azam Khan before finally walking back to the dugout in the 16th over.

He scored an anchoring 39 off 35 deliveries with the help of four boundaries.

Meanwhile, Azam, alongside Sherfane Rutherford made sure that there were no further hiccups in the pursuit and powered the Vipers over the line in the penultimate over.

The Pakistan international remained unbeaten with a 14-ball 26 which included three boundaries and a six.

Drakes and Richard Gleeson bagged two wickets each for the Giants while the rest went wicketless.

The six-wicket victory lifted Desert Vipers to the fourth in ILT20 standings, behind Gulf Giants, with two points in as many matches.

SNGPL crush HEC to set up President's Trophy final duel with WAPDA



A Sports

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) thumped the Higher Education Commission (HEC) by 109 runs in the last round of the President's Trophy and will now face the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) in the final.

The final of the seven-team tournament will run from January 27 to 31. WAPDA topped the standings with 62 points in seven matches, followed by SNGPL with 57 points in as many matches.

HEC required 283 runs to win with nine wickets in the bag at the start of the day. Skipper Saad Khan hung around in the middle and faced 149 balls to score 65 runs comprising six boundaries and two sixes before falling prey to Mubasir Khan.

Muhammad Awais Zafar (50, 77b, 5x4s, 2x6s) played well for his half-century before being dismissed by Mohammad Awais Anwar.

Opening batter, Mohammad Mohsin Khan (7, 16b) returned to bat after retiring out last evening. He was outfoxed by Shahnawaz Dahani who went on to hand a golden duck to Sohaib Sultan as well bringing HEC to 133-4.

Mohammad Ghazi Ghori (54, 97b, 6x4s) too put up resistance scoring a gutsy half-century but Dahani dismissed him as well. Umar Lohya (12, 20b, 2x4s) and Waseem Akram's (20 32b, 2x6s) outings were cut short after they got off to decent starts. HEC lost their last five scalps for just 53 runs while falling 109 runs short of the target.

Dahani, running riot with the ball, picked up his second first-class five-wicket haul giving away 54 runs in 15 overs. Awais Anwar and Mubasir returned with two wickets each while Mohammad Ali dismissed one batter.

The other last-round fixture of the President's Trophy that concluded on Monday saw WAPDA edging Pakistan Television Network (PTV) by three wickets.

Patrick Mahomes responds to Buffalo Bills in fierce locker room speech



A furious Patrick Mahomes stormed through the Kansas City Chiefs locker room, giving a fierce new meaning to the proverb "Be careful what you wish for," after the Chiefs defeated the Buffalo Bills 27-24 in the divisional round on Sunday in Orchard Park.

"They asked for it, and they got what they asked for," the Chiefs quarterback told his teammates. "But he said it, this s-t ain't done. We come back next week ready to f-king go."

The Chiefs will now face the Ravens in Sunday's American Football Conference (AFC) Championship game in Baltimore, marking Mahomes' second-ever road playoff game.

Before Sunday's face-off, Bills offensive lineman Dion Dawkins fanned the flames on one of the league's best rivalries, remarking how Mahomes, 28, hasn't experienced Bills Mafia "in full."

"[Mahomes has] only been here once. So he's never been here. Simple as that," Dawkins said, according to ESPN. "Pat has never been to the Bills stadium in full... The environment will be different, and not to say it's in our favor, but stadium is our favour."

He added: "I don't care what nobody says. This is the most dopest feeling I've ever had. We're having two back-to-back playoff games home. Come on now, like we get to leave and go eat wings. It's cool. So good luck."

Mahomes and tight end Travis Kelce on Sunday connected for their 16th postseason touchdown, surpassing Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski for the most playoff scores all-time.

Despite the snowstorm on Sunday, Mahomes expressed positive remarks about the road environment, despite snowballs being hurled in his direction at the end.

"First of all, this is a great environment, man," Mahomes said. "It really is. We did hear it all week, man, about playing a road game, and we're here to prove a point and show that we can play anywhere."

Brisbane Heat thump Sydney Sixers to win second BBL title

A Sports

SYDNEY: Josh Brown's half-century, followed by Spencer Johnson's four-fer steered Brisbane Heat to the Big Bash League (BBL) title victory with a thumping 54-run victory over Sydney Sixers.

Put into bat first, the Sixers registered a commendable total of 166/8 in the allotted 20 overs, courtesy of a brisk fifty at the top by Brown.

The Heat had a shaky start to their innings as their opener Jimmy Peirson (4) perished in the first over with just five runs on the board.

Skipper Nathan McSweeney then joined Brown in the middle



and they soon put the Heat in a comfortable position.

The pair added 85 runs for the second wicket before both perished in successive overs,

bringing the Heat down to 90/3 in 12.2 overs.

McSweeney scored a cautious 33 while Brown smashed five boundaries and three sixes on

his way to top score for the Heat with a 38-ball 53.

But runs kept coming for the Heat as Max Bryant and Matt Renshaw stitched an important 57-run partnership, stretched till the penultimate over.

Sean Abbott pulled things back for the Sixers with a sensational 19th over as he picked up three wickets including that of Bryant, who scored a 19-ball 29, laced up with one boundary and two sixes.

Renshaw, on the other hand, perished on the final delivery of the innings. He scored a quickfire 40 off just 22 balls.

Sean Abbott led the bowling attack for the Sixers with 4/32 while Steve O'Keefe and Dwarshuis made one scalp each.

In return, the Sixers' batting lineup folded on a mere 112 runs in 17.4 overs.

The home side batters appeared clueless against the Johnson-led Heat bowling attack and only five of them made it into the double figures.

Captain Moises Henriques (25) remained the top-scorer for the Heat in the BBL final, followed by Josh Philippe, who scored 23.

For the Heat, Spencer Johnson bagged four wickets while Xavier Bartlett and Mitchell Swepson claimed two wickets apiece.

It is worth mentioning here that this was Brisbane Heat's second BBL title victory. They last won the prestigious title in the second edition of the league.

Pakistan edge spirited Nepal to maintain winning run in U19 World Cup

A Sports

EAST LONDON: Azan Awais's unbeaten half-century in the run chase powered Pakistan to a hard-fought five-wicket victory over Nepal in the 14th match of the ICC Men's U19 World Cup on Wednesday.

Opting to bat first, Nepal could only register 197 runs on the board and unfolded on the final delivery of the innings.

Nepal had a fairytale start to their innings as they raced to 29/0 in four overs. But Ahmad Hassan castled Arjun Kamal (6) in the next over to provide a much-needed breakthrough to Pakistan.

Bipin Rawal then put together a one-sided partnership with Aakash Tripathi (6) before receiving notable support from skipper Dev Khanal.

The pair added 37 runs for

the third wicket before Khanal fell victim to Ali Asfand in the 18th over. He scored 23 off 37 deliveries with the help of three boundaries.

Nepal then further slipped to 96/5 in 26.4 overs when their batting mainstay Rawal fell prey to Arafat Minhass.

He remained the top-scorer for the side with a cautious 39. His 68-delivery featured four boundaries and a six.

Following his departure, Deepak Dumre (26) and Subash Bhandari (20) made notable contributions at the backend.

Arafat Minhass led the bowling attack for Pakistan in their second U19 World Cup fixture with 3/23 in his 10 overs.

He was supported by Ubaid Shah and Ahmad Hassan, picking up two wickets each.

In pursuit of 198, Pakistan accumulated 201 for the loss



of five wickets and 14 balls to spare, courtesy of a well-crafted half-century by Awais.

The former champions had a decent start to the run chase as their openers Shamyul Hussain and Shahzaib Khan added 80 runs for the first wicket.

The pair had put Pakistan in command but their back-to-

back dismissals in the 22nd over caused a stir in the run chase.

Shahzaib and Shamyul both remained notable contributor in the run chase with a 37 each.

The Green Shirts stuttered further when they lost two more wickets in quick succession and had slipped to 104/4 in 28 overs.

However, Azan Awais joined forces with Ahmad Hassan and launched an astounding recovery.

The pair added an important 64 runs for the fifth wicket before Hassan perished after putting Pakistan in touching distance. He scored 29 off 37 deliveries, hitting four boundaries.

Meanwhile, Awais stood his ground firm and carried his bat all the way through to steer Pakistan over the line in the 48th over.

He top-scored for Pakistan with a 82-ball 63 which featured six boundaries.

For Nepal, Aakash Chand took three wickets while Dipesh Kandel and Aakash Tripathi made one scalp each.

Pakistan next face New Zealand in their last group-stage U19 World Cup fixture on Saturday at the same venue.

Alexander Zverev shocks Carlos Alcaraz to reach Australian Open semis

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Alexander Zverev snuffed out a thrilling Carlos Alcaraz comeback early Thursday to set up an Australian Open semi-final against Daniil Medvedev as Ukrainian qualifier Dayana Yastremska's dream run continued in Melbourne.

Zverev recovered from a major wobble to win 6-1, 6-3, 6-7 (2/7), 6-4 in just over three hours, crushing Alcaraz's hopes of a third Grand Slam.

Alexander Zverev broke at his first opportunity on Rod Laver Arena, dominating the charismatic Carlos Alcaraz, who could find no answer to his opponent's power and precision.

The sixth seed served for victory at 5-3 in the third set but Carlos Alcaraz somehow broke his opponent and produced some outrageous shots in the tie-break as the crowd erupted.

The pair swapped breaks at the beginning of the fourth set but Zverev

earned a crucial breakthrough in the ninth game and served it out to reach the semis at Melbourne Park for the second time.

Former US Open runner-up Alexander Zverev, who reached the semi-finals in Melbourne in 2020, landed 85 per cent of his first serves and won 73 per cent of points behind his first delivery.

"I was playing one of the best players in the world. Over the past two years he has been number one or number two constantly," said the 26-year-old.

"He's won two Grand Slams, and when you are up 6-1, 6-3, 5-2, you start thinking.

"We are all human. It is a great honour to play against guys like him. When you're so close to winning your brain starts going and it is not always helpful, but I'm happy that I got there in the end."

Earlier, former US Open champion Medvedev came through a gruelling

five-setter against Hubert Hurkacz in sweaty conditions 7-6 (7/4), 2-6, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4.

The Russian world number three was twice pegged back by the Polish ninth seed after going a setup but produced the crucial break in the decider to get over the line.

The 27-year-old, who lost to Novak Djokovic in the 2021 Australian Open final and Rafael Nadal the following year, said he felt "destroyed" after the contest, which lasted nearly four hours.

"I honestly was feeling it physically at the end of the second set already and I said to stay tough," he said.

"Fourth set I had no more concentration and I had to try my best to do whatever I can."

In the opening match on centre court, 93rd-ranked Yastremska cruised past unseeded Czech Linda Noskova to become just the second women's qualifier in the Open Era to



get so far at the Australian Open.

She broke three times to win 6-3, 6-4 and set up a clash against Chinese 12th seed Zheng Qinwen, who is also gunning for a maiden Grand Slam title.

Zheng beat Russia's Anna Kalinskaya 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-1.

Yastremska is the first women's qualifier to reach the last four since Australia's Christine Matison in 1978. The 23-year-old wrote a message

of support for Ukrainian fighters involved in the war against Russia on a TV camera lens after her win.

"I'm very proud of them," she said. "They really deserve huge respect. I always try to write something for Ukraine, about Ukraine."

"I think it's my mission here. If I do well, I can get — tough to express — I'm just trying to give the signal to Ukraine that I'm really proud of it."

Zheng came from a set down to see off the unseeded Kalinskaya.

The 21-year-old, known to her fans as "Queen Wen", had never progressed beyond the quarter-finals in eight previous Grand Slam appearances but held her nerve for the win.

"In the first set we had a big competition and the match was really tough for me," she said.

"I just told myself to stay focused, not think anymore about the first set and I'm so happy right now, like really excited."

Women Empowerment

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with the recipients of the 1st Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Entrepreneurs Recognition shields, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

Women empowerment important for progress, prosperity of country: President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said the empowerment of women in every sector of life was important to ensure progress and development of the country.

Addressing the First LCCI Women Entrepreneurs Recognition Ceremony 2024 held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president eulogized the role of Lahore Chamber

of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in contributing towards the empowerment of the women.

He said the LCCI was the first chamber which had arranged awards for the women entrepreneurs and asked other chambers to also play similar role for women empowerment.

He said the LCCI should also train and prepare the women in such a way to enable them to work any

where in the world.

The president said the LCCI had also supported various programmes initiated by first lady Begum Samina Alvi such as awareness campaigns of breast cancer and persons with disabilities.

He said there was a tangible evidence that due to the awareness programme, more women were getting early diagnoses of the disease.

He said being a woman, his wife first lady Samina Alvi had

helped him a lot in politics and other activities.

He said the women in the country often leave their professions after getting married which meant they were wasting the country's resources. He urged them not to leave their profession and work shoulder to shoulder with their men counterparts for the development of the country.

Referring to the atrocities being done in Gaza, the president

said that women were the most affected during the crisis.

Earlier the president conferred awards to the women entrepreneurs for their services.

President Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashif Anwar said unless the government do not give a suitable environment for women, they could not play their due role in trade and investment sector.

Enhancing cooperation among provincial legislators and parliament of Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A workshop titled "Parliamentary Interface: Learning Experience of Provincial Assembly Secretariats" commences at the National Assembly of Pakistan. The workshop, jointly organized by National Assembly of Pakistan & Mustehkam Parlmaan aimed at nurturing a constructive dialogue and deliberation among national parliaments' on crucial issues influencing parliamentary and legislative

agenda. Participants received a comprehensive overview of the National Assembly, its functions, procedures, and a detailed explanation of the committee system and legislative processes from Mr. Muhammad Mushtaq, Special Secretary (Legislation) of the National Assembly in different sessions of the event.

During the session on 'Committee System and Legislative Process', Mr. Muhammad Mushtaq, Special Secretary (Legislation), provided

an in-depth briefing on the committee system and its importance in the legislative process. He also conducted a walkthrough explaining how bills are introduced, reviewed, and passed within the National Assembly and Joint Sessions of the Parliament.

Senior Officers from National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies of Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are actively contributing to the dynamic exchange of knowl-

edge taking place at Parliament House. The Executive Director of Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Mr. Muhammad Anwar shared valuable insights to foster collaborative learning environment in order to promote best Parliamentary practices. He elucidated the technicalities of the committee system and legislative processes.

The session proceeds with a Q&A segment, where Officers from Provincial Assemblies

of Pakistan actively seek clarification on the elaborated topics. Officers from Provincial Assemblies were taken on a guided tour of the National Assembly of Pakistan, encompassing the National Assembly Hall, Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Secretariat, Library, Media and various departments. During the tour, they were briefed on the roles and responsibilities of different units within the Secretariat.

Mariyum Aurangzeb, Javed Latif exonerated in provocative speech case



Bureau Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court on Wednesday exonerated PML-N leaders Mariyum Aurangzeb, Javed Latif and others in a provocative speech case.

ATC Judge Muhammad Naveed Iqbal announced the verdict. The other accused were former MD PTV Sohail Ali and Director News PTV Rashid Baig.

The lawyers had concluded arguments on the pleas of exoneration in the court. They said that the case was registered with a delay of five days.

There was a provocative conversation on TV but the name of the TV channel in the case was not given. However, legal requirements were not followed while filing the case. Meanwhile, the counsel said that the plaintiff deviated from his statement and there was no witness in the case.

Bilawal calls for end to politics of hatred in run-up to polls

PPA

CHINIOT: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stressed the need for ending the politics of hatred and division.

Addressing an election rally in Chiniot, Bilawal said the politics of hatred would be beneficial only for the enemies of the country.

He also highlighted that the country had been passing through the economic crisis for



many years which has affected society as a whole.

Talking about the culture of political vengeance, the PPP leader called for ending tradition of political victimisation while mentioning the example of former PM Benazir Bhut-

to who, he said, never sought revenge on her political rivals.

Talking about the PML-N, he said the first two stints in power of Nawaz Sharif were not less than dictatorship while mentioning that the PPP had never done the politics of revenge.

He also said to his supporters that "he will not like if they speak ill of his political opponents as the competition should be based on manifestos and performances rather than

unnecessary criticism."

He said that instead of the politics of hate, division and backbiting, the PPP had always believed in the politics of ideology while urging his supporters to go door to door and explain the manifesto and economic agenda of the PPP.

He said he would build hospitals for free treatment in every district if voted into power. He said the PML-N supremo had not developed any free treatment centre in Punjab.

Elections 2024: Over 92,000 polling stations to be set up across country

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finalised the scheme for polling stations, with sources claiming that over 92,000 polling stations would be set up across the country for the upcoming general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024.

The comprehensive polling scheme will be publicly released days before the election date, currently sched-

uled for February 8th. This transparent approach aims to ensure informed participation and address any potential concerns well in advance of polling day.

The plan delineates the distribution of polling stations across all four provinces and the federal capital. The polling stations have been categorized as normal, sensitive, and highly sensitive based on the security situation and the history of electoral violence.

According to the draft of the scheme prepared by the ECP, a total of 52,412 polling stations will be established in Punjab for the general elections.

Of the total, 6,040 polling stations in Punjab have been declared highly sensitive. Whereas, 15,617 polling stations in the province have been declared sensitive.

In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, a total of 15,737 polling stations will be set up. Of these, 4,726 have been declared highly

sensitive while 6,180 declared sensitive.

In Sindh, 4,718 polling stations have been declared as normal, 6,576 as sensitive, and 7,802 as highly sensitive. Similarly, 5,015 polling stations will be set up in Balochistan.

The Election Commission has said that it will ensure the provision of all necessary facilities and security arrangements at the polling stations to ensure a free, fair, and transparent election.

Pakistan benefiting from first CPEC phase; engaged with China for next one: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said that having achieved the first phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan was benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with China to execute the next phase. "We have already achieved the CPEC's first phase and we are benefiting from its early harvest projects. We are entering the second phase. We do need more deliberations when it comes to the second phase," he said in an interview with China Global Television Network (CGTN) during his visit to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum.

He said the CPEC's second phase required road and air connectivity around the industrialisation projects. "Both sides are engaged and we have developed a lot of connectivity - road, air and rest of connectivity corridor. We are benefiting from the ecosystem of doing trade with one another," he remarked. Asked how he articulated the Chinese economy, Prime Minister said, "I am always sanguine about it. There are 1.5 billion consumers and 1.5 billion producers... How can you divorce 1.5 billion people from



8 billion people? It has to remain connected." He said being a huge marketplace, both China and the world were interested in each other. Questioned about his government's priorities, the prime minister highlighted the economic revival, the transformation of technology and taxation reforms. He said Pakistan was on the middle ground amidst the discourse between Global North and South and other conflicts in the region. Domestically, he said the government needed to earn more and spend less. The prime minister said that Pakistan should remain focused on taking the advantage of opportunities in the region including the Belt and Road Initiative and the relocation of Chinese industry. He advocated the policy envisaging to encourage business and provide them electricity on competitive price to help the businesses produce competitive goods for export to the international market.

Netanyahu imposes his personal agenda on the world: Palestine

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: There remains no article in the Geneva Conventions and international law that Israel has not violated in its continued aggression against our people

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the

strongest terms the genocidal war committed by the occupation forces, which continues for the 110th day in a row against our people, and violates the texts, contents and spirit of the Geneva Conventions, especially the Fourth Convention, and all international laws that regulate the conditions of defenseless civilians during the war, including the settlement of all homes and facilities. In the border areas of the Gaza Strip to the ground and annihilating everything in those areas and turning them completely devoid of any human presence, after committing hundreds of mass massacres and imposing forced displacement on their residents, under false pretexts and pretexts, the most important of which is the establishment of buffer zones according to the occupation's narrative, as well as the escalation occurring in successive episodes of genocide. Against Palestinian civilians, as is currently happening in the central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, targeting shelter centers and hospitals, pushing more than 1.5 million Palestinians towards Rafah and cramming them there, in light of the deliberate Israeli obstruction of the arrival of aid to all areas of the Strip, the



severity of the extreme cold in the winter, and the spread of epidemics and diseases, especially in Rows of children, women, the elderly and the sick, as the occupation's crimes left more martyrs, injured and injured as a result of the Israeli bombing and systematic destruction of homes, and all of this is accompanied by Israel's continued use of starvation, thirst and deprivation of medicines as a tool of war.

Therefore, the occupation army, with its crimes, imposes a cycle of certain death on Palestinian civilians, and they are not allowed to move except from death to death.

In this context, the Ministry condemns what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is promoting and trying to leak under the cover of the stages of war, especially with regard to prolonging what is called the third phase for a period of 6 months, with what this means in terms of the continuation of the crimes of genocide and forced displacement and displacement of our citizens from the Gaza Strip, in official Israeli arrogance. It underestimates all UN and international demands and positions calling for an immediate end to the war.

ARY News Gujarat reporter returns home a day after disappearance

Aziz-ur-Rehman

LAHORE: ARY News reporter stationed in Gujrat, Aamir Mahmood Butt, returned home a day after disappearing.

According to the details, the family of the journalist filed a missing report of Aamir Mahmood Butt at

Civil Lines police station on Tuesday.

Sharjeel Memon, son of ARY News reporter, in the missing report stated that his father left the house around 8 pm and did not return, meanwhile his cellphone is also switched off.

However, the journalist was returned his home in Gujrat on Wednesday night around 9pm.

Shehryar Afridi gets protective bail in two cases



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday granted protective bail to PTI leader Shehryar Khan Afridi in two cases and

stopped the police from arresting him till February 6.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard the case of Afridi seeking protective bail in two FIR registered in Kohat against him.

The court accepted the bail against surety bonds worth Rs 20,000 and stopped the police from arresting the petitioner. The court also instructed the petitioner to approach the relevant court for relief during the period of protective bail.