



**Indian Army harassing Kashmiri youth over Ram Temple: Abdul Majid Khan**

Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that a large number of Kashmiri youth have been arrested for sharing posts on social media related to the inauguration ceremony of the Ram Temple built by the Indian Army on the site of the centuries-old historic Babri Masjid in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. (Details on Page 3)



**Shah urges Kashmiris to observe India's Republic Day as black day**

Senior Hurriyat leader and Chairman J & K Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shahab Ahmad Shah has appealed to the Kashmiri masses to observe Indian Republic Day as Black Day. In his message from Tihar jail, the incarcerated leader urged the Kashmiri masses to observe protest on 26 January to convey a message to the world that India's unlawful and forcible occupation of their motherland was not acceptable to them. (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Called on**

ISLAMABAD: Head of Al-Jomaih Group along with a delegation called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday.



Photo: PID

**PM urges Saudi Arabia's Jomaih Group to invest in Pakistan's alternative energy sector**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday urged the Al-Jomaih Group of Saudi Arabia to invest in the alternative energy sector of Pakistan. The prime minister, in a meeting with a four-member delegation, led by the Al-Jomaih Group head Sheikh Abdulaziz Hammad, said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had brotherly ties which were getting further stronger.

The Al-Jomaih Group had made a huge investment in the K-Electric. The prime minister said that Pakistan greatly valued the Saudi investment and welcomed its investment in the energy sector. He also lauded K-Electric strategy to invest in the alternative energy sector as it would

help reduce the power tariff for the benefit of consumers. The prime minister also expressed the hope that the K-Electric would further improve its infrastructure to ensure uninterrupted power supply to domestic and industrial consumers.

The Al-Jomaih Group thanked the prime minister and the government team for resolving the longstanding issues faced by the company. Apprising the prime minister of the company's 1500 megawatt projects, the delegation informed the prime minister that the projects would feature the usage of local resources and alternative energy.

Federal Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Energy Minister Muhammad Ali and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

**Pakistan Navy launches Exercise Sea Spark 2024 to assess combat readiness**

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy kicked off the Exercise Sea Spark 2024 on Thursday to critically evaluate its combat readiness and strategy.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the opening ceremony of the Pakistan Navy's exercise was held in Karachi, with Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf partici-



pating as the chief guest.

During the event, participants were briefed on the objectives and strategy of the exercise, which will engage all combat assets of the Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Special Forces, and Pakistan Marines, as stated in an ISPR news release.

In the Exercise Sea Spark 2024, personnel and assets from the Pakistan Navy, Pakistan

Army and Pakistan Air Force will jointly participate in operations. This exercise aims to further strengthen Pakistan's resolve to maintain peace and security in the region.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by representatives from Federal Ministries, including Defence, Foreign Affairs, Law, and National Security Division, along with a large number of armed forces officers.

**Police raid Javed Hashmi's residence, arrest son-in-law and servants**

**Bureau Report**

MULTAN: Police raided the residence of senior politician Javed Hashmi on Thursday and arrested his son-in-law and servants.

Taking to social media site X, former twitter, Hashmi said police raided his residence in Makhdoom Rashid area while the Tehreek-e-Insaf workers convention was in progress and arrested the PTI candidate and his servants.

He said police entered the house by breaking the doors and tortured women as well. Police violated the sanctity of his house [chaddar aur chaar deewari] by forcefully entering the residence without a warrant and took his son-in-law and grandson into custody.

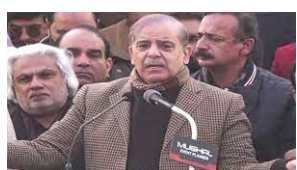
**Rid your own area of private prisons first: Shehbaz to PPP leadership**

**PPA**

MANDI BHAUDDIN: PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, in a veiled response to the PPP leadership, stated on Thursday that there were no political prisoners during PML-N supreme Mian Nawaz Sharif's stint as the country's prime minister.

While addressing a public gathering in Mandi Bahauddin, Shehbaz said that those making announcements about the release of political prisoners upon coming into power should first eliminate private prisons in their own areas.

"Many families have been kept in these prisons, and there is no one to listen to their grievances." The former prime minister recalled that when Nawaz Sharif



was elected into power by the nation in 2013, a conspiracy was hatched against his government.

"Everyone knows who staged the long march and who facilitated it," he said, adding that the nation had not yet forgotten this heart-wrenching episode.

"This long march was initiated on August 14, 2014, against Pakistan and Nawaz Sharif, who was set to bring huge investment to the country. As a result, the Chinese president, who was due in Pakistan in September 2014, had to cancel his visit."

**Former NA speaker Elahi Bakhsh Soomro passes away**

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: Former National Assembly speaker Elahi Bakhsh Soomro passed away due to heart failure on Thursday. He was 97.

His body was sent to his hometown Jacobabad.

A day earlier, his wife Parveen Elahi Bakhsh also passed away. The death of husband and wife within a day left the family shattered.

Soomro was born in Sindh's Jacobabad district in 1926. He belonged to the Soomro family settled in Shikarpur which ruled Sindh for many years. He was the son of Maula Bakhsh Soomro and brother of Ahmad Mian Soomro. He got a degree in engineering.

**Zardari vows effective legislation for protection of minorities' rights**

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Former president Asif Ali Zardari expressed confidence on Thursday that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) would emerge victorious in the

Feb 8 elections with the support of the Pakistani people.

During a meeting with a delegation of the Christian community, the PPP leader stated that party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's ten-point agenda

would reshape the destiny of the country.

Zardari highlighted Lahore's significant historical role in establishing people's governance, and noted that individuals from minority communi-

ties had consistently supported democracy and unity.

The former president pledged to enact more effective legislation for the protection and rights of minority communities, notably the Christians.



Zardari asserted that the PPP would lead the fight for the rights of Pakistan's Christian community, emphasising the close association between the Christian community and the PPP.

**Election 2024 Pakistan: Cabinet notifies army troop deployment**



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Federal cabinet on Thursday issued an official notification regarding the deployment of Pakistan Army's personnel across Pakistan to perform duties at sensitive constituencies and polling stations during the general election 2024.

As per the details, the official notification was issued a day after the federal cabinet approved the deployment of the Pakistan Army and Civil armed officials for security during the upcoming general election.

"Under Article 245 of the Constitution, the army will be deployed across the country," the notification stated.

The notification further stated that the military personnel – deployed outside sensitive polling stations from Feb 05 till Feb 10 – will serve as a quick response force.

The notification mentioned

that the deployment of Army personnel will play a major role in the transparent and peaceful polling process.

The notification further added that the Civil Armed Forces will also be stationed at the Printing Corporation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Post Foundation.

Earlier this month, a Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Khalid was killed in Swabi after unidentified assailants riding a motorcycle opened fire on his car.

In addition, several other leaders including PML-N's Aslam Buledi, Mohsin Dawar and Senator Kohda Akram Dashti have also come under attack in the ongoing month.

On the other hand, Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq had formed a seven-member committee to ensure smooth conduct of upcoming general elections. The committee would assess and provide support for the requirements for conducting general elections.

It will also be responsible for immediate decision-making to provide additional security for effective control over the law-and-order situation.

# Indian Army harassing Kashmiri youth over Ram Temple: Abdul Majid Khan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that a large number of Kashmiri youth have been arrested for sharing posts on social media related to the inauguration ceremony of the Ram Temple built by the Indian Army on the site of the centuries-old historic Babri Masjid in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Cases have started to be filed against. The Indian Hindutva government is using every tactic to erase the identity of Muslim Occupied Jammu and Kashmir through racist measures. India is systematically and institutionally committing genocide of Kashmiris in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. United Nations and OIC take note. The government and people of Azad Kashmir will celebrate the Indian Republic Day as a black day. They will not hesitate to

make any sacrifice for the freedom of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Azad Kashmir Government Spokesman and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan has said that India has fallen victim to prejudice. The Indian Army has started harassing the youth of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir by making baseless cases in response to the posts on social media regarding the construction of the Ram Temple at the site of the centuries-old Babri Masjid. The morale of the Kashmiri youth will not be low. They will not let the sacrifices of the youth go in vain for the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said that India's racist actions are not hidden from anyone. India has unjustly imprisoned the Hurriyat leadership of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Genocide is being carried out on institutional basis to erase the identity of Kashmiris in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. India has used its so-called justice institu-



tions in everything from the military to the ownership rights of properties, malicious distribution of constituencies, baseless arrests and extrajudicial killings against the youth and Hurriyat leadership. He said that he pays tribute

to the youth of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir for standing firm in the face of Indian aggression. India will celebrate Republic Day as Black Day. The people and the government of Azad Kashmir will celebrate Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 to highlight the humanitarian atrocities of Indian forces in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to the world. He said that the armed forces of Pakistan and the government of Pakistan pay tribute to the measures taken by the government of Pakistan for occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The current coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq will vigorously fight the case of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He demanded the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and human rights organizations to take notice of the ongoing war crimes in India and prosecute cases based on the crime of racist actions against India.

# We should bring Constitution towards parliamentary system instead of presidential one: Former PM

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that we should bring the constitution towards a parliamentary system instead of a presidential one. KP Baltistan has given its identity. If we had the majority, it would have become a province ten years ago, which would have had its own assembly, high court and NFC. We have developed agriculture in the country. The Green Cholistan project will be implemented in the future as well. New Economic Zones were created on Saraiki Belt. New universities were established in this region. While this region has been made a new IT hub. He expressed these views yesterday on the occasion of Pakistan Saraiki Party's announcement of forming an electoral alliance with Pakistan People's Party and supporting PPP candidates. Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf



Raza Gilani while giving a media talk at the residence of Senior Central President of Saraiki Party Malikullah Nawaz Venice has said that we should bring the constitution towards parliamentary system instead of presidential system. KP Baltistan has given its identity. If we had a majority, it would have become a province ten years ago, which would

have had its own assembly, high court and NFC. I am not biased but the name of the province should be according to the Saraiki language. Funds are allocated for this region in the budget. But those funds are not invested in the region. There are deprivations in this region. I announced a cadet college and allocated land. Not one was built

in the Special Economic Zone Saraiki Wasib. It will be a game changer if CPEC becomes a special economic zone. Meanwhile, Saraiki Party Central President Malik Allah Nawaz Vance, Central Secretary General Akbar Ansari, Khawaja Rizwan Alam Malik Naseem Labar Khalil Bukhari and others were also present in the press conference.

# Our Mission is to Place Pakistan in the Ranks of Developed Countries: Jahangir Khan Tareen

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chairman of Istakam Pakistan Party Jahangir Tareen has achieved important achievements in Lodhran, Former Chairman of Union Council Mian Bashir Ahmad Arain from Kamalpur Jatial and Malik Naeem Awan from Chak 92M. Jahangir Khan Tareen along with his group and leading figures of other communities. Announced support. Jahangir Tareen welcomed those who joined IPP and said that our mission is to place Pakistan in the ranks of developed countries. He said that the purpose of my politics is only to serve the people. We have given a wonderful package for farmers in our manifesto till date no government has thought about farmers and agriculture. Coming to



power, they will develop so much that there will be no difference between Lodhran and Lahore. People have known the traditional politicians here very well. Chaudhry Ashraf Gujjar and Chaudhi Afzal Gujjar from Kamalpur Jatial also declared their full support for Jahangir Tareen. Alao Azin

Jahangir Tareen held separate meetings with Rao Manwar Hussain Advocate High Court in Kamalpur Jatial and Sheikh Abdul Rasheed Kaku in Rajapur and also addressed the corner meetings. On this occasion, Candidate for Provincial Assembly Constituency PP 227 Maher Ashraf Syal, Candidate

for Provincial Assembly Constituency PP 228 Sardar Nazir Ahmad Khan Baloch, Sardar Irshad Abbas Khan Ghalo, Malik Shah Nawaz Bhatta, Syed Raza Shah Geelani, Hafiz Siddique Arain, Malik Mumtaz. Joya, Arslan Nawaz Bhutta and other leaders were also present.

# PTI women leader Mehar Bano Qureshi starts election campaign in NA 150 Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Former Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi Daughter Mehar Bano Qureshi has started the election campaign in various union councils of NA-150. Multan (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Ms. Mehar Bano Qureshi has said that fair and transparent elections are the need of the country. If transparent elections are not held in the country, the nation will not accept it. Tehreek-e-Insaf is still the most popular political party of Pakistan. Majority of the people want Tehreek-e-Insaf. If transparent and fair elections are held, no power can stop Tehreek-e-Insaf from coming to power. She expressed these views yesterday in connection with the election campaign of her brother Makhdoomzada Zain



Hussain Qureshi in different union councils 18, 19 and 34 of NA-150. And also addressed the corner meeting

Now with what mouth have these people appeared in the people's court? People should reject the PP-N-League

representatives who are taking away petrol, electricity, gas and basic necessities of life. Reject those responsible for rising inflation in the country. Before people use their voting power, keep in mind the parties in PDM who are responsible for the current crises and then use the vote. On this occasion, Union Council chiefs Asif, Asthaqlain Khan Baloch, Riyaz Baloch, Imran Khan Baloch, Aleem Durrani, Asghar Ali, Ali Abbas, Usman, Junaid Baloch Ansari, Jameel Sheikh, Muhammad Imran, Zafar, Muhammad Bala, I Mahub Ahmad, Muhammad Yasir, Muhammad Akbar, Umeer Ahmed, Umar Ali Irfan Ansari Javed Khan Kashif, Hamza Abbas, and other personalities were present. They announced full support for Makhdoomzada Zain Hussain Qureshi.

## Exhibition of the pictures made by the students on the occasion of International Education Day

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Additional Secretary Higher Education Tariq Awan DG PHA Mltan Asif Rauf Khan and Director Labor Rana Jamshed have said that Punjab Colleges remembers all the national and international days and organizes events in accordance with them, through which students' talents hidden within come out as proven by today's art exhibition. He expressed his views on how much talent the students here have and how hard the teachers make the students work. He expressed his views on the occasion of the exhibition of the pictures made by the students on the occasion of International Education Day at the Punjab College Girls Campus yesterday. He said in which premature marriage with children and girls forced labor and other stalls were set up. The director of the college, Professor Osama Bashir Qureshi, said that the institution provides opportunities for all female students to advance. Strict laws for child marriages and forced labor. They should be made and they should be followed strictly. Today, our students have focused more on these two things. Principal Saima Fayyaz said that the institution is providing all kinds of facilities to these students. Today's art exhibition is the mouth of their ability. There is evidence of the system of distribution of prizes among the students who took positions at the end. The duties were performed by Mrs. Mehwish Pasha

## Another fraud of fake former president of Rawalpindi Women's Chamber

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: Another fraud of fake former president RWCCI Rafat Shaheen came to light. Beware of impersonators. To fulfill her illegitimate purposes, Rafat Shaheen is stealing illegal documents and seals of Rawalpindi Women's Chamber of Commerce, collecting data from various institutions and trying to collect money in the form of funds. Our It is requested from all institutions and individuals that the documents being used by Rafat Shaheen in the name of Rawalpindi Women's Chamber should be verified by the institution and should be verified by the Direct General Secretary

## All Party Hurriyat Conference pays tribute to Handwara Martyrs

Bureau Report

SRINAGAR: The All-Party Hurriyat Conference in the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir of India has paid tribute to the martyrs of Handwara and the Kashmiris who were martyred by Indian soldiers in the month of January. According to Kashmir Media Service, Indian forces killed at least 21 innocent Kashmiris by firing indiscriminately in the town of Handwara in northern Kashmir on January 25, 1990. Yesterday, the spokesperson of the Hurriyat Conference in a statement issued in Srinagar paid tribute to the martyrs of Handwara on the occasion of their 34th anniversary. Paying tribute, he said that on that day Indian soldiers fired indiscriminately on the peaceful protesters who were protesting for their right to self-determination. The Hurriyat spokesperson welcomed the people of Handwara for going on a strike to pay homage to the martyr's sacrifices despite the oppression and violence by the occupying administration. He reiterated the determination of the Kashmiri people to bring the ongoing freedom struggle to its logical conclusion. All-party Hurriyat Conference leaders Mir Shahid Saleem, Farooq Ahmed, Advocate Arshad Iqbal and human rights activist Muhammad Ahsan Onto visited India in the month of January. Paying homage to the victims of the massacre of Kashmiris by the soldiers, he appealed to the international community, especially the United Nations, to increase pressure on India to investigate the massacre of Kashmiris. It should be noted that on January 21, 1990, Indian forces killed at least 50 innocent civilians and injured around 250 people by firing indiscriminately on peaceful protesters in Basant Bagh area of Srinagar. Four days later, on January 25, 1990, soldiers brutally killed 21 Kashmiris who were peacefully protesting in Handwara. On January 27, 1994, Indian forces killed 27 civilians and injured 36 in another massacre in Kupwara.



## Kupwara: Protest against the anti-people policies of the occupying administration

Bureau Report

SRINAGAR: Kashmiris protested against the anti-people policies of the occupying administration in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir illegally occupied by India and blocked the Kupwara Karna road. According to Kashmir Media Service, women were leading the protest against the non-provision of water and electricity to the people of the district. Demonstrators gathered to protest on Kupwara Karna road and blocked the road. Protesters against the occupying administration.

## Shah urges Kashmiris to observe India's Republic Day as black day

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Senior Hurriyat leader and Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmed Shah has appealed to the Kashmiri masses to observe Indian Republic Day as Black Day. In his message from Tihar jail, the incarcerated leader urged the Kashmiri masses to observe protest on 26 January to convey a message to the world that India's unlawful and forcible occupation of their motherland was not acceptable to them. "The country that is grossly involved in death and destruction in Kashmir and holding millions of Kashmiris hostage at the gunpoint has no right whatsoever to observe Republic Day", the incarcerated leader said adding that the whole world knows that India is a usurper that has always trampled Kashmiris' aspirations down under the jackboots besides keeping them under illegal military occupation for the last over 76 years. Shah who is currently under illegal detention in New Delhi's notorious Tihar Jail reiterated the Kashmiris' pledge to take the ongoing freedom struggle to its logical end. "Kashmiris who have offered matchless sacrifices during the past several decades would continue their struggle at all fronts unless they achieved their cherished goal of freedom from Indian occupation", he added.



# Thailand, Pakistan celebrate 70 years of military ties

✍️ Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: As a major player in South Asia, Pakistan can play a crucial role in ensuring peace and security in the region amidst the current global volatility. Thai Ambassador expressed these remarks while speaking on the occasion of the Thai Armed Forces Day.

Lt. General Muhammad Aqeel, Inspector General Communication and Information Technology, Pakistan Army, was the chief guest at the event. ASIAN countries Ambassador, High commissioner, Defense Attaches media person and others from various walk of life also attended the event.

The Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, Chakkrid Krachaiwong, marked the enduring friendship between Thailand and Pakistan during the celebration of Thai Armed Forces Day while acknowledging over 70 years of diplomatic relations.

The Ambassador Krachaiwong commended Pakistan as a pivotal player in South Asia, recognizing its potential to play a crucial role in maintaining regional peace and security amid global volatility. Lt. General Muhammad Aqeel, Inspector General of Communication and Information Technology, Pakistan Army, presided over as chief guest at this occasion.

Colonel Thanaci Permpul, the Defence and Military Attaché of Thailand shared insights on the importance of military and security cooperation between the two nations. Expressing gratitude to the Pakistani government for its hospitality towards foreigners, Ambassador Krachaiwong highlighted positive experiences, expressing optimism about deepening ties between the defense and military attachés and envisioning a continued contribution to global well-being.

Colonel Thanaci Permpul acknowledged Lt. General Mohamed Aqeel for his valuable presence and emphasized the strategic significance of Pakistan and Thailand within the region. He proposed leveraging their strategic locations for mutual benefit, emphasizing the potential for enhanced military collaboration.

In his speech, he said both Pakistan and Thailand have their strategic location in their region. You can imagine if we can join these advantages, it will be able to synergize further power. That is why we established Diplomatic Relations in 1951 and both Participate in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization or SEATO in 1954.

Colonel Thanaci said "we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation in 2021, the MoU envisions cooperation in the fields of defense and security policy, exchange of information, training, joint exercises, and research and development in defense technology."

For the Defence Forces, Thailand keeps sending Military Officers to the mission UNMOGIP. Pakistan and Thailand established a Joint Exercise on Counterterrorism named Trisul. And last year, we also had a senior staff talk. In the Training and Education, we exchange training courses on many levels. The Royal Thai Army sent a team from Special Warfare Command to participate in the 6th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition-2023.

We got Silver Medals. And we are sending a new team to participate in the 7th PATS Competition-2024. There is also an Intelligence Exchange with the Pakistan Intelligence Community.

For the Navy, we are extending our cooperation on Maritime Operation, visiting High Rank Commanders and



sending observers to AMAN exercise 2023 in Karachi. Chief of Naval Staff of Pakistan Participated in Indian Ocean Naval Symposium hosted by Thailand. We also have Naval Staff Talks in Thailand.

For the Air Force, we exchanged the

visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Air Force and Pakistan Chief of Air Staff.

And for the Defence Production, we exchange some products. Also, Pakistan sends high rank delegates to Defence and Security Expo in Thailand and



Thailand sends high rank delegates to IDEAS in Pakistan.

MSG Thanawat Salitul and Master Channmetha Permpul present the Krabi Krabong Performance. Colonel Thanaci informed me that Krabi-Krabong or Sword and Club is Thai original performance. Thai people live peacefully but we fight bravely. So, we practice for self defence. Krabi or monkey represents all short weapons and Krabong or giant represents long weapons. By the vision to preserve this Thai art, all high school students learn Sword and Club for Physical Training Class. So, it is in our blood. There are also these performances by youth everywhere in Thailand. Look at the Elephant back warfare, the two-handed swordsmen are doing their role in protecting the elephant's legs of the king.

We start with a salutation 3 times, first for our own religion, second for our king, and the last one for our parents and teachers.

Then we salute to 4 directions which are four Noble Sentiments. One, the desire for others to be happy. Two, Desire for others to be free from suffering, three, Joy when others do well and four, knowing how to let go and keep the mind neutral. Next, we do the teacher salutation dancing. We always respect our teacher. In addition, if the adversaries are dancing in the same posture. It means they have the same teacher and they will not fight. Then, we do salutations again before the duels. The walk was transformed into the two sides staring at each other's tricks. It is about reading each other's minds and controlling each other before fighting.

The event commenced with the national anthems of Pakistan and Thailand, followed by the cutting of a cake by the esteemed guests, including Ambassador Krachaiwong and Colonel Permpul. Captivating cultural performances by Thai children received widespread applause from the audience.

The celebration aimed to honor the bravery of men and women in uniform, recognizing their sacrifices and acknowledging the crucial support of their families. Ambassador Krachaiwong concluded the event with optimism, expressing confidence in the continued deepening of cooperation and friendly ties between the defense and military attaches of Thailand and Pakistan for the greater good of the global community.

✍️ Photos by Raja Farid

## Interview of Engineer Muhammad Hamid, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Al-Noor Solar Energy (ASE), Multan



✍️ Tahir Amin Malik

The CEO of Al-Noor Solar Energy (ASE), Multan, Muhammad Hamid said in an interview that I got BSc Electrical Power Engineering from NFC IET Multan in 2015. He said that I have worked one year in NTDC Multan as an Electrical Engineer and then in 2017 I joined a big group Jaffer Brothers Pvt Ltd as Regional Manager where I worked in many projects particularly in Solariza-

tion of high efficiency irrigation systems which was a project of Punjab Agriculture Department. He said that he completed more than 400 Agricultural Solar projects. I also completed Msc in Electrical Power Engineering in 2017 and after completion Msc I joined Punjab Energy Department as a Project Engineer for Solarization of Public Institutes. After few months from Government Job I joined Zonergy Multan Franchise as a General Manager He further said I have completed more than 200

solar projects UpTo 2022 and then in year 2022 I started my own company with the name of Al-Noor Solar Energy and I have also completed more than 200 projects and many projects are in pipeline. We are providing best quality solar products for customers at wholesale prices and we are also providing Solar Solutions for the domestic, Agriculture, and Industrial sectors. He said that according to International Energy Agency Global Installed capacity of renewable energy must triple by 2030 to limit

global warming to 1.5 °C above pre industrial levels. Muhammad Hamid said that according to Paris agreement many countries in USA, UK, China, European Union, India and Pakistan has set targets for increasing their solar and wind capacities by the year 2030. He said China is the only country which not only completed its target in 2022 but also exceeded its required capacity. He further said that according to Nepra annual report Pakistan's total power general capacity is 43775 MW with 59% share from

fossil fuels, 25% from Hydro and only 7% from renewables including solar and wind. He said the Government of Pakistan is pursuing renewable energy investment on a large scale like Quaid-i-Azam Solar Park Bahawalpur. He said the Government has started net metering to increase renewable energy share and we need to work more in order to achieve our target of 30% renewable share in energy UpTo 2030. He said our demands from the Government are

1. Make the supply chain of

solar items better as we are facing problems in LC's due to which shipments are usually late and it increases our cost because of high cargo charges ultimately it's burden goes on customers.

2. Government should adopt a window operation/ cell to encourage investors for the renewable sector.

3. Government should encourage renewable like solar systems on easy installments for this state bank of Pakistan green financing should be restored.

4. The Government should

take steps to increase awareness among masses for the importance of renewable energy for the prosperity of Pakistan.

Lastly, Mr Muhammad Hamid said my message to the People of Pakistan is that get your solar systems right now as it will not only reduce your electricity bills but also you will be energy independent and will pay back to you within 2 to 3 years and its life is more than 25 years. Solar system installation will reduce global warming for you and your future generations as well.

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# Bloomberg's misery Index and PML(N)

The Bloomberg Economics report, lauding the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s economic management, especially under Ishaq Dar's tenure, comes at a critical time as Pakistan faces severe economic challenges. With the country in the throes of a financial crisis, marked by soaring inflation of 20-25% and an unemployment rate above 8%, the populace is burdened and seeking immediate relief. This backdrop has triggered a wave of extravagant election promises from various political parties, including free electricity, doubled salaries, free housing, transport, petrol, and gas. However, these promises often lack a concrete and rational economic roadmap, raising questions about their feasibility in the current economic climate. This situation positions the PML-N's acknowledgment by Bloomberg as a notable endorsement of their past economic governance, potentially influencing public perception and electoral decisions in these trying times.

The report had employed a 'misery index' tailored for Pakistan, which combines unemployment and inflation rates, to evaluate economic performance. This index showed the PML-N with a score of 14.5%, indicating less economic hardship under their rule compared to Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) at 16.1% and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) at 17.2%. The scores represent averages during the periods each party has been in power since 1990, with a lower score suggesting better economic management.

The "misery index" is an economic indicator created by economist Arthur Okun. One of the main advantages of the misery index is its simplicity, which makes it easy to calculate and understand. However, this simplicity also means it might not capture the full complexity of an economy's health. While the misery index

provides a quick snapshot of economic conditions, it's not a comprehensive measure. Its findings can vary significantly if other factors are included, offering a more nuanced view of economic well-being. For detailed economic analysis, it's often necessary to look beyond the misery index to a broader set of economic indicators.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, this report has indeed impacted the election campaigning for every stakeholder including PML(N), PTI and PPP, and has generated media and public discourses.

The Bloomberg Economics report comes as a significant boost for PML-N, enhancing its image as a competent economic manager. It reinforces PML-N's appeal to voters seeking a party with a proven track record in economic governance. This development, coupled with the return of Nawaz Sharif and the diminishing influence of PTI, places PML-N in a favorable position, potentially influencing voter preference in the face of the nation's economic challenges.

For the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), this report could be a hurdle. Its comparative analysis places these parties in a less favorable light in terms of economic management. This could lead to increased scrutiny of their past performance and promises for future economic policy.

It has influenced the public opinion and voter behavior. In a scenario where economic management is a top voter concern, a report suggesting one party has a better track record could sway undecided voters. This might lead to a shift in the electoral battleground, with economic policy becoming a central theme of the campaigns.

Since its publication, the report has

become a hot topic in media discussions and public debate, potentially shaping the narrative around the elections. Almost every big and small TV channel ran stories on this, soliciting comments from the economic and financial experts. Every anchorperson of prime time talk shows mentioned it as a positive omen for PML(N).

How each party responds to this report, and how they leverage or defend against it, could be crucial in the days leading up to the election potentially shaping the narrative around the elections.

In light of Pakistan's dire economic situation, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) should capitalize this report by finetuning its election campaign with a focus on realistic and responsible promises. The party needs to emphasize its proven economic management skills while transparently communicating the severity of current economic challenges, including the country's high debt, inflation, and sluggish growth.

The campaign should pivot towards proposing long-term, sustainable economic strategies and structural reforms, particularly in the energy sector and state-owned enterprises. Engaging economic experts and emphasizing the development of robust social safety nets to protect vulnerable populations will be crucial.

Additionally, a focus on improving international relations and trade to attract foreign investment and bolster foreign exchange reserves is vital. By adopting this multifaceted approach, PML-N can position itself as a party capable of guiding Pakistan through these challenging times while retaining public trust and support. Rival political parties in Pakistan, in

response to the Bloomberg report favoring PML-N, can craft a cohesive counter-strategy by critically analyzing and questioning the report's methodology and relevance to current economic challenges.

They should highlight the pressing issues of high debt, inflation, and unemployment, and present comprehensive, forward-looking economic recovery plans that prioritize transparency and accountability. Emphasizing on addressing immediate public concerns, such as rising living costs and job scarcity, through grassroots campaigning and effective use of media and public debates, can resonate more with voters.

Additionally, focusing on diverse governance aspects like social development and foreign policy, and leveraging social media for wider outreach, especially among the youth, can strengthen their position. Forming coalitions and alliances can also offer a united and formidable alternative to PML-N, emphasizing current solutions over past achievements.

Amidst the political maneuvering following the Bloomberg Economics report, Pakistan's stark economic realities remain unchanged and pressing. Political parties, while vying for public favor, must ground their promises in these realities: the daunting \$126 billion national debt with a \$25 billion repayment due in 2023-24, meager reserves of about \$8.8 billion, and significant circular debts in electricity and gas sectors. Additionally, they must consider the soaring inflation rate at 25%, the substantial depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, critically low foreign exchange reserves bolstered by external deposits, a tepid GDP growth rate of 1.7%, barely surpassing the population growth rate, and a worrying 8% unemployment rate. In this challenging economic landscape, electoral promises need to be carefully calibrated and responsibly aligned with the nation's fiscal and economic capacity.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## India entirely responsible for Galwan Valley incident

Chinese Defense Ministry Spokesperson Thursday held India entirely responsible for Galwan Valley stand-off saying the incident happened only because the Indian side violated bilateral consensus and made unilateral provocations. Firstly, the Galwan Valley lies on the Chinese side of the western sector along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The relevant incident happened only because the Indian side violated bilateral consensus and made unilateral provocations.

Therefore, the responsibility lies entirely with the Indian side, Senior Col. Wu Qian said at a regular press conference.

Spokesperson Wu made the remarks when asked to comment on previous statement of India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) Subrahmanyam Jaisankar, who said that China violated the bilateral consensus in 2020 and assembled large amount of military forces along the LAC, thus triggering the conflict in the Galwan Valley. And he claimed to have made it clear to the Chinese side that unless a solution is found at the border, India-China relations cannot move on normally. The spokesperson said that over the past three years, China and India had maintained communication and coordination through military and diplomatic channels. Up till now, the two militaries have had 20 rounds of Corps Commander Level Meetings, and agreed to disengage at four

points, namely the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban, contributing to the de-escalation of tensions along the border, he added. "It is unwise and inappropriate for the Indian side to link the boundary issue with the overall relations. This approach is against the shared interests of the two countries," he stressed. "We hope the Indian side can work with the Chinese side towards the same goal, enhance strategic mutual trust, properly handle differences, and safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas." As for the next Corps Commander Level

Meeting, the spokesperson said that they will release information in due course.



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

## Inauguration of Ram Temple & Deceptive Election Tactics in India - I

Elections stand as the bedrock of democratic societies, offering citizens the authority to elect their leaders and influence the trajectory of their nation. However, in recent times, there has been growing apprehension regarding the surge in deceptive election tactics that erode the integrity of the electoral process. These dubious strategies encompass misinformation campaigns and endeavors to suppress voters, corroding faith in democratic institutions and jeopardizing the fundamental essence of representative governance.

Within the fervor of Indian electoral competitions, politicians often resort to unethical methods that cast doubt on the integrity of the democratic process.

A prevalent malpractice in Indian election campaigns involves the exploitation of religious and caste-based divisions to consolidate votes. Politicians leverage identity politics, fostering rifts within communities for electoral advantages. This not only exacerbates societal divisions but also undermines the principles of secularism and inclusivity. Many politicians employ the divisive tactic of catering exclusively to specific communities or interest groups, perpetuating a fractured political landscape that impedes the formulation of comprehensive and inclusive policies benefiting the entire populace. Cash distribution and voter bribery are common occurrences in Indian elections, with politicians offering cash, gifts, or other incentives in exchange for support. This compromises the democratic process, fostering a culture of corruption and subverting the principle of voting based on informed choices. Incumbent politicians often misuse state resources for

electoral gains, diverting government assets to fortify their campaigns. This unfair advantage disrupts the level playing field crucial for free and fair elections.

Indian election campaigns frequently witness the dissemination of false propaganda and disinformation to tarnish the image of opponents. Rumors, fake news, and doctored videos circulate on various media platforms, swaying public opinion and diminishing the credibility of the electoral process. The association between politics and criminal elements remains a significant concern in Indian elections, as politicians with criminal backgrounds secure party tickets, casting a shadow of criminality over the political landscape and compromising the democratic ideals of representation and governance. Violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) are not uncommon during Indian election campaigns, with politicians frequently flouting the MCC through hate speech, false promises, and inflammatory rhetoric. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms is essential to ensure strict adherence to the MCC.

Elections are imminent in India this year, and the BJP, as usual, is employing questionable methods to appeal to the Hindu majority in the country. India's electoral arena has witnessed the rise of disinformation campaigns, particularly on social media platforms. False narratives, misleading images, and fabricated stories often circulate during election seasons, influencing public opinion and potentially impacting voter decisions. The extensive reach of social media makes it a powerful tool for those looking to manipulate the narrative. Voter suppression, aimed at obstructing specific groups from exercising their voting rights, is a concerning

issue in India. Instances of voter intimidation, restrictive voting laws, and selective implementation of identification requirements have raised doubts about the inclusivity and fairness of the electoral process.

False election tactics in India also involve exploiting religious and communal sentiments. Politicians may employ divisive rhetoric to polarize communities, seeking to consolidate support within specific demographics. This strategy not only undermines the principles of secularism but also risks escalating tensions within society. Election campaigns in India often face allegations of illicit financial practices, including the distribution of cash, gifts, or other incentives to influence voters. These tactics compromise the democratic process by undermining the idea that elections should be a fair competition of ideas rather than a transactional exchange. The spread of fake news and rumors, often disseminated through traditional and digital media, remains a persistent challenge, contributing to distorted public discourse and making it difficult for voters to make informed decisions.

Recently, Modi inaugurated the Ram temple in Ayodhya, bringing back painful memories for Muslim residents. The Ram temple now stands on the site of the Babri Masjid, which was demolished by extremist Hindus in 1992. Shahid, a resident of Ayodhya, recounted the tragic events surrounding the Babri Masjid's destruction, stating, "On the day of the demolition, my father was set on fire by extremist Hindus. Not only did my father perish in this heart-wrenching incident, but also my uncle and other relatives lost their lives." Shahid expressed the heaviness in his heart, noting that while the inauguration of the Ram Mandir is a significant day for Hindus, it has left a void for the Muslim community, as their mosques and connections were taken away.

To be continued

## Detrimental but it can be beneficial too

Haleema Sadia

The reality that most people are facing today is too harsh. People's economic well-being is deteriorating day by day. They are not only struggling to pay their electricity bills but also finding it extremely hard to put food on their table. Jobs are scarce. In addition, employers are taking advantage of people's desperation. They are taking surplus labour from their workers while violating the minimum wage laws. Although it's heartening to see our countryman Arshad Nadeem win a medal for Pakistan in World Athletics Championship 2023, it's a shame that one of the world's most populous and gifted country has only won one medal in world athletic championships in 76 years of its existence.

Today, escapism is a new trend for dealing with hardships. People are doing things that make them forget their problems and reality. They are watching TV, Netflix, TikTok, and sports, and using social media to lift their spirits. In short, they are distracting themselves from reality with non-realistic books, movies and video games. People are becoming lethargic. They don't bother finding ways to resolve the problems that they face. They don't protest that the power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a small elite. The outrageous acts against minorities, child labourers and women don't trouble their souls. People are spending too much time on their phones. This is disrupting their relationship with family and community which is important for a person's mental well-being. Some social critics warn that powerful governing elites are providing means of escapism to poverty-stricken people instead of bettering the conditions of people.

People can change their situation only when they are mindful and cognizant of the reality and true conditions.

Escapism can be of benefit too. Devoting all the time to reality can be tedious. Among the cost of living crisis, climate catastrophe, exhausting politics and non-stop news, many people find respite in Netflix, books and literature. Moreover, some people are trying to create a utopia to make reality somewhat bearable. This daydreaming and escapism can be a seed for a new humane social order. The current situation persists due to one other reason. People are not doing enough to change the current state of affairs. What is not altered for too long seems unalterable to them. In addition, they are not thinking their own thoughts. Instead, they find it easy to subscribe to the most dominant ideology or idea. There are still some people raising voices against the status quo but powers that be have enacted draconian laws to silence these voices too. Making one's concerns public requires immense courage nowadays. The powerful elites are telling that economic prosperity will only come if we keep adhering to conventional methods. Teachers and elites are in cahoots. Teachers are drilling such kind of information into students' heads which helps keep the elite's hegemonic position intact. They don't encourage students to criticize the established theories and methods. As a result, students don't doubt the viability of conventional methods. They believe that by following IMF dictates, our country will become prosperous though this didn't happen in past. There is a need to create a new plan. By escaping the confines of dominant ideology and methods, people can alter the world.

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# Sharing Session on Indonesian Model of Religious Moderation and Democracy



**Spokesman Report**

The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad, in collaboration with the International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA), organized a significant experience-sharing session on 23 January 2024, titled "Memories from Indonesia: Reflections on the Indonesian Model of Religious Moderation and Democracy," at the National Book Foundation (NBF) in Islamabad where the Indonesian Corner has been established last November 2023.

As speakers of the Session were Pakistani Ulemas, Scholars, Academics, Activists, and Politicians, who have visited Indonesia last December 2023

to interact with their counterparts in Jakarta and Bandung, and to closely witness the practices of religious moderation and democracy in the Country. This Session was expected to make the results of the visit more impactful for broader Pakistani public as well as to bring Pakistan and Indonesia closer as the two brotherly Muslim countries.

"In the wake of current global challenges, both Indonesia and Pakistan need concerted efforts to share best practices to promote tolerance, moderation, gender equalities, and to ensure positive contribution of individuals in the political democratic system," said the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires, H. E. Mr. Yusran Hardromi in his welcoming remarks.

During the session, delegates shared their perspectives and comments on

current Indonesia, emphasizing the strategic roles in nation building played by the two largest Indonesian Muslim organizations, namely Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, as well as the critical contribution by Indonesian female ulemas in advancing gender equality. In addition, the democracy in Indonesia was also their attention as the Indonesians are currently preparing the general elections next February 2024.

"The religion should be a source of goodness, and different opinions of scholars of Fiqh are not meant to create divisions but provides new ways to the people according to the needs and priorities of their societies," explained Mr. Khurshid Nadeem, Chairman of Rahmatul-Lil-Alameen Wa Khatamun Nabiyin Authority.

Pakistani prominent Politician, Barrister Zafarullah Khan also shared his views during his visit to Indonesia, "The inclusion of minorities even Ahmadis in political and social progress is allowed in Indonesia. There is no distinction on gender basis in the Country and their religious ulemas and scholars are well educated and interpret religion with element of mercy (rahmat) for all mankind with element of universality and gender justice."

In line with two previous speakers, Ms. Beenish Irfan Khan, an Activist in gender inclusion and women's rights in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province emphasized the Indonesian women's independence and active roles in politics and society, underscoring the acceptance of other faiths as a notable element

of Indonesia. While Mr. Malik Habib Orakzai, Chairman of Pakistan International Human Rights Organization (PIHRO) shared his experiences of democracy in Indonesia, highlighting the country's notable tolerance that has allowed democracy to flourish by accommodating all parties.

Chief Guest, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr. Qibla Ayaz, noted that Indonesia's approach to tolerance has evolved into appreciation, respect, and acceptance of other faiths and cultures. Dr. Ayaz added that Indonesian religious harmony, moderation and role of their two big Muslim organizations could be good learning experience for all. "We can learn from Indonesia's journey", he concluded his keynote speech.

Previously, Mr. Muhammad Israr Madani, President of IRCRA, emphasized the significance of religious diplomacy and called for increased interaction between religious academics and ulemas of Indonesia and Pakistan. He highlighted the unique approach and philosophy of Indonesia's mosque and madrasah system, emphasizing their focus on societal betterment rather than politics.

Dr. Raja Mazhar Hameed, Managing Director of NBF, appreciated efforts in organizing such inclusive informative event. He said that the Indonesian Corner in NBF was reflection of growing friendly ties and cooperation between the two nations and would create more awareness about Indonesia among Pakistani people.

# Xinhua Commentary: Lies about China reveal Western hypocrisy

**Xinhua**

**BELJING:** The fact that some Western politicians and media outlets are practicing double standards on human rights and using it as a weapon in an information war against China is becoming the consensus of more and more people.

Examples of Western hypocrisy include allegations concerning boarding schools in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region and so-called "forced labor" in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China.

Boarding schools are common in China and the world. In sparsely-populated Xizang, it ensures fair education. These schools, which are totally voluntary, provide traditional culture courses, such as Tibetan language and literature and folk dance and traditional food. Students are free to wear traditional dresses at school.

It must be pointed out that boarding schools in Xizang are totally different from those aimed at "forced assimilation" in history in some Western powers. For example, in the 19th and 20 centuries, Indian children in the United States were forced to attend boarding schools and banned from speaking their native language, wearing their traditional clothes, or carrying out traditional activities, thus erasing their language, culture and identity in an act of



cultural genocide.

The attacks and smear campaigns against boarding schools in Xizang amount to attempts to destroy the children's right to education and deprive the region of its right to development and progress.

Lies are lies. The "forced labor" in Xinjiang, which some Western countries have alleged, is the same kind of lies with the same despicable purposes. An audit commissioned by Volkswagen has been

a slap in the face for rumormongers. No indication of forced labor was found at the company's plant in Xinjiang, the German carmaker said in December last year.

The myth of "forced labor" in Xinjiang has also been debunked by other firms. Responding to reports alleging forced labor at a shoe factory in south China it sources products from, Skechers said in a March 2021 statement that none of its multiple audits of the factory — in 2017, 2018, 2019

and 2020 — had revealed any indication of the use of forced labor or other concerning labor conditions.

As a matter of fact, the United States is fraught with serious forced labor. The University of Denver's website disclosed that there are currently at least 500,000 people living under modern slavery and forced labor in the United States. Forced labor is a particularly prominent and prevalent issue across 23 industries, such as domestic service, agriculture, planting, tourism sales, catering, medical care and beauty.

Both Xizang and Xinjiang have achieved unprecedented progress in human rights. The two autonomous regions are the epitome of China's human rights development and progress. With a people-centered human rights philosophy, China has found a path toward better human rights that follows the trend of the times and fits its national realities, and made historic progress in its human rights cause, with people from all ethnic groups enjoying a greater sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security.

China's human rights progress has gained prevailing recognition internationally. Western lies will never cover up the truth and the facts, only to expose more about the true hypocrisy and double standards of the rumormongers.

# Serena Hotels sponsored Mashal's Fund-Raising Event

**PPA**

**ISLAMABAD:** Serena Hotels, under the Cultural Diplomacy initiative collaborated with Bestway Cement Ltd, to host a fundraising event titled 'Muddat hue ha yaar ko mehman kiye hue' for the Mashal Association at Serena Hotel in Islamabad on Thursday 25th January 2024.

Mashal Association is a social welfare organization which has been working for educating and empowering girls and women from under privileged families since 1988. It was founded by (late) Begum Shahida Azim and has gone from strength to strength with time, with a higher secondary school for girls with 300 students, a medical center and a vocational training center.

Its Welfare Complex caters to the needs of about 9 surrounding villages/communities that live in and around Margalla Town

which is the outer edge of Islamabad.

The audience experienced the true essence of the Urdu language as Adeel Hashmi who is a famous, talented and a prominent name of Pakistani Showbiz industry narrated selected pieces from Urdu literature, and he was accompanied by Ustad Raees Khan on his magical violin. The event witnessed a significant presence of dignitaries, official representatives from the corporate sector, members of the business community, and media persons.

Serena Hotels takes great pride in the privilege of organizing and hosting events that play a significant role in encouraging the cultural and traditional essence of Pakistan. These events serve as platforms where diverse facets of the country's rich heritage are celebrated, embraced, and shared with a wider audience.

# 2nd Federal & 4th Engineering Capstone Expo'2024

**PPA**

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Engineering Council-PEC conducted 2nd Federal CAPSTONE EXPO (FYDP- Final Year Engineering Design Projects Exhibition) and 4th Regional CAPSTONE (A project of PEC Pakistan Development committee-PPDC) on 23rd JAN'2024 at "PAK - CHINA FRIENDSHIP CENTER", ISLAMABAD. In this Expo 27 Universities participated and 252 shortlisted projects were showcased out of which 72 projects were PEC sponsored.

In CAPSTONE Engineering Universities showcased their Engineering students' projects that pertains to market/industry, in which industries were present along with Islamabad Chamber of commerce to participate and select projects as per their business need. CAPSTONE is the PEC initiative 1st time in Pakistan by PEC Pakistan Development Committee. This opportunity granted by PEC free of cost to help our universities gain more market exposure as well as be able to network with world-class manufacturers of different varieties of engineering products. Market compatible projects being sponsored by PEC. More than 2000-foot fall at the inauguration ceremony whereas visitors over 4000.

Engr Muhammad Najeeb Haroon Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) inaugurated the ceremony as chief guest along with the guests from Islamabad Chamber of commerce (President ICCI, Mr Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri, SVP ICCI, Faad Waheed, Ambassador from Indonesia, Jiflwan G. P and Ambassador from Kyrgyz republic, Ulanbek Totiaev).



Engr Muhammad Najeeb Haroon highlighted on the Engineering community critical role especially in such situation in which Pakistan is currently trapped. Its continuous and consistent struggle that can make a difference and bring the country back on track to development journey. Old mistakes and practices to end up and have to come up and work upon to make the country self-sufficient that is the only bail out for Pakistan and that's possible only when Engineers play their role with the state and PEC support. In house engineering and localization of industry is only possible when engineers put their role in with the support of PEC. PEC focusing on same objective targets started new projects to create

opportunities for engineers. Deliverables of such initiatives will result in new startups, engineering entrepreneurs, industry localization, inhouse solutions and Engineering services. He appreciated the efforts of different committees on different projects and PPDC for this milestone of CAPSTONE EXPO which has set the direction of new competition of industry related projects and same will be portrayed at international level and Silicon Valley INSHALLAH.

Engineers having no limits as he has been developed and drilled to think beyond his own defined limits, it's just the matter of doing. He also highlighted on the austerity that PEC adopted and same our Islam religion teaches. He also highlighted on the ethical

values that engineers must be adhering being responsible citizen. We should be paying back to the country when we get that career level at least in terms of taxes. Sincerity and loyalty to the country expects lot from this Engineering profession.

Mr Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri, SVP ICCI, in his address appreciated the efforts of PEC PPDC and highlighted that PPDC as named delivering very valuable to the engineering community and society via multiple projects initiative. He mentioned that not only PEC but also industries should come forward and sponsor such projects catering industry and business need. He emphasized on industry localization to increase export and decrease

import. He also asked engineers for the renewable energy projects as one of the major challenges Pakistan is facing. He showed great confidence on engineers to play their role.

In the Closing ceremony of the CAPSTONE project Engr Mir Masood Rashid (Convenor PEC PPDC and advisor to Chairman PEC) mentioned the key contributors who made this 4th Regional and 2nd Federal CAPSTONE EXPO successful. He also briefed on the CAPSTONE EXPO theme and highlighted on the initiatives of the PEC for the period 2021-24, among which one is the ENGINEERING CAPSTONE EXPO. PPDC ten milestone projects which have been successfully launched with propelling consist-

ent deliverables for the Engineers and society.

Engr Dr Nasir Khan (Registrar PEC), Engr Mir Masood Rashid (advisor to PEC chairman & Convenor PPDC), Engr Dr. Shakir (Convenor Jury Committee & GB), Engr Sardar Ali Khan (GB), Engr. Mohsin Ali Khan (GB), Engr Azhar ul Islam (GB), Engr Jawwad H Gillani (GB), Engr Abdul Rehman Sheikh, Engr Prof Dr Riffat Asim Pasha, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan (CEO Sardar group), Dr Sohrab Bizarjo (PVC Khuzdar University), Prof Dr Ayub Elahi (UET Taxila), Prof Dr Majid Ali (QUEST ISLBD) and different industry delegates along with honorable guests from academia attended the inauguration ceremony.

### Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

#### Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
64,298.00	64,822.43
Day's High	Day's Low
65,213.61	64,180.44
Index Value	Change
22,083,739,287	-524.43
Percentage	Time
-0.81	25 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

#### Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,529.73	+2.06
Percentage	Time
+0.027%	25 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

#### USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
37,903.37	+96.98
Percentage	Time
+0.26%	25 Jan, 11:50 am GMT-5

#### Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
36,236.47	+9.99
Percentage	Time
+0.028%	25 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

#### Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	183.8
Bahrain Dinar	743.92	751.92
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	39.32	39.72
Danish Krone	40.62	41.3
Euro	303	306
Hong Kong Dollar	35.81	36.16
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.4	917.49
Malaysian Ringgit	59.36	59.96
New Zealand \$	170.83	172.83
Norwegians Krone	26.54	26.84
Omani Riyal	726.5	734.5
Qatari Riyal	76.87	77.57
Saudi Riyal	74.55	75.55
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.75	27.05
Swiss Franc	320.8	323.3
Thai Bhat	7.83	7.98
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77.3
UK Pound Sterling	356.5	359.5
US Dollar	279	281.2

### Meeting with Financial Advisor for Divestment of PIACL

#### PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad chaired a meeting of the Privatisation Commission with Earnest & Young, the Financial Advisor for divestment of PIACL. The financial advisor presented a business plan forecasting the investment roadmap of PIACL together with the immediate funding requirements of the airline. The proposed plan covered the capital and fleet requirements of the airline in the short and medium term to make it a viable and globally competitive airline. The Federal Minister advised further rationalization of the projections before submission of the plan for approval of federal cabinet. The legal segregation plan and transaction structure together with the business plan and valuation methodology shall be taken to the federal cabinet for final approval.

### Faysal Bank and OPay collaborate for expanding digital merchant acceptance across Pakistan

#### PPA

ISLAMABAD: Faysal Bank Limited, a leading Islamic financial institution known for its commitment to technological innovation with Sharia compliance, announced a strategic collaboration with OPay, a global fintech giant with a proven track record in providing cutting-edge digital payment solutions.

Commenting this initiative, Yousaf Hussain, President and CEO, Faysal Bank, said, "We are delighted to partner with OPay in this transformative collaboration. By combining Faysal Bank's Sharia-compliant financial expertise with OPay's technological expertise, we aim to redefine the landscape of digital merchant services and contribute to the growth of the fintech ecosystem in Pakistan."

# Chinese minister's visit, Pakistan's assurance very important in current situation

#### Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Thursday that PML-N is expected to form the government after elections.

The overall economic conditions will improve, CPEC will take a boost, and relations with China, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and other Arab nations will improve if PML-N comes to power, he said.

However, he said, improving relations with Iran and Afghanistan would be challenging as ties with these neighbors have remained troubled.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the masses are hoping



that PML-N will reduce inflation, unemployment and cost of living and improve overall economic conditions.

PML-N has always paid more attention to the

economy than other parties, and the PML-N government will accelerate work on CPEC.

He said that in the present situation, the visit of the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister is of paramount importance, and he has renewed his commitment to completing the CPEC.

The Chinese Vice Foreign Minister also pledged to enhance cooperation in IT, industry, agriculture, and human resources and said that China prefers relations with Pakistan and highly appreciates this friendship.

During the visit, he met with Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of the Army Staff Syed Asim Munir, Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, and others. He also co-chaired the Fourth Meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on Interna-

tional Cooperation and Coordination.

Our leaders told the visiting minister that they are fully committed to the CPEC and it will be completed at all costs.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that during the PML-N government, it was decided to make seventeen thousand forty-five MW of electricity under CPEC, build and improve railways and road systems on modern lines, upgrade ports, and establish mass transit projects.

The projects were to be completed by 2030, but during the subsequent governments, the pace of work on some projects was slower than expected.

So far, only 27 projects have been completed under CPEC, while 63 projects are still pending and must be completed by the new government as soon as possible, he said.

### Hard work

FAISALABAD: A worker busy in his work at a local Polyester factory in the city.



Photo: Online

### PTCL Group renews partnership with SNGPL for cellular services

#### PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecommunications and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G), and largest integrated gas company of Pakistan, SNGPL have renewed their partnership for the continued provision of the state-of-the-art cellular services to SNGPL under PTCL Group Business Solutions.

Group Chief Business Solutions Officer (GCSO), PTCL & Ufone 4G, Zarrar Hasham Khan, and MD/ CEO, SNGPL, Amer Tufail signed the agreement at SNGPL headquarters in Lahore, in the presence of senior officials from both organizations. Under this agreement, PTCL Group will provide wireless connectivity and a host of bundled services to SNGPL.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Zarrar Hasham Khan, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer PTCL & Ufone 4G, stat-



ed, "PTCL Group takes pride in playing a significant role in driving technological advancement and transformation in Pakistan. Our provision of connectivity and ICT services brings substantial convenience and empowerment to individual users and enterprises, including SNGPL, which serves over 7.20 million consumers in North Central Pakistan.

MD/ CEO, SNGPL, Amer Tufail said, "We are pleased to renew our collaboration with the PTCL Group to offer high-quality Cellular/ Internet

of things products and services. SNGPL is a trusted brand, committed to serving domestic, commercial and industrial consumers to deliver sustainable growth and efficiency.

PTCL Group and SNGPL excel in leveraging technology to enable and empower their respective customers, besides contributing immensely to the growth and development in Pakistan. The mutual collaboration enhances their impact on a larger scale to help enrich and strengthen Pakistan's economic landscape.

### Reduced power tariff to revive economic activities: President FBATI

#### PPA

KARACHI: President Federal B Area Trade and Industries (FBATI), Syed Raza Hussain, said the decision to cut down the power tariff by 7 cents will give a little relief to industrial consumers across the country. Lauding the role of the caretaker government in announcing the reduction of the power tariff from 16 cents per KWh to 9 cents per KWh, the FBATI President urged the upcoming government to further revise down the power tariff to empower industries to curtail their cost of doing business significantly.

PTCL Group and SNGPL excel in leveraging technology to enable and empower their respective customers, besides contributing immensely to the growth and development in Pakistan. The mutual collaboration enhances their impact on a larger scale to help enrich and strengthen Pakistan's economic landscape.

### Pakistan's sizable youth population has produced no advantages

#### Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Thursday that Pakistan is blessed with a sizeable youth population which can be of great economic benefit.

However, he said, such a youth population is a great window of opportunity that is not being taken advantage of otherwise Pakistan's economic situation would have been different.

Aslam Khan said in a statement today that it is imperative to take prompt action to take advantage of this prospect since its loss could have far-reaching consequences.

He said that 240 million people are living in Pakistan, and the country's population is expanding steadily at a pace of 2 per cent. In contrast, the population growth in the South Asian region is 1.2 per cent.

Based on estimates, 38% of Pakistan's population is



under 15 years old, while 4% is 65 years of age or more. This results in a youth bulge since 58 per cent of those in the working age group are between the ages of 15 and 64.

Despite this gift, the population is not benefiting us, which is why the unemployment rate is very high which is resulting in social problems, he observed.

He noted that numerous nations have successfully capitalised on the demographic dividend by augmenting their labour pool, improving savings rates, and building up a workforce that is well-educated and proficient.

With 159.83 million people anticipated to be in the working age group Pakistan's population age structure makes it fundamentally a young nation. Now, one might wonder why Pakistan's situation did not benefit from the youth bulge.

He said that what is even more concerning is the realisation that a sizable segment of our populace is still untrained and jobless, which may put them at higher risk of developing melancholy or engaging in criminal activity.

Therefore, it should not be shocking that a great number of people attempt to cross borders illegally, sometimes even at great personal risk.

On the other hand, the youth bulge element alone is a prescription for disaster since the unemployed, illiterate, and ignorant population poses a greater threat to the nation.

Decades have passed since we have failed to take advantage of this window of opportunity but it is never too late.

# Rising Punjab Games Football event

**Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: The football teams of Lahore, Sargodha, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur divisions reached the semifinal stage after winning their respective quarter-final matches in Rising Punjab Games Football event at Punjab Stadium and Velodrome ground on Thursday.

The first semifinal will be played between Faisalabad and Bahawalpur teams while Lahore and Sargodha will lock horns in the second semifinal clash at Punjab Stadium on Friday, January 26, 2024.

The competitions of Badminton Championship were played at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall.

Lahore thrashed Sargodha 2-1 and Faisalabad defeated Bahawalpur by 2-0 in Women's Team Event semifinal matches. On the Men's side, Rawalpindi



stunned Lahore by 2-0 and Faisalabad topped Sahiwal by the same margin in the Men's Team Event semifinals. Following are the result on day 3:

Women's Team Event semifinals  
Lahore beat Sargodha by 2-1

First Single: Ghazala Siddique (Sargodha) beat Amal Muneeb (Lahore)

by 21-17, 21-17

First Double: Saima Waqas & Laiba Masoud (Lahore) beat Ghazala Siddique & Rimsha Mehak (Sargodha) by 22-20, 21-11

2nd Single: Laiba Masoud (Lahore) beat Rimsha Mehak (Sargodha) by 21-9, 21-13

Faisalabad beat Bahawalpur by 2-0  
First Single: Zubaira Islam (Faisalabad) beat Umama Usman (Bahawalpur) by 21-17, 19-21, 21-15

First Double: Zubaira Islam & Bushra Qayum (Faisalabad) beat Umama Usman & Aimen Fatima (Bahawalpur) by 19-21, 21-14, 21-15.

**Results of football matches:**

Lahore vs Bahawalpur 0-0, Faisalabad beat Rawalpindi 2-0, Sahiwal beat DG Khan 5-0, Gujranwala vs Multan 1-1, Rawalpindi vs Gujranwala 1-1, Sargodha beat Multan 1-0.

# Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi register wins in National Women T20

**Sports Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi earned victories in the seventh round of National Women T20 Tournament 2023/24 played across three venues in Islamabad and Rawalpindi on Thursday. In the first game after restricting Quetta to 93-6, Lahore chased the target comfortably with nine wickets in the bag at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium.

Quetta posted a measly 93-6 in 20 overs after electing to bat first. Opening batters Fareha Mehmood (17, 20b, 4x4s) and Dua Majid put up a partnership of 35 runs until the former was run out by Lahore captain Nida Dar. Dua (24, 32b, 4x4s) was caught behind on leg-spinner Ghulam Fatima's bowling. Tuba Hassan, the third batter in, scored a run-a-ball 14, with three boundaries before she fell to Noreen Yaqoob in the subsequent over. Jannat Rasheed was run out by Sadaf Shamas and captain Saima Malik fell victim to Fatima, reducing Quetta to 65-5 in 15.5 overs. Khadija Chishti (18 not out, 19b, 2x4s) and Ayesha Asim (10, 10, 1x4) were the other contributors with the bat.

Fatima picked up two wickets for Lahore, while Noreen had one to her name. In reply, Lahore cruised to the target in just 11.5 overs. Sadaf Shamas and Sidra Amin propelled the chase with a 46-run opening stand. Ayesha Asim was the only wicket-taker for Quetta as she dismissed Sidra just after the powerplay. The opening batter walked back for a 28 off 19, with the help of six boundaries. Sadaf went on to hit an undefeated half-century (51 not out, 38b, 6x4s, 2x6s) that took Lahore over the line. Bismah Maroof also chipped in with an unbeaten 18 off 14 on the back of three fours while stitching a 53-run second-wicket partnership with Sadaf. For her performance with the bat, Sadaf was awarded player of the match. At Ayub Park Ground, Rawalpindi won a last-ball thriller against Karachi after an eventful last over



that saw a wicket followed by a match-winning boundary. Rawalpindi won the toss and invited Karachi to bat first. Muneeba Ali and Javeria Khan stitched an opening stand that yielded 52 runs. Left-arm spinner Tania Saeed struck to remove Javeria (25, 34b, 1x4) as the first wicket fell for Karachi.

Omaima Sohail (10, 10b, 1x4) fell to Rawalpindi skipper Aliya Riaz for just run-a-ball 10, including one four. Right-arm pacer Humna Bilal delivered an exceptional over that resulted in three Karachi wickets; set batter Muneeba Ali departed after scoring a half-century (53, 44b, 6x4s), Karachi skipper Fatima Sana (10, 8b, 1x4) was trapped leg-before and the next batter in, Yusra Amir, fell in the same manner for a golden duck. Trouble deepened for Karachi as Aliya rattled Najjha Alvi's (4, 7b) stumps and Syeda Aroob Shah (8, 8b) was caught and bowled by Waheeda Akhtar, with the scorecard reading 116-7 in 18.2 overs. In the last over, Rameen Shamim and Syeda Masooma Zahra were run out by Waheeda and Farzana

Farooq respectively as Karachi finished at 125-9. Humna, with three wickets to her name, was the pick of Rawalpindi bowlers. She was supported by her captain Aliya who had two wickets. Tania and Waheeda grabbed one wicket each. In turn, Rawalpindi lost both their openers in the powerplay while chasing 126. Wicketkeeper-batter Farzana was pinned leg-before by Rameen and had to go back in the second over for just two runs and Aima Saleem (15, 22b, 1x4) fell to the same bowler on the last ball of the powerplay, with the scorecard reading 21-2 in six overs. Fajar Naved added 14 from 28, with one four, before getting caught behind on Aroob's bowling. Natalia Parvaiz and Aliya Riaz added 34 more to the total for the fourth-wicket partnership until Natalia (14, 13b, 2x4s) was caught by Muneeba to award Aroob her second wicket of the day. Aliya played a captain's knock to drive her team to a win. She impressed with an undefeated 67 from 45, on the back of seven boundaries and two maximums as Rawalpindi completed the chase in the final over.

Humna Bilal, who had come to bat in the final over, brought victory for her side with a boundary on the final delivery of the game, with Rawalpindi inching over Karachi in a close contest. Aroob and Rameen were the only two wicket-takers for Karachi, accounting for two scalps each. Aliya was awarded player of the match for her incredible knock that took Rawalpindi to a five-wicket win.

At Diamond Cricket Ground in Islamabad, skipper Gull Feroza steered her side to victory, as her unbeaten half-century led Multan to a successful chase against Peshawar. After choosing to bat first, Peshawar suffered an early blow as Aleena Shah was run out for just a run in the first over of the innings. Momina Riasat and Raahima Syed built an 82-run second-wicket stand to counter the early setback. Raahima scored 34 from 43, including five boundaries before getting caught off Rehmat Noreen's bowling in the 15th over. In the subsequent over, Noor-ul-Iman pinned Momina leg-before for a run-a-ball 44 that showcased six fours. Tehzeeb Shah was run out in the same over for just six runs with Peshawar's scorecard showing 95-4 in 16 overs. Shabnam Hayat (12, 15b, 1x4) chipped in with some runs to help Peshawar to 116-5 in 20 overs. Gull Rukh, Rehmat and Noor had a wicket each. Multan chased the target of 117 in 15.1 overs on the back of an unbeaten half-century by opening batter Gull Feroza. Multan skipper anchored the chase very well, producing 68 from 51 and smashed an impressive 10 boundaries to take her team over the line. Aleena Masood (14, 9b, 3x4s), Gull Rukh (14, 15b, 2x4s) and Wajeeda Muneer (11, 10b, 2x4s) also added some runs to the total to help their team secure the win. Aleena Shah, Tehzeeb and Seema Gul got a wicket each for Peshawar. For her match-winning half-century, Gull Feroza was adjudged player of the match. All six teams would feature in the eighth round of matches on 26 January 26.

# A. S. Natural Stone U-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament Zone-VI Whites and Zone-IV Blues won their Matches

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Two more matches decided in the A. S. Natural Stone Under-19 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament after beating their opponents at various grounds. Summarized Scores:

Zone-VI Whites beat Zone-III Blues by 208 runs at KCCA Stadium. Zone-VI Whites 287/8 in 45 overs. Huzafa Ahsan 73 7x4 1x6, Adam Essa 38, Hamza Qureshi 34, Muhammad Farhan 26, Abdul Wahab 22. Wali Muhammad 2/50, Ali Mitha 2/53, Muhammad Maaz 2/66.

Zone-III Blues 79 all-out in 32.2 overs. Khalid Khan 22, Saleem Sarwar 19. Abdul Wahab (mf) 4/20, Abdul Basit (sla) 3/21, Saad Sakhawat 2/24.

In the 2nd Match at Young Fighter Ground Zone-IV Blues beat Zone-I Greens by 22 runs. Zone-IV Blues 214/8. Muhammad Saifullah 72 4x4 1x6, Aman Ullah 54 5x4 1x6, Maair Sheikh 31. Uzair Sheikh 2/27, Behroz Baig 2/39, Zubair Khan 2/49. Zone-I Greens 192 all-out in overs. Saad Ali 50 7x4 2x6, Behroz Baig 34, S. M. Ali 26, Awais Khan 20. Habib ur Rehman (mf) 3/43, Zulfiqar 2/24, Aman Ullah 2/29.

# Hafeez blames players for Australia and New Zealand losses

Pakistan team Director and Head Coach Mohammad Hafeez shifted the blame for defeats against Australia and New Zealand in the Test and T20I series respectively, local media reported Thursday. Hafeez met with Acting PCB Chairman Shah Khawar while PCB's COO Salman Naseem was also present.

The 43-year-old expressed that the players lacked focus on the game, as their primary attention was on participating in the ongoing franchise T20 leagues.

Earlier, it was reported that Hafeez's role as director will conclude after disappointing performances in Australia and New Zealand. Pakistan lost 3-0 Down Under while the Blackcaps thumped the Men in Green 4-1.

# Hodge, Da Silva lead West Indies fightback against Australia

**Sports Desk**

Kavem Hodge and Joshua Da Silva put on 149 runs for the sixth wicket to lead a West Indies fightback against Australia on the first day of the second Test on Thursday as the visitors reached 266-8 at stumps.

Hodge and wicketkeeper Da Silva were together at the start of the second session with the West Indies in huge trouble at 64-5.

The pair dug in and battled for over a session and a half before Da Silva was finally dismissed for 79, trapped lbw by off-spinner Nathan Lyon with the score on 213.

Hodge, playing only his second Test, then fell to the second new ball 12 runs later when he edged Mitchell Starc (4-68) to Steve Smith at second slip for an impressive 71.

Debutant Kevin Sinclair was not out 16 at the close, with Alzarri



Joseph dismissed for an entertaining 32 off 22 balls from the last ball of the day.

Hodge and Da Silva mixed resolute defence with some exciting shot-making throughout their partnership to give their side some

hope after a disappointing start to the innings.

"It was a pretty crucial partnership between Hodge and myself," Da Silva said.

"I would have liked to have finished the day a bit better, maybe

one of us getting a hundred, but it wasn't to be.

"Nobody would have expected at 64-5 when I came in that we'd get 266, that's 200-plus runs for three wickets for the rest of the day, so I'm pretty happy."

Starc said when the pink ball started to go soft after the 11th over, bowling became much more difficult.

"We started nicely with the new ball but it started to do a lot less in the middle session and they (Da Silva and Hodge) applied themselves really well," he said.

"Then we got a couple of late wickets, so it was a really even day."

After winning the toss and deciding to bat first on a hot day under clear skies, West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite would have been hoping to get the visitors off to a good start at the top of the order.

However, he looked unsettled and fell for four in the eighth over when he played at a Josh Hazlewood delivery outside off stump and got an edge to keeper Alex Carey.

Fellow opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul had looked more comfortable at the other end and he and an aggressive Kirk McKenzie started to move the score along.

But McKenzie, who scored 21 from 25 balls, tried one big shot too many and got a thick edge off Pat Cummins to first slip, where Usman Khawaja took a sharp chance high to his right.

Chanderpaul (21) was next to go when he edged Starc to Smith at second slip to leave the West Indies struggling at 54-3.

That was soon 57-3 when Alick Athanaze became Starc's 350th Test wicket, caught behind by Carey for eight.

# Batters-led Dubai Capitals thump Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in ILT20

**A Sports**

DUBAI: Sam Billings scored a quickfire half-century in the run chase and powered Dubai Capitals to a comfortable five-wicket victory over Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the eighth match of the ILT20 here on Thursday.

Put into bat first, Abu Dhabi Knight Riders could put up 183/4 on the board despite Sam Hain and Laurie Evans's brisk half-centuries.

The Knight Riders got off to a shaky start to their innings as they lost Andries Gous and Michael Pepper in the second over with just 111 runs on the board.

Walking out to bat at number four, Hain then put together a brief 37-run partnership with Alishan Sharafu, who fell in the sixth over

after scoring an 18-ball 15. Hain then joined forces with Evans and the pair launched an astounding recovery for the Knight Riders.

They dominated the second half of the innings and added 131 runs to the total before Hain finally walked back in the final over.

Hain smashed eight boundaries and two sixes on his way to top score for the Knight Riders with a 39-ball 77.

Evans, on the other hand, carried his bat all the way through with an unbeaten 67. His 41-ball knock featured six boundaries and two sixes.

Dushmantha Chameera led the bowling attack for the Capitals with two wickets while Jason Holder and Roelof van der Merwe made one



scalp each.

In return, the Capitals chased down the 184-run target for the loss of five wickets and 23 balls to spare.

The Capitals had a contrasting

start as they lost David Warner (0) on the second delivery of the innings.

But Jake Fraser-McGurk, alongside Rahmanullah Gurbaz, anchored the run chase.

The pair put together a quickfire 57-run stand before both perished in successive overs, bringing down the Capitals to 65/3 in 4.4 overs.

Fraser-McGurk smashed three boundaries and four sixes in his 17-ball knock and scored 41. Gurbaz was also ruthless with his seven-ball 21 which included one boundary and two sixes. Sam Billings and Sikandar Raza then knitted a match-winning partnership and put the Capitals in touching distance.

The duo added 109 runs for the fourth wicket before they too, fell in consecutive overs.

Billings remained the top scorer for the Capitals with 67. His 35-ball knock featured nine boundaries and a six. Raza, on the other hand, scored a brisk 29-ball 43 and hit five boundaries.

**INVITATION FOR BIDS**  
Bid Reference No. 02/2023-24

1. The Employer, Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority through Chief Engineer & PD, CB&CRBC Project, WAPDA Chashma, District Mianwali Invite sealed bids on Item rate basis from the eligible firms for following works CHASHMA BARRAGE O&M WORKS

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Contract Period
1	SUPPLY OF DEFICIT QUANTITY OF REVETMENT STONE ON VARIOUS BARRAGE SPURS / GUIDE BANKS AND EMERGENT FLOOD PROTECTION WORKS THROUGH SIMPLE STONE DUMPING AND / OR WIRE CRATES PLACING DUMPING IN WATER AT ANY EMBANKMENT LOCATION	150 Days (Contractor Shall be bound to Execute Emergent Flood Works)
2	PROCUREMENT OF OFF-SIZE WIRE ROPES FOR CHASHMA BARRAGE GATES, BARRAGE LIGHTS, PAINT MATERIAL FOR GATES AND RAILING, BARBED WIRE / WIRE NET FENCING etc.	60 Days

Bid Security	2% of bid amount (in shape of CDR / Bank Draft) in favour of Chief Engineer & PD, CB&CRBC WAPDA Chashma Mianwali.
Bid Document Fee	Rs.1000/- each (Non-refundable) to be deposited in CE&PD Account No.365-30-3 Titled CB&CJ-Link Project WAPDA Chashma Muslim Commercial Bank Branch Dist: Mianwali.
Bid form can be purchased:	Office of Executive Engineer, Chashma Barrage Division, WAPDA Chashma District Mianwali
Last date and time of issuing of Bid	13.02.2024 (during office working hours)
Date and time of receiving bids	14.02.2024 From 11.00 to 11.30 Hrs.
Place, Date and time of Opening Bids	Office of Director (Technical) Chashma Barrage Project, WAPDA Chashma Dist: Mianwali. At 12.00 Hrs on 14.02.2024

**Eligibility of Bidders:**  
Bidding document will be issued only to the Firms/Contractors having following documents.

- Firms registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in Category C-6 and above having codes CE-01, CE-04, CE-09 and CE-10 for the year 2023-24.
- In case of representative, original authority letter (in original) on Judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- is necessary from the Owner of firm.
- Documentary evidence of two similar nature works executed during last 05 years duly accompanied by Employer's Completion Certificate for these works.
- Registration with Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and availability on Active Taxpayer List for the year of 2023-24 will be required.

**Note:**

- The Competent Authority reserves all the rights to accept or reject the any bid without disclosing its reasons.
- This bid notice is also available on WAPDA & PPRA Websites also.
- Any other information required, pertaining to advertised works, can be collected from the office of the undersigned during office working hours one day prior to issuance of bids of respective works.
- All rights reserved under PPRA Rules.
- Contact at No.0459-923016 & 0459-376858 for information.

Executive Engineer  
Chashma Barrage Division  
This notice is also available at PPRA Website: [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)  
PID(L) Website: [www.wapda.gov.pk](http://www.wapda.gov.pk) PRD(U)WAPDA/267/2023-24  
Donate for Diamer Basha & Mohmand Dams

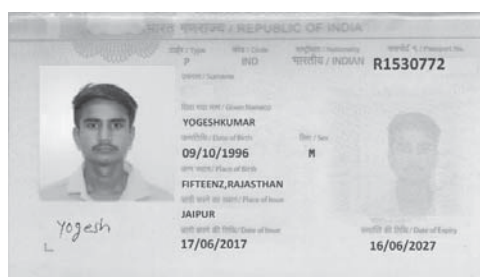
## Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of elected members of Gilgit-Baltistan Council called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Pakistan has credible evidence Indian agents killed two citizens: Qazi



## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi said that Indian agents are involved in the killings of two Pakistani citizens, asserting that the law enforcement agencies have credible evidences of the agents' links to the assassination of two Pakistani nationals on the home soil.

Addressing a presser, the foreign secretary said that two Pakistanis Shahid Latif and Muhammad Riaz were killed on 11 October 2023 in Sialkot and on 8 September 2023 in Rawalakot respectively. The one citizen was killed outside the mosque while another was attacked inside the mosque of the respective cities by local paid killer at behest of the Indi-

an agents.

Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi said that Indian agent Yogesh Kumar hired Muhammad Umair, a labourer in the third country to act as a contact with local criminals in Pakistan to trace and assassinate Shahid Latif.

He said that the hired local criminals successfully traced Shahid Latif but could not carry out the murder plan. After some failed attempts, Muhammad Umair was personally sent to Pakistan from the third country to do the task and he organized a team of five target killers. The team also failed in the first attempt on 9 October 2023 but succeeded in assassinating Shahid Latif two days later.

The foreign secretary said

that law enforcement authorities quickly apprehended the target killers involved in Shahid Latif's murder, including Muhammad Umair, who was trying to flee the country soon after completing the task.

Revealing the details of Muhammad Riaz's killing, the foreign secretary said that Ashok Kumar and Yogesh Kumar, the Indian agents planned the murder. He said that Muhammad Riaz was assassinated during Fajr prayer, in a mosque in Rawalakot on 8 September 2023.

Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi said that law enforcement agencies traced the killer Muhammad Abdullah Ali and apprehended him on 15 September 2023 while he was

boarding a flight at Jinnah International Airport Karachi. While his accomplices were nabbed from various cities of Pakistan.

The Interrogation revealed that Muhammad Abdullah Ali was recruited and guided by the two Indian agents who utilised social media app Telegram to recruit Muhammad Abdullah Ali, who was asked to locate Muhammad Riaz.

The foreign secretary said that Pakistan has documentary, financial and forensic evidence of the involvement of the two Indian agents, who masterminded the assassinations. "We have also reached out to the governments of relevant third countries. And as I said earlier, there are a few other cases of similar gravity at

various stages of investigation," he added.

He said that India's involvement in killings of Pakistanis on their soil is violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and a breach of the UN Charter. Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi made it clear that this violation of Pakistan sovereignty by India is completely unacceptable.

The foreign secretary demanded that India must be held accountable internationally for its blatant violation of international law.

"Pakistan remains committed to protecting its people and securing its sovereignty. Protection of Pakistanis and any foreign national on Pakistani soil is a high priority for the Government of Pakistan," he added.

## Democratic system meant to serve people, not vice versa: Solangi

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said that the democratic system was meant to serve the people, who should have the power to hold their elected representatives accountable.

"Steps should be taken to reinvigorate the democratic system, which is only to take care of the people and not vice versa," he maintained.

The minister was speaking

as the chief guest at a seminar on "Electoral Code of Conduct: Ethical Practices of Stakeholders including Media", organized by the Press Information Department.

He said that as per the Constitution, Pakistan was a federal parliamentary democratic country and the people's elected representatives must do legislation to strengthen the system.

The minister said that the concept of "recalling elections" was first introduced in Greece and the practice was now being followed by other



countries, including Canada, the United States of America and Germany.

A certain percentage of constituents should be empowered to recall their elected representatives by complaining to the Elec-

tion Commission of Pakistan (ECP) if they failed to meet their expectations, he added.

Solangi said that the caretaker government was facilitating all possible steps to facilitate the ECP to hold free, fair and transparent elections on

February 8 so that the people could elect candidates and parties of their choice in a peaceful environment.

The minister said that making fun of political parties and their leaders was not in the interest of the country as it could make the people indifferent towards the system.

Besides Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid, Principal Information Officer Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan, senior officers of the Information Ministry and its attached departments were also present in the seminar.

## Dr Nadeem bans sugary products in health ministry

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Thursday announced to ban serving of sugary products in his ministry, asking other ministries to follow this after the advisory to be issued soon.

He was addressing a seminar jointly organized by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, PANAH and other civil society organizations to address the issues of excessive use of sugary drinks and their fatal impact on human health.

He said, "We committed to strengthen all initiatives to address health hazards associated with sweetened beverages." The minister said that our commitment to addressing Non-Communi-



nable Diseases (NCDs) was deeply embedded in our National Health Vision, which led to the development of the NCDs Action Framework. Aligned with global targets, this framework outlines our strategic actions to tackle current challenges. He said recognizing the impact of sweetened beverages on public health, the ministry was working diligently to regulate trans fatty acids to no more than two percent of the total fats in all foods. Dr. Nadeem Jan added that through collaboration

with the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority, we aim to enforce front-of-pack nutrition labeling and warning signs on foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. He said that the ministry's partnership with the Federal Board of Revenue involves increasing excise taxes on ultra-processed foods, particularly sugary drinks. He added this fiscal measure was a vital step to discourage the consumption of unhealthy products and promote better dietary choices. The minister said, "We are committed to ensuring a healthy diet in public procurements and official meetings, setting an example for the entire nation." Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH), President, Major General (Retd) Masud ur Rehman Kiani said that focus should

be on preventive health which was the most effective way to combat NCDs. He said that unhealthy diet was among the major risk factors to many NCDs like heart diseases, diabetes, stroke, liver and kidney diseases. He said that sweet drinks and ultra-processed foods are among the major unhealthy diets that people were consuming excessively. He said that policies to reduce the consumption of these unhealthy foods will improve public health significantly.

"Increasing tax on sugar sweetened beverages is an evidence based policy to reduce its consumption and related chronic diseases." He said that there was a strong public support for this policy change as per opinion poll conducted by Pakistan Health Research Council in 2021.

## President for special focus on development of GB's natural, human resources

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday citing an immense potential in tourism sector of Gilgit-Baltistan, called for a special focus on the development of human as well as natural resources of the region. He, in a meeting with elected members of Gilgit-Baltistan Council, reiterated the resolve for GB's durable

socioeconomic development.

Discussing the current situation and the problems faced by GB, he said the GB people were educated and highly skilled, and the literacy ratio in the region was also pleasing. President Alvi also stressed the need to uplift the GB's agriculture and farming sectors. He also assured the delegation to convey the issues faced by the GB people to the relevant forums.

## Sheikh Rashid hospitalised with health issues during incarceration

## City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed was shifted to a hospital when his health deteriorated in Adiala Jail on Thursday.

Sources said he was shifted to the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (IRC) as he complained about issues in the jail.

Doctors will have a detailed medi-

cal examination of the AML head. The court will also seek a detailed medical checkup report from the jail administration.

Sheikh Rashid's nephew Shafique said the jail administration intimidated him through a phone call that his uncle was not feeling well and he was being shifted to RIC.

On Jan 16, a court had dismissed his bail in a case relating to May 9 attacks. He was then arrested on court premises.

## Sanam Javed moves SC against nomination papers' rejection

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) worker Sanam Javed has approached the Supreme Court (SC) against her nomination papers' rejection.

Sanam Javed's nomination papers were rejected for NA-119, NA-120 and PP-150.

Meanwhile, Shaukat Basra also filed an appeal in the SC from NA-163, requesting nullification of tribunal's decision against him.

## Pakistan's foreign reserves stands at US\$ 13,341.4m

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves stood at \$13,341.4 million as of January 19, 2024.

According to data issued by the central bank's spokesperson, the SBP received an IMF tranche under SBA and facilitated the government's external debt repayments during the week. After accounting for all flows, SBP's reserves recorded a net increase of \$243 million, reaching \$8,270.5 million.

Giving a breakup of Pakistan's liquid foreign reserves position, the

SBP revealed that foreign reserves of Pakistan held by commercial banks stood at \$5,070.9 million.

In the previous week ending on January 12, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country were \$13,145.1 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$8,027.4 million, while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$5,117.7 million.

Earlier on January 18, it was reported that Pakistan's liquid foreign exchange reserves dropped to \$13.1451 billion as of January 12 due to debt repayments during the week.

## SHC orders reopening of 2,640 govt schools in Sindh

## City Desk

KARACHI: Sindh High Court (SHC) has directed the education department to reopen the government schools that had been closed due to the lack of necessary resources within two months.

The Sindh High Court (SHC) in Karachi has given a directive to the education department to reopen government schools that were closed due to a lack of necessary resources within the next two months.

This decision came after Justice Salahuddin from the SHC issued a detailed report highlighting the concerning state of government schools in the province.

According to the report, judicial magistrates visited 19 different districts in Sindh and discovered that 2,640 schools were closed because they lacked essential resources such as teachers and furniture.

The report revealed that the Sanghar district was identified as the most affected, with 438 nonfunctional government schools.

Meanwhile, other districts facing school closures include Kandhkot Kashmir (135 schools), Jamshoro (109 schools), Tando Mohammad Khan (85 schools), Dadu (45 schools), and Mehar (21 schools). Jacobabad reported 162 closed schools.



The report also revealed that 12 out of 06 girls' schools in Tando Mohammad Khan were completely shut down, while in Umerkot, 304 schools were closed, and 12 schools were found to have fake records.

A shortage of teachers was cited as the reason for the closure of 72 schools in Shaheed Benazirabad, while 181 schools were nonfunctional in Mithi. Thatta reported 254 closed schools, and Mirpur Sakro had 90 shut down.

Additionally, 109 schools, including 28 girls' schools, were closed in Hyderabad.

In other districts, there were 33 closed schools in Tando Allahyar, 77 in Shikarpur, 27 in Larkana, 121 in Matiari, 182 in Ghotki, 161 in Naushehra Feroze, and 185 in Qamber Shahdadkot.

The SHC directed the education department to reopen the schools and submit a compliance report within two months.