



Blinken says 'very hard' obstacles remain for Israel-Hamas deal

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken says a deal between Israel and Hamas that would include a pause in the fighting and the release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners is still possible but "very hard" points of disagreement have yet to be resolved, Al Jazeera reported.



Petrol price raised

The outgoing caretaker govt has jacked up the petrol price by Rs2.73 per litre to Rs275.62 per litre for the next fortnight, as recommended by Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA). "Government of Pakistan has decided to bring changes in the current prices of Petroleum products for the fortnight starting from 16th February 2024," a statement issued by the Finance Division read. As per the notification, the price of high-speed diesel has also been increased by Rs3.37 per litre to Rs287.33 per litre.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Excercise Seapark 2024

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf addressing troops onboard a Pakistan Navy ship during exercise Seapark 2024.



Photo: ISPR

Naval Chief oversees conduct of Exercise Seapark 2024

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Thursday visited naval ships at sea, creeks areas on the coastal belt of Sindh and coastal areas of Balochistan to oversee the conduct of Exercise Seapark 2024 and meet the deployed troops in the exercise. Exercise Seapark 2024 is a major maritime exercise of Pakistan Navy (PN) which is regularly conducted after every two years on two force concept i.e. Blue Force (own force) and Orange Force (enemy force). The purpose of the exercise is to plan and conduct naval operations as per wartime procedures to check operational readiness, major mobilisation of personnel and practice coordination between various elements of PN to undertake complex operations, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

During the operations at sea, the PN warships and aircraft also detected Indian Navy ships, submarines and aircraft, attempting to covertly observe the exercise and interpret PN war plans. According-

ly, necessary safeguards were taken by the PN. During the visit of Maritime Headquarters at Karachi, the Chief of the Naval Staff was given a briefing by the Orange and Blue Naval Force Commanders on the conduct of operations by the respective forces. Thereafter, the Naval Chief visited Keti Bandar Post and Battalion Headquarters of Pak Marines at Shah Bandar where he was briefed on combat readiness for defence of Creeks areas which constitutes the South Eastern maritime boundary with India. During the visit, the Naval Chief interacted with the troops deployed in difficult marshy areas and appreciated their devotion and high morale. Later on, the Naval Chief also visited Jinnah Naval Base at Ormara and naval ships operating at sea. During the visits, the CNS expressed his satisfaction on the professional excellence, high morale and perpetual readiness of the Pakistan Navy to ensure impregnable maritime defence of motherland and reaffirmed its resolve to safeguard national maritime interests.

Brought no-confidence motion on Bajwa's behest: Fazlur Rehman

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUIF) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday revealed that the no-confidence motion against the then Prime Minister Imran Khan was brought on the behest of ex-army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa.

In an interview with a private news channel, Maulana Fazl disclosed that he was not in favor of the no-confidence motion against Imran, which later resulted in his ouster as the country's Prime Minister.

He revealed that the PPP was running the motion, the former ISI chief Faiz Hameed also met the JUI-F chief and asked him

to table the motion against Khan but within the system.

Maulana Fazl elaborated that during the time of the no-confidence motion, they remained in communication with Qamar Javed Bajwa and Faiz Hameed. Both urged all political parties to proceed with the no-confidence motion against the former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The JUI-F chief maintained that the election 2024 was rigged and it apparently benefited PML-N as rumors surfaced that the Lahore seat was 'given' to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Furthermore, Maulana Fazl announced that JUI-F will now protest against the alleged rigging



in election 2024.

It is pertinent to mention here that Imran Khan was ousted as Prime Minister (PM) as the no-confidence motion moved by opposition parties against him succeeded.

As many as 174 votes were cast in favor of a no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan. This was the first time in the history of Pakistan that a no-confidence motion against an elected prime minister succeeded.

Following the resignation of the NA speaker and deputy speaker, PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq as a panel of the chairman of the house began the proceedings on the matter.

The joint opposition needed the support of at least 172 lawmakers from a total of 342 to oust the premier through the no-trust move.

PTI leader and former speaker Asad Qaiser had a formal meeting with Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday night, sources said details are awaited.

Two parties remain staunch rivals in political field. Political distance between the parties could be iron out over a one-point agenda of alleged rigging and irregularities in elections.

Caretaker Interior Minister visits FIA HQs



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ijaz, accompanied by Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani, paid a visit to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Headquarters.

Upon arrival, Director General (DG) FIA Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir, PSP, PPM warmly welcomed the Interior Minister.

Afterward, Minister was honored with a Guard of Honor by a contingent of FIA officers.

The Interior Minister participated in a high-level meeting with FIA officials, where he received a comprehensive briefing on the agency's operations.

The meeting was attended by all ADGs, Directors, and other senior officers of FIA.

The Minister was presented a

report highlighting the annual performance of all FIA wings.

Commending the performance of the wings, the Caretaker Minister praised the initiation of projects aimed at modernizing FIA to meet contemporary requirements.

He emphasized the increasing importance of modern technology in addressing the challenges of the modern world.

The Minister stressed the need for effective use of technology to combat human smuggling, trafficking and cyber-crime.

He called for enhancing the capacity of FIA officials and ensuring their adaptability to modern technological requirements. The caretaker Minister urged the optimal utilization of all resources to improve public service delivery.

Omar Ayub Khan named PTI's candidate for PM slot

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder has named the party's secretary general Omar Ayub Khan as a candidate for the Prime Minister (PM) slot, said Asad Qaiser on Thursday.

The former prime minister who named Ali Amin Gandapur as KP CM on Wednesday said he will announce the name of the party's candidate for premiership soon.

Talking to newsmen outside Adiala Jail after meeting the incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder, Asad Qaiser said Omar Ayub Khan will be the party's candidate for the PM slot.

Cabinet approves appointment of Syed Tariq Muhammad as MD Baitul Maal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Thursday approved the appointment of Syed Tariq Muhammad ul Hassan as Managing Director Pakistan Baitul Maal. The decision was taken on the recommendation of ministry of poverty alleviation and social security, according to a press release issued by the Prime Minister House Media Wing.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar presided over the meeting of the cabinet. On the recommendation of the Ministry of Commerce, the cabinet approved the transit/transfer of vehicle spare parts and new tires used by the Afghanistan Country Office under the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) from Karachi Port to Kabul, Afghanistan. The cabinet was informed that such imports and their transfer to Afghanistan



are prohibited to prevent smuggling in the country, however, under the United Nations Development Programme, the said spare parts and tires will be used by the United Nations and not for commercial use. On the recommendation of the Ministry of Defense Production, the cabinet also approved the redeployment of grade-20 officer Khan Nawaz of the Secretariat Group as Member Finance in the heavy industry Taxila. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the finance ministry approved the exemption of JS Bank's sponsoring shareholder Shabbir Ahmed Randiri from

Section (IV)(1)14 of the Banking Companies Ordinance. Under this exemption, Shabbir Ahmed will be able to exercise his voting rights in JS Bank Limited as a 7.06% sponsoring shareholder. Furthermore, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior, the meeting approved the handing over of Irfan Qadir Bhatti, an accused with dual citizenship, to the Kingdom of Norway.

The cabinet was told that the Norwegian government had accused that Irfan Qadir was involved in terrorism. In this regard, Additional Deputy Commissioner Islamabad was appointed as an inquiry

officer, who after investigation came to the conclusion that the accused was involved in terrorism and other illegal activities. According to these information, the federal cabinet approved the handing over of the accused to the Norwegian government. Similarly, the cabinet on the recommendation of ministry of information and broadcasting, allowed the Pakistan television Corporation to make payments to the foreign broadcasters for the broadcasting rights of sports events. The cabinet gave its assent to the decisions made in a meeting of federal cabinet on energy on February 6, 2024. Besides it also approved the decisions of cabinet committees on legislative cases and privatization held on February 7, 2024. The meeting also approved the decisions made in the Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet on February 7, and February 14, 2024.

PTI names candidates for CM Punjab, CM Balochistan slots

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Gohar Ali Khan on Thursday revealed the names of his party's candidates for Chief Minister Punjab and Chief Minister Balochistan slots.

Gohar Ali Khan, flanked by party leader Sher Afzal Marwat and Mashal Yousafzai, said that

the PTI founder has approved names of Mian Aslam Iqbal and Salar Khan as party's candidates for CM Punjab and CM Balochistan slots respectively.

Gohar Ali Khan also revealed that Aqibullah Khan will be PTI's candidate for Speaker KP Assembly where PTI-backed independent candidates are in majority.

He maintained that his party

will also reveal names of candidates of Speaker and Deputy Speaker National Assembly soon.

The senior PTI leader was of the view that his party actually won 180 seats in February 8 elections but their mandate was stolen and a party (PML-N) which couldn't even secure 20 seats is planning to form a government.

He maintained that PTI has requested Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and judiciary to speedily dispense justice in 70 cases of rigging so that PTI can get back the stolen mandate.

"We will come across as a strong opposition party (in NA) till we get back our mandate but there will be no power-sharing agreement with PPP, PML-N or

MQM," said Gohar Ali Khan.

Gohar Khan concluded his media talk by announcing that his party will stage a peaceful protest across Pakistan on Saturday along with a number of other parties who have expressed their reservations over election results.

He urged all party supporters and workers to bear Pakistan flags in this protest.

PPP contact & coordination committee meets Bilawal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The members of the contact and coordination committee of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Thursday met with the party Chairman of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

They briefed Bilawal Bhutto about their meetings with the other political parties, said a press release issued by the party secretariat.

Qamar Zaman Kaira, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, Shuja Khan, Saeed Ghani, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Bahadur Khan Shehar were present in the



meeting.

Meanwhile, Chairman PPP also met with former Governor of Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar at Zardari House in which the political situation of the country was discussed.

Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, Syed Naveed Qamar and Sherry Rehman were also present during the meeting.

Governor Punjab hopes the new government to turn around Pakistan's economy

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a business role model award ceremony to give awards to business leaders for achieving great success in their respective business fields. Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman was the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Governor Punjab said that the business community is making a great contribution to the socio-economic development of the country and taking an active part in philanthropic activities, which is laudable. He said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council has brought all stakeholders on the same page and hoped that the incoming government would turn around Pakistan's economy towards better growth and development. He said that Pakistan needs to highlight positivity and discourage negativity to move forward. He highlighted the achievements of Edhi and Akhuwat as the outcomes of positive efforts. He acknowledged the need to bring out-of-school children to schools to educate them. He threw



light on the achievements of the Punjab Skills Development Fund from 2013 to 2018 which were made case studies by Harvard and the London School of Economics.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry thanked the Governor Punjab for his support of the new industrial estate project of ICCI. He said that the land for the said project has been identified in the district Chakwal and stressed that the work on this important project should be expedited to complete it to promote industrialization and exports. He said that all parties should accept the election results to move forward

as Pakistan needs political stability to achieve economic stability.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI emphasized for the enrolment of 26 million out-of-school children in the schools as no nation can develop without education. He said that by providing good education to youth, it can be transformed into a great dividend for the country. He stressed that all loss-making commercial entities should be privatized to save about Rs.1000 billion in annual losses to bail out them.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan urged that the business leaders should be promoted as role models for

youth that would put Pakistan on the path of sustainable economic growth. He said that when youth would idealize businessmen as role models, it would foster entrepreneurship in Pakistan and strengthen the economy.

Those who received awards included Qazi Muhammad Akbar, Raja Muhammad Anwar, Chaudhry Javed Iqbal, Tariq Khan Jadoon, Nasir Hussain Raki, Ashfaq Ahmed, Mohsin Bilal Khan, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Faizan Shahzad, Ashar Hafeez, Irfan Aman, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, Faisal Muzamil, Kashif Farid, Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, Syed Sadat Hussain Shah, Imran Rasheed, Muhammad Adnan Mukhtar, Ms. Amna Munawar Awan, Hatim Tabani, Muhammad Usman Hameed, Ms. Afraz Sial, Ms. Fatima Hassan, Ovais Khokhar, Sheikh Tayyab Saeed, Muhammad Waqas Janjua, Tahir Mehmood Abbasi, Tehmas Butt, Rehan Anwar, Shahbaz Masih, Engr. Usman Basra, Hamza Ajmal Baloch, Haris Shabbir, Sheikh Muhammad Afaq, Junaid Khurshid, Zeeshan Mehmood, Arsalan Javaid, Syed Bilal Pirzada, Khurram Shahzad, Babar Aftab Qazi and Ch Mohammad Waleed Umer

79 more electricity thieves fined in South Punjab in one day: MAPCO

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: According to Mapco Director Public Relations Jamshed Niazi. MEPCO Operation against electricity thieves and defaulters is going on in South Punjab. Checking teams caught 79 more consumers stealing electricity in one day. 45 new cases were registered in different police stations. Electricity thieves were fined more than 44 lakh 91 thousand rupees. On February 14, 2024, 13 electricity thieves were fined 689886 rupees in Komaltan circle and 11 cases were registered. 8 consumers were fined 306540 rupees in DG Khan circle. Charged and 8 cases registered. Wahari Circle 7 consumers were fined Rs.1118800, 15 consumers were fined Rs.586198 and 6 cases were registered in Bahawalpur Circle, 14 consumers were fined Rs.821467 and 4 cases were registered in Sahiwal Circle, 8 consumers were fined Rs.256000 and 8 cases were registered in Rahimyar Khan Circle, 6 consumers were registered in Muzaffargarh Circle. 318500 fine Rs.Charged and 3 cases registered, 4 consumers were fined Rs 137000 and 3 cases were registered in Bahawalnagar circle, 4 consumers were fined Rs 237238 in Khaniwal circle and 2 cases were registered. Superintending Engineer Operation MAPCO Rahim Yar Khan Circle Malik Khurshid Ahmad headed by Asin Sadiqabad Sub Division Mohsin Nazir Khosa and SDO Jamal Deen Wali sub-division along with police force and MAPCO staff conducted an operation against electricity thieves in Jamal Deen Wali Sadiqabad. 2 main branches of Son Miani Feeder in Kacha area were cut off and high tension lines were taken down. Mapco DG Khan circle surveillance team conducted an operation against electricity thieves in different areas of the city. 4 people were caught stealing electricity from direct wires. 3 crore 72 lakh 70 thousand rupees were collected from running and dead defaulters in one day. Operations were conducted against defaulting agricultural consumers in different areas of the region. Electricity of 2 defaulting farmers was disconnected for non-payment of overdue electricity bills of more than 7 lakh 50 thousand rupees. One tube in Multan for non-payment of dues of 4 lakh 30 thousand rupees and one tube in Rahim Yar Khan for non-payment of dues of 3 lakh 20 thousand rupees.

World Childhood Cancer Awareness Day

Asim Tanveer



MULTAN: World Childhood Cancer Day is celebrated on February 15 every year. World Childhood Cancer Awareness Day is a global campaign to raise awareness about childhood cancer and show support for children and families affected by cancer.

On this occasion, a cancer awareness walk was organized under the leadership of Dean Children's Hospital Multan Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti and MS Dr. Kamran Asif. In which Prof. Dr. Rana Zulfiqar, Prof. Dr. Waqas Imran, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sohail Arshad, Prof. Dr. Asim Khurshid, Dr. Sadia, and a large number of doctors, staff nurses and paramedics participated.

After the walk, Dean Children's Hospital Prof. Muhammad Kashif cut a cake and distributed prizes among the children to encourage the children affected by cancer admitted to the Children's Hospital.

Dr. Shiraz Khan to present his PhD Dissertation on February 22, 2024

PNP

PESHAWAR: It is for the information of General Public that the PhD Dissertation Public Defense Examination of Mr. Shiraz Khan, PhD Scholar of Management Sciences Department, CECOS University of IT & Emerging Sciences, Peshawar has been scheduled to be held on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 03:00 PM in Committee Room, CECOS University, Peshawar.

The topic of his PhD Dissertation is "Impact of Digital Supply Chain Management on Operational Performance: A Moderated Mediation Model". The Scholar will present the findings of his research through a Public Defense session followed by a Viva-Voce Examination by the Research Supervisory Committee.

All the interested Academia Members/Researchers are encouraged to participate in the session.

House looted by making hostage family in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Traditional delayed response by police given free hand to dacoits to loot valuables worth millions of rupees and fled successfully after a house robbery in Dhoke Hassu Khan in the limits of Fatehjang Police station on early hours of Thursday. Sources said that seven armed bandits equipped with different weapons entered in to a house by scaling the walls and made hostage the family at gunpoint. As they locked the family in a room, one of the brave teenage female members of the family made SoS call to police helpline rescue-15 and informed about the looting spree. However, police respond after half hour of the call and till then the armed bandits completed their task and fled with looted booty.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Asad Qaiser and Barrister Doctor Muhammad Ali Saif arriving at JUI-F chief Fazl-ur-Rehman residence for meeting in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Joint operation of AJK Food Authority in Sidhanoti to check harmful milk

Abdul Majeed Tahir

AZAD PATAN SIDHNOTI: Under strict instructions of Supreme court of Azad Jammu Kashmir, a joint operation of Team Food Authority Siddhanoti and Team Food Authority Rawalkot Azad Kashmir.

The Team Food Authority recovered a large quantity of unhealthy milk by installing a canal at the Azad Patan Sidhanoti Bridge in Azad Kashmir. According to District Food Controller Sidhanoti Adnan Naqvi, Pakistan Post official



vehicle No. Ris 972, which is owned by the Government of Pakistan, has recovered harmful milk from the said vehicle.

In Sidhanoti district, the process of checking harmful milk and other food items was going on. At the same time, actions were being taken against the sellers of defective milk and

food items. The mafia, changing the procedure, started selling harmful food items and milk in the government vehicle. Diya. Meanwhile, other vehicles bringing food items from outside Azad Kashmir were checked and the exported hazardous items were destroyed on the spot. People appreciat-

ed the actions of Team Food Authority on the action of Food Authority.

Meanwhile under the directions of Supreme Court

Actions of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Food Authority in Tehsil Dadyal of Mirpur district Food Safety Officer Mirpur Junaid Nazir along with Assistant Food Safety Officers Shahid Nazim, Shahriar Ahmad and Raja Shahid also inspected marquees, bakeries and their factories located in Tehsil Dadyal. During the inspection, fines were also issued in addition to issuing rectification notices

for the poor sanitation conditions in the bakeries factories. While during the inspection of the marquees, the cleanliness of the kitchen and the spices and cooking oil used in the food were evaluated. Which will be satisfactory. The Team Food Authority strictly instructed the management of Marquis not to use non-standard spices and cooking oil in the preparation of food and not to bring and use slaughtered meat from Azad Kashmir as per the issued orders of the Food Authority. The implementation of the ban should be ensured.

First Software Technology Park inaugurated

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Inspector General Communication and Information Technology Lieutenant General Muhammad Aqeel (Star of Intiaz Military) and Director General SCO Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Major General Umar Ahmed Shah formally inaugurated the first Software Technology Park (STP) in Azad Kashmir at Mirpur. The fastest internet, computers and related IT facilities will be available to the talented IT students and young people from across Azad Kashmir. Along with the fastest development in various fields from STP Park, the software developed here will be available. Internationally

On this occasion, Director Communication and Informa-

tion Technology Brigadier Saadi Manzoor, Sector Commander SCO Azad Kashmir Col. Rashid Ahmad Khan, Commanding Officer of SCO Mirpur Division Lt. Col. Muhammad Ahsan Ashfaq, Commissioner Mirpur Division Chaudhary Shaikat Ali, Brigadier of Mohiuddin Medical College (Rt.) Abdul Aleem, Chief Executive of Muslim Hands Asif Rathore, Senior Vice President of Chamber of Commerce Hafiz Kashif Nazir, District Information Officer Muhammad Javed Malik and other senior military and civil officials attended the ceremony Inspector General Communication and Information Technology Lieutenant General Muhammad Aqeel (Sataraz Intiaz Military) and Director General SCO Azad

Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Major General Umar Ahmed Shah visited various areas of the Software Technology Park and interacted with other people present including IT freelancers and reviewed the problems faced while on this occasion Taken various suggestions for the promotion of information technology from the people on.

Inspector General Communication and Information Technology Lieutenant General Muhammad Aqeel (Star Intiaz Military) congratulated the SCO officials on the completion of STP Park and said that this Soft Technology Park is an important milestone in the journey of technological improvement and economic prosperity of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. With an emphasis on innovation

collaboration and skill development, the park is poised to shape the future of the region's information technology landscape.

Director General SCO Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Major General Umar Ahmed Shah said that the scope of such STP centers will be extended to districts, tehsil levels and important towns of Azad Kashmir. STP centers will also be established in universities, schools, colleges where offices are located. During working hours, students and general public will be able to benefit from it. With this important project of information technology, the employment facility through information technology will be available in the free region, along with empowering the youth, as well as the economic development of



Pakistan. There will be significant progress in development through information technology. He said that in the current era of innovation and development, SCO is trying to provide the youth with all the latest facilities related to IT including the fastest internet connectivity, power backup, security. The park is equipped to meet the needs of

freelancers, entrepreneurs, startups and professionals.

On this occasion, the administrative officers and prominent members of the civil society praised the efforts of SCO and Information Technology for establishing the Software Technology Park and said that this STP will provide modern facilities to our young genera-

tion, especially those related to IT. There will be and the products developed by them will also be according to international standards. This achievement of SCO will be a milestone in the journey of development, which will also increase the trend of competition between more software houses at the public and private level.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:29 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:13 pm
Maghrib	5:51 pm
Isha	7:15 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
& Rescue Services	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 Enquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

AIOU announces results of BS (ODL) programs

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results of BS (ODL) programs for Semester Spring 2023. The results have been uploaded on the CMS portal. Students can conveniently check their results on the portal. It is pertinent to mention that the results of Matric, FA, BA, and B. Ed programs have already been announced earlier. To ensure compliance with the academic calendar, Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, had directed the examination department to announce the results of all academic programs as per the calendar.

Admissions for BA (Associate Degree), B. Ed, and BS (ODL) programs will start on March 1st. The first phase of admissions is currently underway, and almost 90% of the results from the last semester have been declared. The results of the remaining programs are being compiled and will be announced soon. The deadline for admission to BS (Face-to-Face) programs has been extended until February 26. Examinations for open courses, certificate courses, matriculation, FA and I. Com programs of autumn semester 2023 will begin on March 5. The date sheet is available on the university website. Roll number slips are being dispatched to the students.

Yakishime: 'Earth Metamorphosis' exhibition inaugurated at PNCA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Japan Foundation's traveling pottery exhibition "Yakishime: Earth Metamorphosis," one of the most basic or primitive means of producing ceramics, opened at the National Art Gallery of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The exhibition aims to acquaint visitors with the unique and centuries-old cultural facet of Japan.

The exhibition, which runs until February 29, is jointly organized by the Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture, Jamal Shah, and the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan WADA Mitsuhiro jointly inaugurated the exhibition on Thursday, said a news release.

The event would provide an opportunity for the visitors to witness the evolution of yakishime

from its ancient roots to contemporary expressions. This captivating showcase focuses on a traditional Japanese ceramics technique yakishime (firing unglazed wares at extremely high temperatures) and introduces its history and evolution that has developed in distinctive directions in Japan from the 4th and 5th centuries through the present day.

It features over 80 exquisite pieces from the earliest examples to the present through yakishime wares, tea vessels, food vessels, jars, containers, and more that have become an essential part of everyday life in Japan. It also presents a wide range of non-utilitarian objects created by contemporary ceramic artists working in yakishime styles aiming to provide an opportunity to communicate this distinctively Japanese sensibility and aesthetic to people abroad.

Ambassador WADA, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony, expressed his deep admiration

for this time-honored traditional Japanese art of producing ceramic art and crafts, and said that "one of the unique characteristics of Japanese culture is the fusion and coexistence of tradition and innovation."

We are good at adding new interpretations to tradition while respecting old methods and tastes," Ambassador WADA mentioned that Pakistan is also known as a production center of traditional pottery with Blue Pottery from Multan which has common attractions with Yakishime. "I feel a sense of warmth and simplicity from both of them", he further added.

The Ambassador said both Japan and Pakistan have rich and diverse cultural heritage and the cultural linkages between the two friendly nations, which can be traced back in history such as the Gandhara civilization.

"In terms of the fusion of tradition and innovation, I am looking forward to seeing the new phase



of Pakistan's traditional arts in the next generation as well", the Ambassador further added. The

Ambassador expressed his appreciation to the Pakistan National Council of the Arts for extending

their collaboration in arranging this exhibition at the National Art Gallery.

Hard Work

ISLAMABAD: Street vendors are selling handmade traditional caps at a road in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Role of family planning is important to achieve the country's sustainable development goals



PNP

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer PPIF and Director General Population Welfare Department Punjab Saman Rai participated as a special guest in the "International FP Summit 2024" held in Karachi.

The summit was designed as a forum for an in-depth exploration of existing family planning practices as institutional strategies, bringing together stakeholders, including academia, policymakers, government officials, and non-government organizations. Representatives

participated in large numbers. The theme of this International FP Summit is "Family Planning, Key to Achieving the SDGs". CEO PPIF and DGP WD Saman Rai representing Punjab at the summit said in his address that the role of family planning is very important to

achieve the goals of sustainable development of the country. It indicates the development and development of the country. At present, there is a need for strong efforts to create comprehensive awareness about family planning among people across the country.

NH&MP to ensure safe transportation of vehicles

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) wants to ensure safe transportation of vehicles carrying flammable and hazardous materials on Motorways and Highways.



In this regard, a meeting chaired by Inspector General Salman Chaudhry was held at the Central Police Office of NH&MP.

The various stakeholders, including representatives from OGRA, Senior Executive Director (Enforcement) Sohail Ahmad Tariq and Senior Executive Director (LPG) Sarmad Aslam, from Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) Director Aftab Qazi and Director Samad Khan of Explosive Department, Consultant Scientist Dr. Omer Quershi, DIG Saad Akhtar Bharwana and AIG Syed Muhammad Bilal from NH&MP were present in the meeting.

Key issues related to the safe transportation of these vehicles were discussed, and IG Salman Chaudhry highlighted the importance of a comprehensive policy in this regard. Ensuring the safety of patrolling officers and commuters was emphasized in the meeting, with plans for training programs and the provision of necessary safety equipments.

Cooperation among stakeholders was deemed essential for ensuring the safe movement of such vehicles across the country.

It was agreed in the meeting that sharing information of such vehicles along with crew members to the Motorway Police would help enforce traffic rules and regulations effectively on motorways and highways.

The participants commended the efforts of NH&MP in enhancing commuter safety on motorways and highways. Salman Chaudhry reiterated the commitment of NHMP to prioritize the safety of both commuters and patrolling officers.

NUST announces article writing competition on 'Women in Climate Action'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) has called on all voices of Pakistan to become part of its efforts to amplify the importance of Women in Climate Action by participating in an 'Article Writing Competition'. According to an official of NUST, the article writing competition, being arranged in collaboration with the Gender Intersectionality and Climate Change (GICC), is aimed at stimulating thoughtful discourse on the intersectionality of gender and climate resilience.

The last date for submission of the articles is February 29. The details of the event can be accessed through the website: gicc.nust.edu.pk. The article writing competition is part of the "Women in Climate Action - Celebrating Resilience" event being arranged by the NUST and GIZ Pakistan on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8) in Islamabad. This empowering event aims to recognize and applaud the significant contributions of women in climate action, emphasizing their leadership, innovation, and impact on creating sustainable and climate-resilient communities. The researchers, climate heroes, academia, and individuals from the development sector have been called to participate in the event featuring panel discussions, success stories, stalls showcasing women-led initiatives and art and photo exhibitions. About the other activities under this mega event, the official informed that an insightful panel discussion, successful storytelling session, art and photo exhibition and project and product exhibits will also be part of the event.

Elections are rigged controversial and a black mark on the democratic parliamentary system: Liaquat Baloch

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Deputy Amere Jamaat-e-Islami Liaquat Baloch has said that the national elections are rigged, controversial and a black mark on the democratic parliamentary system. The commissioner proved to be a wall of sand in the face of pressure, resigned. The caretaker Prime Minister should file a reference in the Supreme Court for the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the rigging.

While holding a press conference in Mansurah along with Jamaat-e-Islami spokesperson Qaiser Sharif, he said that there has been an increase in the division and political instability in the country. Political parties have to move towards a long partnership.

Liaquat Baloch said that Jamaat-e-Islami took more than 25

lakh votes in total, which were reduced in Form 47 to around 14 lakhs in National Assembly constituencies and less than 17 lakhs in provincial constituencies. But he participated in the election without any alliance with any party. Votes were received on a large scale, our candidates were defeated by rigging in Karachi and KP, despite this, we believe that the nation has strengthened the reputation of Jamaat-e-Islami's national service by trusting us, we will intensify the public relations campaign.

Naib Emir said that the government that was established with the stolen mandate of the people will suffer from the blackmailing of the global colonialist forces. The rigged election has created great dangers for the country and the nation. Even the people do not understand, to target 30-40 circles, 35 punctures, form Forty-five, ROs



formulas were repeated. He said that the intervention of the establishment alone cannot do anything, a group that has been imposing on the people for a long time in the form of landlords, big capitalists and a few sections on the religious front, will continue to fight for the rule of law and people. He said

that there is in the political context, the oppressed Palestinians and Kashmiris have been forgotten, the whip of inflation is being rained on the people, we will raise our voices in every forum for the rights of the oppressed classes. He said that the culture of politeness should be nurtured in politics.

Liaquat Baloch said that the next Parliament will have to re-examine the entire design of the supervisory culture. In response to a question, he said that PTI had been given a platform unconditionally, but at the last moment their position had been changed.

PPSC Chairman Lt Gen Malik Zafar Iqbal's Exit Caps Three-Year Reformation Era

PNP

LAHORE: Today marks the conclusion of Lt Gen Malik Zafar Iqbal's three-year tenure as Chairman of the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC). Under his tenure, the PPSC has undergone significant reforms aimed at restoring public trust in the recruitment process and to develop it on modern lines.

Addressing the staff of PPSC, he expressed gratitude to the entire team and highlighted the comprehensive transformation witnessed within the organization. Central to these reforms was the revamping and streamlining of the examination process and the establishment of a new data bank, along with the development of software for streamlining examination processes. Additionally, the introduction of an e-pay system for exam fees and the establishment of NADRA booths to verify candidates' identities have further enhanced transparency and security.

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Trail-5 & 6 visitors' info centres 'illegally sealed' by CDA

Chairperson, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) Rina Saeed Khan on Thursday said the Capital Development Authority (CDA) illegally sealed the visitors' information centers at the Trail-5 and 6 of the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP) being managed by the Board.

The Chairperson took to her official handle on X (formerly Twitter) to apprise the masses of the rogue behaviour of the civic agency that took many aback as the visitors information center were the only source of guidance for local and foreign tourists visiting the national park's nature and biodiversity-rich hiking trails.

In her X post, she wrote: "URGENT: CDA thugs have come this morning and taken over our Visitor Info Center on Trail 5 throwing out IWMB furniture. This building was made by Himalayan Wildlife Foundation not CDA and we have handing over documents. We are going to police and courts now! @WildlifeBoard."

She also shared the official order of CDA allocating the land of existing information centres to the Board for establishing its offices whereas any handing over or taking over of the building would be carried out through the Environment Directorate of the CDA through intimation to the Authority's Administrative Directorate.

The Board also issued a news release stating that the Federal Development Agency illegally sealed the Visitor Information Center located on Trail-5 and Trail-6. "CDA officials broke the locks of the office including the conference room and took out the belongings. However, the concerned building was handed over to IWMB by the Administration Directorate of CDA after formal paperwork. The CDA officials acted without notice and ignored all legal aspects," the IWMB alleged.

When contacted the CDA spokesperson Kamran Qureshi, he hanged up and gave a silent treatment to the queries on the matter. Director General, the CDA's Environment Directorate, Irfan Niazi was also contacted for his official version who also hung up the call and did not turn up to provide his version on the matter.

It may be mentioned here that the civic agency and the Board have recently locked their horns over the possession and control on the erstwhile Islamabad Zoo which was currently operating as the only wildlife rescue and rehabilitation center awaiting funds by the government to develop it into a most-modern public information center and a virtual zoo and the a wildlife preservation center.

Election-2024 Fiasco-Fixing Responsibility - I

The government and Election Commission attributed the slowdown and collapse of the internet during the 2024 elections to the Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) raises questions, given PTA's declared objectives. These objectives emphasize the regulation of telecommunication systems and services, promoting user interests, ensuring a wide range of high-quality and competitive services, and modernizing telecommunications throughout Pakistan. Additionally, PTA is tasked with investigating complaints against licensees and taking action on alleged contraventions of its provisions and rules.

The situation suggests discrepancy between PTA's mission and reported internet disruptions during a critical of national elections. If the slowdown was indeed under PTA's control, it would be at odds with its mandate to promote and protect telecommunication service quality and accessibility for all users in Pakistan, including during significant events like elections which rely heavily on transparent and open communication channels. This scenario underscores the need for a thorough investigation to determine whether the disruptions were due to technical failures within PTA's oversight or deliberate actions that contravened its objectives.

PTA perhaps has to give a lot more explanations for internet slowdown which has jeopardized the entire election exercise costing billions to the government exchequer and for keeping the entire nation at razor's edge. These are not the political parties which are blaming

the government for deliberate slowdown; this allegation is also supported by independent watchdogs like NetBlocks which have termed the disruption and slowdown of the internet during the Elections-2024 campaign events deliberate rather than due to genuine technical issues.

NetBlocks described the incidents as "nation-scale disruption to social media platforms," which were consistent with previous events imposed during opposition rallies or speeches by opposition leaders and the immediate restoration of services following these events, have led to widespread skepticism about the official explanations. The independent observers have argued that these disruptions were politically motivated, aimed at silencing opposition voices and controlling the flow of information during the election period, rather than being the result of genuine technical problems.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan condemned the suspension of internet services as a breach of international law and fundamental rights, emphasizing the importance of freedom of expression, especially in the context of elections lending credence to the argument that the internet disruptions were seen as more than just technical glitches.

The election process, which was closely watched by the entire nation and had profound implications for the country's future, was reportedly marred by these disruptions. This situation was

particularly critical because the integrity and smooth conduct of the elections depended heavily on stable communication channels, especially in the digital age where much of the electoral communication and reporting relies on internet access.

The absence of public accountability or scrutiny of PTA by contesting parties, civil society, and government bodies is surprising, especially considering the verified reports of inefficiency and unpreparedness. Such a lapse in responsibility, especially when the stakes involved the democratization process and the future governance of the country, raises questions about the regulatory oversight and crisis management capabilities of the authority.

The 2024 elections in Pakistan have drawn widespread criticism for allegedly compromising the integrity of the voting process, leading regional and international media to describe the event as exceptionally unfair, non-transparent, and heavily rigged in the nation's history. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have voiced significant concerns over the electoral proceedings, advocating for thorough investigations into the numerous reported irregularities. The US Department of State specifically called attention to infringements on the freedoms of expression and assembly, underscoring the fundamental democratic principles at risk. Similarly, the UK Foreign Secretary raised issues regarding internet accessibility

and anomalies in the reporting of election results, indicating potential barriers to a free and fair electoral process. Moreover, the European Union expressed dismay over the compromised level playing field, highlighting constraints on political engagement and accusations of electoral meddling. These international reactions underscore a collective call for transparency and accountability in addressing the alleged shortcomings of the electoral exercise in Pakistan.

Given the significant impact of internet disruptions during the 2024 elections in Pakistan, it is imperative for PTI, alongside other affected political parties and civil society activists, to advocate for the appointment of an independent panel. This panel should comprise both internationally and nationally renowned Information Technology experts tasked with conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the internet backbone's technical capacity to handle the entire election process's demands.

A key point of inquiry should be whether the existing internet infrastructure was adequately equipped to support the volume of election-related communications. If limitations were known, the pertinent question arises as to why such critical information was not communicated to the Election Commission, the media, and the public at large. The investigation should delve into whether there were any efforts to augment capacity in anticipation of the increased load and scrutinize the extent of consultation between the Election Commission and PTA regarding the online election system's readiness.

To be continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir



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

Rigging Allegations and Anti-Establishment Narrative - II

The spread of anti-country and anti-army propaganda carries significant implications for national security and sovereignty. False information or inflammatory rhetoric may incite violence, civil unrest, or other forms of instability, posing a threat to public safety and order. Furthermore, propaganda campaigns aimed at undermining the legitimacy of a nation's government or institutions can erode public trust and confidence, impairing the government's ability to govern effectively and defend against external threats.

Moreover, anti-country propaganda can strain diplomatic relations and exacerbate tensions between nations. Foreign adversaries may employ propaganda to discredit rival governments, justify aggressive actions, or undermine international cooperation. Additionally, the dissemination of false information or provocative rhetoric can exacerbate misunderstandings, escalate conflicts, and impede efforts to foster dialogue and collaboration on global challenges.

Addressing the threat of anti-country and anti-army propaganda requires a concerted effort by government, civil society, and technology companies to promote media literacy, fact-checking, and critical thinking skills among citizens. Additionally, robust regulatory measures and international cooperation are essential to combat the spread of disinformation online and hold malicious

actors accountable for their actions. By cultivating a more informed and resilient public, society can better defend against the corrosive effects of anti-country and anti-army propaganda and uphold the values of truth, democracy, and respect for national sovereignty.

In an increasingly interconnected world where information traverses borders effortlessly, the rise of anti-country propaganda has emerged as a formidable influence capable of sowing discord, escalating tensions, and destabilizing both nations and international relations. This deceitful form of misinformation, often propagated by adversarial actors, extremist factions, or foreign adversaries, carries profound ramifications for societies, governance structures, and global harmony.

Anti-country and anti-army propaganda aims to fracture the fundamental fabric of a nation's identity and solidarity, deliberately seeking to divide communities along ethnic, religious, or ideological lines. Through the dissemination of false narratives, incitement of animosity, and cultivation of mistrust, propagandists undermine the social cohesion that binds societies, fostering internal discord and weakening national resilience against external manipulation and interference. Such campaigns pose a significant threat to democratic principles and governance frameworks by eroding public confidence in elected representatives, democratic processes, and the rule of law. By fostering public unrest, undermining democratic

norms, and impeding effective governance, propagandists seek to delegitimize governments and undermine the very foundations of democratic governance.

Anti-country propaganda frequently exploits pre-existing ethnic, religious, or sectarian tensions within societies, exacerbating grievances and inciting intercommunal violence. Through the demonization of minority groups, dissemination of hate speech, and promotion of divisive ideologies, propagandists deepen societal fissures, exacerbating conflicts and directly imperiling peace, stability, and human rights. Furthermore, the escalation of ethnic or religious violence can engender destabilizing repercussions that extend beyond national borders, precipitating regional instability and insecurity.

Certain sectors have begun suggesting that the recent elections indicate a prevailing sentiment against the Pakistan Army, arguing that the majority of voters supported a particular party despite various constraints. They contend that these results signify a populace in favor of said party and in defiance of the establishment. However, these assertions are unsubstantiated and diverge from reality.

To begin with, independent candidates ran as such and should not be conflated with any specific party. Therefore, attributing the votes garnered by independents to a particular party is logically flawed and lacks merit. Even if we were to entertain this argument, the combined votes of all other political parties surpass those of independent candidates, undermining the notion that a majority of the populace opposes the Army or establishment.

To be continued

Post Election: Scene & Behind the Scene - II

Tazeen Akhtar

PPP is satisfied in Sindh for third consecutive 5 years rule in the province. Certainly MQM of Karachi with 17 most important seats will go with PMLN because they have the least to secure from PPP in Sindh while PPP does not need any ally to establish gov there.

Here very important to note is, PMLN, PPP, MQM, JUI will get more seats of reserve and minorities but IND (PTI) can not avail this opportunity. They are not a registered party. This will bring them down in number game.

Other main stream parties are already mindful that PTI can not be convinced to form a coalition and PTI chairman himself made it clear not to make a coalition with PMLN or PPP. This has brought PMLN and PPP closer with MQM, JUI, PMLQ etc to move forward for a coalition in the center.

Here, first Nawaz Sharif and then Army Chief issued statements about national unity type things in the formation of the central government.

Nawaz Sharif in a statement aired after election and termed as winning speech that PTI criticized, called his party 'biggest' in the elections 2024. He invited all the political parties to sit together and form a government to pull Pakistan out of the difficulties.

"We can't hold elections again and again; every one should together play a positive role in bringing Pakistan out of this crisis, Nawaz said.

General Asim Mumin's words' Pakistan's diverse polity and pluralism will

be well-represented by a unified government of all democratic forces imbued with national purpose. Elections and democracy are means to serve people of Pakistan and not ends in themselves. The nation needs stable hands and a healing touch to move on from the politics of anarchy and polarisation which does not suit a progressive country of 250 Million people."

Question rises, when you call for a national government with all parties on board, what do you mean actually? It means the government formed after election according to results is not a national gov?

The big wigs should think upon it what message they are conveying to a nation that already has lost trust in all so called democratic processes especially the general elections. First of all, they need to omit the word General before the Election. I suggest the title "National Election".

IND (PTI) as mentioned, they are not political party, legally they can not claim reserve seats, first they have to form a group and name the head of the group. If they are confident of majority, they need to name the PM candidate of their group.

More notable than that is, the meeting of Raja Nasir Abbas, the head of Majlis e Wahdat ul Muslimeen (MWM) mainly a Shia org turned political party, in the jail with Imran Khan only few days before than election. Astonishingly MWM won a seat in National Assembly that was not expected alone by MWM. Hameed Hussain of MWM was supported by PTI in NA-37, Parachinar, Kurram District, a highly sensitive region with respect to terrorists attacks as well as Shia Sunni

differences. Here comes more interesting part of Pakistani election. IND (PTI) can join MWM to become a registered political party that can pave the way for them to have reserve seats, enhancing the number in the assembly. But here two points are central to ponder upon. What constitution or laws say in this format, having no example in the history? What difference will it make when still the number 172 is not reachable? Barrister Gauhar said in the press conference "We are ready to sit in the opposition if failed to fetch the required number."

Finally, in the scenario of above mentioned developments, Bilawal's press conference has made clarity on the next political picture. Shehbaz is Prime Minister, Asif Ali Zardari is President and Maryam is CM Punjab. PPP will have Chairman Senate and Speaker as well. This will ease PPP with no responsibility in the center but still having hold on important gates in the way to legislation.

Imran Khan is being convinced by who, it has no need to mention, everyone knows there is some understanding already developed that was seen in shape of declaring Bani Gala as sub jail instead of sending Mrs. Imran to real jail. Everything is not on the screen, something is also cooked behind the scene. Let's see when it is cooked and we are made to eat in next 5 years.

Writer is senior Journalist, Analyst, broadcaster and Editor Monthly International Magazine "Pakistan in the World". He worked as editor in Daily Khabrain, Daily Jinnah and Daily Azkar. He can be reached at tazeen303@gmail.com

Steps taken under SIFC yielding positive results: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said the measures taken under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIF) were yielding the positive results as the caretaker government made all-out efforts to revive the national economy. "The caretaker government took steps to create a conducive environment for business, facilitate the role of the private sector in the country's development and increase tax revenue," he said while talking to a delegation of Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP) and industrialists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by Senator Nauman Wazir, at the Prime Minister Office.



State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed, Federal Bureau of Revenue Chairman and secretaries of the ministries concerned were also present in the meeting, a PM Office news release said. Through its policies, the PM said, the government was facilitating the private sector to increase

exports and employment opportunities. He hoped that the next elected government would continue the journey of providing employment opportunities to the people, and overall economic progress by further increasing industrial development and investment in the country with the continuation of policies. PM Kakar commended the efforts of the caretaker finance minister, FBR chairman and all the concerned for reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for the prudent economic policies. He also appreciated the business community and investors for extending support in difficult times, saying it were the industrialists who had restored invest-

ment in the government polices and played their role in the development of national economy. Referring to the FBR reforms and the SIFC's establishment, PM Kakar said it was the best time to invest in diverse fields. The companies associated with the steel industry should prioritize investment for the development of new iron ore deposits in the country. In the meeting, the participants paid tribute to the caretaker government for its efforts for facilitating investment in the country, resolving the problems of industrialists, reforming the FBR and taking measures to restore the economy.

The meeting was informed in detail about the large scale industry of steel and copper in Pakistan, the fourth largest export sector, of which copper exports volume alone was \$1.35 billion in the last financial year. The meeting was further apprised that the annual per capita consumption of steel in Pakistan was 40 kilograms, which showed a vast potential for development in the sector.

Life changing medical aid to Pakistan and awareness of impact of air pollution on health



Aziz Ur Rehman Mujahid

GUJRAT: Midland International Aid Trust (MIAT) and Miss Pakistan - Shafina Patel Shah is a national ambassador to the Pakistan Cleft Lip and Palate Association. They arrive on the 15th February and will be here till the 24th. Shafina is very passionate about the environment and helping the poor. She has joined the professor to witness the fantastic life changing work that he has initiated and has been part of, for over 15 years. They will be hosted by the very able Dr Ijaz Bashir whose charity Aisha Bashir Trust partners MIAT and has been instrumental in delivering many projects.

Professor Gatrud is well known globally for his humanitarian work in 23 countries. Here, in Pakistan in 2016 he completed 2 floors of the Cleft Hospital in Gujarat to help set up the nationally famous centre that provides life changing operations at an international level with a complete package of dental, hearing and speech therapy for these children. He will be joining the Cleft team from the UK who arrive on the 13th February. His work in Pakistan spans from 2009 and varies from providing 10,000 tents to victims of the devastating floods in 2014 to provision of hundreds of water well around the country and thousands of cataract operations. His charity built 100 houses after the recent floods in 2022.

Over the years he has been instrumental in providing education not only to school children in many parts of the world but also to health professionals and will again do so on his visit on this occasion.

In addition, through his charity he built the limb centre in Gujarat where now hundreds of club foot children are seen and managed. All services provided by MIAT through Aisha Bashir Trust are free for the poor. He will partake in surgical activities and open the Club Foot Centre officially on the 23rd February.

He is equally passionate about the Environment and set up WASUP - World Against Single Use Plastic - now present in over 50 countries. WASUP also incorporates the impact of climate change. His message on his visit is to highlight the impact of air pollution on health of all organs in the body. He will highlight the dangers of cooking indoors and the impact of smoking on children. On the 21st there will be a launch of his book 'The Story of Three Plastic bottles' that has been translated in Urdu. This book will be distributed free to many schools in Pakistan. With Miss Pakistan he will be giving many talks on climate change including one to the University of Gujarat on the 20th February.

Miss Pakistan will be part of the book Launch and also the opening of the Club Foot centre. Shafina will also accompany the professor to Kashmir to visit a school where MIAT has provided playground equipment such as swings for children with special needs.

In summary, Prof Gatrud has helped lives of thousands in Pakistan in the process helping them get off the streets where they would beg and possibly be trafficked to a life where they can be educated and be accepted by society. We look forward to his visit with Miss Pakistan.

Protein Day 2024: 'Right To Protein' announces 'Solve with Protein' as the theme for the year

PPA

ISLAMABAD: #ProteinDay, now in its fifth year, calls on individuals, businesses, and industry leaders to boost awareness about the vital role of protein in nutrition security and enhance accessibility to protein-rich foods as health solutions for citizens.

Karachi: 'Right To Protein', a dedicated awareness initiative powered by the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), unveils "Solve With Protein" as the theme for Protein Day 2024, to be celebrated on 27 February, marking its fifth year. The initiative calls on individuals, businesses, and industry leaders to unite in addressing the surging demand for protein-rich foods, delivering protein solutions that are accessible to citizens across Pakistan and the larger South Asia region.

The lack of understanding about protein as an essential macronutrient leads to inadequate levels of protein consumption. The Protein Day 2024 theme of "Solve with Protein" urges brands, thought leaders, community and health influencers, media, and citizens to amplify the message on protein's pivotal role in fostering a healthier and more resilient population. It also aims to drive conversations and highlight solutions for citizens to stay informed of accessible protein food sources that can be included in daily diets and further the efforts to make 'nutrition security' a reality.

"While past governments have made some progress with several initiatives, we must collectively strive to increase awareness about nutrition and food security by incorporating adequate levels of protein into our daily diets. Recognizing protein as a fundamental macronutrient offers a pathway to address various health challenges, foster resilience, and contribute to the overall well-being of Pakistan. The #SolveWithProtein theme aims to unite professionals like doctors, nutritionists, health and fitness influencers, and others, fostering awareness about protein as a pivotal solution for improved health," said Fareeha Talha, CEO, Fartal Pharmaceuticals, Vice President of the World Poultry Science Association, Nominee for HungerCon 2023.

Public outcry leads to Secretary Culture's visit after allegations of corruption and misconduct in Hyderabad

TFD Report

HYDERABAD: After public protests against Sindhoo Chandio, Secretary Culture visited Hyderabad. People piled up complaints of corruption and misconduct in front of the Secretary Culture. Sindhoo Chandio and Secretary Culture also walked inside the shrine wearing shoes. Under a well-thought conspiracy to cover up extensive corruption in developmental projects under their supervision in Hyderabad, with the intention to spread religious discord, Deputy Director of Antiquities Department Hyderabad, Sindhoo Chandio, after staging drama at shrines and harassing visitors, forcibly removed visitors from the mausoleum of Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro, locked the mausoleum, extorted money from visitors through personal employees, and after humiliating several dignitaries on behalf of Sindhoo Chandio, public protests ensued. As a result, today Secretary Culture



Khalid Chachar visited the mausoleum

of Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro, and the officials of the shrine committee and local residents informed him of their issues. Officials of the shrine committee not only presented a heap of complaints against Sindhoo Chandio regarding his misconduct, bad manners, and corruption but also showed videos to the Secretary Culture depicting the mausoleum being opened at various times of the night and money being extorted from visitors by the personal employee of Sindhoo Chandio during Fajr prayers. However, no official action was taken against Deputy Director of Antiquities Department Hyderabad Sindhoo Chandio regarding the incident. The surprising fact is that during the tour of the inner part of the mausoleum, all the visitors and officials of the shrine committee entered barefoot, but Sindhoo Chandio, without showing any respect, continued his theatrics of disrespect not only for himself but also for the Secretary Culture, making him also walk around the mausoleum barefoot.

Iran claims Antarctica ownership defying global treaty, preps for military operation on South Pole

Iran's Navy commander declared Antarctica as the regime's property, asserting plans for a military operation on the South Pole, Fox News reported.

The announcement, made on a televised broadcast last fall, emphasised Iran's intention to raise its flag and conduct both military and scientific activities in the region.

"We have property rights in the South Pole. We have a plan to raise our flag there and carry out military and scientific work," stated Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani in late September.

This declaration has sparked concerns, especially in the context of recent Iranian-backed militias' actions that resulted in the death of three US soldiers in Jordan.

Questions arose about whether the unfreezing of \$6 billion in Iranian funds by the US could potentially be used for establishing a base in Antarctica.

However, a US State Department spokesperson clarified that these funds are strictly earmarked for humanitarian goods and cannot be utilised for activities in Antarctica.

Despite growing tensions globally, including the Iran-backed Hamas massacre in southern Israel, the Biden administration released \$6 billion in sanctions relief. Iran's President, Ebrahim Raisi, challenged the restrictions on fund usage, asserting the regime's prerogative to allocate the funds as needed.

The potential expansion of Iran's military presence into Antarctica raises concerns about violations of multilateral conventions. Yonah Jeremy Bob, a military and intelligence analyst, emphasised the risks associated with Iran's aggressive actions, urging the US and its allies to take the nuclear threat more seriously.

While Iran's naval ambitions extend beyond the Middle East, with previous reports indicating plans for a military presence at the Panama Canal, the international community remains vigilant.

The intricacies of claiming an interest in Antarctica, as highlighted by experts, raise questions about the recognition of such endeavours under existing treaties.

Spring Festival

People perform dances of the Miao ethnic group during an event celebrating the Spring Festival in Gandong Township, Rongshui Miao Autonomous County, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Feb. 14, 2024. People across China are enjoying the ongoing Spring Festival holiday in various ways.



Photo: Xinhua/Huang Xiaobang

Tamped redefines the sports and entertainment landscape in Pakistan

PPA

PAKISTAN:--In a ground breaking move, tapmad, Pakistan's leading OTT platform has further solidified its position as the home of sports, securing a multi-year rights deal with Sony and various other content rights aggregators for a myriad of thrilling sports events, cricket boards, and top-notch football streams. The streaming service is set to redefine the sports and entertainment landscape, offering an unparalleled and enticing experience to viewers all over Pakistan.

This move highlights tapmad's commitment to its

subscribers as the go-to hub for sports fans, offering an exclusive, ad-free, and HD content experience. As sports streaming continues to evolve, tapmad stands out as a trailblazer, offering a user-friendly interface and seamless experience where the viewers come first. Whether you're a cricket devotee, a football fanatic, or an entertainment enthusiast, tapmad's diverse content lineup guarantees an entertaining and engaging immersion for subscribers.

tapmad also offers its users an ultimate entertainment extravaganza, delivering an unmatched selection of over 200 action-packed movies, blockbuster hits,

live channels, and kids' favorites. From high-octane action flicks to family-friendly adventures, tapmad caters to every preference and age group across all genres.

With this bold expansion, tapmad viewers are guaranteed content-packed years of streaming. There are some of the multi-year rights that tapmad has successfully secured:

Cricket Series: All Australia home series from 2024 till 2030, All England home series from 2024 till 2028, All Sri Lanka home series from 2024 till 2027, All Afghanistan home series from 2024 till 2027, All India home series from 2024

till 2028, PSL (Pakistan Super League)-Season 9 & 10, IPL (Indian Premier League) - from 2024 till 2027, Bangladesh Premier League For the year 2024, WPL (Women Premier League) - from 2024 till 2027, The Hundred from 2024 till 2028, Vitality Blast from 2024 till 2028.

Football: EPL (English Premier League) for 2024/25, Serie A for the year 2023/24, Bundesliga from 2024 till 2026/27, UEFA Europa League from 2024 till 2026/27, UEFA Champions League from 2024 till 2026/27, FA Cup (Football Association Challenge Cup) - for the year 2024, UEFA Euros



from 2024 till 2026/27, UEFA Nations League from 2024 till 2026/27. Others: US Open from 2024 till 2026, Australia open from 2024 till 2026, French Open for the year 2024, Laver Cup for the year 2024, All UFC fights from 2024 till 2029.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
61,020.05	62,153.84
Day's High	Day's Low
62,394.25	60,926.85
Index Value	Change
8,125,807,060	-1133.79
Percentage	Time
-1.82%	15 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,597.53	+29.13
Percentage	Time
+0.38%	15 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,626.77	+202.50
Percentage	Time
+0.53%	15 Feb, 12:38 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
37,703.32	-260.65
Percentage	Time
-0.69%	14 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180	182
Bahrain Dinar	743.12	751.12
Canadian Dollar	206.5	208.5
China Yuan	38.84	39.24
Danish Krone	40.24	40.64
Euro	301	304
Hong Kong Dollar	35.74	36.09
Indian Rupee	3.48	3.59
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	906.33	915.33
Malaysian Ringgit	58.6	59.2
New Zealand \$	170.1	172.1
Norwegians Krone	26.43	26.73
Omani Riyal	725.75	733.75
Qatari Riyal	76.76	77.46
Saudi Riyal	74.2	75
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.85	27.15
Swiss Franc	315.64	318.14
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	76.55	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	352.5	355.5
US Dollar	279.15	281.95

Unpopular elections further complicated political landscape

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Thursday that investing billions of rupees in conducting controversial elections did not help anyone in the country.

He said more instability and nationwide protests since the polls will cost the government billions of dollars.

He also said that the economy would be destroyed and the country would be chaotic if the voters' choice wasn't honored and justice wasn't done.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement released today that there is more political instability and doubt now than there was



before the election.

After the elections, protests occurred all over the country. If something isn't done immediately to improve things, the economy will fail,

and the government will descend into chaos.

According to the business leader, it is getting clearer when the new government will be formed, and foreign exchange reserves can only cover six weeks of imports. On the other hand, Pakistan has to pay back \$45 billion in loans over two years, which is a very tough task.

He said that during the recent election, it was not difficult to guess that internet and mobile services outage was intended to suppress public opinion. Moreover, the 72-hour delay in the election results was another proof of rigging, which has stoked unrest.

He said the elections could not be called transparent from any angle, so most parties and candidates protest against them.

After the PTI and other parties, the Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F), which was considered an ally of PNL-N and PP, rejected the election results and announced nationwide protests against the alleged rigging in the February 8 polls.

Controversial elections have attracted attention outside the country. The US, UK, EU, and some other countries have expressed reservations and called for streamlining according to the law.

He said the UN has also discussed the elections and called for justice, which prefers avoiding such controversies, which must be a matter of concern for our policymakers.

Most voters believe their mandate has been stolen, and international criticism will affect Pakistan's global image.

Construction

ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in construction work of public complex for people at Supreme Court in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan's economy in shambuck due to high gas, electricity prices: Sultan Malik

PPA

MULTAN: Qaumi Tajir Itahad Pakistan's central president Sultan Mahmood Malik said, "The government is continuously increasing the prices of electricity, gas and petrol, is pushing Pakistan's economy towards destruction. By accepting the tough conditions of the IMF, today Pakistan is on the verge of collapse. The country that has happy people is the one that progresses. Today, the gas bills have forced people to stop using gas, and they are cooking on wood at home. Sultan Mahmood Malik further said: The Economic Coordination Committee, on the demand of the IMF, increased the gas prices by 67% from February 1, exacerbating the problems of traders and the public. He said, first, more than 80% of Pakistan's domestic small industries have closed down, and large industries are unable to produce their products due to expensive gas and electricity, forcing traders and the public to buy more foreign goods



than Pakistani products. Due to incomplete expenses, factory owners are laying off a significant number of employees, leading to widespread unemployment. The outgoing government is slaughtering traders and the public with the IMF's sword. We demand that if happiness is to be brought to the country, first abolish gas and electricity bills and taxes. Otherwise, nothing will be gained in the country except hunger and bankruptcy. Sultan Mahmood Malik further said: Do not create problems for the incoming government. If the immediate increase in gas and electricity prices is not withdrawn, traders will be forced to go on a nationwide strike.

METRO Pakistan Join Hands with Sindh Food Authority for Training on Food Safety and Hygiene

PPA

KARACHI: METRO, the leading international wholesale company, in collaboration with the Sindh Food Authority (SFA) conducted a day long training session titled 'Food Safety and Hygiene Training for Food Handlers', in Karachi recently. The session, attended by more than 200 food handlers, was designed to train the participants to handle food items according to the principles of hygiene.

The chief guest of the occasion DG-SFA Agha Fakhar Hussain was joined by senior team of SFA including Director Masood Bhutto, Dr. Ghufraan, Chef Muqem Soomro, along with the senior management of METRO Pakistan, including Zohaib Jamil, Divisional Manager QA, Imran Shamim, Manager Corporate Communications, Saultat Hussain Regional Manager QA, among others.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. M. Thiru, Senior Head of Operations, METRO Pakistan, said; "METRO as a responsible corporate citizen, is always open to provide



support to the health and hygiene related initiatives, and this cooperation with the Sindh Food Authority is part of the same thought process. We hope that our contribution will help spread the right knowledge to these young professionals and will enable them in ensuring the food handling, safety and hygiene protocols."

Sharing his satisfaction Agha Fakhar Hussain, Director General, Sindh Food

Authority, said "In every field training is a must to enhance capacity building and through this training food handlers will be able to handle food items according to hygiene principles."

The DG SFA thanked the management of METRO Pakistan for their support in conducting the successful session and presented the attendees with the certificates.

Naseem Shah to Bowl Over Tech Enthusiasts as the new Face of TECNO SPARK 20 Series!

PPA

LAHORE: TECNO, the leading smartphone brand in Pakistan, has just announced its brand ambassador for the SPARK 20 series. The collaboration with the renowned Pakistani cricketer perfectly resonates with TECNO's tagline, 'Stop at Nothing,' emphasizing the commitment to delivering innovative products and excellence.

The brand has chosen Naseem as the ambassador for the SPARK 20 series due to his dynamic style, youthful energy, hard work, consistent progress in his professional field, resilience in the face of challenges, and a positive attitude toward life.

"It is a matter of great honor and pleasure to join hands with TECNO, a name that shares my



commitment to excellence. Over time, TECNO has emerged as a prominent technology brand, known for offering quality products with stylish designs and innovative features, all at competitive prices. I certainly can't wait to try out all the new additions to the SPARK 20 series. Together, we aim to redefine the smartphone experience and inspire consumers to 'Stop at Nothing' in their

pursuit of innovation and quality", Naseem Shah.

With the aim of strengthening TECNO's standing among smartphone consumers in Pakistan, Naseem Shah will play a pivotal role in spearheading the marketing efforts for the series. His influence and appeal will be leveraged to connect with the right audience and create a significant impact in the mobile phone market.

TECNO Pakistan says, "We welcome Naseem Shah as the brand ambassador for our new SPARK 20 Series. His strong athletic style and dedication to sports mirror our commitment to delivering cutting-edge technological advancements. Naseem's compelling persona and charismatic charm will transform this ambassadorship into an interesting collaboration for the year 2024."

Naseem Shah will be the face of all major events and campaigns for the SPARK 20 series throughout the year. According to reports, the brand has exciting collaborations and surprises in store for its audience, making Naseem an integral part of this journey. We're super excited to see what cool stuff they have got lined up for us this year!

Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders protests 65% increase in gas prices

PPA

HYDERABAD: President of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry, Muhammad Farooq Shaikhani, has strongly criticized the Economic Coordination Committee's decision to implement a 65% increase in gas prices. He deemed it disastrous for the industries and questioned the moral justification of the caretaker federal government, especially after the 2024 elections.

Shaikhani highlighted that the additional burden of 242 billion rupees imposed on consumers is solely to comply with IMF conditions, emphasizing the adverse impact on businesses and the public. The revised gas prices, reaching Rs.100 per MMBTU for protected consumers, Rs.300 per MMBTU for non-protect-

ed consumers and Rs.900 per MMBTU for bulk consumers, are seen as detrimental to the already struggling industries in Pakistan.

The President expressed deep concern for Hyderabad's renowned glass bangle industry, which had already faced challenges such as gas load shedding and previous price hikes, leading to the closure of 80% of factories and unemployment for over 2 lac individuals. Shaikhani fears that the remaining factories will also shut down with the latest 65% increase, exacerbating unemployment in Hyderabad.

Shaikhani asserted that the government's focus should be on providing essential facilities to promote industry growth, rather than escalating gas and electricity prices without proper planning.

CCP approves two mergers in Balochistan's mineral sector

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval to two mergers in the mining of copper and minerals sector in Balochistan. In this regard, CCP approved the acquisition of a cumulative 66.66% shareholding in M/s. National Resources (Private) Limited by two public listed companies.

National Resources (Private) Limited is a private limited company engaged in the exploration, survey, extraction, excavation, mining, and boring of minerals. Its primary purpose is the potential development of the mineral sector in Balochistan. The infusion of investment in

this sector will give a boost to mineral exploration.

M/s. Lucky Cement Limited, a public listed company engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of cement, sent a pre-merger application to acquire 33.33% shares in National Resources (Private) Limited from M/s. Y. B. Pakistan Limited.

Similarly, M/s. Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, a public listed company, engaged in the manufacturing, producing, buying, selling, importing, and exporting of fertilizers and chemicals, sent a pre-merger application to acquire 33.33% shareholding in National Resources (Private) Limited from M/s. Reliance Commodities (Private) Limited.

PayPak debit card-holders to enjoy 15% discount on PLA flights

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A state-of-the-art Pakistan's first and the only domestic payment scheme (DPS) is ensuring the utmost security of payment not only for ATM for cash withdrawal but also at POS terminals while shopping at all merchant outlets across Pakistan, MGMM communication link Seema Sultan Ali Kaswani said on Thursday.

Pakistan's two flagship institutions, PIA along with ILINK had signed an agreement for joint promotions and marketing of each other's, she said while talking to a Private news channel.

Through this strategic alliance, PIA will provide attractive discounts on all international and domestic ticket purchases by the PayPak cardholders and loyalty program members, she further mentioned.

PIA would also make its inventory available on Golooto App with attractive incentives and benefits, she highlighted.

Under this alliance PayPak and PayPak UnionPay cardholders will be able to enjoy 15% discount on all international and domestic travel tickets, she added.

Replying to a question, she explained that PayPak is owned and operated by ILINK and was launched under the aegis of the State Bank of Pakistan to spur financial inclusion and digitization across the country.

Customers can easily access funds in their account through PayPak debit card that is accepted at all ATMs across Pakistan and at various restaurants, shops, malls and e-commerce websites, she added.

She said all transactions are locally Routed within Pakistan keeping customers' personal information safe and secure as there is no need for cross-border transfer of any data.

To another question, she said PayPak has achieved tremendous growth in a short span of time and the alliance with our national flag carrier is another step towards making PayPak card the best debit card scheme in Pakistan.

It strengthened our commitment to support the agenda of incentivizing digitization by bringing unique products for Banks' customers, she added.

PCB Management terminates fast bowler Haris Rauf's central contract

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Fast bowler Haris Rauf has been penalised by Pakistan Cricket Board, following a probe into his refusal to join Pakistan's Test squad for the tour of Australia 2023-24.

After a thorough hearing process conducted by a PCB committee and taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders involved in the matter, Haris' central contract has been terminated from December 1, 2023 and no NOC (No objection certificate) to play



any foreign league will be granted up to June 30, 2024.

The PCB management provided a chance for a personal hearing to Haris in compliance with the principles of natural justice on 30 January 2024 and his response was found unsatisfactory.

The PCB states that playing for Pakistan is the ultimate honour and privilege for any sportsperson. Refusal to be part of Pakistan's Test squad in the absence of any medical report or justifiable reason is a material violation of the central contract.

Karachi Kings on the hunt for their second title in HBL PSL 9

Kiran Asim / Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: The HBL PSL ninth edition is around the corner with some of the leading stars of limited-overs cricket raring to light up cricket grounds in Pakistan. With a new coach and captain, Karachi Kings enter HBL PSL 9 with oodles of optimism and they'll show faith in their local talent as well as global star power to rebound. Karachi Kings will get their campaign underway on 18 February against Multan Sultans at the picturesque Multan Cricket Stadium.

They've snapped up West Indies superstar Kieron Pollard in their squad who will try to swing their fortunes with his all-round capabilities. They have also secured the services of Australia all-rounder Daniel Sams as well as retained seasoned campaigner Shoaib Malik. Pace bowling is further stacked with Mir Hamza and Anwar Ali who will provide squad depth given their vast domestic experience and international exposure as well.

Karachi Kings managed to bag only three wins in the 2023 season and despite having the firepower in their ranks to spring more surprises, they could not coalesce as a unit.

The team's ethos includes resilience and a fighting spirit, and they'll be aiming to rejuvenate this season and give Karachi fans a lot to cheer about. The 2020 HBL PSL champions are determined to hit the ground running early on as the highly-experienced Shoaib Malik will be looking to shine at the twilight of his career.

Phil Simmons comes with a wealth of



coaching experience. He coached West Indies and is at present the head coach of Trinbago Knight Riders in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) and LA Knight Riders in Major League Cricket (MLC). "The decision to bring in Phil Simmons as head coach was influenced by his impressive credentials, including being a T20 World Cup-winning coach. His experience in guiding teams to success at the highest level adds a valuable dimension to our coaching setup, and we look forward to harnessing his expertise for a successful campaign in the upcoming HBL PSL edition and to build a team for the future", said Salman Iqbal, owner of Karachi Kings.

Kings retained Shan Masood as their captain who currently leads the Pakistan Test team. Karachi Kings' director Haider Azhar shed light on the decision to appoint Shan as skipper of the side. He said: "Securing Shan Masood for Karachi

Kings was nothing short of a coup for us. His leadership qualities and captaincy feats are well-documented and we are proud to have a local boy from Karachi lead the team. On a personal note, having worked closely with Shan in the past, I believe he is the ideal captain for our team that will be undergoing a transitional phase and we expect him to be central to our project."

On the objectives set for this year's HBL PSL, Haider Azhar said, "Our first objective for this year has been to set up a platform and building blocks for the future, all the while assembling a squad that would be competitive in the upcoming edition of HBL PSL. We have a healthy mix of experience and youth in our squad with five players under the age of 24 years, supported by seasoned campaigners and proven performers."

Salman Iqbal, highlighting the importance and progress of the HBL PSL, said:

"The progress of the HBL PSL over the years has been phenomenal, not only elevating the standard of T20 cricket but also playing a pivotal role in the development of Pakistani talent. The league has become a significant platform for showcasing local talent, providing them exposure and opportunities at the international level."

Talking about Karachi's fortunes for the upcoming season, Salman said, "Karachi Kings fans can anticipate a major turnaround this year. With a strategic rebuild, a balanced squad, experienced leadership, and a focus on exciting yet measured cricket, we are optimistic about our prospects in the upcoming season. The team is geared up for a competitive campaign, aiming to deliver performances that will make our fans proud and contribute to a successful journey in the ninth edition of HBL PSL."

Karachi Kings fixtures for HBL PSL 9

18 February v Multan Sultans, Multan Cricket Stadium
21 February v Peshawar Zalmi, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

24 February v Lahore Qalandars, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

28 February v Islamabad United, National Bank Stadium, Karachi

29 February v Quetta Gladiators, National Bank Stadium, Karachi

3 March v Multan Sultans, National Bank Stadium, Karachi

6 March v Quetta Gladiators, Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

7 March v Islamabad United, Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

9 March v Lahore Qalandars, National Bank Stadium, Karachi

Dubai Capitals sink Gulf Giants to join MI Emirates in ILT20 final

A Sports

SHARJAH: A combined bowling performance, followed by Leus du Plooy's blistering half-century stormed Dubai Capitals into the ILT20 final with a nine-wicket victory over Gulf Giants in the second Qualifier on Thursday.

Giants' captain James Vince's decision to bat first did not prove fruitful for his side as their batting lineup struggled against a disciplined Capitals' bowling unit and could register a modest total of 138/6 in the allotted overs.

Hard-hitting opener Usman Khan provided a flying start to the Giants with his 21-run cameo. But his departure in the third over ignited a top-order collapse which resulted in them slipping to 40/4 in 7.2 overs.

In-form Shimron Hetmyer joined skipper Vince in the middle but, he too, failed to settle and perished in the 11th over after scoring a run-a-ball eight.

Vince, who was waging a lone battle for his side, finally found subtle support at the other end in the form of his compa-



triot Chris Jordan.

The pair added an important 55 runs before the captain finally perished in the penultimate over.

Vince remained the top-scorer for the Giants with a gutsy 58. His 53-ball knock featured four boundaries and two sixes.

Meanwhile, Jordan carried his bat all the way through with a crucial 30. He conceded 29 deliveries and struck two boundaries and a six.

For the Capitals, Sikandar Raza, Haider Ali, Jason Holder, Olly Stone and Scott Kuggeleijn made one scalp each.

In return, the Capitals comfortably chased down the 139-run target for the loss of just one wicket and 25 balls to spare, courtesy of a strong start provided by their openers.

Leus du Plooy and Tom Banton combined to add 98 runs for the first wicket, putting the Capitals in touching distance.

The opening stand remained majorly dominated by du Plooy while Banton was rotating the strike before finally falling victim to Liam Dawson in the 12th over after a run-a-ball 38. His knock featured four boundaries.

Meanwhile, du Plooy stood his ground firm and partnered with Tom Abell (20*) to steer the Capitals over the line with an unbeaten 41-run partnership.

Leus du Plooy top-scored for the Capitals with a 40-ball 63 which featured five boundaries and three sixes.

Dubai Capitals will now take on table-toppers MI Emirates in the ILT20 final, scheduled to take place on Saturday at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Rohit, Jadeja tons put India in command against England



A Sports

RAJKOT: Skipper Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja scored centuries and recovered India to 326/5 at Stumps on Day 1 of the ongoing third Test against England here on Thursday.

Opting to bat first, the hosts found themselves in deep trouble as their top-order batters Yashasvi Jaiswal (10), Shubman Gill (0) and Rajat Patidar (5) fell cheaply.

Their back-to-back dismissals had India reeling at 33/3 inside the first overs.

Following the slump, all-rounder Jadeja joined his captain Sharma in the middle and the duo launched an astounding recovery.

Jadeja and Sharma soaked the pressure exerted by the aggressive visitors and kept the scoreboard ticking.

They added a mammoth 204 runs in their exquisite partnership with Sharma bringing up his 11th century soon after the Tea break.

The marathon stand was the hosts' first century-plus partnership and the highest so far by either India or England in the ongoing five-match series, currently squared at 1-1.

Rohit Sharma fell in the final session off Mark Wood, falling into the short-ball plan set up by England. He remained the top-scorer for India with 131 which featured 14 boundaries and three sixes.

Following Sharma's dismissal came India's emotional debutant Sarfaraz Khan.

The right-handed batter announced himself in style, smashing regular boundaries and pushing England onto the backfoot.

He put together a one-sided 77-run stand with Jadeja, scoring 80 per cent of the runs.

Sarfaraz had an agonizing end to his sensational knock as a mix-up, followed by a direct hit from Wood, resulted in him packing.

He smashed nine boundaries and a six on his way to a 66-ball 62.

Ravindra Jadeja brought up a well-crafted century in the dying minutes of Thursday's action and celebrated by swinging the bat in his trademark sword dance.

He remained unbeaten on 110 alongside Kuldeep Yadav (1*) and will now resume India's first innings on Day 2.

Mark Wood was the pick of the bowlers for England, picking up three wickets while Hartley made one scalp.

Kylian Mbappe tells PSG directors he plans to leave: source



France captain Kylian Mbappe has told officials at Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) that he intends to leave when his contract expires at the end of the season, a source close to the Ligue 1 champions said on Thursday.

The 25-year-old, who arrived in Paris from Monaco in 2017, had extended his contract in 2022 until 2024 but last summer declined to activate a clause allowing him to stay another year at PSG.

Mbappe has been widely tipped to move to Real Madrid and, according to a source close to the matter, has already entered negotiations with the Spanish giants.

"The terms of the departure have yet to be fully agreed," the source said, adding that the club and Mbappe will make an official statement "when everything is finalised in the next few months".

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PSG declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

Kylian Mbappe will leave PSG on a free transfer but the blow to the club will be softened by an agreement they reached last summer which will see the player waive bonuses amounting to around 60 to 70 million euros (\$65.6 million to \$76.6 million).

After seven seasons at PSG, Kylian Mbappe, the club's all-time top scorer, looks set to seal a move to Real Madrid, the club that the player has dreamt of since he was a child.

Real have made no secret of their desire to bring him to the Santiago Bernabeu. In 2019, 2021 and 2022, club president Florentino Perez considered signing him, only to be rebuffed each time.

Sarfaraz Khan says 'father's dream' fulfilled after India debut

Sports Desk

LAHORE: India's Sarfaraz Khan on Thursday said his Test debut has been a dream fulfilled for his father after he impressed with an attacking 62 against England in the third match.

A prolific run-getter in Indian domestic cricket, Sarfaraz got his Test cap from former captain Anil Kumble with his teary-eyed father, Naushad Khan, and wife looking on in Rajkot.

Sarfaraz made the most with his 48-ball fifty to take the attack to the opposition bowlers and shine on a day of centuries by skipper Rohit Sharma (131) and Ravindra Jadeja (110 not out).

"I felt really happy," Sarfaraz told reporters.

"Coming to the ground for the first time and got the cap in front of my

father. I was six years old when he started my cricket," the 26-year-old said.

"It was my dream to play for the Indian team in front of him. It was a dream to play for India during his lifetime."

Sarfaraz, often criticised for being overweight, has been knocking on the selectors' doors for more than three years while scoring in the domestic Ranji Trophy and has a first-class average of over 69 in 45 matches and a best of 301 not out.

Sarfaraz Khan came out to bat after Rohit's departure and, following a nervous start, found his rhythm with boundaries to entertain the crowd.

He reached his 50 after a dominant show against the spinners and raised the bat to his family and the applauding dressing room.

"I was padded for almost four hours. I kept thinking that I have kept so much patience in life and there is no harm in keeping some more," he said.

"After I went in, was nervous for first few balls but I have practised and worked so hard that everything went well."

Sarfaraz burst into the limelight with a record 439 in school cricket in 2009 but his career later hit roadblocks and controversies.

Hailing from a small town in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, Sarfaraz was once charged with age-fudging after failing a bone test report and was later booted out of a training camp due to indiscipline.

He played the Indian Premier League and was once selected by Royal Challengers Bangalore, but could never cement his place in the XI and was also

advised by skipper Virat Kohli to lose weight.

But Sarfaraz, who plays domestic cricket for Mumbai, is happy to realise a dream his father had set out to achieve.

"It was my father's dream to play for India but unfortunately it couldn't happen due to some reasons and there wasn't much support from home then," Sarfaraz said.

"Then he worked very hard on me and is now doing on my brother. It was the proudest moment of my life."

Sarfaraz Khan was finally run out after a mix-up with Jadeja, but his innings left the opposition camp impressed.

"I thought Ben (Stokes) wanted to keep attacking fields so we could create a chance. And fair play to him, he had the courage to go over the top on a few



occasions," England assistant coach Paul Collingwood said.

"He sweeps really well and put the bowlers under pressure. On debut, it

National Idea Bank

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi in a group photo with the winners and organizers of the National Idea Bank Season III, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.

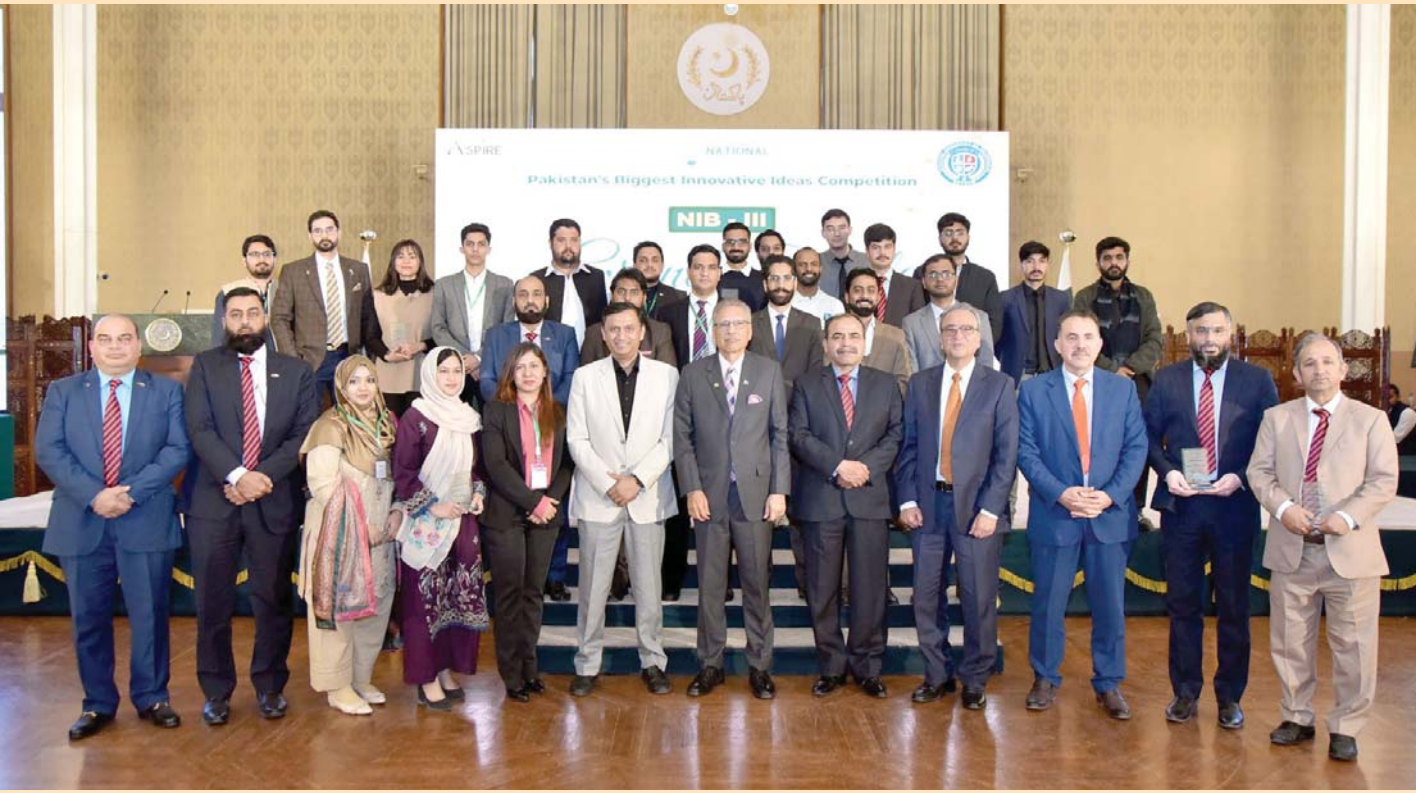


Photo: Online

President for enabling environment to nurture youth's intellectual abilities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi on Thursday called for providing an enabling environment for youth to nurture their intellectual abilities and benefit from their innovative ideas for the country's prosperity. He said that Pakistani youth were blessed with enormous potential, brilliant minds, and bright ideas, however, they needed an appropriate platform to transform their ideas into competitive and quality products to increase the country's exports and reduce imports.

The president gave these remarks while addressing the season finale of the National Idea Bank (NIB) Third Edition, organized by the

National University of Technology (NUTECH) in collaboration with ASPIRE Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The event was attended by members of the academia and business community.

Highlighting the importance of innovative and emerging technologies, the president said that he was a staunch supporter of promoting a knowledge-based economy and stressed the need for talent hunting through forums like the NIB for socio-economic development. He appreciated the role being played by NIB as a repository of innovative ideas that would serve as a catalyst for the country's transformation to a brighter and prosperous future. The

president said that innovative and technological solutions needed to be timely adopted for the country's development. He remarked that he had been advocating for internet voting for granting the right to vote to overseas Pakistanis as well as using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in Pakistan's electoral process. He further said that EVMs, if adopted, could have streamlined the electoral process.

The president also voiced concern over the elite capture of the system, which only safeguarded the interests of the elite and failed to address vital socio-economic challenges, particularly educating over 26 million out-of-school children. He also stressed the

need to focus on issues such as malnutrition and stunting as well as neonatal mortality rate. The president criticized the existing world order, based on vested interests, that failed to stop the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

Chairperson ASPIRE, Hassan Syed, briefed the audience about NIB as a platform for fostering innovation, creativity and collaboration to bring together leading minds, entrepreneurs and visionaries to explore ground-breaking ideas and initiatives aimed at shaping the future of Pakistan. Rector NUTECH, Lt Gen (R) Moazzam Ejaz, said that NIB was providing an excellent platform for youth

to transform their innovative ideas into successful products. He added that the support of universities, markets, businesses and local industries was essential for providing youth with a launching pad and mentorship. Project Director, Shahzana Memon, apprised that since NIB's inception, it had promoted more than 6000 business ideas and consequently, over 40 local start-ups had been established. She informed that in the 3rd Season of NIB, almost 2400 ideas were received out of which 67 ideas were selected as the national-level winners. The president also awarded recognition shields to the participants who came up with top-15 novel ideas in the NIB Season III finale.

PM AJK tasks AJK University to serve people in true sense

Bureau Report

BHIMBER: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that main aim of his life was to serve the people of the state in true sense. The Prime Minister Haq expressed these views while presiding over an extraordinary meeting held at DC Office here today. The meeting was attended by top officials of the government including Deputy Commissioner Mirza Arshad Mahmood Jaral, Registrar Bhimbar Univer-



sity Dr. Abid Hussain, Dr. Mohammad Saeem, Deputy Registrar Mohammad Naveed and others. The AJK premier was given a detailed brief-

ing regarding the administrative and financial matters of the University. Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that "University of Bhimber"

would be an ideal and exemplary institution in which students not only from AJK but also from all over Pakistan would aspire to get admission.

Providing quality education and health facilities to citizens, he said, was his government's top priority.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq expressed his profound grief and sorrow over the death of Niaz Pasha Jadoon, Chief Editor and Publisher of Shamal Group of Newspapers. In his condolence statement, the Prime Minister, while paying rich tribute to the journalistic services of the deceased, extended his heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family.

Pakistan's election process internal sovereign affair of country: FO

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's election process is an internal sovereign affair, emphasizing the nation's commitment to upholding its constitutional obligations.

Reacting to a statement issued by US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller regarding the general elections, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch emphasized Pakistan's democratic nature, highlighting the significant participation of millions of voters, including unprecedented numbers of women and young voters in the general elections.

She mentioned that Pakistan welcomed foreign observers, including a group from the Commonwealth, demonstrating the country's commitment to transparency in the electoral process. She said Pakistan takes its constitutional obligations seriously. It is the right of Pakistanis to enjoy freedom and democracy. She said any step that Pakistan takes in this regard is in conformity with its constitutional obligations and not influenced by external advice.

US calls for investigation of rigging allegations in Pakistan elections

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: The United States (US) has once again called for an investigation into allegations of alleged fraud in Pakistan elections.

Briefing the media in Washington on Wednesday, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said that the US thinks that an investigation of rigging is an appropriate step to take.

"That is our response to questions of irregularities not just in Pakistan, but when we see them anywhere in the world and we think that they're thoroughly investigated and resolved," he said.

A spokesman said the US was looking forward to working with new Pakistani elected government.

Miller said that the formation of a coalition government is ultimately an internal matter of Pakistan. Ultimately that's not a decision for the



United States to make. It's a decision for Pakistan to make.

Uncertainty looms over Pakistan's political future as none of the major political parties – PML-N, PPP or the PTI-backed independent candidates – secured a simple majority in the National Assembly in the February 8 general elections.

Political stakeholders were

making efforts to forge alliances and secure 169 seats in the 336-member lower house of parliament.

PTI-backed Independent candidates consolidated their lead in the general elections 2024 over mainstream political parties, especially in the National and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assemblies, throughout the result announcement process.

Steel industry acknowledges Prime Minister for assuring support

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP) on Thursday met with caretaker Prime Minister for Anwar ul Haq Kakar and acknowledged the government support for industry.

The delegation included leading member of long steel manufacturers which included senior members of PALSP including Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak, Abbas Akberali, Javid Mughal, Saqib Riaz, Hussain Agha, Zarak Khan Khattak, Hassan Farid and Wajid Iqbal Bukhari- Secretary General, PALSP. The meeting was also attended by senior officials of Finance, FBR, SBP and NHA, said a press release issued by PALSP here.

PALSP delegation briefed the Prime Minister about the challenges and most pressing issues of steel sector.

The members of delegation expressed their concerns over current difficult period for industries amid exorbitant interest rates, sky rocketing cost of inputs especially electricity prices etc.

In order to bring the Steel Industry out of the current situation, the PALSP delegation urged the PM that the Govt must take effective measures



to facilitate steel sector.

PM Kakar keenly heard all the issues of industry and assured govts full cooperation and support.

He recognized the pivotal role that the steel sector can play in fortifying the country's economy and directed the relevant authorities to formulate policies aimed at supporting steel industry to contribute more to the economy.

PALSP members also highlighted that the menace of flying GST invoices is biggest threat for documented players. PALSP apprised that the flying sales tax invoices are being circulated for sale/purchase of local steel scrap by unorganized/small players out of the industry and approximately 80% of the local scrap sales are routed via Flying Sales Tax Invoices.

Cabinet approves hike in gas tariff on IMF demand

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Thursday approved the hike in gas tariff to meet International Monetary

Fund's (IMF) conditions.

According to sources, the hike in gas tariff which was approved by the federal cabinet will be effective from February 1, 2024.

PTI founder likely to move court against conviction in three cases

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan likely to file pleas against conviction in three cases tomorrow, citing sources.

According to sources, Salman Safdar, counsel of PTI founder Imran

Khan will move court against the conviction in the Toshakhana, cipher and Nikah case.

It is pertinent to mention here that former prime minister Imran Khan was convicted in three major cases including Toshakhana, cipher and Nikah case before the general elections 2024.

Senate election likely to be deferred

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Senate election likely to be deferred due to incomplete electoral college for the upper house election.

The National Assembly and four provincial assemblies are Electoral College for the Senate.

Sources said that a month-long schedule required for holding the senate elections. The elections will be held after the National Assembly as well as four provincial legislatures will be completed.

It is to be mentioned here that the tenure of the half senators of the incumbent senate will be completed by March 11, while elections were

expected to be held in the first week of the month.

Parliamentary sources said that the Senate elections could be deferred till the third week of March. "Incumbent senators will remain members of the house until election of the new senators," sources added.

It was anticipated that the schedule for the Senate election may be released immediately after general elections.

A total of 50 senate members are expected to retire on March 11, while total strength of the senate will become 96 after four seats of FATA cancelled due to merger of the region with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The elections will be held for the 48 vacant seats in the Senate.

MQM-P presents constitutional amendments before 'allies'

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leaders who held talks with the other parties in Islamabad regarding government formation briefed Rabita Committee members about the developments.

As per detail, Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui presided over the MQM-P Rabita Committee meeting held at Governor House. Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal, Anees Qaimkhani, and others also attended the meeting.

The Rabita Committee was informed that the MQM-P delegation has presented three constitutional amendments aimed at empowering the local governments to the parties in Islamabad. "All parties except the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) are willing to support the MQM-P's constitutional amendments," the participants

were told.

The Rabita Committee members were informed that the government would not have a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, and it is expected that the opposition will also support their amendments.

"All parties except the PPP appreciated MQM-P's constitutional amendments and termed them a guarantee of economic stability and national security," the Rabita Committee was briefed.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, MQM-P Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that MQM has a 'significant' role in government formation. "We have to decide on the larger interest of the country," he added. Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that his party presented three constitutional amendments by keeping our political interests aside. "Our proposal in favor of 230 million people of Pakistan," he asserted.