

IHC summons PM Kakar on Feb 19 in missing Baloch students case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday summoned caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar in person in a case pertaining to non-recovery of Baloch students.

The IHC conducted hearing of the case regarding non-recovery of Baloch students. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard the case.

During proceedings of the case, Assistant Attorney General Usman Ghuman told the court that attorney general was not available and prayed to court to adjourn the case but the judge turned down the request.



As the hearing started, the advocate general took the stance that they need-

ed more time in the case.

Reacting to that, Justice Kayani remarked, "I have observed restraint and not summoned both DGs (director generals) in court. However, the caretaker prime minister should attend court on Monday at 10am."

Justice Kayani further remarked that death sentence should be handed down to those behind forced disappearances. The people involved in such disappearances should be awarded death sentence twice, he said.

Later, the court, while summoning the caretaker PM on Monday at 10am in person, adjourned hearing of the case till Feb 19.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Director CIMMYT (Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de maiz y Trigo) an international maize and wheat improvement center Dr. Kevin Pixley called the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Latif Khosa conveys PTI founder's message to Pir Pagara

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Latif Khosa, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf-backed MNA-elect from NA-122, has held a telephonic conversation with Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) chief Pir Pagara and conveyed PTI founder Imran Khan's important message.

During the telephonic conversation, Latif Khosa thanked GDA for not voting in no-confidence motion against the then-prime minister Imran Khan - who was ousted in April 2022.

Both leaders discussed the country's political situation after completion of February 8 general elections. PTI and GDA expressed determination to work together in future.

A day earlier, Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Chief Pir Sadaruddin Shah Rashidi, popularly known as Pir Pagara rejected the results of the General Elections 2024 and announced vacate two Sindh Assembly seats.

"This is not the work of ROs (returning officers). If the entire province was



to be handed over to Zardari, then what was the need for an election," he charged.

On the occasion, GDA leader Saifur Abbasi announced: "Our two assembly members will not take oath."

Abbasi said that the alliance would hold a sit-in at the Hyderabad Bypass on Friday. "We will expand the scope of our protest and contact other parties as well. There will be a protest outside the Sindh Assembly on the day of its maiden session."

Pir Pagara said that the GDA's protest would be peaceful and within the ambit of the law and no one would stop any ambulance or family cars during the protest.

MDA seizes more than 30 unapproved commercial buildings in Multan



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the orders of Director General Multan Development Authority (MDA) Dr Muhammad Zahid Ikram, MDA Enforcement and Town Planning Directorates took major action against illegal, unapproved commercial constructions. A joint team of Enforcement and Town Planning took action against unapproved/uncommercialized commercial buildings on Multan Public School Road and sealed more than 30 constructions. Also notices several times for commercial and map approval were released. More than 30 buildings on Multan Public School Road were sealed after the owners did not approach the MDA and continued commercial activities in the building.

Apart from this, the MDA enforcement team under the leadership of the Director of Enforcement removed the temporary and permanent encroachments from Ngana Chowk, Northern Bypass Road, Wapda Town and Syedanwala Bypass Chowk, while the hoarding boards in the road boundaries were demolished.

Chairperson of NCSW highlights pivotal role of women in national development

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Nilofar Bukhtiar has emphasized the pivotal role of women in national development during a meeting at the South Punjab Secretariat here on Tuesday. Bakhtiar highlighted the importance of providing business opportunities to women, not only to enhance their financial independence but also to drive prosperity across Pakistan, ultimately boosting the overall GDP. She said

Preparations are underway for the upcoming United Nations conference in March, focusing on "Women and Economy." Bakhtiar stressed the need to incorporate data from South Punjab women into the recommendations to be presented at the conference.

Meeting was attended by Secretary Specialized Healthcare South Punjab Afzal Nasir Khan, Additional Secretary Muhammad Farooq Dogar, Deputy Secretary Abdul Sabur Thakur and



Section Officers Ahmad Rana, Wajaha Rasool and Ms Bariha.

Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar commended the efforts of the Punjab Secretariat and advocated for the inclusion of a female representative from South Punjab on the NCSW board. She acknowledged the establishment of the Anti-Rape Crisis Cell (ARCC) in Multan as a giant step, and emphasized the need for setting up similar crisis cells in Bahawalpur, Muzaffargarh, and other districts. She pledged

to enhance the effectiveness of the Violence Against Women Center and expressed determination to secure land for the Multan Women Chamber of Commerce's building.

Secretary Specialized Healthcare South Punjab Nasir Afzal Khan briefed Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar on the challenges of poverty eradication among women in South Punjab. He highlighted the Deep Dive Conference attended by ambassadors from 43 countries and international organiza-

tion representatives, aimed at formulating action plans for women's development in South Punjab. He said the focus of the South Punjab Secretariat lies in increasing literacy rate and bolstering the agriculture sector to alleviate poverty among rural women. Efforts have been made to raise awareness about gender equality and women's rights through various workshops, he added. Afzal Nasir Khan said the first Anti-Rape Crisis Cell in Punjab province has been established in Multan, with 11 reported rape cases in the past three months. He said measures such as Anti-Harassment Committees in government offices and the provision of separate washrooms for women have been implemented to ensure the safety and dignity of working women.

The Secretary Specialise Health Care said Mother and Child Hospitals are under construction in Multan, D. G. Khan, Layyah, and Bahawalnagar as part of the mother and child health programme.

Sardar Attique & Chaudhry Majeed express deep sorrow over death of Director General of Higher Education Colleges

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan and ex-premier Chaudhry Abdul Majeed and Minister of Education Colleges Zafar Iqbal Malik expressed their deep sorrow and grief over the death of the father of Director General Higher Education Colleges Dr. Khawaja Abdul Rehman. He prayed for the eternal peace of departed soul and expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

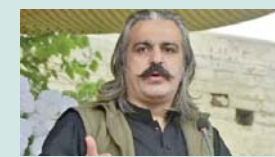
Urs Mubarak to be held in Mirpur on 24th and 25th February: Awaqaf Department

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: The annual Urs Mubarak of the great spiritual leader of the subcontinent, Hazrat Baba Peer E Shah Ghazi, known as Damrinwali Sarkar, is being held on 24th and 25th February at Khari Shareef Mirpur 13th and 14th of Sha'ban al-Mu'zam, under the auspices of the Awaqaf Department and the district administration. On Saturday, February 24, Darbar Sharif will be bathed and the veiling ceremony will be held after the Maghrib prayer. The concluding prayer ceremony of Urs will begin at 11 am on Sunday, February 25, 14 Sha'ban, and the closing prayer ceremony will be held at 1 pm, in which the prominent Ulama of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan will attend the ceremony. Naat Khawan recited the spiritual verses of Arif e Khari and Rumi Kashmir will present the wise words of Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. For all the arrangements of Urs, along with the Awaqaf Department, the district administration of Mirpur and the police, as well as other institutions will also assist. Security full-proof arrangements will be made for the visitors on the occasion.

PTI nominates Ali Amin Gandapur for KP CM slot

Bureau Report



PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday nominated Ali Amin Gandapur as its candidate for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister slot.

The nomination of Gandapur for the KP CM has been made by the PTI founder.

The former PTI chairman, in informal talk to mediemen at Adiala Jail, said there would be no dialogue with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) on formation of government in the Centre.

Gandapur had been declared returned candidate from NA-44 (Dera Ismail Khan) by securing 93,443 votes on Feb 8. He defeated Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

First plenary meeting for cotton crop to be held on February 14

APP

ISLAMABAD: The first plenary meeting for the cotton crop will be held on February 14 (Wednesday) to discuss and deliberate the ways and means to enhance the output of the crop during the coming season to achieve sustainable agriculture growth and economic development in the country. The meeting will evaluate the per-maund cotton price during the forthcoming season to ensure a proper rate of return to local growers, besides encouraging the farming community to bring maximum area under cotton cultivation, said Cotton Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Anjum Shahzad.

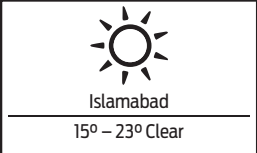
Talking to APP here on Tuesday, he said that the meeting will also make deliberations to overcome the challenges faced by the cotton growers and suggest innovative measures and best crop management practices to enhance the per-acre output of cotton during the next season. He said that due to the measures introduced by the government during last season, the cotton output gained momentum and recorded over 8.354 million bales, adding that efforts will be made to further boost the crop production during the coming season to strengthen the government's efforts to develop the agriculture sector in the country.

Desert Rally to begin on 20th: Zaheer Anwar Jappa

Asim Tanveer

BAHAWALPUR: The 19th TDCP International Cholistan Desert Rally and Cultural Festival will start from February 20, 2024. To review the arrangements in this regard, a meeting was held in the committee room of the office under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa. President Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Mann, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Muhammad Sarwar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Farooq Qamar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Sameera Rabbani, Assistant Commissioner Yazman Mujahid Abbas, Assistant Commissioner Ahmedpur Sharqia Faisal Ahmed, CEO Bahawal. Poor Waste Management Company Naeem Akhtar, Hobara Foundation Representative Major (Rtd) Umar Mehdi, SDOCCA, In-charge TDCP Haider Raza Shah, Deputy Director Public Relations Abid Hasan Rizvi, District Health Officer and Focal Person Dr. Khalid Chanar, District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 Baqir Hussain, Civil Defense Officer Fariha Jaffer, Highway Department, Islamia University Bahawalpur, Shahzad Khalid, District Sports Officer Fawad Anwar and officers of other relevant departments were present. Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa directed that the arrangements for the TDCP Interna-

tional Cholistan Desert Rally should be completed on time and all other issues including traffic management, parking, rally routes, craft and food stalls and sports competitions should be taken care of on the occasion of the Cholistan Desert Rally. It should be done in an excellent manner. Deputy Commissioner He also reviewed the performance of various committees established with reference to organizing the rally. He directed that all possible facilities should be provided to tourists and fans on the occasion of Cholistan Desert Rally. On this occasion, it was informed that the opening ceremony of the 19th Cholistan Desert Rally will be held on February 20. Registration and technical inspection of the vehicles participating in the desert rally will be done on February 21. He further informed that the qualifying round will be held in Cholistan on February 22. While on February 23 prepaid vehicles The first round and the stock category race and dirt bike race will be held on February 24 and a cultural show will also be held. On February 25, there will be a pre-paired category race and a truck race. Later, a prize distribution ceremony will be held. On the occasion of the TDC rally, the Derawar fort will be decorated with beautiful electric lamps. Cultural Show, Folk Music, Qawwali Night, Kabaddi, Desi Wrestling, Volley on the occasion of the rally Other sports competitions including ball and tug-of-war will also be held.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:31 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:11 pm
Maghrib	5:50 pm
Isha	7:14 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
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

45th anniversary of Islamic Revolution of Iran celebrated

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani congratulated the people and the Government of Iran on this important anniversary. He emphasized the principles of friendship, cooperation and solidarity that characterize the relations between Pakistan and Iran. He was addressed to the audience on the occasion of welcoming the 45th anniversary of the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the National Day as a guest of honor.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamabad, Pakistan hosted a grand ceremony on Monday to mark the 45th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the National Day of Iran.

The caretaker foreign minister Jalil Abbas Jilani was the chief guest, Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Peer Naqeeb Ur Rehman, Noorul Haq Qadri attended the event. H. E. Atadjan N. Movlamov Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan also present.

Mr. Muhammad Kamran Khan



Tessori, Governor Sindh said that the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was the 77th anniversary of the long-standing brotherly relations between Iran and Pakistan, who remained firm and friendly in all circumstances. Their bilateral relations, especially in the economic and trade sectors, were strong, he added. Governor of Sindh has also recently visited Iran and met senior officials in Iran.

Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam, addressing the distinguished gathering, extended warm wishes for a bright and prosperous future. He emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations between the two

neighboring nations, acknowledging the deep historical, cultural, and religious ties.

The ceremony commenced with the national anthems of Iran and Pakistan, sung by young children holding and waving the flags of both nations.

Ambassador Moghadam expressed gratitude to Foreign Minister Jilani for attending the ceremony, citing the honor it bestowed on the occasion.

In his speech, Ambassador Moghadam reflected on the unbreakable relations between Iran and Pakistan, rooted in historical, geographical, and ethnic commonalities. He highlighted the significant steps taken



to enhance economic and trade relations, including the opening of common border crossings and markets.

The ambassador praised the Islamic Revolution of Iran as a pivotal event of the 20th century, bringing self-confidence and independence. He emphasized Iran's achievements in various

fields, such as scientific, industrial, cultural, medical, and technological advancements, despite challenges from external forces.

Ambassador Moghadam reaffirmed Iran's commitment to an independent foreign policy, supporting the Muslim world. He commended Pakistan on the successful nationwide election,

expressing hope for progress and prosperity under the new government.

The event concluded with networking among participants and a lavish dinner with Pakistani and Iranian cuisine hosted by the Iranian embassy at a local hotel in Islamabad.

Photos by Raja Farid

Hard work

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is displaying new born kid's clothes and toys at his roadside setup in front of PIMS hospital in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Policemen fighting on front line against terrorism real asset: RPO Dera

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: On Tuesday, Regional Police Officer Nasir Mehmood Satti at the Range Office Dera Ismail Khan on behalf of Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan of police officers, Cash prizes and certificates of appreciation were distributed among the them.

In this regard, a solemn ceremony was organized at the Range Police Office, Dera.

RPO Dera has said during the ceremony that Dera Police has created an everlasting story of bravery and duty against terrorists in every difficult hour which is unmatched and the entire nation is proud of your sacrifices and services.

RPO said that the real asset of the department is the police force who fight on the front line in the challenges faced by terrorism and it raises the prestige of the entire police force.

RPO said that police officers and personal who are playing the role of role models in their professional duties against terrorists by putting their lives on their palms will be encouraged at every forum. Therefore, police officers should perform their professional duties according to public relations above all social contradictions and affiliations.

He said to use all his energies only for establishing law and order, fighting crimes and providing justice to the people without discrimination.

Zindigi and Popcorn Studio Collaborates to Transform Co-working Spaces across Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, announced a strategic alliance with Popcorn Studio, the foremost co-working space provider with 12 locations across Pakistan. Renowned for fostering thriving communities of freelancers, entrepreneurs, and startups, Popcorn Studio will collaborate with Zindigi in an initiative aimed at transforming the co-working landscape.

Noman Azhar, Chief Officer, Zindigi, expressed his optimism about the alliance, stating, "We acknowledge the essential contributions of freelancers, entrepreneurs, and startups in fostering innovation and economic development, especially in a vibrant market like Pakistan. Our Collaboration with Popcorn Studio offers not only top-tier co-working facilities



but also an unmatched combination of convenience and value for everyone." This collaboration epitomizes Zindigi's commitment to supporting Pakistan's

flourishing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Ranked among the top five countries globally for freelancing, Pakistan is home to a burgeoning community of gig economy.

Launch of Heartfile's Reports on Smokeless Tobacco and New Nicotine Products

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Heartfile, a leading health think tank NGO, convened a dissemination event at Serena Hotel Islamabad to unveil their recently generated evidence on Smokeless Tobacco (SLT) and Tobacco and New Nicotine Products (TNNPs) in Pakistan. It aimed at highlighting the pressing challenges posed by the emergence of these tobacco products. Eminent parliamentarians Senator Fawzia Arshad and Senator Seemee Ezdi graced the event. It also gathered prominent figures from various sectors, including government officials, health and tobacco control experts and civil society representatives from all over Pakistan.

The reports encapsulate the essence of collective efforts by Heart-

file, Sustainable Policy Development Institute (SDPI), Tobacco Control Cell Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Association for Better Pakistan, Society for Alternative Media and Research and Blue Veins Pakistan for generation of evidence.

Speakers at the meeting echoed that the widespread use of tobacco and emerging nicotine and Tobacco products poses a significant public health challenge, necessitating immediate and comprehensive measures to curb its escalating impact and safeguard both current and future generations from its detrimental health, social, and economic consequences.

Dr. Saba Amjad, CEO Heartfile shared the rationale of carrying out this research. According to her, these objectives were met through a series of activities designed to generate pertinent evidence regarding the current

landscape and policy frameworks concerning SLT and the new tobacco products.

Mr. Khurram Hashmi, Senior Technical Advisor Vital Strategies shared the overarching problem of SLTs and TNNPs within the specific context of Pakistan. Dr. Minhaj us Siraj, an eminent tobacco control champion in Pakistan, concurred with the issue and emphasized that research shared today provide the much-needed contextual evidence required by policy makers to counter these emerging threats in Pakistan.

Senator Fawzia Arshad emphasized the need for grass root sensitization of local bodies to improve enforcement of Tobacco Control Laws and emphasized that the penalties and fines for violations should be increased significantly to create effective deterrence.

Being a member of the Select Committee on The Islamabad Capital Territory Trust (Amendment) Bill 2020, she offered her full support to the cause of Tobacco control.

Senator Seemee Ezdi, chairperson of senate committee on climate change, highlighted the correlation between tobacco control and climate change, emphasizing that tobacco usage contributes to pollution and is severely harmful to the environment. She praised the implementation of a ban on smoking in public places in Pakistan and vowed her support for the Tobacco control cause. Dr. Waseem Iftikhar Janjua of SDPI and Mr Qamar Naseem of Blue Veins shared the global landscape of the TNNP problem and the SLT problem in KP respectively. This was followed by the sharing of both the reports' findings by Heartfile.

SBP revokes three exchange companies' licenses

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Tuesday revoked the foreign exchange licenses of M/s AA Exchange Company (Pvt.) Limited, M/s Glaxy Exchange Company (Pvt.) Limited and M/s Al-Hameed International Money Exchange (Pvt.) Limited. According to the SBP news statement, SBP suspended the authorization of exchange companies till further orders on account of serious violations of the State Bank's regulations and instructions.

Ashrafi asserts elections as internal matter, calls for non-interference from external entities

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative for Religious Affairs and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday accused India of complicity in the violence against Palestinians.

Addressing a press conference, he said according to reports, Israel was utilizing Indian-made drones to perpetrate attacks on the innocent people of Rafah, a claim that has stirred international concern.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) condemned the alleged collusion between India and Israel, stating that while India continued to oppress Kashmiris, it was also practically involved in the bloodshed of Palestinian civilians.

He pointed fingers at Adani-Elbit, suggesting that the conglomerate was facilitating the provision of drones to the Israeli government, thus exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

The recent Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) special summit convened to address the Palestine issue resulted in a decision to exert pressure on countries supplying weapons to Israel. Ashrafi called upon Muslim nations to sever financial and economic ties with such countries if they fail to adhere to the OIC's directives.

He urged for a boycott of Indian products, similar to the ongoing boycott of Israeli goods, in response to India's alleged complicity in the attacks on Palestinians.

Women journalists 'deeply concerned' over PML(N)'s cyber attacks on Meher Bokhari

Spokesman Report

PAKISTAN: The Network of Women Journalists for Digital Rights (NWDJR) is angered and deeply concerned about the ongoing attacks against prominent women journalist Meher Bokhari and others in online spaces by PML(N) party supporters. On examining multiple platforms, NWDJR has found non-consensual use of images (NCUI), non-consensual use of intimate images (NCII) and doctored images created through generative artificial intelligence (AI) and other AI tools of Meher Bokhari being shared online with sexist, misogynistic and sexualized gendered attacks.

It is not the first time women journalists have been targeted by political party supporters online. There has been pervasive and persistent online harassment, sexualized and otherwise gendered disinformation faced by women journalists in Pakistan, with many being threatened with physical assault and offline violence. We've witnessed multiple incidents of female journalists' private information being leaked online with what we can say are well-planned and directed efforts to silence them & resulted in stalking and offline harassment.

In Meher's case, the attempt to malign, scare and threaten her with morphed images of her on objectionable content through generative AI tools points towards a remarkably alarming trend of a new form of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) against journalists.

Before the elections, NWDJR released the 6-point agenda on media freedom and journalist safety for political parties' electoral manifestos, which was signed by more than 100 journalists and civil society members on journalist safety. It has been quite alarming and disappointing that despite the efforts to raise our concerns with political parties around journalist safety, we witnessed, in a matter of days, attacks on journalists like Meher Bokhari, Maria Memon, Hamid Mir, Saadia Mazhar and Benazir Shah, to name a few along with family members of journalists for simply reporting during Pakistan's general elections 2024.

The action angers NWDJR, and we'd like to reiterate that online violence and abuse constitute as an offense and complaint-based action should be taken by relevant authorities.

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Silver Lining on Election 2024

The recent elections in Pakistan have catalyzed a monumental shift, challenging the traditional elitist stronghold on politics and signaling a move towards a more inclusive and democratic electoral landscape marking a departure from the past where political success was often synonymous with wealth, lineage, and the backing of the 'establishment'. By disrupting the age-old dynamics of vote trading and elite dominance, these elections hint at a new era where the collective voice of the broader society—encompassing the poor, the middle class, and the educated—can significantly influence political discourse and outcomes. This evolution towards a merit-based political system, less tethered to patronage and elitism, heralds a promising future for Pakistan's democratic institutions and the fabric of its society, reflecting a more diverse and equitable representation of its people's aspirations.

The electoral outcomes in Pakistan have also challenged and overturned a deeply ingrained narrative: that a political party like PTI, bereft of 'electables', estranged from establishment backing, and faced with opposition from state institutions, would inevitably falter and face obliteration. Contrary to these expectations, the elections have emphatically demonstrated that it is possible for a party to secure victory without the traditional pillars of establishment support. This breakthrough is particularly poignant, highlighting that individuals from the poorer segments, the middle class, and the educated populace can achieve electoral success without resorting to vast financial resources or leveraging influential connections. This collective awakening to the power of the ballot signifies a momentous step towards democratizing political participation, heralding an era where genuine change is driven by the electorate's collective will, transcending the barriers of wealth, gender, and institutional influence.

It also brought home one important outcome that any party which will sell itself to undemocratic assumptions will not go unpunished. PML(N) during the PDM coalition, used undemocratic means to beat its opponent. They had in their mind not to strengthen democracy but to jail the Chairman PTI, force PTI leaders to either forsake politics or join another party and put the workers in jail in thousands. They took and projected all their undemocratic acts as their biggest win and used it as a rallying point during their public meetings, without realizing that it is destroying its perception as a political party to trigger a happy undemocratic party. The PML(N) also paid the cost of bringing back Nawaz Sharif by trampling the law of the land and subduing the judiciary at the cost of sacrificing the political capital.

They projected these apparent gains as their biggest achievement not realizing that sand has already been shifted right under their own feet. Secondly it brought Nawaz Sharif back home with zero risk and in return it rendered the government, the country and its people ransomed with the establishment. It gave the key role to establishment in SIFC and handed it over major and sensitive institutions like NADRA, PTA and NAB. If we dub the power of only these three institutions together, one will easily realize that the soul of the people, economy and politics have been ransomed. It also plunged the economy into negative growth, spiraling the country to unprecedented inflation which was around 12% to 42% inflicting untold misery to the people of Pakistan.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

On the other side of the isle was PTI, both its leaders and the party, emerged as steadfast party and steadfast leaders and staunch and loyal workers, who stood bravely against the state brute power and instead of using any violence preferred to use constitutional, legal and political means to pursue their objectives. They shunted all electables and appointed completely unknown educated and learned persons as the candidates. Resultantly, Unlike PML(N) which was punished in the elections, the truncated party and its candidates were rewarded with immense political capital in the same proportion as the PML(N) lost it.

In the PDM government, unlike PML(N), the PPP played extremely well. It unloaded all the economic, financial and law and order challenges to PML(N), and stayed clear of ministries of economy, planning, law and order and did not endorse the state aggression against PTI, and in doing so saved its political capital. This saved political capital paid the PPP with a dividend in the form of excellent and more than expected performance in the elections-2024, in the center, punjab, Sindh and Balochistan making it second biggest national stature party only after PTI.

In the post 2024 elections, PPP has again played very smartly. It has very cleverly opted for all constitutional posts, the presidency, senate chairman, Speaker National Assembly and governors and other such positions in lieu of extending its support to the candidate of PML(N) for the position of premiership while cleverly staying out of the government. It has once again trapped the power hungry PML(N) to form the government in the center and made sure that PML(N) loses whatever little political capital it has left with. With only 79 seats, PML(N) has accepted the premierships disregarding the cost it would have to pay in terms of losing political capital or what cost the country or its people will have to pay. It is now immaterial who would be the prime minister, either Nawaz or Shahbaz or Maryam, in any case up to the next elections, PML(N) will be a party which would most likely lose whatever political capital it has left with.

The 2024 elections in Pakistan have unequivocally signaled a transformative shift in the political landscape, underscoring the electorate's rejection of undemocratic practices and the misuse of state power for political gains. Parties like PTI, which prioritized constitutional, legal, and peaceful means of engagement, have been vindicated, emerging stronger and more politically capitalized, while those resorting to oppressive measures faced a decisive rebuff from the voters. This electoral verdict not only reaffirms the resilience of Pakistan's democracy but also highlights the evolving political acumen of its populace, who have demonstrated a clear preference for governance rooted in democratic principles, transparency, and accountability. As the dust settles, the lessons of these elections resonate deeply, heralding a new era where political legitimacy is earned through adherence to democratic norms and respect for the electorate's mandate, setting a precedent for future political contests in Pakistan.

Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC.

It also brought home one important outcome that any party which will sell itself to undemocratic assumptions will not go unpunished. PML(N) during the PDM coalition, used undemocratic means to beat its opponent. They had in their mind not to strengthen democracy but to jail the Chairman PTI, force PTI leaders to either forsake politics or join another party and put the workers in jail in thousands. They took and projected all their undemocratic acts as their biggest win and used it as a rallying point during their public meetings, without realizing that it is destroying its perception as a political party to trigger a happy undemocratic party. The PML(N) also paid the cost of bringing back Nawaz Sharif by trampling the law of the land and subduing the judiciary at the cost of sacrificing the political capital.

They projected these apparent gains as their biggest achievement not realizing that sand has already been shifted right under their own feet. Secondly it brought Nawaz Sharif back home with zero risk and in return it rendered the government, the country and its people ransomed with the establishment. It gave the key role to establishment in SIFC and handed it over major and sensitive institutions like NADRA, PTA and NAB. If we dub the power of only these three institutions together, one will easily realize that the soul of the people, economy and politics have been ransomed. It also plunged the economy into negative growth, spiraling the country to unprecedented inflation which was around 12% to 42% inflicting untold misery to the people of Pakistan.

In the post 2024 elections, PPP has again played very smartly. It has very cleverly opted for all constitutional posts, the presidency, senate chairman, Speaker National Assembly and governors and other such positions in lieu of extending its support to the candidate of PML(N) for the position of premiership while cleverly staying out of the government. It has once again trapped the power hungry PML(N) to form the government in the center and made sure that PML(N) loses whatever little political capital it has left with. With only 79 seats, PML(N) has accepted the premierships disregarding the cost it would have to pay in terms of losing political capital or what cost the country or its people will have to pay. It is now immaterial who would be the prime minister, either Nawaz or Shahbaz or Maryam, in any case up to the next elections, PML(N) will be a party which would most likely lose whatever political capital it has left with.

Distressed Gazans bracing for all-out Israeli assault on Rafah

With no ceasefire in place in war-ravaged Gaza, the head of UNRWA, the UN aid agency for Palestinians, warned Tuesday that those in the enclave remain deeply traumatized by the relentless Israeli attacks and afraid of a full-scale assault on Rafah in the south. "People are anxious and in fear of a possible large-scale military operation," Philippe Lazzarini said, after emerging from a briefing with Member States at UN Geneva.

"If the assault takes place, the question is, 'Where will the civilians go?' There is absolutely no safe place in Rafah anymore and the fear is that the number of people killed and injured might again significantly increase." Since Oct 7 when the war began, more than 100,000 Gazans have been reported either killed, injured or missing under the rubble by the local health authority, amid intense Israeli bombardment. Lazzarini insisted that it was unfeasible to expect the more than one million displaced people crammed into Rafah governorate to move once again so that Israeli forces could continue their sweep for Hamas militants. "They are asked to move, the question is where to move," he said, noting that in Rafah, every spare piece of land over a 20-kilometre stretch was occupied by hundreds of thousands of people living in makeshift plastic shelters. Turning to the issue of the serious allegations that some UNRWA staff collaborated with Hamas, the agency chief noted that he had immediately sacked those involved and initiated an investigation. Lazzarini also called for the cooperation of the Israeli authorities. The UNRWA Commissioner-General also noted that the UN Secretary-General's review would begin tomorrow into allegations against the agency regarding its "use of social media, about tunnels, about political affiliations" and how proactive it has been in responding to them. The process will likely take two months but it should be accompanied by an inquiry, including into the Israeli military's claim that a tunnel and data centre located 20 metres beneath UNRWA's headquarters in Gaza City was used by Hamas, Lazzarini said. "We need to look at all the situations where UN premises have been blatantly disrespected. Since the beginning of the war more than 150 of our installations have been hit.

We know that some installations have been completely destroyed, hundreds of people have been killed, thousands have been injured and all this needs to be investigated independently, together with the allegation of a tunnel." Earlier, Israel's Permanent Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Meirav Eilon Shahar, would have the world believe when she said that her Government wished "no harm" to civilians in Gaza and that it did intend to cooperate with the investigation into UNRWA, although it remained at war with Hamas. "Our fight is with Hamas, it is not with the Palestinian people," said the Ambassador, who also insisted that "there are alternatives to UNRWA" – a claim rejected by Lazzarini who said that it would be "shortsighted" to close the agency at a time when senior UN humanitarians and NGOs were calling for aid to be stepped up to Gaza. "We have half a million girls and boys deeply traumatized that we urgently need to bring back into an education system," the UNRWA chief said. This would not be provided by "an emerging local administration", he insisted, adding that "there is absolutely no other UN agency" or NGO with the experience in providing government-like services, including education to hundreds of thousands of children.



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

11 February: International Day of Women and Girls in Science - II

In a fake bank accounts lawsuit dating back to 2015, former chairman of the Pakistan stock exchange Hussain Lawai, who is widely believed to be a close aide to former president Asif Ail Zardari, was arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA in July).

Following a supreme court decision in a case involving the housing projects, Malik Riaz's Bahria town is being investigated in other investigations; in may, nab chairman retired justice Javed Iqbal ordered the anti-graft watchdog to launch investigations against Bahria town Karachi, Bahria town Lahore, and Bahria town Rawalpindi.

This year, a corruption lawsuit against retired army officers, which Sharjeel Memon's detention last year was just as interesting to watch as the 'honey and oil' mystery surrounding him during his 2018 detention.

Former prime minister Yousef Raza Gilani was charged with corruption in the years-old multi-billion dollar Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) corruption lawsuit in march. Two other former prime ministers, Nawaz Sharif and shahid Khaqan Abbasi, were investigated by nab for alleged power abuse by granting a contract for the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal to 15 different companies of their choice.

Similarly, injustice, both economic and social, exacerbates the challenges faced by Pakistan. Economic inequality limits access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization. The consequences of corruption and injustice within government agencies are far-reaching, affecting not only the allocation of public resources but also the lives of ordinary citizens who rely on these institutions for essential services.

When funds meant for vital public projects are

siphoned off through corrupt practices, it is the communities in need that suffer the most. Similarly, when individuals are denied opportunities or treated unfairly due to systemic injustice, the social fabric of the nation is torn apart, leading to further divisions and unrest.

Injustice and abuse of power have also come to light. A recent investigation revealed a pattern of discriminatory practices within a government agency, resulting in the unfair treatment of certain individuals based on their race, gender, or political affiliation. Such systemic injustice not only violates basic principles of equality and fairness but also erodes the public's confidence in the government's commitment to upholding the rule of law.

The Noor Muqaddam case in Islamabad, the horrific murder of a 27-year-old girl used to be announced on July 2021. As the facts became known, Zahir Jaffer, the son of a wealthy businessman and a buddy of the victim, became the killer. In Pakistan's criminal justice system, conventional capability (such as blood money) have been used to defend the accused from courtroom action.

The unsanctified Malik Ishaq one of the most important questions in Pakistan's criminal justice system is: does the prosecution have a similar attitude toward cases that draw no public notice? Corroborated involvement in more than 57 murders. There are many forms of banditry out there.

Petty non-state actors are illiterate and vulnerable to abuse. Jazlan, a 19-year-old boy, was shot and killed in Karachi just because he told someone to drive safely. The evidence is there, suspects are in police custody, and this is one of the open-and-shut situations. However, Pakistan's criminal justice system is inadvertently incapable of dealing with it.

According to The World Justice Project ranked Pakistan 130 out of 142 countries on its 2024 scale for adhering to the rule of law, which is by no means acceptable. Regional Rank is 5/6 and overall score is 0.38.

Article 25 of Pakistan's constitution guarantees equality before the rule. However, Pakistan's criminal justice system is in no way intended to provide justice to those at the lower levels of the hierarchy. Justice is at the top of the game; many victims are unable to file a complaint. If they succeed in doing so, the vicious cycle of court hearings and court trials undermines their faith in the criminal justice system.

The role of the media in exposing and shedding light on corruption and injustice cannot be understated. Investigative journalists have played a crucial role in unearthing cases of malfeasance and shining a spotlight on the perpetrators. The power of public scrutiny and accountability through the press has been instrumental in holding government agencies to a higher standard and demanding swift action to rectify the wrongs that have been committed.

The fight against corruption and injustice within government agencies is a collective responsibility that requires the commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders. It is essential for citizens to remain vigilant and hold their elected representatives and public servants accountable for their actions. Furthermore, government institutions must prioritize transparency, integrity, and ethical conduct to rebuild public trust and confidence.

Ultimately, the eradication of corruption and injustice within government agencies is not only a moral imperative but also a fundamental requirement for the effective functioning of a democratic society. Without genuine efforts to address these systemic issues, the very foundations of democracy and the rule of law are at risk of being eroded, leaving a legacy of mistrust and disillusionment in its wake.



Analysis

M. Ameer Hamza

Remarkable Role of Govt, Election Commission and Pak Army in Conducting the Fairest Elections - III

However, achieving transparency in elections encounters its share of hurdles. In numerous regions, electoral processes are tarnished by corruption, coercion, and deficient accountability, eroding public confidence and trust in democratic institutions. Additionally, the proliferation of disinformation and misinformation presents new obstacles to transparency, corroding public faith and assurance in the electoral process. Furthermore, inadequate legal frameworks, absence of political will, and resource limitations can impede endeavors to promote transparency and accountability in elections.

Given these challenges, it is essential for governments, electoral management bodies, civil society organizations, and international stakeholders to collaborate in bolstering transparency in elections. This necessitates coordinated efforts to establish and enforce robust electoral laws and regulations, enhance transparency and oversight mechanisms, promote public awareness and education on electoral rights and responsibilities, and invest in the security and integrity of electoral infrastructure.

In Pakistan, elections were conducted on February 8 for 859 seats, with approximately 18,000 candidates contending for parliamentary positions. These seats comprised 266 general seats in the National Assembly, 297 seats in the Punjab Assembly, 130 seats in Sindh, 115 seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 51 seats in the Balochistan Assembly. The February 8, 2024 election held significant importance compared to previous ones for several reasons. Notably, it boasted a budget of 42 billion rupees, and the number of registered

voters surpassed 50% of the country's total population. Moreover, a significant number of independent candidates participated, with the election involving hundreds of tons of special paper used to print 260 million ballot papers. Additionally, the February 8 elections were the most expensive in the country's history, costing 26 times more than the 2008 elections. The surge in independent candidates stemmed from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) withdrawing its election symbol "Bat" due to intra-party election non-compliance, resulting in party ticket holders contested as independents. Consequently, the number of independent candidates increased by 51.22% compared to the previous election, reaching 11,758. According to Election Commission data related to electoral rolls and voters for the 2024 elections, there was a significant increase of 225 million voters, including 12.5 million women, in Pakistan since 2018.

The number of registered voters reached fifth place globally, following India, Indonesia, the USA, and Brazil. With this substantial increase, the total number of registered voters in 2024 stood at 128,585,760, compared to 10,60,239 in 2018 and 8,60,89,828 in 2013.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) devised a modernized Election Management System (EMS) for delivering election results on February 8. Developed by a private company, the software functioned via the internet and autonomously, without requiring a connection. This system, implemented at a significant cost of Rs320 million, operated solely on election day, managing data from Form 45 and 47 post-election completion.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Developing the concept of the role of religious leaders in bringing humanity together in one secure world

Dr. Mohamed El Shahat El Gendi

The world of civilization and urbanization is still in the age of technology and information.

It lacks the correct compass built on objective foundations to establish a human civilization that restores the true concept of man. Who feels his human value in its comprehensive meaning in order to get rid of poverty, hunger, disease and wars, where lives a safe and dignified life in which he obtains basic rights and natural freedoms as a human being. In light of the natural disparity between progress and backwardness and between wealth and poverty; instead of committing the injustices, tyranny and domination that the developed world exercises over the developing and underdeveloped world at all individual, collective and international levels, which results in many disadvantages, epidemics and famines in the world order by which disrupts the world order, because of it wars and conflicts of every kind, religious, social, economic and political, erupt. This is what humans suffer from, especially in the era of modern wars that threaten all of humanity. Through which super powers directed operations of liquidation and genocide against some peoples, under false slogans chanted by the aggressors with alleged ideas to justify their aggression in the era of hegemony of the developed North world, America, Russia, and the countries of Europe, which always repeat bright terms for the sake of global leadership, such as globalization, the global citizen, democracy, peaceful coexistence, human rights, and others.

With firm certainty, that situation highlights the need to seek help from the principles of religions and the role of religious scholars and elite men. In order to preserve human rights and peoples from tyranny; by addressing or alleviating problems, resolving conflicts, and dealing with them objectively, away from bias towards one party against another party; in accordance with its purpose of caring for humans; directing him and correcting his actions on the straight path based on its reform message to achieve his correct caliphate from Allah in the universe. As the protector and savior of humanity from crises and tribulations; thus scholars carry out their duty to guide people and upright their behavior. On the path to reforming himself, developing his society, and restoring his humanity; as long as the prophets worked, and after them, the leading scholars followed their path. To lead people from misguidance to guidance and from corruption to reform, from fear to security.

For this reason, the thought of world and traditional religions, which targets man as a principle and purpose in his faithful recognition of Allah, the enforcement of rational and comprehensive justice, and the exercise of his freedom of choice for man in his human capacity without discrimination of any kind in all fields. It is the last resort to get out of this dark tunnel. Which demonstrates tyranny and the imposition of will and double standards against weak people and the countries of the poor South. In various ways to achieve dependency, submission, depletion of wealth, and satisfaction with inferiority. There is no way for him but to accept what he wants in terms of submission to the policies and plans of the decision-makers in the super powers. Accordingly, the importance of activating and developing the achievements of the Conference of Leaders of Religions in its march through seven sessions from its inception until the present time is evident, with permanent and strategic planning for the future to achieve the desired goal. This requires taking into account some important matters in this context, which are summarized below:

Orientation towards establishing an effective role for humans in religious thought

On the basis that man, in the true religious understanding, is the pillar of existence that is unique to all other living beings; with the message of worship and development, with the qualities

and talents that God created in him and the qualities he possesses in his entire spiritual, heart, mental and physical being in the most perfect way, as proven by the text of the Almighty's saying: We created man in the best edifice. He is the best in his physical and moral form and in the life components in the universe than other beings. Then it was necessary to revive the latent capabilities of every human being with the aim of establishing peace as a paved path to development and urbanization, creating a useful and positive personality at all personal, local, regional and global levels, and engaging in the areas of religious, cultural, social, economic and political life. This requires providing the necessary educational, environmental, psychological and social factors. This role is fulfilled in a fair and correct way, but without it there are difficulties and obstacles in the current global situation, which requires cooperation and partnership between religious leaders, decision makers and concerned parties to strive for it and work constantly to achieve it.

Contributions of religious leaders in this stage

Religious leaders can work to instill awareness of its importance and the necessity of cooperation and partnership for achieving it between all humanity. As a religious responsibility and a societal and international interest, based on the principles, values and behaviors that religions possess, with which they created virtuous societies. It established a common cultural contribution to humanity. This balance between thought and application. It is the key to overcoming the problems existing in the current era, such as inequality, instability, conflicts and wars. Which constitutes an obstacle to conducting a meaningful and successful dialogue that achieves what the backward nations aspire to, ensuring the creation of the appropriate environment for human development and creating the atmosphere for creating the global citizen that conferences and resolutions of the international organization have referred to. It is what religions have called for in religious discourse and in practical conduct and their conferences by:

1. Call for humanity in one peaceful and secured world. We find the evidence for this by shifting from the partial concept to the complete concept of one humanity in one world that accepts everyone, its units are integrated and the countries in it stand in solidarity towards



the goal of one humanity. This requires agreement on the basis required to achieve the goal: we are all being one; should all cooperate to ensure the basic needs for a decent living and to ensure the components of a person's secure existence for himself, his community, his country, and his world. In sequential lines that complement each other.

2. The joint endeavor to employ and activate the use of the digital revolution, which has brought about an unprecedented scientific and cognitive transformation with its enormous technological and electronic achievements; by directing it to

serve religious and humanitarian issues that guarantee an understanding world that upholds the value of human humanity; with all the meaning it carries and the good it brings to everyone; in order to achieve the common goal of a safe and stable life in which the natural revival and differences between people are directed to strength, not weakness. And work to compete to achieve legitimate precedence and superiority to a factor that adds goodness and achieves development and urbanization. Not for the sabotage, demolition factor, and the dominance of a few over the large people this is what is happening in our world today. From using the digital world as a means of spying on privacy, questioning identities, and washing minds and brains; to the conquest of globalization with its powerful mechanisms and its suspicious and deceptive methods, leading to ideological hegemony and the export of its legal and cultural systems that are superior and deny other systems that have provided civilizational roles in the path of humanity throughout history. What is required is to use this unprecedented digital boom in ways that are not intended for it, and to turn it in the right direction in creating the concept of a global village that cooperates and coexists together. On the balance of justice and the public interest, and recognition of the right to difference in identity and ideology, as well as freedom of opinion and expression; within the framework of positive cooperation for what achieves good; while preserving the peculiarities of each nation or group, its self-identity and its doctrinal origins, upon which the public order is established, with its religious, material, and moral components that preserve its entity and are the foundation of its existence. According to this truth, human societies were established from the very beginning. And they will remain different from each other for the rest of the universe. It is a living truth and a reality that was stated in the Qur'an: "And if your Lord had willed, He would have made the people one nation while they still differ." But the problem threatening the world order lies in the practices of the forces of oppression and arrogance through destructive methods and weapons, and they are known and exist in the age of scientific and information civilization.

3. Devoting the concept of collective and international leadership to achieve world



Dr. Mohamed El Shahat El Gendi

starting from his inner feeling; and also in his external relations with the structures of his society, which is based on pluralism. It finds its foundations in Islam as a comprehensive religion that applies a unified standard. Regardless of differences in creed, color, gender and social status. It is necessary for this peace to extend to international relations by ending armed conflicts and raging wars. In a way that religious leaders play an active role in the processes of resolving international disputes through peaceful means: negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or international judiciary, with the aim of stopping wars and settling disputes; or prevent it by preventing its outbreak; in such a way that the individual's peace with himself is achieved, which is an important psychological and social component that is indispensable in the religious and human sense of giving priority to the factor of piety—by preventing one from falling into sins and crimes—over the element of evil and immorality that is inherent in the individual's nature, along with goodness and righteous thought, according to the Qur'anic texts: And We have created man and We know. What he whispered to his oneself. And Allah Almighty says: "And oneself, and they created it, then inspired it to its immorality and its piety." Al-Shams/; It is what directs his behavior and shapes his actions that start from within him and translate it into a reality that affects people's lives. When adhering to its principles of guidance and reform the result leads to the creation of true peace, as translated by the behavior of the individual and the state in all transactions, so that the psychological meaning is integrated within it social, economic and political; it is not limited to one side or another; which guides and limits the impact of unjust practices and fanatical behaviors biased toward peace, moderation, and justice that pervade human life at the individual, local, and international levels. It is the message of Islam and the heavenly religions. As stated in the Sunnah: A Muslim is one from whom Muslims are safe; in another narration: "Safe People from His Tongue and His Hand." It is a concept of dealing that achieves the comprehensive and integrated meaning of human value that highlights the meaning of healthy humanity.

It can also be a nucleus for the possibility of the existence of a global state of peace, in the basic meaning of Islam and the Abrahamic religions, and it is one of the most important and urgent needs of humans, peoples and countries in the world in age of the Global organization according to the will of the major powers that maintain their dominance with the weapon of nuclear terror.

4. Achieving security and self-security for every individual on the local and regional levels of each country, as well as international security for the world from the farthest north and west to the farthest south and east; it is through him that the concept of complete peace is achieved at all levels, without separation of one from the other, but rather through communication and interconnection between them. Through which all parties move to practical security achieved on the ground and not security on paper or security based on mere claims, appeals, recommendations or non-binding decisions. These methods are not sufficient to achieve the required safety. Real security is more indicative of the existence of security in its psychological and moral aspects, extending to the material, economic, social and political aspects, as is the practical meaning in the Almighty's saying: "So let them worship the Lord of this house, who has fed them from hunger and secured them from fear." Quraysh, as subsistence security and material security are contained within the realm of spiritual peace and security. In which the individual enjoys tranquility, safety, stability, and peaceful and amicable coexistence, which is the ultimate blessing, the greatest justice, and the most comprehensive in achieving the truth of the correct concept of humanity, because of the meanings of security it includes in all aspects of life, by providing inner tranquility and fulfilling the basic needs of every individual, and in living that guarantees a life safe from aggression. As an individual, a group, or a state, complete and undiminished security prevails at all levels, at the personal level, at the collective level, and at the global level, which is the security that is lacking for modern-day human beings, despite all the claims of the developed world about the rights of the individual and citizen and global security. This is the goal that must be achieved.

Religious leaders take the initiative to alert them and demand positive intervention and partnership in achieving them, as well as raising awareness about them and participating in their implementation with decision-makers at the internal level. And with the concerned authorities through various activities in seminars, workshops, conferences and international organizations; and to insist that religious leaders be a party to it; with serious and organized cooperation based on knowledge of its path and developments; to strive to achieve it on the ground in an appropriate period; this is what Islamic security achieved, which transformed from imperative texts to practical applications. He moved from ideology to an international legal system. Thus, man moved from the world of chaos to the world of safety and stability in all fields of life. Until the Qur'an said: Have they not seen that Islam has made a secure sanctuary to which the fruits of all things are brought? The verse includes multiple dimensions, after the concept of security in its comprehensive meaning, material and subsistence, due to their necessity in the life of the individual and society, not partial security, which is what resulted in achieving the realistic transformation from the theoretical concept to the practical living application. Under the leadership of Muhammad the Prophet, may God's prayers be upon him, with the realization of the value of man and the universality of humanity, with its humanitarian foundation and slogan, humanity secured through a system and state based on Sharia law that triumphed for human dignity and secured its existence by providing all the reasons for a good life based on peace, security, happiness, and justice. This happened before the establishment of the international system and the drafting of the Global Charter. Launching the favorite slogan: The United Nations, signed by all countries, but this necessary achievement has been emptied of its content in the current global system due to the position of the emperors of the super powers in controlling and unfairly exploiting the sources of wealth and the destinies of peoples and countries. It remained in the theoretical realm in international constitutions and conventions and was not transferred to practical. There is little practical implementation for the sake of interests and leadership,

which is what must be achieved by the contribution of religious leaders, the provision of serious cooperation formulas, and the availability of determination and will between religious leaders and political leaders. It is a very real development required for peace, security and development for humanity which religions put it at the heart of their texts. Heaven's messages and religious laws are concerned with it. It would be better for the Conference of Religious Leaders to adopt it with a specific work program in its time, stages and type, with a correct understanding of comprehensive protection of the life of the human race in the modern era as a requirement for achieving global peace and security. With phased plans in which the responsibilities of both the religious and political leadership are determined for oversight and follow-up of implementation; Which the countries of the Global North should adhere to in their relations with the nations and peoples of the Global South on the basis of security that is beneficial to all. In accordance with the requirements of justice in all its local, regional and international dimensions; As long as this is found, complete safety is achieved.

The outcome of the idea of developing the concept of religious leaders contribution on: the ideology and successful model of the correct concept of interreligious relations and activating the role of religious leaders in human development, rationalizing his thoughts, and correcting his behaviors; as well as contributing to maintaining international peace and security; it is based on building and developing the individual as a human being who enjoys his human rights in the fullest sense. This is due to the comprehensive concept of the elements and components inherent in the entire human self, not the specific concept that falls short of absorbing the whole and leaving out the rest of the elements that include all the components of the human being. Likewise, by adopting the comprehensive concept, not the partial one, in addressing the necessary requirements for rational dealing in affairs of human relationships and transactions based on acquaintance and understanding between man and his fellow man according to the one origin that unites human beings; and on the basis of the constant bond of human brotherhood that is inherent in human existence at all stages. Moreover, the concept of one humanity is based on complete, undiminished foundations and values that guarantee; by building a complete human edifice that must get rid of the thoughts and practices of extremism and terrorism and follow the paths of moderation and centrism; on the basis of investigation into understanding and applying the foundations of correct human society based on equality in humanity and building relationships on mutual respect, cooperation, performance of religious and life rights, forgiveness and tolerance, especially when one has mastery and victory; hence, the bias is truly towards peace and security for the individual and the national community, and the preservation of global peace and security. Therefore, it is necessary to establish meaningful and constructive dialogues based on equality and seriousness as a basis for communication and conflict resolution using religious and humanitarian concepts to build a safe world. In light of what is happening in political geography within the framework of the globalization ideology that dominates the management of the world; and the formation of its system according to its dominant vision, with which some identities are exposed to challenges through weakness or dissolution. And also to dismantle nations and societies and corrupt their systems. In addition to the potential threat to international peace and security; if it is not comply and adherence to peaceful behavior and by implementing established religious principles aimed at correction and reform of life.

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Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
61,226.92	61,065.31	
Day's High	Day's Low	
61,654.65	59,613.17	
Index Value	Change	
12,168,344,829	+161.61	
Percentage	Time	
+0.26%	13 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,512.28	-61.41	
Percentage	Time	
-0.81%	13 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,346.19	-451.19	
Percentage	Time	
-1.16%	13 Feb, 12:03 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
37,963.97	+1,066.55	
Percentage	Time	
+2.89%	13 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180	182
Bahrain Dinar	743.08	751.08
Canadian Dollar	206.5	208.5
China Yuan	38.84	39.24
Danish Krone	40.38	40.78
Euro	301.5	304.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.74	36.09
Indian Rupee	3.48	3.59
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.43	916.43
Malaysian Ringgit	59.21	59.81
New Zealand \$	171.12	173.12
Norwegians Krone	26.43	26.73
Omani Riyal	725.67	733.67
Qatari Riyal	76.76	77.46
Saudi Riyal	74.5	75.3
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.85	27.15
Swiss Franc	318.94	321.44
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.3
UK Pound Sterling	353	356
US Dollar	280.5	282.25

Difficult for politicians to prioritize welfare of the masses

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Brigadier (ret'd) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Tuesday that the SIFC has emerged as the only hope for economic recovery amid increasing political uncertainty. The elections left the country in a polarised and unstable state, as they did not deliver political stability but instead created uncertainty and legitimacy issues. Aslam Khan said that all three major parties declared victory soon after the elections and claimed they were the largest party in the National Assembly. But soon, it appeared that neither won a simple majority, leaving no party in a position to form a government independently. Therefore, he added that a split mandate will soon result in a weak coalition government that cannot deliver, which will fan the masses' frustration. Aslam Khan said that the new govern-

ment will face several daunting challenges. The most important is dealing with an economy still in the ICU and soaring inflation that has fuelled a cost-of-living crisis. It is believed that the new government will be unable to maintain the economic stability achieved by the caretaker government through unpopular decisions. He said that the new government would be unable to implement tax reforms, revive or sell lost state-run enterprises, and would not like to see further energy price hikes as decided by the IMF. The split mandate will hinder political and economic stability. It will also be challenging to sign another agreement with the IMF, which is necessary to save the country from bankruptcy. Politicians would focus on horse trading, keeping allies happy, and dealing with the opposition as they were handled, while economic stability would be outside their list of priorities.



He said that in this grim scenario, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) could play a crucial role in implementing necessary but unpopular decisions despite opposition from some quarters.

The SIFC should be further strengthened to help steer the country out of problems, as expecting politicians to deliver is self-deception. He observed that the SIFC must be the driving force behind structural reforms regardless of the interests of political and business elites. Aslam Khan said that inflation, rising energy prices, and costly imports have taken a toll on the masses and increased business costs. The ever-growing circular debt cripples power and gas companies, hindering infrastructure investment and service delivery and pushing masses to the wall. He said frequent price changes create uncertainty for consumers and businesses, hampering long-term planning and investment decisions. Extensive cross-subsidies and distorted pricing burden the government and fail to reach the most deserving. Dependence on imported gas exposes the sector to volatile global energy markets.

KMBL team visit Baithak School

KARACHI: Khushhali Microfinance Bank's Corporate Office team recently visited the Baithak School Network in Islamabad. Led by Kashif Ahmed Khan, Head of Liability and ADC Sales, the team interacted with the students during this visit. They emphasized the importance of education, nurturing aspirations, and instilling financial literacy for a brighter future while also distributing school bags to deserving students.



Awareness session on opportunities for growing companies held

COMMERCE DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), in collaboration with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) organized an awareness session on "Opportunities to Raise Funds & Capital for Prospective and Growing Companies" here at FPCCI Regional Office on Tuesday. Regional Chairman and Vice President FPCCI Zaki Aijaz presided over the Awareness Session while CEO and MD Pakistan Stock Exchange Farrukh Khan, Directors Ahmed Chinoy, Javed Qureshi and GM Raeda Latif also spoke. Zaki Aijaz said that this awareness session aims to inform the trade bodies about the Pakistan Stock Exchange and encourage them to be listed. He said that through this awareness session, the issues of capital and liquidity are being highlighted. He said there is a misconception that SMEs cannot be listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange. He said the companies should be listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange as it will benefit them.



CEO & MD Pakistan Stock Exchange Farrukh Khan, Directors Ahmed Chinoy and Javed Qureshi said that PSX has taken various initiatives and people are being informed about its benefits through a door-to-door campaign. He said they are providing awareness about listing in the Pakistan Stock Exchange, investment, and other matters. He said that this is the best forum for investors. Ahmed Chinoy said they have introduced reforms in the stock exchange,

and a company can get an enlistment certificate in 29 days. Farrukh Khan and Ahmed Chinoy said that this makes local companies become international brands and also improves their profile. Currently, there are 534 elite companies listed in the stock market and our local companies will also get the status of select companies by being listed. He said that the arrival of local companies leads to the development of the economy and increases market capitalization.

ICCI and IPO discuss joining hands in sensitizing the business community about IPRs

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Farukh Amil, Chairman, Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan) visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and discussed collaboration with ICCI to sensitize the business community about the importance of intellectual property rights for businesses to avoid counterfeiting and piracy of their products and achieve better growth. Farukh Amil briefed the business community about the role of IPO-Pakistan in promoting an enabling IP environment to promote businesses, creativity, and innovation. He said that the lack of an IP culture and weak IP enforcement are major



challenges and IPO-Pakistan is working for awareness and enforcement of IPRs to place Pakistan on the global IP map as a compliant and responsible country. He said adherence to IPRs will enhance Pakistan's reputation as a business and investment-friendly country. He said that SMEs should benefit from the services of IPO-Pakistan for better protection of their patents, copyrights, and trademarks. Speaking on the occasion, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that SMEs are the backbone of the economy and IPO-Pakistan should further simplify the IP registration processes and procedures and introduce mobile apps to

facilitate SMEs in the online registration of their products and services for copyrights and trademarks. He said that in the global competitive business environment, the role of IPO-Pakistan is important in promoting innovations and startups through strict enforcement of IPRs. He said that Pakistan needs to lay a strong foundation for a vibrant IP system to encourage innovations, business growth, and investment and hoped that IPO-Pakistan would contribute to making Pakistan a competitive economy. He assured that ICCI would work with IPO-Pakistan to create better awareness in the business community about the importance of IPRs for better growth of their businesses.

PTCL Group's strong operational performance during 2023

PPA

ISLAMABAD: PTCL Group, Pakistan's leading telecom and ICT services provider has achieved a double-digit revenue growth of 25.8% during the financial year 2023. PTCL Group has maintained its strong performance, strengthening its status as Pakistan's top integrated telecom service provider. Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), posted 15.4% growth in its revenues, owing to its strong performance in both retail and business segments, whereas Ufone achieved 25.6% growth in its revenues. The Group's subsidiary, U Microfinance Bank, kept a strong momentum and posted 76.5% revenue growth during 2023. The company announced its annual financial results for the year 2023 at its Board of Directors' meeting held in Islamabad on February 13, 2024. PTCL Group's revenue has increased by 25.8% YoY to Rs 190.6 billion, mainly driven by strong performance in the consumer segment led by fixed broadband, mobile data, and wholesale & business solutions, along with microfinance services. The Group's profitability was, among other factors, particularly affected by significant Rupee devaluation and high interest rates

during the year. The Group has posted a net loss of Rs 14.1 billion. The biggest highlight for PTCL during 2023 has been the signing of a Share Purchase Agreement with Telenor Pakistan B. V. (Telenor) to acquire a 100% stake in Telenor Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd (Telenor Pakistan) based on an Enterprise Value of PKR 108 billion on a cash-free, debt-free basis. PTCL continued its strong performance throughout 2023. PTCL posted revenue of Rs 96.3 billion for the year 2023 which is 15.4% higher than last year, mainly driven by growth in broadband and wholesale & business solutions segments. Flash Fiber, PTCL's premium Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) service, showed tremendous growth with highest Net add share within FTTH market in 2023. This phenomenal growth has been possible through the aggressive expansion of PTCL Flash Fiber and dedicated customer experience throughout the country. The company reported net profit of Rs 9.4 billion, highest since 2013, which is 3.7% higher as compared to last year. Prompt deployment of FTTH and strong performance in Corporate and Wholesale segments are the cornerstones in PTCL's topline growth.

SECP prescribes fit and proper criteria for key executives of Corporate Restructuring Companies

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), to strengthen the risk mitigation framework and enhance transparency in the approval process, has prescribed fit-and-proper criteria for the key executives, including promoters, major shareholders, board members, directors, and CEOs of corporate restructuring companies (CRCs). The Circular, available on SECP's website, outlines that individual's fitness and propriety will be evaluated based on factors such as integrity, track record, financial soundness, competence and capability, and potential conflict of interest with the CRC's business. Importantly, compliance with these criteria is perpetual, and CRCs are obligated to ensure adherence at all times. Furthermore, CRCs are required to monitor any changes in the status of their CEOs and directors. If any change results in non-compliance with the Fit and Proper Criteria, the CRC's board is mandated to immediately cease the individual's functions, inform the SECP, and initiate the process for replacing them with a suitable candidate. This circular will streamline the licensing process for CRCs, fostering greater trust and reliability in the sector. Additionally, Annexures for Information to be provided by promoters, major shareholders (other than a body corporate), proposed directors, and proposed chief executive officer of the CRC have been annexed to the Circular for guidance. Effective immediately, all CRCs are advised to comply with the provisions outlined in the Circular. The circular is available at SECP's website at <https://www.secp.gov.pk/document/circular-fit-proper-criteria-for-key-executives-of-corporate-restructuring-companies/?wpdm-dl=50523>

Mastercard expands partnership with Bank of Punjab



PNP

KARACHI: Mastercard and the Bank of Punjab (BOP) have expanded their partnership to cover the commercial segment, ranging from large corporate entities and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) to freelancer and gig workers. BOP will become the first bank in Pakistan to issue Mastercard BusinessCards® for SMEs, offering a range of solutions designed to cater to the country's 5.2 million-strong SME market. BoP has also launched the first Foreign Currency Business Debit Card, enabling more than 2.5 million freelancers to digitize their payments. By facilitating a shift from cash to digital payments, BOP is not only revolutionizing the SME sector, but also promoting financial inclusion in Pakistan's burgeoning gig economy. The extended partnership will also see the introduction of the Mastercard Corporate Card, which will offer larger businesses a customized, flexi-

ble and secure digital payment solution to manage employees' travel, entertainment and procurement expenses, with a high level of expense visibility. This will enable Corporates to manage payments more efficiently and reduce friction in making B2B payments. "Building on a market legacy that spans over two decades, Mastercard collaborates with our partners to accelerate Pakistan's digital transformation, drive financial inclusion and fuel its economy. In line with our pledge to bring 50 million SMEs worldwide into the digital economy by 2025, we are harnessing the power of our technology to help businesses of all sizes pay and get paid. The expansion of our partnership with BOP marks a transformative step in modernizing payment methods and making them widely accessible to Pakistan's businesses and individuals alike," said Arslan Khan, Vice President and Country Business Manager, Pakistan, Mastercard.

Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 advances to Grand Finale

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The enthralling second phase of the Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 concluded at Nayza Amaan Square, Gulberg, setting the stage for a grand finale on February 24, 2024 at Nayza G1 Market Johar Town.

The grand finale promises to be a thrilling contest with a double elimination format, featuring top contenders from the initial rounds across various weight categories. In the second phase competitions, emerging victorious in the -60 kg youth category were Murtaza, Sajjad, Shams, Danish, and Mian Ahmed, all securing their spots in the finale.

The -75 kg youth category saw Haid-



er King, Abdullah Nisar, Muhammad Umair Iqbal, and Moosa Butt advance, showcasing their strength and skill. In the -85 kg division, Hammad Butt and Hamza Butt earned their places in the final round, while the 85+ kg category will see Shazil Ali and Muzammil Khawar vying for the title.

Additionally, Usman Ghani triumphed in the 80+ kg senior category, adding to the roster of talented athletes set to compete in the championship's culmination.

With contenders now preparing for the ultimate challenge, the Grand Finale of the Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 is poised to be a spectacular display of power, technique, and determination.

The HBL PSL 9 trophy is named 'The Orion Trophy'

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The HBL PSL 9 trophy was unveiled at the Polo Ground of the Race Course Park in Lahore in the presence of Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi, franchise owners, HBL representatives and star cricketers.

The trophy is "The Orion Trophy" and will be a source of motivation for all the teams participating in the tournament. The trophy embodies the spirit of the HBL Pakistan Super League where each team shines brightly as they strive for glory.

Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman PCB: "It is a pleasure to announce that HBL PSL is entering its ninth season, and I am proud to say that HBL PSL continues to be a success story for Pakistan cricket.

We unveil this Orion trophy, we look forward to a month-long celebration of the beautiful game of cricket and the excitement and drama that accompanies it.

"HBL PSL connects to the hearts of people of Pakistan, who cherish every thrilling moment of the game. Be it towering sixes, high-intensity bowling, and top-notch catches, HBL PSL offers an emotional rollercoaster.

"I would like to thank the title sponsor of the league HBL, they truly have uplifted the game of cricket in our country through their support and have become synonymous with the name of the league. All the successes over the past eight years are a testament to HBL's commitment to the Pakistan Super League.

"I also want to thank the representatives of all six teams for being present here today and I wish all teams the best of luck for the season. May the best team



lift this prestigious trophy."

Ali Naqvi, owner of Islamabad United: "We are excited about the ninth edition of the HBL PSL. Islamabad United has been one of the most successful teams in the tournament and we want to extend that with a grand triumph this season.

"We had one of the best drafts in our history and some of the most exciting players will be lining up for Islamabad United this season. I can't wait to watch the team play at the home ground in Rawalpindi and win the hearts of the fans."

Salman Iqbal, owner Karachi Kings: "Karachi Kings are ready to turn the tables in the HBL PSL 9 with their breathtaking performances. The build-up and preparation for the tournament have been top notch and I expect some quality results in the tournament.

"We have a new coach and captain for this season which makes the fans more

excited about Karachi's prospects in this season. A strong Karachi Kings means a strong and exciting HBL PSL and we'll prove it this time around."

Atif Rana, CEO Lahore Qalandars: "As the two-time HBL PSL champions we are eagerly looking forward to completing a hat-trick of triumphs for the first time in the history of the league.

"We have stacked up our resources this season as well and aim to hit the ground running in the tournament. Our fans are also geared up to fill the stadium not just during the home games in Lahore but also in the away games as well and support the team with all their might.

"I assure them that we'll put in our all efforts to lift the Orion Trophy in Karachi under the able leadership of Shaheen Shah Afridi."

Ali Khan Tareen, Owner of Multan Sultans: "I am super glad to be a part of the HBL PSL again. It is such an exciting

venture to be a part of as it spreads smiles on the faces of many people across the country. A lot has happened between this season and the past season and I want to make sure that the Sultans maintain consistency in their performances this year as well.

"The HBL PSL also brings a wave of happiness to the people of Pakistan and I am sure this year will be filled with heaps of triumphs.

"It would be great to conclude this exciting season with the glittering HBL PSL trophy being lifted by Mohammad Rizwan and Co."

Javed Afridi, chair of Peshawar Zalmi: "I am glad that the ninth edition of the HBL PSL is finally here and the Babar Azam-led Peshawar Zalmi are ready to make a mark in the tournament.

"Our loyal fans wait the whole year for the tournament to start and I want my team to put up great performances in every game. I promise you that Peshawar Zalmi will continue to play the attacking style of cricket this year as well.

"My team is hungry to prove a point on the field and I am sure the beauty of the Orion Trophy must have added more to that hunger."

Nadeem Omar, owner Quetta Gladiators: "The Orion Trophy has been unveiled and this occasion is no less a motivation for team Quetta to roar in the HBL PSL 9.

"We have had our fair share of struggles in the recent seasons but it is about time that Gladiators showcase good fight and determination and HBL PSL 9 is a befitting time to be doing that.

"We are looking forward to taking on all five teams and proving our mettle at all the four venues."

Ramiz Raja to partially commentate during PSL 9

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman and renowned commentator Ramiz Raja, on Tuesday, revealed that he will not be available for the entire Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9.

Talking to X, formerly Twitter, Ramiz thanked his fans for the wishes on his return to PSL but revealed that by the time he was approached for the commentary role, he had already signed a deal with Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

The renowned commentator, however, shared that he will be available to commentate in the latter stage of the tournament.

"Thank you all for your PSL comeback wishes. I am humbled. I had already signed up for BPL when I got the offer of PSL so will be joining the last leg of Pindi [Rawalpindi] and Khi [Karachi]. Let's hope it's a great tournament," stated Ramiz.

Earlier this week, the PCB unveiled a star-studded commentary panel for the PSL 9, featuring former Australia captain Michael Clarke, who is all set to make his HBL PSL debut behind the mic. 42-year-old Clarke has been an active



broadcaster after hanging up his boots as a player.

The foreign commentators' roster involves the dynamic Ian Bishop, known for his insightful and gripping commentary, along with Danny Morrison, Simon Doull, Pommie Mbangwa, Mark Butcher, Dominic Cork and Mike Haysman.

Bishop will return to the PSL for the second time after having called the 2017 season. Morrison is a well-known name among the local fans and a regular voice in the tournament while Doull has made trips to Pakistan not just for PSL but also for various international series.

Mbangwa will return after having called the 2022 edition of the HBL PSL. Butcher, Cork, and Haysman are also synonymous names with the PSL and they'll light up the tournament with their vocals and thrilling calls with the mic in hand.

The Pakistani commentators also make up an exciting lineup with Ramiz Raja, Waqar Younis, Bazid Khan, and Aamir Sohail joining Urooj Mumtaz, Sana Mir and Marina Iqbal. Tariq Saeed and Ali Younis will call the action in Urdu. Erin Holland and Zainab Abbas will be the presenters during the course of PSL 9.

owner Nadeem Omer appeared in a local podcast in December where he revealed that he is "double-minded" on Sarfaraz Ahmed's future as the captain.

However, earlier this week, Omer revealed that Sarfaraz Ahmed himself wanted to take a break from captaincy to focus more on his performance.

"Sarfaraz wants to take a break from captaincy with new head coach Shane Watson set to decide who will lead the side after consulting with the team management," Omer said.

Quetta Gladiators squad for PSL 9: Sherfane Rutherford, Mohammad Amir, Rilee Rossouw, Mohammad Wasim Junior, Jason Roy, Wanindu Hasaranga, Mohammad Hasnain, Abrar Ahmed, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Sajjad Ali Junior, Usman Qadir, Omair Bin Yousuf, Will Smeed, Khawaja Nafay, Adil Naz, Akeal Hossain, and Sohail Khan.



The franchise played three finals under his leadership and also lifted their solitary title in 2019. However, the franchise saw a total change of fortune since winning the title as they failed to reach the playoffs in the last four editions.

In a bid to force a change, Quetta Gladiators made notable changes in their coaching staff and management as they brought in legendary all-rounder Shane Watson as the head coach and express pacer Shaun Tait as their bowling coach. Franchise

Deputy Commissioner says Pak Super League to provide a peaceful recreational environment for cricket



Asim Tanveer / Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: According to the official spokesperson of Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadeer Mohammad Waseem Yusuf Deputy Commissioner Multan Captain Retired Rizwan Qadeer has said that the fans of Multan City are ready to host the colorful cricket fair of PSL. To provide a peaceful recreational environment for cricket an effective security plan has been formed for this, he expressed these views while presiding over a meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office yesterday. A detailed briefing was also given by PSL officials in the meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadir said that the encroachment and cleaning operations on the sides and routes of the stadium have also been completed while orders have been given not to block the roads unnecessarily during cricket matches. Foolproof security will provide the administration with public inconvenience estimated, but it is also important to highlight the positive perception of the country with regard to cricket around the world. In this regard, an ideal traffic plan will be made to control the traffic problems. The task has also been given.

Two more matches decided in Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tourney

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches decided in the Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tournament at various grounds.

The highlights of the day's play was Deadly bowling by Hamza Sohail 5/27, Zakir Khan 5/49 and Muhammad Ali 4/33.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-VI Whites defeated Zone-II Blues by 9 wickets at Oval Cricket Academy NBP Stadium.

Zone-II Blues 87 all-out in 25.1 overs. Shaheryar Jadoon 35, Shahzaib Ahmed 19 not out. Hamza Sohail (Imf) 5/27, Waleed Azeem 2/26.

Zone-VI Whites 93/1 in 6.1 overs. Arbaz Khan 61 8x4 2x6, Jahanzaib Sultan 24.

In another match Zone-VII Blues beat Zone-III Reds by 1 Wickets. Zone-III Reds 211 all-out in 43 overs. Rana Mudasser 37 not out, Abdullah Marwat 30, Abdul Rafay 29, Shahzaib Khan 28, Abdullah Umer 23. Zakir Khan (rls) 5/48, Ahsan ullah 2/31, Ahsan Marwat 2/34.

Zone-VII Blues 215/9 in 44.1 overs. Afroz Hasan 64 8x4 2x6, Ahmed Hasan Khan 35, Waqar Ahmed 20. Muhammad Ali (mf) 4/33, Shahzaib Khan 2/34, Rana Mudasser 2/46.

Record-setting West Indies beat Australia in third T20

Andre Russell and Sherfane Rutherford

put on the biggest sixth-wicket partnership in a T20I to steer the West Indies past Australia by 37 runs in their third and final clash on Tuesday.

Both men

crunched quickfire half-centuries to propel the visitors to 220-6

in Perth with Australia managing just 183-5 in reply, David Warner

top-scoring on 81 in his last appearance for Australia at home.

The hosts won the first match in Hobart by 11 runs and sealed

the series with a 34-run victory at Adelaide.

The West Indies made a horror start after winning the toss

and opting to bat, losing three wickets in the opening three overs.

But Russell (71 off 29 balls) and Rutherford (unbeaten 67 off

40) led the fightback, with both posting their highest T20 scores

in a 139-run sixth-wicket partnership that set a new standard.

Spinner Adam Zampa went for 1-65 off four overs — his most

expensive in the format.

"I was just happy I could contribute tonight," said Russell. "I

think it's just the nature of this team, we are never out of it. Five

wickets down, but there wasn't any panic in the change rooms.

"I'm happy we came together as a team and we were definitely

playing as a unit tonight."

Australia started well with Warner and captain Mitchell Marsh

reaching 61 without loss after the six-over powerplay.

Warner clocked his 3,000th run as he brought up a 26th

half-century off 25 balls before Marsh departed for 17, skying a

catch to Jason Holder off Akeal Hosen.

Australia reached 98-1 at the halfway mark but were pegged

back by tight bowling from the West Indies.

The match turned when Australia lost three wickets for three

runs. Roston Chase bagged two of them, including Warner

and Josh Inglis (one), while Romario Shepherd bowled Aaron

Hardie (16).

Glenn Maxwell blasted an unbeaten 120 in Adelaide but, with

96 needed off the final five overs, it was a bridge too far even for

him and he fell for 12 as the chase fizzled despite Tim David

cracking a lightening 41.

"We knew they'd come into this series, they're a really good

team with some amazing cricketers, so fair play to the West

Indies," Marsh said.

With Australian pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood rested,

Xavier Bartlett earned a debut and Johnson Charles nicked to

wicketkeeper Matthew Wade in his first over before he bowled

Kyle Mayers in his second over.

In between, Nicholas Pooran was removed by Jason Behrendorff

to leave the West Indies reeling at 17-3.

But Chase began the rebuild, taking 17 off Bartlett's third

over before his luck ran out against Zampa, bowled for 37 as he

attempted another big hit.

Hardie accounted for Rovman Powell (21) before Rutherford

and Russell came to the rescue.

Russell blasted seven sixes and four boundaries, while Rutherford

hit five sixes and five fours.



ECC meeting

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presided over a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Asif Zardari will be PPP's candidate for president slot: Bilawal

PPA

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday announced that co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari will be party's candidate for president slot, emphasising that constitutional positions were their right.

Addressing a press conference following two-day-long Central Executive Committee meeting, the PPP chairman said that he would like to see his father Asif Ali Zardari become the president.

"I am not saying this because he is my father. I am saying this because the country is in a huge crisis at the moment and if anyone can

douse this fire, it is Asif Ali Zardari," Bilawal Bhutto said.

The former foreign minister said the constitutional positions were PPP's right and they will field candidates for president, Senate Chairman and National Assembly (NA) speaker.

Meanwhile, Bilawal Bhutto ruled out the possibility of becoming part of any coalition government, saying that his party would vote for prime minister candidate of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) but sit in opposition.

"The PPP has decided that we are unable or not in a position to join federal government ourselves, nor are we interested in taking minis-



tries in such a setup," the party chairman said while addressing a press conference.

Bilawal Bhutto acknowledged that the reality was that his party does not have a mandate to form a government in the Centre. "Due to

this, I will not be putting myself forward for the candidacy of the prime minister of Pakistan," he said, noting that PML-N and the independents have greater numbers.

Meanwhile, he pointed out that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) had refused to form a coalition with the PPP which left the PML-N as the only party that had invited the PPP to join the government.

"We don't want to see chaos in the country or perpetual crisis in the country," the PPP chairman said, adding that his party decided to support the PML-N's candidate for the premiership to ensure political instability.

A day earlier, it was reported that senior PPP leadership advised party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari against forming a coalition government with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and sitting in

Solangi reads news bulletin to give message govt considers radio important communication medium

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday created new history by reading English news bulletin on Radio Pakistan on World Radio Day.

The minister read 1.00 pm news bulletin on Radio Pakistan and gave an important message that the government considered radio as an important medium of communication. This move by the caretaker information minister also indicated that the government was committed to promoting radio broadcasting in the country.

Radio Pakistan is the oldest and largest broadcasting organization in the country with a wide audience in different languages.



This initiative of the minister would strengthen Radio Pakistan as a national broadcaster and help promote digital radio broadcasting in Pakistan. Solangi also participated in Radio Pakistan's podcast program and expressed his views on various issues. The minister said that the government was committed to

strengthen Radio Pakistan and make it a more effective and dynamic medium of communication.

The government was also working to promote digital radio broadcasting in Pakistan, he maintained. "Radio Pakistan is a national broadcasting organization with a long and rich history," Solangi added.

French decision to impose sanctions on Israeli colonists 'important step': Palestine

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomes the decision of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to impose sanctions on 28 extremist Israeli colonists who were involved in attacks and acts of violence against Palestinian citizens in the occupied West Bank, and considers it a courageous decision and an important step in the right direction towards the necessity of imposing more sanctions on the entire colonial settlement system throughout the land, State of Palestine.

The Ministry calls on all countries to impose deterrent sanctions not only on extremist colonialists, but also to place terrorist colonialist organizations on the lists of terrorism and the entire colonial system, and to exert pressure on the occupying state to force it to stop settlement, dismantle the colonialist armed militias, and withdraw their weapons.

ECC approves Rs.7.4bln 'Ramzan Relief Package'; tariff rationalization

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Tuesday approved Rs.7,492.75 million proposed Ramazan Relief Package-2024 to provide relief to the general public during the upcoming holy month of Ramazan.

The package is aimed at providing subsidy to the targeted beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) with net amount of Rs. 7,492.75 million, which is provided for in the budget for 2023-24, according to a press statement issued by the finance ministry.

The ECC meeting was presided over by Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar.

The ECC meeting was attended by the Minister for Privatization and Inter-Provincial Coordination, Fawad Hasan Fawad; Minister for Interior, Commerce & Industries, Gohar Ejaz; Minister for Energy and Petroleum Division, Mohammad Ali; Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Sami Saeed; Minister of Maritime Affairs, Communication and Railways, Shahid Ashraf Tarar; Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Muhammad Jehanzaeb Khan; Advisor to PM on Finance, Dr. Waqar Masood, federal secretaries, and other senior government officers of the relevant ministries.

The committee approved a summary of the Ministry of Commerce (Tariff Policy Wing), regarding "Individual Tariff Rationalization Proposals from Different Sectors for Review of Custom Duties" and advised that tariff

rationalization should be coordinated with the trade policy

ECC also approved a proposal regarding "Permission to Import Wheat and Export of Wheat Flour under Export Facilitation Scheme 2021" presented to the forum by the Ministry of Commerce and directed the relevant Ministries to prepare comprehensive proposals for enhancing the opportunities for valued added exports.

The ECC also approved a summary of the Power Division regarding the "Commissioning of 1263 MW CCPP Punjab Thermal Power (Pvt) Limited, Jhang (PPTL)".

Another proposal of the Ministry of Commerce regarding "Sharing of Subsidy on Imported Urea at 50:50 Basis Technical Supplementary Grant for Ministry of Commerce" was considered by the Committee. ECC approved the proposed release of Rs. 6 billion to the Ministry of Commerce.

The funds are meant for clearing the arrears of subsidy for the previous financial year. It was clarified that no subsidy on this account has been allowed by the government during the current year.

The ECC also directed that the provincial governments be approached to clear their respective arrears of subsidy on urea.

The Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (PD&SI) briefed the ECC on the inflation situation in the country. The forum directed the Ministry of PD&SI to make sure that detailed analysis is carried out on the data collected by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, and the same is also presented to the Committee for taking appropriate measures in a timely manner.

NADRA officials among 16 arrested in fake passport

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested 15 suspects including seven officers of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and Passport Immigration in a case pertaining to the issuance of fake Pakistani passports to Afghan nationals.

According to details, three Assistant Director Passport Immigration, and four NADRA officers have been arrested by the FIA.

The sources said that four agents and five Afghan nationals were also arrested in the operation.

The FIA has taken action on complaints received from NADRA and the Passport Office.

The gang was involved in the issuance of forged Pakistani passports at the international level. The FIA sources said that 16 accused have been arrested in the case.

It added that efforts are being by the FIA made to arrest more suspects.

Read More: Woman among two



FIA officials arrested in fake passport case

Earlier on January 8, two officials of the Passport Office Islamabad including a woman have been arrested by the FIA in a case about issuance of forged passports.

The arrests were made after pre-arrest bail of the accused was revoked by the Special Judge Central.

The arrested suspects were serving at the printing section of Passport Office Islamabad and were on bail before arrest.

Syed Nabi and a female official were among the arrested accused while the raids are being conducted to nab other persons nominated in the case registered in 2021.

Distressed Gazans bracing for all-out Israeli assault on Rafah, UN warns

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: With no ceasefire in place in war-ravaged Gaza, the head of UNRWA, the UN aid agency for Palestinians, warned Tuesday that those in the enclave remain deeply traumatized by the relentless Israeli attacks and afraid of a full-scale assault on Rafah in the south. "People are anxious and in fear of a possible large-scale military operation," Philippe Lazzarini said, after emerging from a briefing with Member States at UN Geneva.

"If the assault takes place, the question is, 'Where will the civilians go?' There is absolutely no safe place in Rafah anymore and the fear is that the number of people killed and injured might again significantly increase." Since Oct 7 when the war began, more than 100,000 Gazans have been reported either killed, injured or missing under the rubble by the local health authority, amid intense Israeli bombardment. Lazzarini insisted that it was unfeasible to

expect the more than one million displaced people crammed into Rafah governorate to move once again so that Israeli forces could continue their sweep for Hamas militants. "They are asked to move, the question is where to move," he said, noting that in Rafah, every spare piece of land over a 20-kilometre stretch was occupied by hundreds of thousands of people living in makeshift plastic shelters.

Turning to the issue of the serious allegations that some UNRWA staff collaborated with Hamas, the agency chief noted that he had immediately sacked those involved and initiated an investigation. Lazzarini also called for the cooperation of the Israeli authorities. The UNRWA Commissioner-General also noted that the UN Secretary-General's review would begin tomorrow into allegations against the agency regarding its "use of social media, about tunnels, about political affiliations" and how proactive it has been in responding to them. The process will



likely take two months but it should be accompanied by an inquiry, including into the Israeli military's claim that a tunnel and data centre located 20 metres beneath UNRWA's headquarters in Gaza City was used by Hamas, Lazzarini said.

"We need to look at all the situations where UN premises have been blatantly disrespect-

ed. Since the beginning of the war more than 150 of our installations have been hit. We know that some installations have been completely destroyed, hundreds of people have been killed, thousands have been injured and all this needs to be investigated independently, together with the allegation of a tunnel." Earlier, Israel's Permanent Amba-

sador to the UN in Geneva, Meirav Eilon Shahar, would have the world believe when she said that her Government wished "no harm" to civilians in Gaza and that it did intend to cooperate with the investigation into UNRWA, although it remained at war with Hamas.

"Our fight is with Hamas, it is not with the Palestinian people,"

said the Ambassador, who also insisted that "there are alternatives to UNRWA" – a claim rejected by Lazzarini who said that it would be "shortsighted" to close the agency at a time when senior UN humanitarians and NGOs were calling for aid to be stepped up to Gaza. "We have half a million girls and boys deeply traumatized that we urgently need to bring back into an education system," the UNRWA chief said.

This would not be provided by "an emerging local administration", he insisted, adding that "there is absolutely no other UN agency" or NGO with the experience in providing government-like services, including education to hundreds of thousands of children. "If we want to give a chance to any future transition to succeed, we need also to make sure that the international community has the tools, and one of these tools is UNRWA." Meanwhile in New York, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced concern over the deteriorating conditions

and security for humanitarian aid delivery in Gaza. Speaking to the press ahead of a Security Council meeting, he noted the breakdown in public order in the enclave. "At the same time, we have restrictions imposed by Israel that are not improving and limit humanitarian distribution," he said. "On the other hand, the deconflicting mechanisms to protect humanitarian aid delivery in relation to humanitarian operations are not effective."

He expressed hope that "negotiations on the release of hostages and some form of cessation of hostilities" will be successful to avoid an all-out offensive in Rafah, "where the core of the humanitarian system is located and that would have devastating consequences."

The UN chief added that he was deeply troubled by the number of journalists that have been killed in the Gaza conflict. He said freedom of the press is fundamental for the public "to know what is really happening everywhere in the world."