



Pakistan's first Mobile summit sets the stage for innovation

Presented by TECNO, powered by Jazz, designed and produced by Brand Spectrum, Pakistan Mobile Summit, the first ever mobile conference in Pakistan, took place on January 29th at Serena Hotel in Islamabad. With a distinguished guest list of top industry leaders and over 250 attendees, this event provided an excellent platform for engaging in insightful discussions, sharing innovative ideas... (Details on Page 5)



Filipino Envoy urges businessmen to explore trade opportunities in Philippines

Ambassador of the Republic of Philippines Maria Agnes Cervantes highlighting the huge bilateral trade potential between Pakistan and the Philippines urged businessmen to look at the Philippines which could serve as a hub for distributing goods to the ASEAN region. She, while speaking at a meeting during her visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said that the Philippines-Pakistan trade volume... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

New hope

Foreign Minister of Iran, HE Amir Abdollahian called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) COAS, at GHQ on Monday.



In meeting with Iranian FM, COAS stresses need to respect state sovereignty

City Desk
RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir on Monday met Iran's Foreign Minister (FM) Amir Abdollahian and underscored the centrality of respecting the other state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling it "sacrosanct, inviolable and the most important cardinal of state-to-state relationship".

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian called on the Army Chief at General Headquarters (GHQ) today. During the meeting, COAS Munir emphasised the need for sustained engagement and utilizing available communication channels between Pakistan and Iran to address security concerns.

He underscored the centrality of respecting the other state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling it sacrosanct, inviolable and the most important cardinal of state-to-state relationship. Pakistan and Iran also reiterated their commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in the border region which is as an indispensable requirement for the well-being of the people living on

both sides. Realizing the historical, religious and cultural ties that bind Pakistan and Iran, both sides emphasized on strengthening bilateral ties and fostering greater understanding of each other's concerns. They observed that terrorism is a common threat that needs to be tackled through collaborative efforts, better coordination and

intelligence sharing. The two sides agreed to operationalize the mechanism of deployment of military liaison officers in each other's country at an early date to improve coordination and efficiency of response against common threats. They reaffirmed the resolve to remain closely engaged and not allow any spoilers to drive a wedge between the brotherly nations.

Federal Cabinet to discuss FBR's restructuring

Commerce Desk
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar has summoned a federal cabinet meeting tomorrow (Tuesday) in which the inter-ministerial committee formed for the restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will submit its report. According to sources, PM Kakar will chair the meeting and the cabinet members will be discussing on report of the committee headed Dr Shamsah Akhtar. Other members of the inter-ministerial committee will include federal ministers for privatisation, foreign affairs, commerce, energy, law and justice and information technology. The inter-ministerial committee has been mandated with recommendations with respect to the digitisation and restructuring of the FBR. On January 23, PM Kakar ordered the constitution of an inter-ministerial committee for the restructuring of the FBR. The inter-ministerial committee was directed to come up with recommendations regarding the proposals in the next meeting of the federal cabinet. The cabinet appreciated the efforts of Finance Minister Dr. Shamsah Akhtar in increasing the tax revenue and improving the tax-GDP ratio. The cabinet also admired the finance minister for presenting detailed proposals regarding the administrative structure of the FBR.

Pakistan's democracy affected by 'politics of hatred, division': Bilawal

PPA
ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday reiterated his rallying cry of "burying the old politics" and ushering in a new era, saying that Pakistan's democracy and government system has been affected by 'politics of hatred, division'. The former foreign minister made these remarks while interacting with students of the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) Islamabad campus regarding PPP's manifesto "Chuno Nai Soch Ko (Choose new thinking)". "Politics of hatred and division is at its peak," Bilawal regretted, adding that if all political parties keep branding each other 'traitor' and 'infidel', then how can Pakistan be managed. He noted that traditional politics have divided society and affected the country's democracy and government system. He warned that if these parties were to come into power, they would likely victimise their political opponents. "I am contesting to bury the politics of hate and division," he asserted.

Ministers, officials barred from making foreign visits till Feb 8 elections

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar has withdrawn permission granted to federal ministers, advisers and government officials for foreign visits till completion of general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024. "I am directed to convey that the prime minister has been pleased to withdraw all permissions for foreign visits, official or private, granted to the federal ministers, advisers and special assistants to the PM, and all federal officers with immediate effect," stated a notification issued by Cabinet Division. The statement added, "No leave for any foreign visit shall be granted till the completion of the election process and the assumption of office by the new government". It directed all federal secretaries to ensure that all permissions for foreign visits, official or private, granted or allowed by the ministers-in-charge of their divisions are also withdrawn with immediate effect. The directive comes less than two weeks before the forthcoming general elections, scheduled for February 8, 2024.

PM reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthen ties with Iran

Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Monday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and discussed matters of mutual interest. Underscoring close relations between Pakistan and Iran, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further consolidate bilateral ties. He also emphasized the need to address common challenges through collaborative and cooperative approaches, rooted in the respect for international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular territorial integrity and sovereignty of both Pakistan and Iran. The prime minister conveyed his warm sentiments for President Ebrahim Raisi and extended an invitation for him to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.



Security forces kill terrorist in North Waziristan: ISPR



City Desk
RAWALPINDI: Security forces on Monday gunned down a terrorist in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) North Waziristan district. According to the military's media wing, on reported presence of terrorists, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan district. During the intense fire exchange, the security forces gunned down a terrorist identified as Naikman Ullah who was killed. The killed terrorist remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities including target killing of innocent civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorist. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country. Earlier in a similar operation in the Zhob district of Balochistan province, Security forces have killed seven terrorists in an intelligence-based operation. According to ISPR, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Sambaza in Zhob. Seven terrorists were killed in the operation of the security forces while weapons and ammunition were recovered from their possession.

Sepoy Muhammad Tariq embraced martyrdom in Abyei after 'barbaric' attack

City Desk
RAWALPINDI: On 28th January 2024, a convoy of Pakistani Peacekeepers was ambushed in Abyei (disputed area between Sudan and South Sudan) while escorting two local patients to a hospital. Pakistani peacekeepers responded effectively and forced the militants to retreat. However, during exchange of fire, Sepoy Muhammad Tariq (resident of Badin, Sindh) embraced martyrdom while four individuals including two officers were injured. Pakistan's peacekeeping contingents have always distinguished themselves by virtue of their professionalism and devotion to duty. Todate, 181 Pakistani peacekeepers have laid their lives while serving the cause of peace around the world.

Over Rs472b collected under petroleum levy in six months

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The federal government has collected more than Rs472 billion in petroleum levy in first six months of the current fiscal year and committed to gather Rs920 billion under the head in the whole fiscal year (July 2023-June 2024). The sources privy to the development said that the federal government has so far collected more than Rs472 billion in the head of petroleum levy during first six months of the current fiscal year (July 2023 to December 2023). The government charges at least Rs60 per litre petroleum tax and diesel. Initially, the government had budgeted Rs869 billion petroleum levy for the current fiscal year but now it is eyeing Rs920 billion. During the last fiscal year (July 2022-June 2023), Rs580 billion was collected in the head of petroleum levy.

Diplomats, international journalists invited to Xinjiang's annual political meetings

Spokesman Report
BEIJING: International representatives and media outlets have for the first time been invited to sit in on or cover the upcoming annual political meetings in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, local authorities said. The meetings, known as "Two Sessions," are the annual meetings of provincial-level lawmakers and political advisors, during which plans for local economic and social development in the year ahead are discussed. China's national-level Two Sessions normally take place in Beijing in March each year, after local meetings are finished. The annual meeting of the Xinjiang regional people's congress will open on Tuesday, while the Xinjiang regional committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference will gather, CGTN reported on Monday. The regional foreign affairs office has invited diplomats from the embassies of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, SCO observer states and dialogue partners, as well as representatives of international organizations such as the SCO Secretariat and the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Institute, to sit in on the meetings. Dozens of domestic and international media outlets attended the press conference on Sunday, including Türkiye's Anadolu Agency, Indonesia's Antara News Agency, Singapore's The Straits Times and Kazakhstan's Kazinform. Journalists from 10 media outlets in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macao Special Administrative Region also attended the meeting.

Azad Kashmir Assembly Speaker hails Bilawal Bhutto for end of long struggle

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly Speaker Senior Parliamentarian Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that the election campaign of the candidates of Islamabad Rawalpindi Division at the place of martyrdom of his mother Ms. Daughter Mashrekh Benazir Bhutto and her colleagues after seventeen years in Liaquat Bagh Ground was successful.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech at the general meeting has proved that he has a grip on national and international affairs with the ability of the elected Prime Minister of Pakistan. Bring success to the People's Party and then the People's Party can trust the bright future of themselves and the coming generations by taking into account the people-friendly decisions made by its leadership in the past, because we believe in arguments and not claims and they are in front of the entire nation.

Our political opponents resort to tricks to hide the sun by putting their finger in front of the sun, but this is not possible, there cannot be a conflict between law and nature. Haider Babar



Jadoon Raja Imran Ashraf while addressing the corner meetings during the election campaign in the provincial assembly constituencies did he say that the leader of the people Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto daughter of the east Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Pakistan's security and occupied Kashmir's freedom invincible defense.

People's sovereignty, the rule of law, the protection of the democratic system and the protection of the democratic system and the struggle against terror-

ism, extremism, lawlessness, sectarianism, former President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari offered their lives in the burning flames of burning and killing after the martyrdom of Ms. Benazir Bhutto. Chanting the slogan of Zindabad (Pakistan Khape) showed patriotism and kept the nation peaceful.

Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that the goal of the People's Party is never power, but national development, national security, welfare, humanity, dignity, politeness, tolerance, and toler-

ance. According to progressive ideas and ideas, a society free from exploitation should be established where everyone is provided with their basic rights equally at their doorstep.

Together, we are determined that after fair and transparent neutral elections, the people of God will rule now, the scene of which is you and I are all over Pakistan. Saz Khattab went to the people to protest and shouted and blew the minds of the catwalkers. He said that the People's Party will also achieve success and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will also take the oath of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. 15 million Kashmiri refugees living in Pakistan. The majority of people are standing with the People's Party. I thank the people of Kashmir for their unequivocal support of the People's Party in all four provinces on our appeal and I guarantee to solve all their legitimate demands after coming to power. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Prime Minister After being elected in Pakistan, a big package was approved for the refugees living in Pakistan. Corona will be included in our duties. And during the election campaign, he received a warm welcome in all the constituencies

Professionalism of police officers can be further improved through motivation: RPO

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Regional Police Officer Captain (Rtd) Muhammad Sohail Chowdhury awarded certificates of appreciation to Police Officers including Special Branch with excellent performance. He said that the morale of the police is high due to good police officers. The reason for which is strict action against the criminal. The arrests of the arrested criminals and their operatives are a testament to the efficiency of the police. He further instructed the police officers to continue the operations against the criminal in the same way. All resources are being utilized to make Multan Region Police crime free. He also appreciated the performance of Special Branch. He said that the Special Branch is the best wing of the Multan Region Police, thanks to which the nefarious purposes of the criminal elements are not allowed to succeed. This wing plays a vital role in taking legal action against criminals. SP Legal Shaban Mehmood, SP City Hasan Raza Khakhi, SP Special Branch Javed Iqbal, ASP New Multan Anam Tajmal, Assistant Director Regional Police Office Mian Abdul Rahim Long, Private Secretary Chaudhry Muhammad Khalid, D. S. P HQ Special Branch Sadia Saeed, DSP Headquarter Nimreen Munir, DSP Haram Gate Mohammad Ibraheem Darishakh, SHOs Mushtaq Abrar, Khalid Hussain, Mudassar Hussain, Ejazul Hassan Sarfaraz Ahmed, Asim Shabbir and other officers were involved.



Sardar Attique approves establishment of Dammam Unit in Saudi Arabia

Abdul Majeed Tahir



MUZAFFARABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference President and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan approved the organization of Saudi Arabia. As a result of the approval given by the Sadr Muslim Conference, Mrs. Mehr Al-Nisaa Secretary General has announced the members of Dammam Unit Saudi Arabia for the next term. Sardar Muhammad Ali Jandalvi President, Sardar Maqsood Chaghtai Senior Vice President, Raja Abdul Waheed General Secretary, Sardar Basharat Abbasi Organizer, Mashkoor Sikandar Vice President, Sardar Muhammad Ishtiaq Vice President, Shahtab Khan Abbasi Vice President, Raja Danish Kabir Vice President, Khurram Ziad Vice President Sardar Kamran Kamal Deputy General Secretary, Shamaz Shehzad Information Secretary, Junaid Zahid Deputy Information Secretary, Sardar Ayaz Farooq Finance Secretary, Sardar Nair Kamal Deputy Finance Secretary, Raja Ehsan Liaison Secretary were elected. An official notification has been issued in this regard.

Preparation

ISLAMABAD: A view of political parties displayed banners on a pedestrian bridge in Federal Capital, ahead of upcoming general election 2024.



Photo: Online

PML-N inaugurated election office in Wana

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Former PML-N Minister of State and NA-42 Constituency nominated Ghalib Khan advocate reached Wana here on Monday in connection with the general election campaign.

On this occasion the workers of PML-N warmly welcomed him.

PML-N's nominated candidate for National Assembly, NA, 42 formally inaugurated his central election office in Wana, (SWL) South Waziristan Lower.

A large number of tribal elders participated in the inaugural program apart from League workers.

The tribal elders, expressing full confidence in the leadership of the Muslim League-N, announced full



support and to seal the lion sign on 8 February general election.

Later former Minister of State Ghalib Khan Advocate said while talking to the media that during my tenure

in power in Lower South Waziristan district, many development projects have been completed and are also on the ground.

He said that in the development

projects Passport Office, Pakistan Agriculture Research Center, Red Crescent Office Wana, DHO Office Wana, FATA University Sub Branch, Model Dairy Farm Wana and Model Farm Processing Center Dazaghondai have been approved and completed.

He said apart from this, various projects have been brought from FATA Development Authority under the Irrigation Scheme worth Rs, 80 crores.

He appealed to the public that the other candidates should not listen to false promises.

He said, all these are seasonal birds, they want to gain their success by deceiving people.

He said, they will defeat them in the general elections of February 8.

KP Food Authority seals 21 mills for producing substandard ghee

Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Food Authority on Monday sealed 21 mills for producing substandard ghee.

The KP Food Authority has initiated strict actions against ghee mills involved in producing substandard ghee.

The food authority inspected a total of 26 ghee mills, and samples from 46 different brands were examined.

According to the spokesperson, the result of the examination of 46 brands, 32 samples were found to be substandard, while 14 met the required standards.

The officials from the food authority sealed the total of 21 ghee mills producing inferior quality.

Stringent measures were taken in various areas, including Haripur, Malakand, Bannu, and Kohat. The Food Authority conducted operations to ensure the compliance of food manufacturing units with quality standards.

PPP candidate announces support to JUI-F in Swat's PK-05

Web Desk

SWAT: The president of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Swat district on Monday withdrew his nomination and announced support for Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) in PK-05 constituency.

The president of PPP in Swat, Akram Khan, directed the workers to hasten the political campaign in the constituency for the success of JUI candidate, Sanaullah and instructed them to vote for the JUI candidate in the upcoming general election 2024.

It is pertinent to mention here that the president of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Swat district is also contesting from the same constituency.

Last week, an independent candidate from NA-193 (Shikarpur) announced to withdraw in favour of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl's (JUI-F) Rashid Mahmood Soomro.

The independent candidate announced his support for the JUI-F's candidate in a public gathering. Addressing the gathering, Rashid Mahmood Soomro said that the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) could not provide 'Roti, Kapra Aur Makaam' to the people as per its slogan in the last 50 years.

He said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari promised to build three million houses, if elected to power, adding that the PPP failed to construct even 60 houses with Rs 60 billion aid for the flood victims. "The PPP is trying to buy a vote for just Rs5000," he alleged.

Supremacy of the Constitution Should be ensured in the country: Malik Amir Dogar

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: NA, 149 and PP 215 Union Council 35, while addressing the corner meeting organized by District General Secretary. PTI Aamir Anwar Qureshi, NA 149 Candidate Malik Amir Dogar, and Candidate Provincial Assembly PP 215 Moin Riaz Qureshi, while addressing the corner meeting, said that Tehreek-e-Insaf is an idea, a theory. And the name of madness is that Imran Khan freed the people from self-determination and slavery. The message given is now on the tongue of every Pakistani, even a child has Imran Khan on his tongue and Imran Khan's love in his heart and this craze

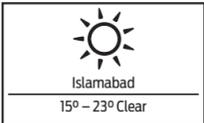


is increasing rapidly with each passing day. He added. That the supremacy of the constitution should be ensured in the country so that stability will come

in the country and development of the country and nation. As soon as the PDM government came to power, they started crying about the country's resources, while they brutally spent the country's money on their luxury. Today, the people are blaming each other for inflation and unemployment. Imran Khan's views from every constituency on February 8 will not come in the words of thieves on these interests. And Tehreek-e-Insaf will win. A public leader like Imran Khan has never come and will never come, who taught the people to live with their heads up and fight for their rights. On this occasion, Aamir Anwar Qureshi, Zaheer Awan, Hameed Nawaz Khan, Shahryar Bhatta Asim Sanjrani also

expressed his views. Qasim Khan Niazi, Umira Fasal, Malik Nasrullah, Nasir Khan Lashari, Rabnawaz Baloch, Rao Ali Asghar, Sajjad Khan, Faheem Bhatti, Iqbal Baloch, Abdul Waheed, Muhammad Younis and others participated.

Multan. Malik Aamir Dogar, Moin Riaz Qureshi, Aamir Anwar Qureshi are addressing the corner meeting held at NA, 149 PP 215 UC 35, Zaheer Awan, Hameed Nawaz Khan, Shehryar Bhatta Asim Sanjrani also expressed their views. Qasim Khan Niazi, Umira Fasal, Malik Nasrullah, Nasir Khan Lashari, Rabnawaz Baloch, Rao Ali Asghar, Sajjad Khan, Faheem Bhatti, Iqbal Baloch, Abdul Waheed, Muhammad Younis and others are partners.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:41 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	3:57 pm
Maghrib	5:35 pm
Isha	7:01 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Mastercard expands partnership with SadaPay

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mastercard and SadaPay have expanded their strategic business partnership to launch SME debit and credit cards in Pakistan. The multi-year collaboration will see the two companies boost financial inclusion among the country's small businesses and freelancers.

"At Mastercard, we are committed to building a robust digital payments infrastructure and paving the way to a more inclusive society in Pakistan. In line with our pledge to connect 50 million MSMEs worldwide to the digital economy by 2025, we work to help small businesses realize their full potential. We seek to harness the power of partnerships with pioneering fintech players, such as SadaPay, to provide Pakistan's SMEs and freelancers with innovative products and services that enable them to pay and get paid," said Arslan Khan, Vice President and Country Business Manager, Pakistan, Mastercard.

"SadaPay is on a mission to address the financial requirements and solve the payment pain points of freelancers, who will make a growing contribution to Pakistan's economy in the next decade. Our expanded partnership with Mastercard will enable us to diversify our digital-first offering and introduce groundbreaking products poised to be a game-changer for freelancers and small businesses," said Brandon Timinsky, CEO, SadaPay.

Disposable vapes ban could lead to relapse in people trying to quit smoking: Study

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A fresh study has indicated that banning disposable vapes might negatively impact 2.6 million people as well as discourage the use of e-cigarettes from then on in the United Kingdom.

This research comes from a recent discussion among UK officials to ban disposable vapes to prevent minors from becoming addicted to the product.

The study was conducted by the University College London and funded by Cancer Research UK and was published by the journal Public Health. It highlights the importance of tobacco harm reduction products to reduce the harm caused by tobacco addiction by being a less risky habit.

The research further mentions that more adults in the UK have begun to favour e-cigarettes over combustibles. If



a ban was to be enacted, it would negatively impact the image of disposable vapes and prevent smokers from seeing it as a safer alternative.

The researchers argue that while it is important to prevent minors from using these products, it should not affect the health of the rest of the UK. A senior author of the study, Professor Jamie Brown, said: "Ban may discourage the use of e-cigarettes among people trying to quit smoking and may induce relapse among

those who have already used disposables to quit." He further argues that tobacco cigarettes are more harmful to the body but those are not currently heavily restricted and by banning vapes, the government creates an image that these products are more harmful for one's health, further discouraging its use.

The study was based on a survey of 69,973 adults. It has discovered an increase of vape users in the population as it was 0.1 percent in January 2021 and now rises to 4.9 percent in August 2023. If disposable vapes are banned, it may result in those new smokers shifting to tobacco instead.

The co-lead author of this study, Dr Sarah Jackson, said: "In the event of a ban, it would be important to encourage current and ex-smokers who use disposables to switch to other types of e-cigarettes rather than going back to just smoking tobacco."

Group photo

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE posing for a group photograph along with photo journalists during a reception in honour of photo journalists at her residence in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Government should immediately solve the issue of extra and additional tax: M. Akram Farid

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice President of All Pakistan Hotels Association and Chairman Central of Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) Mian Akram Farid while addressing the meeting said that the government is sympathetic to meet the legitimate demands of the hotel industry. Consider that this industry can develop better and create new employment opportunities, since January, WAPDA has imposed extra tax and further tax on electricity bills despite having a registered business address for sales tax. This action is ignoring the registered business address. Taking only the name into consideration, which is a gross exaggeration, the hotel industry



is an important source of revenue for the country, while 50 to 60 million people are associated with the hotel industry in Pakistan and lakhs of workers are employed in this industry.

Therefore, special attention should be given to the better development of this industry. He expressed these views during the meeting of Pakistan Hotels Association, adding that due to the absence of a national tourism policy and a consistent

policy framework for the hotel industry, no new major hotel chain has opened in Pakistan since 1990. He said that the government can get a lot of revenue by creating favorable conditions for this industry and solving its major problems.

Mian Akram Farid, Senior Vice Chairman of Pakistan Hotels Association, demanded that the government abolish the import duties and regu-

latory duties imposed on the import of machinery and other goods for the hotel industry as these duties have increased the cost of doing business and cost of goods. There is a delay in clearance.

He said that earlier the CDA had closed the guest houses in the residential areas of Islamabad, but now again the guest houses in the residential sectors and streets of Islamabad have been destroyed, apart from the residential apartments. Being used as gate houses. Due to this reason, the government is also losing crores of rupees in monthly sales tax, income tax and property tax. Due to the absence of taxes on flats and guest houses, hotel customers are shifting to flats and guest houses.

Disappearance of the accused became a mystery, the heirs of Darbadar were forced to stumble



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The disappearance of the accused from Nellore police station in the federal capital of Islamabad has become a mystery. Even after a month has passed since the disappearance of the accused, the heirs are forced to stumble upon Darbadar. According to the details, Tazeem Akhtar, a widow resident of Tamer area of Federal capital Islamabad, along with her daughter-in-law Tehmina Shaheen and granddaughters, said in a press conference at the National Press Club Islamabad that Nellore police station SHO Qasim Zia had killed the enemies.

In collusion with, his son Nasir Mustafa alias Thapro has disappeared from the case, despite the court order, the police is not giving any kind of cooperation to us, nor is it providing any information about Nasir Mustafa, although the court has ordered S. HO has been ordered to register cross version FIR but SHO is deliberately reluctant to register cross version FIR, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, Army Chief and Federal Interior Minister are appealed to that his son Tazeem Akhtar, while talking to the media along with his daughter-in-law Tehmina Shaheen and granddaughters, further said that his son Nasir Mustafa, who died on December 23, 2023, from a psychiatric hospital in Lahore. Qasim Zia, SHO of Nellore police station, arrested him in the case of Section 324 and locked him up in custody and received a twelve-day remand from the court.

After finding out that Nasir Mustafa was not present in Hawalat, it was learned from the police that the police team led by SHO Qasim Zia was taking him for recovery at 1:30 in the night, that he had escaped from the police custody, although the police Weapons had already been recovered from him, the police was supposed to present his son in the court in the morning after the remand ended, but the police made his son Nasir Mustafa alias Thapro disappear with the intention of murder.

Mafias are gearing up to seize control of system again

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Brig. (R) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Monday that various business mafias are making preparations to retake control of the country's economic system.

He said that mafias are making substantial investments in the political system to obtain favours at the masses' expense.

He added that the economy would begin to collapse if these merciless mafias were not stopped from their unholy activities.

Aslam Khan said in a statement issued here today that business mafias are investing heavily in politics to reactivate after the elections and loot the people.

If this trend is allowed to continue, the economy will start sinking while inflation, which is already at record levels, will break all previous records, he said.

He noted that actions against the smuggling of dollars, oil, wheat, sugar, rice and many other commodities and steps against foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan have supported the crumbling economy, and the value of the rupee has improved.

These actions scared the mafia, and they stopped their activities. However, now they are getting ready to start their game after the election, and some important politicians and top bureaucracy are being made accomplices.

These elements provide financial support to every party so that whatever government comes, they cannot take any action against them.

In Pakistan, it is normal for the ruling party to leave before five years, but whatever government comes, they do nothing against these influential mafias.

Therefore, the situation forced the army to take bold steps, and the nation has seen the results of their actions.

Despite the best efforts of the sugar mills mafia, they were not allowed to smuggle or export sugar, while smuggling dollars, ghee, rice, and many other items was discouraged.

He observed that if the army withdraws from these issues after the election, the mafia will restart the process of destroying the country's economy again, which is dangerous for the country's security.

Aslam Khan said that as long as the country's businesspeople continue to play a significant part in forming the government, they will continue to focus on their own corporate interests rather than those of the nation and the country.

According to him, mafias have a long history of infiltrating businesses and sectors through intimidation, violence, and bribery. These organisations can obtain a vital foothold in enterprises or hijack entire industries, allowing them to maximise their earnings.

It is common practice to underestimate the influence of organised crime on businesses, despite the well-known consequences for society. On the other hand, the repercussions for both enterprises and society are extremely detrimental.



AIOU initiates solutions with Quranic and Sunnah guidance for intellectual and ethical challenges

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) recently hosted a thought-provoking one-day seminar focused on the theme of 'Foundations of Contemporary Ethical Crisis.' The event, presided over by Professor Dr. Shah Mohayyudin Hashmi, Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, featured Professor Dr. Rashid Arshad Kaleem from Punjab University as the esteemed guest speaker.

In his lecture, Dr. Rashid Arshad emphasized the imperative role of Quranic teachings and the Sunnah in tackling intellectual and ethical decline.

He underscored the need to guide the new generation towards these principles, stating that adherence could not only resolve ethical crises but also elevate worldly life to a virtuous existence.

Dean Shah Mohayyudin Hashmi emphasized the importance of addressing intellectual crises within the Muslim Ummah, highlighting the need to focus on internal issues before external challenges. Stressing guidance from the Quran and Sunnah, he noted that the biography of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) serves as the most effective guide for the welfare of humanity.

Celebrating its 50th Golden Jubilee, AIOU sees this seminar as part of a series of events. Prof. Dr. Hashmi highlighted the university's commitment to becoming a hub for intellectual, literary, and cultural activities, echoing the directive of Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood.

Dr. Sanaullah, Chairman of the Department of Quran and Tafseer, emphasized understanding contemporary challenges by referring to ancient wisdom. To address the ethical crisis, he urged the Muslim Ummah to delve into the knowledge of philosophy, theology, and logic. This seminar marks AIOU's dedication to fostering intel-



Intellectual discussions and contributing to the resolution of contemporary ethical challenges.

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India-France's Unholy Nexus

After Joe Biden humiliated India by declining to preside over India's Republic Day celebration, the country invited French President Emmanuel Macron in an attempt to regain lost pride. Macron was an easy target, drawn in by India's large reserves of money and exploiting its false sense of insecurity, he agreed only to draw more orders to boost the French economy, which is struggling with high unemployment, a large national debt, and social issues. By conveniently ignoring India's heinous human rights record and subhuman actions in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the persecution of religious minorities throughout all of India, and the use of brute force to put an end to more than 25 separatist movements—actions that France has consistently denounced—Macron effectively consented to and participated in the event. Macron successfully signed multi-billion dollar transactions by fully exploiting the circumstances. Indian perspectives, on the other hand, were different. Not only is France milking India, but the USA, Russia, and Israel are doing the same. They are tricking India into believing that it is in danger from nuclear-armed Pakistan and powerful China by instilling a false sense of insecurity, but in reality, they are robbing India of foreign exchange with the sole intent of maintaining their defense-related industries, boosting their economies, and creating jobs for their citizens. What India hopes to achieve by spending billions on military weapons is irrational, ridiculous, and unreal. Pakistan, a nuclear power with a strong, nimble, and ready armed force, cannot be intimidated by it. These arsenals of weapons are equally ineffective against China, which has demonstrated its superiority in all border

standoffs over the past few decades, most notably in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh in 2022, the Galwan Valley in 2020, which resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers, and in numerous other skirmishes that occurred in Pangong Tso, Sikkim, and eastern Ladakh. Now that China is providing them a protective shield, not even India can intimidate its smaller neighbors like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. Similar to France, the USA is defrauding India by creating the false impression that, with US assistance, India might compete with China, despite the fact that India's military power is far inferior to China's. By message India's inflated ego, the United States has so far sold \$220 billion worth of military hardware, ostensibly to modernize the country's armed forces and wean it off of Russia. Nevertheless, rather than altering anything in the region, the United States has succeeded in bolstering the United States' flagging economy and creating jobs for its people. By taking advantage of India, Russia and Israel, like France and the USA, are able to maintain their economies, military industries, and job opportunities for their citizens. Russia has been supplying enough armaments to cover more than 70% of India's military hardware needs since the cold war until 2017. Russia sold India weapons worth \$144 billion between 1991 and 2019, and in just 2017-19, he sold \$15 billion worth of military hardware, including Su-30MKI fighter jets, T-90 tanks, BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, Kalashnikov rifles, and BrahMos guided sea-to-sea missiles.

What India hopes to achieve by spending billions on military weapons is irrational, ridiculous, and unreal. Pakistan, a nuclear power with a strong, nimble, and ready armed force, cannot be intimidated by it. China cannot and will not be intimidated by India by any stretch of imagination. India has little possibility of surpassing China in the upcoming centuries. China's economy, which is only second in strength to that of the United States, is worth \$18 trillion, whereas India's economy is only \$3.4 trillion. With 2.03 million active personnel—nearly 600,000 more than India's 1.45 million—it has the largest standing army in the world. With a military budget of \$229 billion as opposed to India's \$73.9 billion, it can afford to create cutting-edge weapons. China is a strong nuclear deterrent with 320 nuclear weapons compared to India's 150. China has a strong air force with 3,304 combat aircraft, over 1,000 more than India's 2,296. To counter China's ascent and gain a major role in the Indo-Pacific region's security architecture, the USA, France, and Israel are fortifying their defense ties with India. These goals are being attained at India's expense. They are sapping India's hard-earned foreign cash to keep their economies afloat. Knowing full well that by doing this, they are avoiding military cooperation with Pakistan and bringing Pakistan, a significant South Asian nation, closer to Beijing. This is not a logical or rational approach. They are well aware that their attempts to artificially support India are ineffective. They are fully aware that conventional military domination is a riskier and less practi-

cal option when nuclear weapons are present on both sides. Their self-serving concerns with Pakistan now primarily center on counterterrorism and regional stability rather than defense connections. For Pakistan, the benefits of this compelling security paradigm are greater than ever. Pakistan is forced to pursue self-sufficiency in defense manufacture due to a reduction in military hardware supply from traditional partners like the USA and France. It is making investments in its own defense sector to create and produce a greater variety of military hardware, such as naval vessels, combat aircraft—most notably the JF-17, which it co-developed with China—and small arms. In order to decrease dependency on foreign suppliers in fields like electronics, avionics, and missile technology, there is a greater emphasis on domestic research and development. Pakistan has maintained its military preparedness and strategic independence by aiming for self-sufficiency, even in the face of shifting international defense alliances and supply dynamics. Moreover, Pakistan is replacing both the USA and France with China and Turkey by building ties and seeking collaborations with other countries for technology transfer, joint production agreements, and co-development projects. This may have been an understanding with China and Pakistan, who did not even bother to acknowledge or comment on the fact that France and India are inking extensive agreements expressly to strengthen India's defense capabilities and modernize India's armed forces against China and Pakistan. As a result, the signing of these significant accords was largely ignored. They may have known better than India that all of India's sophisticated gear, ammo, and military software would eventually rust in the warehouses.



Qamar Bashir

Pakistan wins the 'Best In-Show' award

Pakistan's Pavilion at New York's fame 'Travel and Adventure Show' has won the "Best In-Show – International Tourism Development" award — at an event in which nearly 190 countries are taking part. "It is a matter of pride for us that Pakistan Pavilion has been awarded the Best in-Show — International Travel and Adventure Show," said Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, who inaugurated the pavilion depicting Pakistan's tourism potential.

The event is being held from January 27-28 with the participation from over 550 of the top destinations, tour companies, cruise lines, and travel providers from around the world. Pakistan Pavilion has been set up in collaboration with Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Pakistan's Consulate General in New York and private sector companies. Gilgit Baltistan Minister of Tourism Ghulam Muhammad, former Minister for Tourism Gilgit Baltistan Raja Nasir Ali Khan, and Consul General of Pakistan in New York Aamar Ahmed Atozai were present on the occasion. A 60 members delegation having representatives of PTDC, TDAP, and 24 private sector companies are representing Pakistan at the Travel and Adventure Show. The Travel and Adventure Show features live performances by Pakistani artisans specializing in lacquer woodwork and traditional doll making. It is showcasing nation's diverse tourism potential. "Travel and Adventure Show is a fantastic show and many countries and tour operators are present here," Ambassador Masood Khan told reporters. "The world is taking a keen interest in the tourism market of Pakistan, especially in adventure and eco-tourism," he said. "Pakistan has the most beautiful and undiscovered touristic sites with huge untapped tourism potential." For over 19 years and over 118 completed events, the Travel & Adventure Show has connected over 2.5 million travel enthusiasts, over 15,000 unique Travel Advisors, and thousands of travel media with over 4,500 different exhibiting companies from around the world influencing over \$6 billion in travel bookings, it was pointed out. In his remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan invited participants to visit Pakistan and experience the timeless beauty of Pakistan's ancient civilizations and natural wonders, from snow-capped peaks to pristine coastal areas. In his message on this occasion, Wasi Shah, State Minister for Tourism and Chairman PTDC, congratulated the organizers for the arrangements and ensuring presence of all regions of Pakistan at the Pavilion. He hoped that efforts will greatly contribute to attracting more foreign visitors to Pakistan which will not only help tapping tourism potential of the country but will also contribute towards image building of Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion to the reporters, Consul General Aamar Ahmed Atozai said that Pakistan's participation in the event will be helpful in attracting potential tourists to Pakistan. to the incoming tourists.



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

Army Chief interacting with general public - II

The Current Army Chief of Pakistan, General Asim Munir, has demonstrated a notable commitment to addressing the concerns of the people alongside fulfilling his professional responsibilities. On various occasions, he has shown positive gestures, including a historic address at the "Pakistan National Youth Conference" at Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad. In his speech, General Syed Asim Munir, Nishan Imtiaz (Military), emphasized the unique identity of Pakistan, distinct from Western civilizations. He encouraged the youth to have immense confidence in their country, nation, culture, and civilization, highlighting the importance of research and positive thinking in the face of societal challenges.



Abdul Basit Alvi

"Pakistan Zindabad," and "Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad." The Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, delivered a significant and thought-provoking address at the Youth Convention held at Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad. Throughout this discourse, participants in the convention raised several pertinent questions. General Munir shed light on the motivations behind the creation of Pakistan, emphasizing that it was a manifestation of the collective mindset of the Muslims in the subcontinent. These Muslims were convinced that religion and Islamic civilization were fundamentally distinct from Hindu beliefs, making it impractical for the two nationalities to coexist. The establishment of Pakistan was a result of this conviction. General Asim Munir stressed that today's youth should not be swayed towards Western civilization after overcoming Hindu domination. He urged a steadfast belief in Islam, considering it a perfect religion, as the axis of self-confidence.

Addressing the prevalence of propaganda on social media, the Army Chief emphasized the Islamic mandate for research before accepting information. He cautioned against false propaganda aimed at undermining Pakistan, emphasizing the need for confidence in the nation, its people, and its natural resources. Participants openly praised Pakistan forces for their response during recent tensions with Iran, with the Prime

Minister acknowledging the central role of the Army Chief in managing the crisis. During the convention, discussions included references to the caliphate of Hazrat Umar, prompting General Munir to highlight that when the populace embodies the qualities of Umar, rulers can govern in a similar style. The Army Chief lamented the power-centric nature of Pakistani politics, urging individuals to contribute positively for the country's betterment. While discussing the negative impacts of social media, he urged participants to avoid such effects and resist disillusionment, emphasizing the role of self-confidence. In response to questions about political stability, General Munir underscored the importance of the five-year parliamentary term and rejected equating democratic changes within this period with instability. He cited examples from Britain and India, where governments changed multiple times during the five-year parliamentary term. Responding to inquiries about the caretaker government's prolonged rule, he clarified that it was a constitutional necessity linked to census and delimitation requirements, and the caretaker government would step down post-election completion. Regarding the rights of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Army Chief emphasized the collective identity of being Pakistani, noting that the identity card and passport possessed by the people of Gilgit-Baltistan were identical to his own, reinforcing the idea that a shared identity unites the nation. It is imperative to discourage negative tendencies and resist the influence of detrimental propaganda.

To be continued

Foreign direct investment and Debt Trap Diplomacy: a case study of CPEC - I

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a commercial transaction where an investor from one country invests in a company or institution located in another country. This investment includes the establishment of new businesses or the acquisition of existing ones, making it an essential driver of global economic growth. FDI promotes international trade, creates job opportunities, and boosts the development of host economies. It is the cornerstone and key driver of economic growth and development of a country. China has recently become the leading investor in FDI with Belt and Road initiative. FDI is crucial for developing countries like Pakistan as it helps in addressing its financing gap and improving its infrastructure and seaports. However the critics have raised concerns over the growing dependencies on China's FDI and its Potential repercussions including falling into debt trap and compromising its sovereignty (Younas. U, 2021).



Sohail Ahmad Baber

A decade has passed since the inception of China Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC), the multi billion dollars flagship project under president Xi Jinping, s 1.4 trillion dollars Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was launched. The Gigantic BRI programme, 11 time the size of Marshall plan that rebuilt Europe from the ruins of world war 2, aims to revive the faded "silk road" through new roads, high speed rails, power plants, ports and airports and telecommunication, links to boost trade with in Asia, Middle East, Europe and Africa. The BRI project has been described by former American assistant defense secretary Chas Freeman as "potentially the most transformative engineering effort in human history, because once completed, it could cover more than half of world population and generate GDP of \$21 trillion (Hussain. N July,2023).

According to Naveed Hussain, The CPEC project which has been described as "Game Changer" by Pakistani's official was announced in 2013 during visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to Pakistan, but it has received a huge impetus in April 2005 when president Xi Jinping visited the country. Pakistan hailed the CPEC as journey towards " Economic Regionalisation in Globalized world, and as a " Hope of better region with peace, development and growth of Economy. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a major component of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its impact on Pakistan's growth, human development, employment generation(almost 236000 jobs), revenues, environmental impacts and overall development has been widely debated (Zafar. A, 2021). In terms of growth, the CPEC has brought about significant investment in energy and infrastructure projects, with the aim of boosting economic growth. According to the Pakistan Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reforms, CPEC has already contributed 4.5% to Pakistan's annual GDP growth. However, critics argue that this growth is not sustainable and will ultimately lead to a debt crisis due to the high costs associated with the projects. In terms of human development, the CPEC has led to the creation of some employment opportunities, but these have been limited to low and semi-skilled labor. The lack of skilled labor has resulted in many companies bringing in workers from China, which has led to criticism from local groups who claim that the locals are being sidelined from the employment benefits.

To be continued

Pakistan's first Mobile summit sets the stage for innovation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Presented by TECNO, powered by Jazz, designed and produced by Brand Spectrum, Pakistan Mobile Summit, the first ever mobile conference in Pakistan, took place on January 29th at Serena Hotel in Islamabad. With a distinguished guest list of top industry leaders and over 250 attendees, this event provided an excellent platform for engaging in insightful discussions, sharing innovative ideas, and building collaborative networking within the dynamic landscape of the ever-evolving mobile industry.

The summit, inaugurated by Dr. Umar Saif, Minister of IT and Telecom, garnered support from key entities such as the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority,



Tech Nation Pakistan, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), and the Pakistan Mobile Phones Manufacturers Association.

Julian Gorman, Head of GSMA APA said, "The key element in the digital future is undoubtedly the smartphone that plays a pivotal role in expediting digitalization, thus bolstering the country's economy. As the 5G era continues to expand around the world, it is imperative for Pakistan to modernize its policies to

support and uplift the telecom industry. We firmly believe that a supportive regulatory environment coupled with strategic policies will not only foster a healthy and competitive telecom sector but will also contribute significantly to Pakistan's digital transformation journey."

This momentous evening gathered some pivotal figures in the mobile phone ecosystem, ranging from government representatives, operators, regulators, manufacturers, and app developers to advocates for digital and financial inclusion (D&I) as well as sustainability. Prominent names, including Mr. Muzafar Hayat Piracha, CEO Airlink, Major General (R) Hafeez ur Rehman, Chairman PTA, Fatima Asad-Said, CEO ABACUS, Aamir Allawala, CEO Transion TECNO Electronic, Muhammad Imran Saleem, Coun-

try GM, CareemPakistan, Ehsan Saya, Managing Director, Daraz, Mr. Anwar Kabir, CEO Brand Spectrum, and others, graced this prestigious event.

Central to the discussions was the profound impact of 5G, exploring its transformative potential for digital advancements and B2B services, alongside other pertinent topics. Complementing the discussions, an exhibition area was set up to highlight the diverse contributions of organizations within the mobile industry.

This remarkable event has not only broken new ground but has also set a precedent for similar entities to come together, working collectively towards positive change in the mobile phone industry. It serves as a driving force for future initiatives, aiming to shape a more impactful and innovative trajectory for the industry.

Austrian ambassador explores investment prospects in Pakistan, stresses positive perception



PPA

KARACHI: Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan and Afghanistan Andrea Wicke, joined by Hussain Islam, chairman of the Prime Minister's Task Force in the Strategic Reforms Unit, and Johannes Brunner, commercial counsellor of the Austrian Embassy Commercial Section, visited the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) to engage with the Chamber's leadership and gain insights into Pakistan's economic landscape.

During the meeting, OICCI CE/Secretary General M Abdul Aleem provided a comprehensive briefing to the Austrian delegation on Pakistan's business prospects, with a focus on attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), ideally reaching three percent of its GDP. Notably, the total capital investment by OICCI members from FY 2013 to FY 2022 amounted to \$22.0 billion, while Pakistan's net FDI stands at \$19.9 billion. In the past year (Jan-Dec), Pakistan attracted \$1,771 million in FDI, marking a 25% increase from 2022.

Ambassador Wicke shared her insights on how Pakistan is perceived globally in terms of investment, emphasizing a focus on regional trade, particularly the potential within South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). She stressed the importance of building a positive perception of Pakistan through engagement with foreign media to showcase the country's overall beauty.

Both Andrea Wicke and Johannes Brunner expressed optimism, highlighting that OICCI's engagement with potential Austrian foreign investment companies would play a crucial role in providing a neutral perspective on Pakistan's on-ground economic situation. The visit underscores the growing interest of foreign entities in exploring and contributing to Pakistan's economic development.

2nd AlBaraka Regional Conference unveils crucial role of home remittances in Pakistan



PPA

KARACHI: AlBaraka Forum for Islamic Economy in collaboration with the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) hosted the 2nd AlBaraka Regional Conference to shed light on the crucial role of home remittances in Pakistan and their impact on sustainable development. The conference served as a platform to discuss the multifaceted aspects of home remittances and their far-reaching implications in shaping the economic growth tracks of nations in general, and Pakistan in particular.

The event brought together leading experts, decision-makers, and stakeholders to engage in dialogue about strengthening Islamic finance tools to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and align remittance strategies with sustainable development objectives in a globally changing remittance landscape.

"As one of the 57 member states of the OIC, Pakistan plays a crucial role in promoting economic integration through home remittances. Islamic financial institutions facilitate these remittances, encouraging recipients to invest sustainably in local businesses and welfare programs. Collaboration between governments and financial institutions is essential to establish secure, user-friendly, and legal channels for remittances and foster linkages with international financial institutions" stated Mr. Yousef Khalawi, Secretary-General of the AlBaraka Forum for Islamic Economy.

The discussion started with keynote addresses delivered by Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Dr. Mufti Irshad Ahmad Ajjaz, Chairman Shariah Advisory Committee of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Dr. Ishtar Husain, Former Advisor to Prime Minister and Ex-Governor SBP, and Mr. Zulfikar Ali Khokar, Head of the Pakistan Remittance Initiative at SBP, sharing industry insights and future outlook for the country.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Senior photojournalist Ramzan Mughal presenting the souvenir to Ms Jane Marriott CMG OBE British High Commissioner to Pakistan



Civil Services Academy's Probationary Officers Visit CCP for Interactive Session

PPA

ISLAMABAD: As part of their training under the 51st Common Training Programme (CTP), a syndicate group of 20 probationary officers from the Civil Services Academy visited the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) for an interactive session.

Mr. Saeed Ahmad Nawaz, Member (Office of Fair Trade, MIU), CCP, presided over the session. While speaking on the occasion, he discussed the proactive measures undertaken by the CCP, including the establishment of a Market Intelligence Unit (MIU), to effectively implement the Competition Law.

The syndicate group was led by the faculty in charge, Mr. Rehmat Wali Khan, Deputy Director. The group members, who are currently researching the "Implications of Fifth Industrial Revolution (IR 5.0) on Public Sector Management in Pakistan," asked multiple questions. While responding to the questions, Mr. Nawaz underscored the significant challenges and opportunities presented by the advent of the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

The syndicate group also benefited from a comprehensive presentation delivered by Mr. Shahzad Hussain, DG (Advocacy)/Registrar of CCP. The presentation explained the substantive provision of Competition Law dealing with Abuse of Dominance, Prohibited Agreements, Deceptive Marketing, and Mergers & Acquisitions. It also traced the historical trajectory of Competition Law, highlighting its pivotal role in fostering a competitive environment conducive to Pakistan's economic progress.

Reflecting on the visit, the syndicate group members expressed gratitude to the CCP for the warm hospitality and offering invaluable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities posed by IR 5.0. They found the engagement beneficial for their research.

Last IMF tranche will be first test of new government

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Monday that getting the final instalment from the IMF will be the new government's first test.

He said the new government would have to work hard to meet the IMF's strict criteria, as all political parties offer great relief to the masses.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the new government will need a new three-year IMF agreement to run the country, which will be an uphill task.

The IMF programme is very important for a country's survival because it prevents politicians from irresponsible spending that damages the economy.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the last tranche of the existing standby agreement with the IMF would be possible after raising electricity and gas prices. It will be mandatory as the circular debt is constantly increasing despite the record increase in the price of these items.



If the IMF offered any relaxation during the final review, it would demand an upward revision of electricity and gas prices before the next agreement.

The political parties promise up to 300 units of free electricity for the masses, which is impossible due to a lack of resources and the lender's supervision.

Any such attempts will result in the displeasure of the IMF, and if the industries are forced to pay for cheap electricity for the people, then production and exports will take a kiss of death.

The business leader said that

imports have been restricted for eighteen months. The new IMF programme will include a demand to remove the import ban, which will decrease foreign exchange reserves, widen the deficit, and weaken the rupee.

He said that the IMF would also demand that industries catering to local demand be opened up to competition from overseas companies, which would be disastrous.

Moreover, taxes on real estate, land, agriculture, wholesalers, and retailers will be demanded, which will be very difficult for the government to accept and implement as it will hurt their voter base.

The NFC award could also be linked to the provinces' tax collection, which would not be acceptable to them. Meanwhile, pressure to sell to failed government companies that are causing annual losses of trillions of rupees would increase.

He said that, due to the Yemeni conflict, oil prices could skyrocket at any time due to energy supply disruptions, making the situation worse.

D' Educationist Hosted a Successful Global Education Interact Expo'24 in Lahore

PPA

LAHORE: In an effort to bring global education closer to Pakistani students, D' Educationist, a leading overseas education consultant, successfully hosted the Global Education Interact Expo'24 in Lahore. With a "FREE Entry", the event, held at The Nishat Hotel, Johar Town, Lahore attracted students from across the region eager to explore educational avenues beyond borders. Around 30+ top-ranked international universities & hundreds of students along with their parents participated in the expo. Students with great interest and excitement to enroll for admissions at top-ranked International Universities along with the Free IELTS Mock Test.

As a trusted education specialist in Pakistan, D' Educationist played a pivotal role in guiding numerous students who attend-

ed the expo. The event served as a platform for students to explore academic opportunities in leading international universities and colleges. The expo served as a unique platform for students to engage directly with representatives from leading universities in the UK, USA, Australia, Germany, and Canada. Information about IELTS and Mock test facility was also provided at the expo.

D' Educationist's team of skilled and friendly counselors engaged with students, offering insights into pursuing education in the UK, USA, Australia, Germany, and Canada. The personalized sessions covered everything from academic programs to admission procedures & IELTS Test providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of their options.

Mr. Syed Sheharyar Abbas Naqvi, Managing Director at D'

Educationist Pvt. Ltd, expressed enthusiasm about the expo's success. "Our goal is to empower students with the knowledge and resources needed to make informed decisions about their academic futures. The Global Education Expo'24 was a testament to our commitment to providing quality guidance for those aspiring to pursue education in prestigious universities worldwide."

Representatives from esteemed universities expressed their enthusiasm for the event: "The Expo provided a wonderful platform for students to interact directly with universities. The enthusiasm and curiosity of the attendees were truly inspiring. We are excited about the prospect of welcoming talented students from Pakistan into our global academic community," said Mr. Saad Hassan, Queen Mary University of London, UK.

"It was a pleasure to be part of the expo. The interactive workshops and free IELTS mock tests added a practical dimension to the event. Such initiatives not only empower students but also showcase the commitment of D' Educationist to the success of every aspiring student," said Mr. Ali Nasir, UMASS Boston, USA.

Prominent 30+ leading universities participated in the expo are: Queen Mary University of London (UK), University of Chester (UK), Kaplan Business School (Australia), Coventry University (UK), Deakin College (Australia), University of Essex (UK), Canterbury Christ Church University (UK), Concordia University Chicago (USA), University of Victoria (Canada), Anglia Ruskin University (UK), University of the West of England (UK), The University of Law (UK), Brunel University



London (UK), Western Sydney University (Australia), San Francisco State University (USA), Arizona State University (USA) & some other study groups also participated e.g. Navitas, Study

Group, Inuni etc. With a regional office in Lahore and a growing presence across Pakistan, D' Educationist continues to be a reliable resource for students aspir-

ing to study abroad. The expo's success further reinforces the company's position as a facilitator of valuable connections between students and international educational institutions.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
62,773.72	63,813.06
Day's High	Day's Low
63,792.84	62,717.71
Index Value	Change
7,952,660,102	-1039.34
Percentage	Time
-1.63%	29 Jan, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,632.74	-2.35
Percentage	Time
-0.031%	29 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,095.47	-13.96
Percentage	Time
-0.037%	29 Jan, 12:13 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
36,026.94	+275.87
Percentage	Time
+0.77%	29 Jan, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	183.8
Bahrain Dinar	743.75	751.75
Canadian Dollar	205	207
China Yuan	39	39.4
Danish Krone	40.71	41.11
Euro	302	305
Hong Kong Dollar	35.79	36.14
Indian Rupee	3.36	3.47
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	90.39	915.39
Malaysian Ringgit	59.17	59.77
New Zealand \$	170.33	172.33
Norwegians Krone	26.76	27.06
Omani Riyal	726.28	734.28
Qatari Riyal	76.83	77.53
Saudi Riyal	74.6	75.6
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.74	27.04
Swiss Franc	323.63	326.13
Thai Bhat	7.85	8
U.A.E Dirham	76.7	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	357	360
US Dollar	279.5	281.6

Elections will help bring the economy out of ICU

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the February 8 elections will bring the economy out of ICU.

He said that transparent elections will result in political stability, without which economic stability is impossible.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that if some people tried to make the elections controversial after the voting process had finished, the economy would continue to suffer.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the IMF, other international institutions, and the business community believe the economy is slowly improving.

He said that if there is no obstacle, the

economic recovery process will be fast, which will help mitigate the suffering of people experiencing problems.

If the elements trying to make the elections controversial succeed, it will result in a crisis, and the benefits of the tough measures taken so far will also be lost. The country will be back where it was in April 2022.

The business leader said that the current situation is that hopes, exports, foreign exchange reserves, and incomes of the people and the business community are increasing, which is encouraging, but unemployment and inflation are also increasing.

He said the growth rate is expected to be two percent and unemployment to be eight percent in the current financial year.

The industrial sector is facing difficulties, and the condition of agriculture could be more encouraging. This year's budget deficit is likely to be 1.6 percent of GDP.

If progress is made in increasing the volume



of direct taxes, the government revenue will increase while deficit and inflation will decrease. Mian Zahid Hussain said the country's energy crisis has become a big threat to the people and the economy. This debt is touching 6 trillion rupees. The cost of electricity and gas is

continuously increasing, and now there are reports of oil becoming expensive again, worrying people.

Due to continuous inflation, people are getting poorer, but one section of society is getting richer, which is growing social division and triggering unrest and extremism.

Without the country achieving long-term political and economic stability, controlling unrest and militancy will be impossible.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Tehreek-e-Insaf should apologize for the violent incidents of May 9 and return to the national mainstream by indicating the Charter of Economy's signing and playing its role in the country's political stability.

He added that all political parties are busy trying to impress the people with their manifestos. Still, the people and the business community will only vote for the political party with concrete proposals to solve the countries ongoing

Energetic

ISLAMABAD: A street vendor is carrying handmade items for selling purpose on his motorcycle at his way in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Wafaqi Mohtasib assures to address the issues of the business community

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) said that the business community plays an important role in economic development and assured of his cooperation in addressing their grievances. He said this while talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that visited his office led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

Ajaz Ahmed Qureshi has said that a separate portal for ICCI will be created to solve the grievances of the business community, and if the complaints are not resolved within thirty days, they will be automatically transferred to the Wafaqi Ombudsman for redress. He said that ICCI should form a committee to liaise with his organization for redress of complaints. He further said that about 200 institutions and departments of the federal government come under their jurisdiction and his organization dealt with 194,000 complaints



last year. More than 85% of the decisions were implemented. Every complaint in the Federal Ombudsman is decided within sixty days due to which there are no pending complaints. He said that 22 regional offices and complaint centers are already available for immediate redressal. Soon regional offices in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir will be opened. These far-flung offices would benefit the common people a lot.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce said that ICCI has more than 8000 members who play an important role in the development of the economy by promoting industrial and commercial activities. He said that ICCI members have to face issues with FBR and other institutions and stressed that a focal person of the Federal Ombudsman should be appointed for

ICCI to help solve the issues of the business community. He said that if the problems of the business community are solved soon, the economy will develop better.

Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI lauded the efforts of the Federal Ombudsman to resolve the complaints of the people quickly against the mismanagement of the public institutions under the federal government and assured the full cooperation of the Chamber in this regard.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that the efforts being made by the Federal Ombudsman to resolve the complaints of the people need to be better highlighted in the public so that the maximum people can benefit from its services. He said that the ICCI is ready to organize awareness programs about its services in collaboration with the Federal Ombudsman. Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Maqsood Tabish, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, and others were included in the delegation.

FPCCI Satisfied with SIFC Initiatives



PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has appreciated that Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Convener of MQM Pakistan & Dr. Farooq Sattar, Senior Deputy Convener of MQM Pakistan, have visited the head office of the apex body to present their economic manifesto; business and infrastructure development plan to the business, industry and trade community.

Acting FPCCI President categorically maintained that FPCCI is happy with the policy, macroeconomic, structural and export promotion initiatives being undertaken by Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC); and, wants to know how MQM Pakistan will incorporate those initiatives into their economic manifesto.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui apprised that MQM Pakistan is deeply concerned over indirect taxation; discriminatory levying of taxation to the urban centers; incompleteness of K-IV water project; PKR. 1,200 billion per year losses of state-owned enterprises (SOEs); lack of progress on Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) privatization and shortages of basic utilities in industrial areas; i.e. electricity, gas and water.

Dr. Farooq Sattar also criticized the introduction of Section 7-E in the Income Tax Ordinance (IT-2001) as, in his opinion, it has resulted in the taxes from construction sector from PKR. 50 billion to down to 25 billion; while 7-E barely generated 5 billion.

National Bank of Pakistan will collaborate with NASTP for strategic initiatives



PPA

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan and National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) have entered into an agreement, marking a substantial and noteworthy stride in their collaborative endeavors.

The event took place at the state-of-the-art NASTP Karachi establishment, where Amin Manji, the CTO and Group Chief of the Information Technology Group at NBP, joined hands with Air Commodore Ghayyas Uddin, the distinguished Managing Director of NASTP Karachi, to formally execute a compre-

hensive agreement delineating the provision of a purpose-built facility for NBP's IT Group at the state-of-the-art technology park.

In attendance were prominent figures from both entities, including Khawaja Mohammad Ali, the Head of Technology Strategy, Risk and Governance at NBP, and Group Captain Dr. Shoab from NASTP, alongside other esteemed team members from both organizations. In addition to formally entering into the agreement, the occasion served as an opportune platform to underscore the potential benefits inherent in this strategic collaboration.

PTCL launches first neutral Internet Exchange in Pakistan powered by DE-CIX

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the largest integrated Information Communication Technology (ICT) company of Pakistan and DE-CIX, the world's leading Internet Exchange (IX) operator, celebrated today the inauguration of Pakistan Internet Exchange (PIE) powered by DE-CIX, the first carrier-neutral IX in the country.

Hosted in the PTCL data center in Karachi, the IX is operated by DE-CIX under the DE-CIX as a Service (DaaS) model and built on DE-CIX's award-winning interconnection infrastructure. The interconnection platform offers local peering,

as well as remote access to DE-CIX Frankfurt (Germany), one of the largest IXs in the world. PIE powered by DE-CIX is set to serve as a hub for regional connectivity, enabling local networks low-latency interconnection and the localization of global content, while increasing network stability, scalability, and security.

Speaking at the occasion, the Chief Guest, Dr. Umar Saif, Federal Minister IT & Telecommunication said, "Pakistan is a massive digital market, with an internet user-base larger than the population of Italy. Over the past few years, we have made significant strides in advancing fiber connectivity. We got two fiber loops from Kashgar to Rawalpindi, further extended

to Karachi by PTCL. Additionally, multiple submarine cables making landfall in Karachi further enhance our connectivity. Now, PTCL Business Solution's carrier neutral Internet Exchange, managed by a tier 1 IX operator, DE-CIX, is up and running and generates exciting prospects for localized content hosting from leading platforms like YouTube, Netflix and TikTok. The content cached and routed from Pakistan can seamlessly reach other markets, positioning us as the regional digital connectivity hub. It can generate annual revenues, ranging from \$200-400 million through transit traffic to substantially add to our economy."

"We are thrilled to collaborate with



DE-CIX to bring this state-of-the-art interconnection facility to Pakistan," said Zarrar Hasham Khan, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer at PTCL & Ufone 4G. He further stated, "As the largest integrated ICT compa-

ny in Pakistan, we are committed to advancing the country's digital infrastructure to support widespread digitalization, and this collaboration is a significant step forward in achieving that goal.

SECP issues Islamic Finance Bulletin for 2022-2023

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has released published its first 'Islamic Finance Bulletin' for the financial year 2022-23, aimed at providing up-to-date data, insights into new developments, and a deeper understanding of regulatory reforms in the Islamic financial services industry. The Islamic Finance Bulletin Additionally, it provides essential information on the Islamic financial services industry including Islamic capital markets, non-banking financial institutions, and Takaful, while also offering a future perspective on SECP policies, regulated sectors, and cooperation.

The SECP has conducted a diagnostic review of Islamic finance in its regulated sectors and subsequently published its report in February 2023, capturing information, data, challenges, and opportunities along with policy recommendations.

Further, it has decided to it has been decided to publish quarterly data on Islamic finance, with the exception of data on Islamic banking. This Islamic Finance Bulletin therefore presents a quarterly overview of development in Islamic finance during the financial year ended on June 30, 2023.

Despite facing challenges in economic transformation, Pakistan's Islamic finance sector has made significant progress and now making currently makes up a significant portion of the country's financial landscape. The Federal Shariat Court's 2022 ruling in 2022 to eliminate Riba and transform the economy in five years has accelerated these efforts, indicating continued growth in the sector.

Moreover, for a comprehensive understanding of Pakistan's complete Islamic financial system, the SECP also encourages readers to refer to the Islamic Banking Bulletin published by the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Islamic finance Bulletin is available at SECP's website.

CM to award cash prizes to top athletes on Feb 2

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Adviser to Punjab Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz has announced to distribute hefty cash prizes of Rs 3 crore, 90 lakh among the athletes who achieved top positions in different national and international sports competitions in recent past. He said that Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi will distribute the huge cash prizes at a grand ceremony scheduled to be held on February 2, 2024.

Wahab Riaz made this big announcement while presiding over an important meeting at National Hockey Stadium on Monday.

Secretary Sports Punjab Raja Jahangir Anwar, DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum and Deputy Directors Zahoor Ahmed and Ata-Ur-Rahman were also present in the key meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Wahab Riaz



said that the top performing athletes in various national and international sports competitions are our true heroes and they deserved to be honoured fully. "Punjab CM will grace the cash prize distribution ceremony to encourage the young talented athletes of multiple games," he added.

Wahab informed that the leading position holders of 34th Quetta National Games, Pink Games, Asian Athletics Championship 2023, Rising Punjab

Games, Ramzan Sports Series, Junior Asia Cup Hockey Oman, World Snooker and Chess Championship will be awarded cash prizes at the mega ceremony. "Para-athlete Haider Ali, who won a gold medal in the Paralympic Games, will also be awarded a cash prize of Rs 20 lakh".

He further said that 150 motorcycles will also be given to Tehsil Sports Officers of Punjab who showed extraordinary performance in Punjab's unique sports

club registration campaign. "Sports clubs have been registered for the first time in the history of Punjab," he added.

Wahab said that prizes of Rs 50,000 per person will be given to the TSOs who showed best performance in registration of sports clubs. He said that these mega cash prizes will definitely play a major role in inspiring and motivating the young talented male and female athletes of the province.

Softball Federation elections; Asif Azeem President, Dr. Farhan Essa SVP, and Yasmin Haider elected as Chairperson

Sports Desk

KARACHI: In the Softball Federation of Pakistan elections, Asif Azeem was elected President and Naseem Khan was elected unopposed as Secretary General for the next four-year term.

In the general body meeting in connection with the election held in Karachi Gymkhana, the Chief Election Commissioner Syed Waseem Hashmi announced the names of the successful officials.

All the candidates were elected unopposed. On this occasion, Ahmed Ali Rajput participated as an observer on behalf of the Pakistan Olympic Association.

Among other elected officials, Professor Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah was named Senior Vice President, Yasmin Hyder Chairperson, Farah Saeed, Tehmina Asif, Dr. Hina Jamshed Khan, Shahid Shinwari and Muzamil Hussain were declared successful as Vice Presidents.

Other elected include Joint Secretary Farhan Rashid, Secretary Finance Muhammad Zeeshan Merchant, Murad Hussain as Associate Secretary, Shahid Aftab Chairman Umpiring, Asim Khan as Chairman Coaching and Faraz Ejaz as Chairman Technical Committee.

Apart from this, Muhammad Nasir, Ahmed Yar Khan, Ali Haider and Raisa



Farhan were elected as members of the Executive Committee.

On this occasion, the House approved the minutes of the previous meeting and the calendar for the coming year.

In addition, the members unanimously approved the consideration for amend-

ments to the Federation's constitution about other important matters, including the implementation of the principles of universal good governance of the International Olympic Committee, the implementation of the new reforms of the World Baseball Softball Confederation,

and authorized the president of the federation to form a committee in this regard.

The newly elected president Asif Azeem and other officials paid tribute to the former president of the federation Haider Khan Lehri for his services to the development and promotion of softball.

Rawalpindi, Lahore, Quetta win matches in National Women's T20

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi, Lahore and Quetta won the ninth round of the National Women's T20 Tournament 2023-24 after all six teams participated in games played across three venues in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

At Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, captain Aliya Riaz's unbeaten ton took Rawalpindi to 182-4 in the first innings. In return, Multan could only manage 155-5, losing the game by 27 runs.

Multan won the toss and opted to bowl first. Rawalpindi's Wicketkeeper-batter Farzana Farooq fell to Noor-ul-Iman for just five runs in the fourth over.

Shortly after, Aima Saleem was run out for a run-a-ball 18, including four boundaries, to bring Rawalpindi to 41-2 in 5.3 overs.

Rawalpindi captain Aliya Riaz and Fajar Naved stitched up a 133-run third-wicket partnership to turn the innings around for their side.

Tasmia Rubab cut short the partnership as she ran out Fajar as she departed for 34 off 32 balls, with three fours, in the penultimate over. Natalia Parvaiz, the next batter in, was stumped for just a run in the last over of the innings.

Aliya played a captain's knock, smashing an unbeaten century to take Rawalpindi to 182-4 in 20 overs. She ended the innings undefeated at 118 from 61, showcasing 17 boundaries and four maximums.

Gull Rukh and Noor were the only two wicket-takers for Multan with a scalp apiece.

In reply, Aleena Masood fell for a golden duck courtesy of Waheeda Akhtar in the first over of the innings.

Fresh off her heroics with the bat, Aliya struck on her first ball to remove Gull Rukh for just four runs.

Multan captain Gull Feroza and Saiqa Riaz batted together to add 71 runs to the total, countering the earlier setbacks.

Gull Feroza's bat produced a fighting knock of 78 from 57, including 11 fours and a six, to keep hope alive for her team until she eventually fell to Aima in the 16th

over. Saiqa hit an unbeaten 49 from 43, including seven fours.

Aima, Waheeda, Aliya and Humna Bilal all returned with one wicket each.

For her effortless performance with the bat, Aliya was awarded player of the match.

At Ayub Park Ground, Karachi fell three short of the target after they had restricted Lahore to 127-7 earlier in the game.

After choosing to bowl first, Karachi skipper Fatima Sana struck early to remove the tournament's leading run-scorer Sidra Amin for a three-ball duck in the first over. Off-spinner Rameen Shamim sent



Sadaf Shamas (10, 11b) walking back in the fifth over to reduce Lahore to 29-2 inside the powerplay.

Bismah Maroof and Sidra Nawaz batted together to add 49 runs for the third-wicket stand until Syeda Aroob Shah struck to remove the latter for 19 from 27.

Lahore captain Nida Dar was trapped leg-before by Omaira Sohail for a golden duck. In her subsequent over, Omaira dismissed Bismah for 47 from 45, including five fours.

Iram Javed (18, 20b, 2x4s) and Ayesha Zafar (22, 12b, 4x4s) were the other contributors with the bat as Lahore ended with 127-7 in 20 overs.

Fatima and Omaira picked up two wickets each, while Rameen and Aroob returned with one each.

Muneeba Ali and Javeria Khan put up a 41-run opening stand until left-arm spin-

ner Nashra Sundhu struck to remove the latter for 18 on 14, with three fours.

On the next ball, Omaira was caught behind on Nashra's bowling, returning for a golden duck.

Yusra Amir joined Muneeba on the crease to construct a 47-run third-wicket stand. Ghulam Fatima provided the breakthrough, as she dismissed Muneeba (37, 35b, 6x4s) in the 13th over.

In the next over, Karachi's skipper Fatima also copped a golden duck, courtesy of Bismah. Nida removed Yusra (35, 41b, 2x4s) to bring the side to 103-5 in 16.4 overs.

Quetta to bat first. Dua Majid and Fareeha Mehmood put up an opening partnership of 48 runs before the former was run out by Fatima Zeb in the last over of the powerplay. Dua walked back after 11 off 12, with two boundaries.

Tuba Hassan joined Fareeha on the crease to build a solid second-wicket partnership, yielding 64 runs. Fareeha completed her half-century (56, 50b, 8x4s) before falling to Momina Riasat.

Tuba's bat produced 52 from 33, with two fours and a six, hitting her second half-century of the tournament before she was caught by Sumbal Liaqat off Salwa Raheem.

Jannat Rasheed (20 not out, 21b, 2x4s) also chipped in with some crucial runs. Salwa and Momina picked up one wicket each.

Quetta captain Saima Malik ran out Momina (10, 10b, 2x4s) on the fifth ball of the third over to give Peshawar the first jolt in the innings. On the very next ball, Anam Amin rattled Raahima Syed's stumps as she returned for a golden duck.

Peshawar captain Aleena Shah (11, 12b, 2x4s) was stumped off Ayesha Asim's bowling in the seventh over. In the subsequent over, Saima dismissed Shabnam Hayat for a solitary run.

Tehzeeb Shah (29, 22b, 5x4s) was the next batter to fall, after getting stumped off Ayesha's bowling as well to bring Peshawar down to 55-5 in 8.4 overs.

Tuba pinned Sehar Gul leg-before for just four runs as trouble deepened for Peshawar. Fatima (9, 5b, 2x4s) was caught by Khizra Rani to award Ayesha her third wicket of the innings.

Salwa (0, 3b) and Seema Gull (6, 5b, 1x4) both fell to Tuba in the same over with Peshawar reeling at 72-9 in 12 overs. Sumbal, the last batter for Quetta, could not come out to bat owing to an injury, awarding Quetta the game by 83 runs.

Tuba and Ayesha accounted for three wickets each while Anam and Saima picked up one each.

For her brilliance with the bat and ball alike, Tuba was adjudged player of the match.

HEC, Pakistan Position in National Bodybuilding Championship 2023 & 2024

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation organized the 71st Mr. and Junior Mr. Pakistan 2024, Man Physique 2024 and National Bodybuilding Championship 2024 from 25th to 27th January 2024 with great enthusiasm at Lahore. The entire program was organized at Mehfil Theatre, Lahore.

The manager's meeting was held on 25 January 2024 at 04:00 PM at National Hotel, Lahore, under the supervision of PBBF. The team HEC under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Umer Saleem, Director Sports, University of Education, Lahore and Manager Team HEC participated and weighed themselves after the meeting for classes. Federation, including all departments and provinces of Pakistan, participated in the event. More than 200 bodybuilders, in ten (10) weight categories ranging from 60 kg to 100+ kg, participated in the championship. 15 bodybuilders of HEC participated under the supervision of manager Prof. Dr. Muhammad Umer Saleem and coach Mr. Majid. 7 players participated in the competition for Junior Mr. Pakistan and 8 for the title of Mr. Pakistan. 1 player participated in Men Physique category too.

HEC won the first position as a team in the Mr. Junior Pakistan competitions. Rao Hamza won Gold medal in men physique. In their respective classes, Adnan Ali won Silver, Waqas Khan and Uzair won Gold and Silver respectively, Muhammad Wasim won Bronze while Rajeel Ahmed and Abdullah Malik won Bronze and fourth positions respectively. In Mr. Pakistan competitions, Mirza Saadullah and Syed Haris secured the fourth and sixth position respectively in their class.

Moreover, the Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation also honored HEC with the overall third place trophy in the National Games: Bodybuilding Championship 2023 during the 34th National Games held in Quetta last year, correcting its record. The team's manager, Professor Dr. Muhammad Umer Saleem filed an application to the federation since the event for the correction of the record.

All-Pakistan Inter-Boards Girls Handball Championship is starting from January 30 in Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The All-Pakistan Inter-Boards Girls Handball Championship is starting today from January 30 in Multan. The event is hosted by Education Board Multan. Girls teams of education boards from all over the country are participating in the event. On this occasion, Sports in-charge Education Board Multan Malik Nisar Ahmed said that Education Board Multan has already received the honor of hosting girls boys competitions of gymnastics, ring ball and handball. Multan Board will also ensure the best hosting arrangements in the Girls Handball Championship.

Cristiano Ronaldo expresses words of admiration for rival Lionel Messi



Many people believe that Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are the two best football players ever to play the game, as the latter reveals what he really admires about the former.

The two have been engaged in a rivalry that has characterised the last fifteen years of football, with each competing for the game's most coveted individual and team awards. Though the two have acknowledged they aren't particularly close, their battle has never truly ventured into unfriendly territory, and it is clear that there is a great deal of respect between them, according to the Mirror.

Between them, Messi and Ronaldo have won an incredible 13 Ballon d'Or, with the Argentinean player enjoying eight of those wins after winning the trophy in three of the previous four years. When they were at their best, they both won many Champions League titles while lighting up La Liga with Real Madrid and Barcelona, respectively.

Fans have been exposed to some incredible genius moments from both of them over their protracted war for the title of greatest, and their relationship remains stable as a result. In 2020, Ronaldo said in an interview with RMC Sport, "I truly respect Messi's career to date."

"He has already said that he had trouble when I left the Spanish league because it is a rivalry that he appreciates. "It is a good rivalry that exists in football, but this is no exception. Michael Jordan had rivals in basketball, Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost were great rivals in Formula One."

"The only common point between all the big rivalries in the sport is that they are healthy."

Indian tennis squad lands in Islamabad for Davis Cup tie

ISLAMABAD: After months of uncertainty and reluctance, the Indian tennis team arrived in Islamabad to play the important Davis Cup Group I tie against Pakistan at the Sports Complex Grass Court on February 3-4, reported The News on Monday.

As per the publication, the All-Indian Tennis Association (AITA) tried using all options to deprive Pakistan of the hosting rights. It had first approached the Davis Cup Committee and then to the Chair of the Independent Tribunal to shift the tie to a neutral venue.

However, their efforts went in vain and had only two options before them either to travel to Pakistan to play the tie or face the ire of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) by forfeiting the tie and facing a fine.

Fearing the fine and possible relegation, the Indian team finally decided to travel to Pakistan and arrived in the federal capital late Sunday evening.

According to The News, this is the first time that Pakistan has defeated India's point of view on an international forum twice in a matter of months.

It was the DCC that rejected India's concern, allotting the tie to Pakistan, and then came the turn of the Chair of Independent Tribunal which upheld the DCC/PTF stance, rejecting AITA concerns altogether.

The visiting squad includes five players, two physios, a coach, a manager, and a coordinator. Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Secretary Col (ret'd) Gul Rehman and other federation officials welcomed the Indian team on their arrival to Pakistan.

Meeting

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the role of Masajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating awareness about health issues, at Governor House on Monday.



Photo: PID

Role of mosques, vital for educating out-of-school children, preventing diseases: President

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said the mosques might play a vital role in the provision of education to out-of-school children along with imparting religious ethos for bring about socio-economic development of the country. He said the mosques had a central place in Muslim soci-

ety and could be utilized to educate people about important social issues.

The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting about the vital role of Masajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating awareness about health issues. The meeting was attended by the Caretaker Federal Minister for Reli-

gious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Dr Aneeq Ahmed, and religious scholars from various schools of thought. Addressing the meeting, the President said that educating 26 million out-of-school children was an uphill task in the wake of inadequate educational infrastructure. Building new schools would require tremendous resources as well as time,

he added. He said that utilizing almost 2.5 lacs mosques across the country could be a unique and cost-effective avenue to bring these children back to education. The President said that mosques could be used as centres of education by incorporating the Government's Accelerated Learning Programme. "Pakistan should have mosques at

the centre of society, simultaneously imparting worldly and religious education to fight the challenges of society," he added. The Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony apprised the meeting that Mosques could be used at the optimum level by enhancing the role of "Pesh Imam" who would ultimately supervise educational activities.

Filipino Envoy urges businessmen to explore trade opportunities in Philippines

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Ambassador of the Republic of Philippines Maria Agnes Cervantes highlighting the huge bilateral trade potential between Pakistan and the Philippines urged businessmen to look at the Philippines which could serve as a hub for distributing goods to the ASEAN region.

She, while speaking at a meeting during her visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said that the Philippines-Pakistan trade volume stood at US\$209 million which was very low as compared to other members of ASEAN region like Malaysia and Thailand with whom Pakistan's trade volume was almost US\$2 billion and US\$1.65 billion respectively.

She stated that KCCI as a major chamber of the country has huge potential for great-



er coordination and cooperation with the Philippines and we would like to contribute towards greater exchanges of businesses between the two countries.

The envoy further informed that the embassy has been issuing visas to credible businessmen within seven days who want to visit the Philippines to expand business and it was trying to further improve the visa issuance process.

Speaking on the occasion,

Vice Chairman Businessmen Group Anjum Nisar pointed out that although the trade balance was in favor of Pakistan the trade volume between the two friendly was too low which needs special attention.

He stressed the need to collectively explore trade and investment opportunities and undertake mutually beneficial joint ventures in potential sectors including agriculture, cement, pharmaceutical, services and IT sectors, besides promoting tourism opportunities in both countries.

Anjum Nisar was of the view that there were good chances of improving Pakistan's IT exports to US\$10 billion in the next couple of years, which will also be a good opportunity for Filipino businesses to benefit from Pakistan's talented human resources in the IT sector.

Earlier President KCCI Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh stated

that to boost the exports, there was a need to target available opportunities, promote a business-friendly environment, and establish strong business connections to strengthen bilateral trade relations between the two countries."

He said that there was immense potential in areas such as infrastructure development including roads, power and telecommunications, electronics and banking.

"The Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) serve as impactful mechanisms for stimulating both domestic and foreign investments, playing vital roles in accelerating sustainable economic growth," he said, adding that Filipino companies can have the opportunity to explore joint ventures and investments within the SEZs under CPEC to boost bilateral trade between the two countries.

He also stressed the need to make the visa process easier for business delegations which would strengthen business and trade ties between the two countries. "Both countries may also create educational linkages between universities in Pakistan and the Philippines to strengthen educational ties and to enhance the quality of education and research in Pakistani universities."

Both nations can share creative concepts in the tourism sector, fostering intercountry tourism development through collaborative efforts and joint ventures, he added while inviting Filipino companies to participate in the upcoming My Karachi-Oasis of Harmony International Exhibition scheduled to be staged from August 2 to 4, 2024, which provides a significant platform for forging valuable business connections.

Pakistan, Bahrain stage two-week long joint exercise 'Al-BADAR'



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Opening ceremony of two weeks long Joint Exercise Al-BADAR-VIII was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi with participation of contingents from Pakistan Army and Bahrain National Guards.

Al-BADAR is an annual bilateral joint exercise in Counter Terrorism domain between Pakistan and

Bahrain.

Director General Military Training was the Chief Guest of opening ceremony.

The exercise is aimed at nurturing of joint employment and interoperability besides, harnessing the historic military to military relations among the brotherly countries.

Both countries have displayed zeal and enthusiasm for benefiting from each others' expertise / experience.

Pakistan, Iran agree to promote mutual goals of peace, prosperity



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Monday agreed to work towards promoting the mutually desired goals of peace and prosperity, based on mutual respect and a collective approach to address the confrontational common challenges. The agreement came during a meeting between Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who arrived here in the wee hours

of Monday, according to a Foreign Office statement.

The two sides discussed bilateral cooperation, underlining the importance of robust dialogue and cooperation as the pathway for a positive, forward-oriented and upward trajectory in bilateral relations. Upon arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FM Jalil Abbas welcomed his Iranian counterpart, before holding comprehensive talks to enhance bilateral dialogue, engagement and further strengthen the bilateral ties.

Solangi visits PEMRA to condole with Salim Baig over his brother's death



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday visited Chairman Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, Muhammad Salim Baig, to condole with him over the death of his elder brother Zafar

Baig.

The minister offered Fateha for the soul of the late Zafar Baig and said he was deeply grieved to hear the news of his death and shared the grief of the bereaved family.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

ZARA Alert App would protect the children from any harm

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Human Rights has started to create awareness of Zara Alert App in every Mobile tune as a public service message said an official here on Sunday. Talking to APP, he said that the purpose of awareness was to standard operating procedures for the helpline 1099 while taking calls of missing and abducted children and reporting them on the Zara Alert App. The Zara Alert App is a mobile application that can be used to report missing and abducted children, he added.

The app allows users to upload a photo of the child, provide information about the child's disappearance, and share the alert with others. The app also allows users to track the progress of the investigation and receive updates on the child's status.

The App, which is connected to all the police stations in the country, will also allow users to track the progress of the investigation process and update. He added that Ministry Human Rights is confident that the initiative will serve to safeguard the children from any kind of harm.

The app users to upload a photo of the child with complete information about child's disappearance and alerting relevant departments for prompt action. The ZARAALERT App is available on android/ios/web Zarra.mohr.gov.pk.

Chinese embassy in Nauru holds reopening ceremony

Xinhua

YAREN: The reopening ceremony of the Chinese embassy in Nauru was held on Monday evening in a hotel in the southeastern part of the Pacific island country.

A plaque of the Chinese embassy was unveiled by Nauru's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Lionel Aingimea and Luo Zhaohui, head of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, who participated in the event as a representative of the Chinese government.

Aingimea said in his speech at the ceremony that developing relations with China is very welcome in Nauru. "Nauru looks forward to what we can do together," he said. Wang Xuguang, head of the team responsible for re-establishing the Chinese embassy in Nauru, said in his speech that the recognition of the one-China principle is the political foundation for the restoration and development of the two countries' bilateral relations.

"From this new beginning, the two countries will continue to enhance political mutual trust, support each other in independently pursuing a development path suited to their national conditions, accommodate each other's core interests and major concerns, support and cooperate closely with each other in international and regional affairs, and push bilateral relations to a new height," Wang said.

PPP submits reservations to ECP over election results system

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The People's Party has submitted its reservations with regard to the election results system in writing to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Spokesman has received a copy of the letter written by the PPP-Parliamentarians to the election commission.

"We are bringing our serious objections to your notice with regard to the new system of election results, the EMS," the letter read.

"The election commission had rejected the use of WhatsApp in the parliamentary committee session saying it would have Internet problems," according to letter. "When the WhatsApp will face problem, the new App would likely to have more problems," the PPP writes.

"The use of the EMS App will compromise transparency of the election," PPP argued. "We demand the use of WhatsApp for sending election results instead of the new application," PPP said.

"The Presiding Officers sending election result to the ROs, should also send it to the candidate and election agents," PPP suggests.

The party recommended formation of WhatsApp groups, where polling complaints should also be shared. The PPP has expressed apprehension that the new election results system will be a repeat of the RTS imbroglio, which was used in 2018 election.

Huge cache of cigarettes sans sales tax stamps seized from Khanewal

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Anti sales squad of the Regional Tax Office (RTO) claimed to have seized a huge cache of cigarettes without sales tax stamps from the Chhab Kalan area in district Khanewal.

According to official sources, working on a tip-off, additional commissioner Bilal Ahmed and assistant commissioner Haroon

Rasheed conducted a raid at a warehouse and managed to recover a huge quantity of local brand cigarettes.

The cigarette brands were lacking sales tax stamps. The amount of the seized cigarettes is stated in millions of rupees.

The team however could not arrest any outlaw. The police concerned is also conducting raids to arrest the outlaws.