



Jamaat-e-Islami won't remain passive in face of rigging, asserts Siraj

Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq has labelled the 2024 elections as a repetition of the 2018 elections, asserting that they would not result in a stable government.



China opposes, condemns acts against civilians in Rafah, Gaza: Mao Ning

China on Monday opposed and condemned acts against civilian and international law and called on Israel to stop military operation immediately in Rafah in southern Gaza.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

BIZNET 2024

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the 3rd edition of Hosting Business Net 2024, a platform to promote financial inclusion and digital transformation, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday.



Photo: PID

State to defend civil servants, act against 'violent trolls': PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday vowed that the State of Pakistan would defend the civil servants in discharging their constitutional duties and act against those "violent trolls" involved in blackmailing and pressuring them.



Such action, he said, was a clear violation of the Article 5 and other articles of the Constitution and the laws of the land.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that the people of Pakistan had spoken with a clear voice on February 8 and had given a split mandate.

"Some elements with a proven track record of violent behaviour and vigilantism (however) are now using different tricks, including weaponisation of social media in blackmailing, vigilantism and pressuring civil servants to switch their loyalties from the State of Pakistan to the violent gang," he added.

"The State of Pakistan shall defend the civil servants in discharging their constitutional duties, act against these violent trolls and ensure exemplary punishment to them."

Prime Minister Kakar said that there should be no doubt about the government's commitment to the noble civil servants serving the State and the people of Pakistan.

President calls for respecting people's mandate, ensuring political inclusion

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that political inclusion is imperative for financial inclusion to put the country on the path of progress and prosperity.

social media websites in Pakistan was due to the lack of intellectual capacity to handle criticism. He also lamented that capable people were being kicked out of politics.

inclusion of the people as excluding them from the development process could have repercussions for the country.

The President highlighted that Pakistan could not progress without the inclusion of 26.2 million out-of-school children in the education system. He stated that educating such a large portion of our population would require thousands of new schools and additional resources.

example of China which had lifted millions of its people out of poverty by investing in their education and health.

CEO of Transforming Hub, Mr Iftikhar Hussain, highlighted that BizNet was an ecosystem that had brought together the best minds by promoting increased collaboration, commitment and innovation.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO of Airlinks Communication, Mr Muzaffar Piracha, apprised the audience that digitization of the economy was the first step

towards financial inclusion which was not possible without advancements in the mobile industry.

Chief Digital Officer of Jazz, Mr Aamir Aijaz, said that Pakistan had a large undocumented economy that was undermining the whole financial system as businesses/transactions were not registered.

Earlier, the President also gave away shields to companies in recognition of their services for enhancing financial inclusion through technological and digital transformation.

Pakistan's policy endeavours on track to achieve disaster resilience against floods: Solangi



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday told the Senate that the country's policy endeavours keeping in view its growing vulnerability due

to climate catastrophes were on track to achieve disaster resilience against floods. Responding to a motion tabled by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohmand to discuss the pressing issue of water resources, floods and water mismanagement in Pakistan, especially in the wake of the devastating floods in 2022 and in 2010, the minister provided a brief overview of the country's response to floods through policy interventions.

SC summons petitioner in plea against elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday summoned the petitioner in personal capacity in a plea seeking to annul elections.

A three-member bench of the top court presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hila-li, heard the case.

At the outset of the hearing, the CJ inquired about the petitioner and questioned whether the petition is moved just for the sake of publicity.

The CJ noted that the petitioner moved the case and disappeared, and tomorrow he would claim that we were not heard.

PTI announces alliance with Sunni Ittehad Council, MWM

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Monday announced alliance with the Sunni Ittehad Council and Majlis-e-Wahdatul Muslimeen (MWM).

The announcement was made by Barrister Gohar flanked by MWM chief Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Sunni Ittehad Council's head Sahibzada Hamid Raza and Omar Ayub Khan.

Barrister Gohar said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent candidates, who are in centre, Punjab and KP will join the Sunni Ittehad Council.

The decision was taken after prolonged consultation between PTI, SIC and MWM, he added.

He said the PTI candidates will present documents of joining the Sunni Ittehad Council with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) today.



Barrister Gohar reiterated his party's stance of alleged rigging in the general elections and claimed that his party won 170 to 180 seats in the NA, but the results were 'rigged'.

Speaking on the occasion, Omar Ayub Khan said the decision to join the Sunni Ittehad Council was made to get reserved seats as they are only allotted to political parties.

Commenting on the revelations of the ex-Rawalpindi commissioner Liaquat Chatha, Ayub alleged

rigging was done to deprive the PTI of winning the elections.

He also accused Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan of 'stealing' PTI seats in Karachi and Hyderabad during the elections 2024.

MWM chief Allama Nasir Abbas and Sunni Ittehad Council head Hamid Raza Khan commended PTI for contesting and winning the elections without the "bat" symbol.

Both the leaders said their alliance with the PTI is 'unconditional'.

Earthquake jolts Gilgit-Baltistan, adjoining areas

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake, of 5.0 magnitude struck various parts of Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly the Ghizer, Diamer districts, sending tremors through the region earlier on Monday. According to a private news channel, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said that the epicenter of the earthquake was recorded 45 km southeast of Gilgit, with a depth of 25 kilometers, causing tremors across the region.

Meanwhile, earthquake tremors were also felt in Skardu, Kharmang District, Ghanche District and Hunza.

Fortunately, no major damage or casualties have been reported as of now, bringing a sense of relief to the affected communities.

IHC suspends success notifications of Tariq Fazal, Khurram Nawaz, Anjum Aqeel from Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday suspended success notifications of winning candidates from Islamabad's constituencies NA-46, 47 and 48.

The candidates, whose success notification was suspended by the two-member IHC bench comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, include Anjum Aqeel Khan, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry

and Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had issued notification of victory of these candidates from NA-46, 47 and 48.

PML-N's Anjum Aqeel Khan was declared victorious from

NA-46 (Islamabad), Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry of PML-N from NA-47 (Islamabad) and Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz (independent) had won election form NA-48 (Islamabad).

The PTI-backed Independents including Ali Bukhari and

Shoab Shaheen had challenged the result of returned candidates from NA-46, 47 and 48.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday ordered the returning officer (RO) of NA-128 to submit complete record.

Blast in Afghanistan, near Pak Afghan border two people died, two injured



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: A fielder's car was detonated by a remote control on Monday near the Angoor Adda border, on the Afghanistan side.

In which two people died and two people were injured.

Confirmed the incident, family sources said that unknown persons had planted the bomb on the side of the road.

Family sources said that the four persons in the Felder car were going from home to the bazaar, that the vehicle was targeted by the explosion of a remote control bomb installed on the road.

During which two people died and two people were injured.

The injured and the dead are said to belong to the family of Shehba Raz Gangi Khel Wazir.

The deceased were identified as Siddiqullah Wazir and Noor Wali Shah Wazir.

Among the injured are Nisar Wazir and Kher Muhammad Wazir.

The injured persons were shifted to District headquarters hospital wana for treatment.

It should be noted that the remote control bomb blast took place on the Afghan side, two kilometers away from

Angoor Adda Border.

Ahmedzai Wazir tribes reside near Angoor Adda border.

On the other hand, Acting MS of the District Headquarters Hospital, Dr. Asif said that the treatment of the injured is going on.

He said that the two deceased persons were sent to their native areas, while trying to provide all possible facilities to the two injured.

Allama Tahirul Hasan calls for end of politics of chaos in Pakistan

Abdul Majid



Allama Tahirul Hasan, Central Deputy General Secretary of Pakistan Ulema Council and former candidate of MPA 118, said this in his special statement that people are worried due to inflation and are forced to commit suicide, but political parties are doing politics of chaos for their own interests. It is going through a difficult situation, everyone should move forward for economic stability. External forces are taking advantage of Pakistan's internal chaos. The institutions of Pakistan have always made immense sacrifices for the stability of Pakistan and the end of terrorism. Even today, our Pakistan Army and security institutions are fighting foreign terrorists on Pakistan's borders. The peaceful conduct of the elections is due to our Pakistan Army. External enemy forces want to weaken Pakistan by creating political instability in Pakistan, but the people will end internal and external political conspiracies with the help of their Pakistan Army and security agencies. The parties should start the journey of joint development with the Pakistan Army and security institutions for the prosperity and development of Pakistan and sustainable peace.

Shahid Mir announces vision 2024



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: President Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Shahid Mir has said that Vision 2024 has been set for the development and stability of the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir under a comprehensive and integrated system. Practical steps are being taken to bring the status of schedule Bank.

After assuming Presidential slot of AJK Bank Shahid Mir for the first time during his visit to Mirpur Division in a meeting with the High ranking bank officials. Regional Chief Raja Waseem Khan Divisional Head Credit Management AJK Mr. Imtiaz Shaheen and other senior bank officials were present on this occasion.

President Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Shahid Mir said in his address that he has created a vision for the development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bank.

Earlier, when the newly appointed president of the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir reached Mirpur, he was given a rousing welcome.

NUML Dean Appointed First Pakistani Executive on Translators without Borders' South Asian Panel

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking achievement for Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Jamil Asghar Jami, Dean of the Faculty of Languages at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), has been appointed as the first Pakistani Executive Member



of the South Asian Chapter of Translators without Borders. This historic appointment highlights his exceptional contributions in the fields of translation and interpretation and symbolizes Pakistan's emerging presence in the global linguistic community. He holds a PhD in Linguistics and has been honoured with a prestigious research fellowship from the University of North Texas, USA. Dr. Jami's journey in language education is marked by significant roles, including establishing and leading the Department of Translation and Interpretation at NUML, reflecting his dedication to raising the standards of language translation and interpretation in the country. His academic prowess is further evidenced by his authorship of two insightful books on Allama Iqbal, adding depth to Pakistan's cultural and intellectual heritage. Dr. Jami's linguistic expertise extends beyond academia to international platforms, where he is recognized as a United Nations interpreter, demonstrating his capability in managing complex linguistic tasks globally. His talents are also integral to the Pakistani government, often interpreting for the President and Prime Minister, demonstrating his reliability in high-stakes national and international dialogues. This blend of academic, administrative, and practical expertise in languages, complemented by over two decades of experience in teaching and translation, not only underscores Dr. Jami's individual achievements but also represents a significant stride for Pakistan in the international academic and linguistic domains.

Korean Company acquires shares in a Pakistani Hydro Power Entity

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a merger that will see a Korean company investing in Pakistan's hydropower sector. The transaction involves Korea-based M/s. DL E&C Co. Ltd (Acquirer) acquiring shares in Pakistani company M/s Mira Power Limited (MPL), which operates the 102 MW Gulpur hydropower plant, from M/s. DL Holdings Co. Ltd (Seller).

The Acquirer is a Korean registered company, which mainly operates as a construction company, and also provides engineering, procurement, and construction solutions in South Korea and internationally. On the other hand, MPL is a public limited company (Unlisted) existing under the laws of Pakistan.

MPL is a subsidiary of Korea Energy (KOEN), a South Korean based electricity generating company. MPL has been successfully generating power since 2020 in Pakistan via the 102 MW Gulpur hydropower plant located in Kotli district, Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

MPL had submitted a pre-merger application to the CCP pursuant to Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010. Both the Acquirer and Seller entered into a Share Purchase Agreement for the sale of shares back in July 2023.

In its competition assessment, CCP determined that MPL's estimated share in the market is less than 1%, and this transfer of ownership will not result in any modification of the MPL's presence in the market. The proposed transaction will not lead to the dominance of the Acquirer in the relevant market post-transaction, and therefore, the merger was authorized.

Moreover, it is a significant vote of confidence of international investors' appetite for Power Sector in Pakistan.

Samosa Patti

RAWALPINDI: A vendor is preparing traditional item Samosa Patti at his workplace in the city.



Photo: Online

Leaders of AJK Movement for Protection of Khatam Nabuwat demand end of Qadianism

Spokesman Report

KOTLI: Leaders of Azad Kashmir Movement for Protection of Khatam e Nabuwat (End of Prophet-hood), while welcoming the release of the prisoners arrested in the case of destruction of Islamic rituals from Tatta Pani Bhabara Qadiani Apostate, have demanded the Kotli administration to abide by the law while implementing the decision of the High Court. Make it complete and

remove the rituals of Islam from other centers of Qadianis in Kotli district. Similarly, the books in the graveyards of Qadianis in Goi and Tatta Pani sectors, which have Kalima Tayyaba and Quranic verses should also be removed. In a statement issued by spokesperson of Tehreek e Tahfiz e Khatam Nabuwat Hafiz Maqsood he categorically added that

If the administration and law enforcement agencies fulfill their responsibilities, then the law and order situation will also be remained peaceful. If the administrative bodies show traditional negligence and laziness, then there will be agitation among the Muslims, in response to which such incidents will continue to happen he warned.

The leaders of the movement, Maulana Muhammad Saleem Ejaz, Qari Abdul Waheed Qasmi, Maulana Jameel Ahmad Jami, Raja Asif Khan, Dr. Abrar Ahmad Mughal, Maulana Abdul Razaq,

and others said in clear and blunt words in their statement that we have been in Azad Kashmir for the past several years.

The constitutional and legal struggle is continuing and it is the responsibility of the administration to implement it after the decision of the courts. If the administrative institutions do not leave their negligence, the Muslims themselves will remove the rites of Islam from other Qadian centers as well.

Medland Int'l Trust, Miss Pakistan to build school for special children in Mirpur

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Medland International Trust (UK) Chief Executive Professor Abdul Rashid Gartrad and Miss Pakistan Shafina Shah Petal and former Director General Information Raja Azhar Iqbal have said that service to the suffering humanity is the best duty which makes Allah happy. Allah Pak has sent angels for humanitarian service in the form of Chairman of the Health and Welfare Trust Chaudhry Muhammad Mustafa, Dr. Lan Charlez Robbat Sun.

COMSTECH Organizes International Workshop on Innovative Practices for Development of Agri-business

PPA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH, ICESCO and Songhai Center, in Benin jointly organized 5-day international training workshop on innovative practices for the development of a sustainable agri-business for the future at Songhai Center in Porto-Novo the capital city of Benin.

H. E. Mr. Gaston Cossi Dossouhoui, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, H. E. Mr. José Didier Tona to Minister of Living Environment and Sustainable Development, H. E. Mayor Oumar Ba, President AMS/CCT-UMOA, Dr. M. Sharif, Advisor, Science and Technology, ICESCO, Dr. Salimane Karimou, President, National Commission in Benin, and H. E. Prof. Dr. Godfrey Nzamujo, Director General Songhai Center addressed the



inaugural session held on Monday.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH said that the idea of organizing this field based, hands on training course was discussed in Niamey Niger where he had the honor of hosting legendary Prof. Dr. Godfrey. He readily agreed, and now

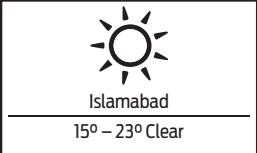
we are pleased that we have plan to take "Songhai Phenomena" to other OIC member states. He said that we consider Songhai a miracle, an unparalleled story of human perseverance, dedication, and intellect.

He said that this training will address the challenges in achieving

food security through sharing of knowledge and experiences, application of science, technology and climate smart agricultural technologies.

Prof. Choudhary highlighted the COMSTECH initiatives, and announced new initiatives for African countries in collaboration with ICESCO and Songhai Center.

Prof. Dr. Godfrey Nzamujo welcomed the participants of the International training workshop and emphasized the need of the human capacity building in the fields of science and technology for achieving financial and economic goals. The director ICESCO said that we are committed to build capacity of OIC member states in the fields of science and technology for the socio-economic development. He said that the development of the workforce is vital for development.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:25 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:16 pm
Maghrib	5:55 pm
Isha	7:18 pm

EMERGENCY

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

HOSPITALS

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

First Lady advocates floral art therapy

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: First Lady Samina Arif Alvi Monday emphasized that floral art transcended mere hobby status, asserting its therapeutic benefits for mental well-being.

Speaking as the chief guest at an award ceremony for the Floral Art Society of Pakistan (FASP), celebrating their triumphs in the Bloom Oman competition in Muscat, Oman, she highlighted the stress-relieving and mood-enhancing qualities of gardening and floral cultivation.



Addressing the gathering, the first lady underscored the collective responsibility to nurture both environment and mental health, noting that a significant portion of the country's population grappled with mental health challenges, with many unable to seek professional help.

She advocated for the regular organization of floral art events to not only beautify surroundings but also engage younger generations in health-promoting activities.

Recognizing the FASP's remarkable achievement of securing 11 awards for Pakistan in the Bloom Oman competition, she praised their contribu-

tions to elevating the country's standing.

Samina Arif Alvi urged attendees to raise awareness about early breast cancer detection, a cause she has championed, leading to a notable reduction in related mortality rates over the past five years.

Further, she called for advocacy on behalf of persons with

disabilities and mental health, emphasizing the importance of inclusive awareness efforts.

Concluding the event, the first lady distributed awards and certificates of appreciation to FASP members, recognizing their invaluable contributions to Pakistan's success in the floral art competition Bloom Oman.

Ashfaq wins silver, bronze medals in international competition

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chef Mohammad Ashfaq won Silver medal in black, Bronze medal in main pasta course box in International Competitions in Pakistan Chef Association Culinary art Lahore. Championship was held at Royal Palm Golf and Country Club on 13-14-15 Feb 2024 by COTHM Group of Colleges.



Iqra Grammar School is the best school for 66 Dhandra children. Alhaj Vohra



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Traders should actively participate in the education system of children, this was said by Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra at the annual prize distribution ceremony of Iqra Grammar School. On the arrival of the chief guest of the event, Naseer Yousuf Vohra, director Shakeel Ahmed, Ali Shakeel and Nazia Shakeel decorated their necks with flower garlands while showering flower petals on the beat of the drum and seated them on the stage in the pandal in the form of a procession. The children welcomed Alhaji Nasir Yousuf Vohra by standing and clapping. The program began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and Naat Rasoolullah was recited. Children presented tableaux, sang national anthems and songs. Shields and certificates were also given to the children for their success in this event for first, second and swim. Naseer Vohra has said that Iqra Grammar School 66 Dhandra presented its curriculum in the best way due to which the children got the most prominent positions. I pay tribute to the management of Iqra Grammar School who are running this system in an excellent manner. Government should also bring good packages for private schools and encourage children. Shield was also presented to Chief Guest Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra on this occasion.

Call for action to build fair, rights-based, equitable and ecologically just world



PPA

ISLAMABAD: At closing of 5-day World Social Forum in Nepali capital Kathmandu on Monday, the Deputy Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Shafiqat Munir signed the Civil Society statement on thematic assembly on economic inequality and justice calling for action to build a fair, rights-based, equitable and ecologically just world.

Thousands of people representing various civil society organizations signed a civil society statement on thematic assembly on economic inequality and justice. The Assembly was organized at the World Social Forum by Oxfam, Fight Inequality Alliance, Asia Feminist Coalition, ActionAid, LDC Watch, South Asia Alliance for poverty eradication, and Asia Center. The joint statement was issued by Mustafa Talpur, head of advocacy for Oxfam Asia.

The statement said: We need to lose our fear, for them to lose their power – is a challenge posed by us as we conclude the World Social Forum 2024. The power imbalance that fosters systematic and structural inequalities and the compounding crises that comes along with it, drives us to lose our fear to stand up and speak up against all forms of injustices. It must be understood as a systemic design that leads to gross violations of human rights for a vast majority of the global population.

The CSO statement said: At a time when survival and recovery become a privilege for most of us, the richest 1% have continued to remodel economic systems to shift as an inequality-generating machine and veer away from the democratic fabric of the world towards plutocracy. This must raise urgent and unequivocal global attention across the civic space that this is the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation we need to redesign another world that is possible.

This comes in line with our deepest solidarity to movements across the world that resist the everyday dehumanisation and loss of dignity in the people's lives brought by oppression and an insatiable greed for power. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free. The world belongs to those who care for it, and we shall resist all forms of power that perplex us against the freedom we own, the statement added.

Heavy rain

ISLAMABAD: People travelling in Metro on their way bus during heavy rain in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Cyberthreats in Pakistan increased by 17% in 2023 as compared to 2022: Kaspersky Research reveals

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky experts discussed the evolution of the cyberthreat landscape in the region during its 9th annual Cyber Security Weekend – META 2024. The focal point of the discussions was the security of emerging technology trends such as AI, that are influencing the scale of modern threats.

In parallel, threats targeting industrial control systems within critical infrastructure, in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia were also discussed. Kaspersky's Cyber Immunity approach took center stage as a way to create solutions that are virtually impossible to compromise and that minimize the number of potential vulnerabilities.

When looking at the threat landscape in Pakistan, Kaspersky's telemetry showed the number of overall cyberthreats in the country increased by 17% in 2023 as compared to 2022. Kaspersky blocked 16 million cyber



attacks in Pakistan in 2023.

"Being an emerging country and accepting digital transformation at good pace, Pakistan has very important role to play in Asia. As the cybersecurity landscape evolves, cyber threats continue to become diverse and sophisticated.

This trend is particularly evident due to the emergence of advanced technologies like AI and the escalat-

ing geopolitical and economic turbulence within the META region. These factors collectively contribute to the surge in cybercrime and the heightened complexity of cyberattacks.", comments Amin Hasbini, Director of META Research Center Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT)

According to Kaspersky's analysis of the cyber-

security threat landscape in the META region has fluctuated significantly. In the region, Turkey saw the highest number of users affected by online threats (41.8%), followed by Kenya (39.2%), Qatar (38.8) and South Africa (35%). Fewer users were affected in Oman (23.4%) and Egypt (27.4%) followed by Saudi Arabia (29.9%) and Kuwait (30.8%).

New govt should prioritise economic growth, poverty reduction

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Monday that the incoming government should prioritise economic development and poverty reduction.

The country cannot afford any more lavish spending; therefore, he said that wastage should be curtailed while state-run companies causing losses to the tune of trillions of rupees should be sold immediately.

He added that the NFC award is weakening the federation; the share of the provinces should be reduced so



that the federation can service loans in a better way.

Dr. Hanif Mughal said in a statement issued here today that the country is currently in the grip of severe crises, so the new government should keep economic development and poverty reduction as its top priorities.

He said that inflation and lavish expenses should be reduced, and the service of the public should be made a priority so that the situation could be improved.

The country has become too weak and can no longer afford the waste of funds; currently, inflation is close to 30%, the budget deficit has reached

7% of GDP, and poverty is increasing due to the continuous increase in the cost of electricity, gas, and petrol.

The high cost of energy is hitting production and exports; the income of the masses is decreasing, stoking poverty, while it has become impossible for the government to pay the interest on the loans.

Dr. Hanif Mughal said that yearly, over eight million people are born for whom there is a severe shortage of health, education, and other facilities.

Failing public sector companies are

losing trillions of rupees, but no government wants to sell them, and the entire burden has to be borne by the poor. If government intervention in public-sector companies is not reduced, it will not be profitable.

He said that under the 7th NFC Award, 63 percent of the total federal income is distributed among the provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the former FATA. Politicians and bureaucracy embezzle a large part of these funds.

Despite such funds, there is no special development work in provinces, and the federal government does not even have

money to pay the interest on the loans.

When provinces are unwilling to collect tax money, why are they adamant about spending it? he asked.

He said there is a need to reduce the provinces' share and increase the federation's share in the NFC award. The financial condition of the federation remains very weak, so all the political parties are ready to govern in the provinces, but no one seems ready to govern in the federation.

If the country's condition is to improve, instead of making loud claims, it is necessary to bring reforms to all sectors, including business laws; otherwise, the country will have no future.

On the commencement of Astana's Chairmanship in the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

Dear reader! My name is Askhat Orazbay and I am the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), in which Kazakhstan holds the chairmanship for 2024-2026.



(for comparison: it is comparable to the territory of Croatia and much larger than Estonia, Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland).

I would like to share with the audience information about the activities of IFAS aimed at improving the situation in the Aral Sea basin and serving the interests of the peoples and states of Central Asia for 30 years.

In modern realities, with ubiquitous population growth, rapid economic development of states, and an increase in water consumption per capita, the burden on the environment is steadily increasing. Such an intensification of anthropogenic impact provokes and accelerates the processes of global climate change. In Central Asia, all these processes are proceeding at a faster pace than the global average. The ecological crisis in the Aral Sea basin is accompanied by progressive scarcity and pollution of water resources, land degradation and desertification of vast territories, loss of forests, eco-landscapes and biodiversity. On a huge area of the dried-up bottom of the Aral Sea, a new desert has formed - Aralkum, with a size of more than 54 thousand square kilometers

In these tense conditions, it is highly relevant for the Central Asian States to elaborate new mechanisms for developing cooperation in the region. The main goal of the chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the IFAS is to further increase the level of cooperation on the integrated use and protection of water resources, solving environmental problems, socio-economic aspects and introducing elements of a "green" economy in Central Asian countries.

During the period of Kazakhstan's chairmanship, we will continue to implement two main programs approved by the IFAS Board: Aral Sea Basin Program-4 (ASBP-4) and its systematic monitoring, as well as the Regional Environmen-

tal Protection Program for the Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REPPSD CA). The period of implementation of the both Programs - until 2030.

The environmental problem of the Aral Sea began to appear in the 1960s and 1970s, which has led to the fact that there is practically nothing left from the 4th largest lake on our planet. At first, the Aral Sea was divided into two reservoirs, then into three and ...

During the years of Independence, Kazakhstan, with the support of the World Bank, carried out comprehensive work and was able to restore a little part - the Small Aral or the Northern Aral Sea, but this is only about 8% of its original value. The port city of Aralsk is still far from the water, which at first went 100 km away, but after the measures taken it came much closer.

Particles and dust of salts and toxic chemicals left on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea

are found not only in the Tien Shan and Pamir mountains, but also far beyond the borders of our region. In order to reduce the removal of harmful substances, the countries of the Aral Sea region are actively engaged in phytomeliorative measures, planting of saxaul (Haloxylon) and other vegetation.

But are plantings on the former bottom of the reservoir so effective? What is the current state of ecosystems? As it is known, due to several low-water years in a row, the flow along the Syr Darya has decreased and the volume of water in the Northern Aral Sea has lessened from a maximum of 27 to 20 cubic kilometers. The catch of fish has declined and this has a negative impact on the employment of the local population. The morbidity rate of the population is growing again due to desertification and deterioration of water quality... Will the tragedy happen again? What are the moods and plans of the locals? There are a lot of questions and they are all interconnected.

I believe that we need to study the full range of problems and ongoing work, to update them and to try to solve them as soon as possible and more effectively.

In the Aral Sea Basin Program-4 (ASBP-4), which I mentioned earlier, the environmental direction is highlighted as a separate main area, consisting

of 12 project proposals.

I would like to note that joint actions are envisaged to adapt to climate change, including measures to adapt the most vulnerable sectors: water and agriculture, drinking water, energy, biodiversity, forest, pastures and mountain ecosystems. It was envisaged to develop a regional action plan for adaptation to climate change and, thanks to the support of the Program of the German Society for International Cooperation GIZ "Green Central Asia", five of our countries have developed and adopted a Regional Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change in Central Asia.

It also provides for the dissemination of the best climate-adapted agricultural practices. We will have to develop a regional program for the protection of biological resources in Central Asia, implement measures to preserve and restore ecosystems in the basins of our main rivers - the Amudarya and the Syrdarya, and continue systematic forest plantations in the Aral Sea region (Priaralye) zone and on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea.

The following environmental projects provide for the development of a system for monitoring the state of the environment and water resources in the Aral Sea region (Priaralye) and on the drained seabed; the development of environmental inno-

ventions and technologies in the Aral Sea region (Priaralye) zone.

I consider such a project as "Improvement of water quality in rivers and reservoirs, taking into account international standards, elimination and prevention of pollution, including industrial waste" to be very important. Kazakhstan and other countries are working on joining the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes, and Uzbekistan has recently joined it.

Reducing the risks of natural disasters associated with floods, mudflows and droughts in the Aral Sea basin, studying the state of glaciers in the upper reaches of transboundary rivers, developing transboundary eco-corridors, regional networks of specially protected natural areas for the conservation of biodiversity is far from an incomplete list of those projects that we must promote during our IFAS chairmanship.

If we talk about new initiatives that will be carried out within the framework of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the IFAS, then this is the creation of a long-term and sustainable regional cooperation mechanism for the effective use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all countries in the region in the fields of irrigation, hydropower and ecology.

Systematic work is also needed to implement a unified automated system for accounting, monitoring, management and distribution of water resources in the Aral Sea basin. President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at a meeting of the Council of Heads of States-Founders of the IFAS held on September 15, 2023 in Dushanbe, called on the parties to begin implementing these initiatives.

Strengthening regional cooperation with international development partners, UN structural entities, financial institutions and the donor community plays an important role. It is worthwhile to intensify activities within the framework of generally accepted international environmental conventions, action plans, declarations and joint statements.

In the period of 2024-2026 Kazakhstan will take measures to implement the instructions and agreements reached by the Heads of States at the IFAS Summit on September 15, 2023 in Dushanbe, as well as previously concluded agreements and commitments, which will ensure the consistency of Central Asia's actions to achieve the global SDGs and its positioning as a single region.

Sincerely,
Chairperson of the IFAS Executive Committee Askhat Orazbay

Chinese New Year

Artists perform lion dance during the Penang Chinese New Year Celebration in George Town, Penang, Malaysia.



Photo: Xu Xinyu/Xinhua

Portuguese Writer José Luis Peixoto in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: José Luis Peixoto, from Portugal, acclaimed author and poet is coming to Pakistan, this February 2024.

With initiative of the Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad, and the support of the Portuguese Institute Camões, José Luis Peixoto will participate in the Literary Festival of Lahore 2024, taking place this month on Friday 23rd till Sunday 25th.

In Islamabad, the author will be participating in University events with students and professors, and interacting with Pakistanis' writers, journalists and culture related figures.

José Luis Peixoto (born in 1974 in Alentejo, south of Portugal) is one of Portugal's most renowned contemporary authors, winner of the



José Saramago Literary Award, amongst others, and his prose and poetry books have been translated into more than 30 languages.

At the Lahore Literary Festival 2024, the author will engage in several thematic discussion panels and will showcase his views on liter-

ature, life, his literary career, and literature in the Portuguese language speaking countries (9 countries in 4 continents).

Munich conference closes with calls to jointly address global security challenges

Xinhua

MUNICH, GERMANY: The 60th edition of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) wrapped up its three-day gathering here on Sunday, with participants calling for enhanced international cooperation to address the world's pressing challenges.

Decision-makers and world elites engaged in productive discussions on enhancing the global system, ensuring that all stakeholders benefit more equitably. They agreed that promoting positive-sum cooperation is crucial as no country can remain immune to global challenges and risks, such as climate change, regional conflicts, and artificial intelligence.

The MSC was born as a venue for dialogue among allied countries in the West in 1963 and thus has been dubbed a "transatlantic family meeting." Although the circle of participants has grown over the years, the "Davos of Defense" still adopts a Western-centric mentality.

This year's motto for the MSC, "lose-lose," which was put forward in the 2024 Munich Security Report, sums up the prevailing and conspicuous mindset of the West - facing a volatile global situation and changing geopolitical environment, governments seek to "de-risk" and prioritize "relative gains."



The mentality of prioritizing relative payoffs may spur "lose-lose dynamics" of inter-governmental interactions while jeopardizing cooperation and undermining the international order, thus creating a vicious cycle, the report noted.

Experts noted that the "pessimism" of these Western countries reflects their anxiety in a turbulent world. Ongoing regional conflicts, including the Ukraine crisis and the Israel-Hamas conflict and their spill-over economic effects, have increased their insecurity. At the same time, the development of new entrants in the international order and the multi-layered challenges of Western society have made it hard for the West

to sustain its prioritized position.

Cui Hongjian, a professor at Academy of Regional and Global Governance at Beijing Foreign Studies University and the deputy director of Chinese Association for European Studies, emphasized the need for a mindset recalibration, particularly regarding the West's perception of the global order if it adopts the "lose-lose" model.

Noting the anxiety of developed countries in the West, the Munich Security Report also pointed to the dissatisfaction of developing countries in the Global South for not receiving their due benefits.

On the conference's opening day, United Nations Secre-

tary-General Antonio Guterres said in his opening speech that the global community is "more fragmented and divided than at any time during the past 75 years."

"Global governance in its present form is entrenching divisions and fueling discontent," Guterres said.

China's views drew wide attention at the conference.

The West believes that allowing developing countries to reap more means they will get less, said Sun Chenghao, a fellow at the Center for International Security and Strategy, Tsinghua University.

According to Sun, the West focuses on distribution instead of growing the pie, creating a "lose-

lose" situation.

Sun said Chinese proposals, such as the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Belt and Road Initiative, consider all parties' needs, strengthening the existing international order.

Former Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying stated at the MSC that China is against forming exclusive multilateral security mechanisms in Asia. This is not only because these mechanisms are directed toward China but also because they are incompatible with the concept of common security and threaten regional stability.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and attaches importance to their legitimate security concerns. Fu stressed that it insists on peacefully resolving disputes

and conflicts through dialogue and consultation.

"This is also recognized by most countries in Asia," she noted.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during the opening of the 60th Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Munich, Germany, Feb. 16, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)

Solidarity To Benefit All
"If we do something really stupid, we could have been lose-lose," Graham Allison, a professor at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, told Xinhua.

He said that all parties should cooperate to establish a framework to make an insoluble problem manageable.

MSC Chairman Christoph Heusgen made similar remarks in his opening address for the conference.

"Many of these (global security) challenges are man-made, which means they can be changed by men and women," he said on Friday, calling for a "silver lining" amid the "doom and gloom" of the global situation.

The Global South, which has become an increasingly important part of the security discussions in Munich in recent years, also called for enhanced cooperation and collaboration.

Something is "fundamentally wrong" with the system that does not provide an occasion for the Global South to talk, said Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados, during the conference.

"It can't be the voice of one or two in speeches or conferences such as this, and what the global system misses is an effective mechanism for decision-making," she stressed.

She called for enhanced international collaboration in climate change governance while urging wealthier nations to act more assertively.

Noting that multipolarity has created significant opportunities for balance and justice, Guterres on Friday stressed that a global order that works for everyone must address the gaps and provide solutions.

"We must work based on justice, with renewed urgency and solidarity," he said. "A safer world - and a bigger pie - for all."

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
60,459.74	59,872.96
Day's High	Day's Low
60,504.48	59,191.85
Index Value	Change
7,164,558,903	+586.78
Percentage	Time
+0.98%	19 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,728.50	+16.79
Percentage	Time
+0.22%	19 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,627.99	-145.13
Percentage	Time
-0.37%	16 Feb, 4:50 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,470.38	-16.86
Percentage	Time
-0.044%	19 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	352.4	355.4
US Dollar	279.3	282.2

New government must cut business costs: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Hattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday that the record turnout during the recent elections proved the trust of the masses in the democratic process.

Despite record inflation, poverty, unemployment, and instability, more than six million people exercised their right to vote, which shows that they are not disappointed with democracy and they want a continuation of democracy, he said.

Talking to the business community, Mian Zahid Hussain said that incompetence,



mismangement, and corruption have led to

the fall of the country's economy which needs efforts for revival.

The debt burden has increased a lot; the power, gas, and other sectors are in trouble; and circular debt has touched Rs 6,000 billion.

The business leader said that failing government companies are wasting trillions of rupees every year, the economy is suffering from wrong priorities, and Pakistan's GDP is expected to remain at only two percent.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that in these situations, it has become difficult for people and businesses to survive, but despite this, the people have not lost hope.

He said that the people still understand that their quality of life will be improved by the political leaders. A good environment will be provided for employment and business, and the inter-

ests of the country will be served.

He said that it will now be the duty of the new government to take appropriate steps to meet the expectations of the people, businesses, and international institutions.

The new government should uphold merit and take extra care in the appointment of the Finance Minister, Chairman FBR, and some other top slots to ensure smooth relations with the lenders and rapid progress.

IMF policies should be implemented, the masses should be given relief and steps should be taken to increase exports, foreign direct investments, remittances, and import subsidies.

All parties should join hands to revive the economy so that the problems of the country can be reduced and people can have a break, he demanded.

Traditional vegetable

FAISALABAD: People are busy in buying mustard green vegetables (Saag) from a roadside vendor in the city.



Photo: Online

easypaisa Empowers users with 'Savings Pocket' for Financial Independence

PPA

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, introduces its latest breakthrough offering, the 'Savings Pocket'. This revolutionary feature is not just about saving funds; rather it aims to provide users financial freedom through secure goal-based savings and streamlined financial management, eliminating the need for conventional, cumbersome methods.

The 'Savings Pocket' is not just about saving; it's about empowering users, especially women. A fundamental question is asked through this offering, i.e., why must dupattas and handbags be used as a safe for women's money? Why can't they use pockets? With 'Savings Pocket', women can take

control of their finances directly from their phones through the easypaisa App, eliminating the need for external storage solutions.

Commenting on the launch, Farhan Hassan, Head of easypaisa Wallet Business, said, "Our newly launched 'Savings Pocket' embodies our commitment to empowering users to make informed financial decisions. This unique feature is revolutionary in the savings world, enabling users to make flexible goal-based savings aligned with their priorities."

Rifah Qadri, Head of Marketing & Communications added, "Today's woman demands more than outdated norms. Our campaign is unique as it challenges the norms and stands against outdated practices that limit financial freedom."

Hotel One by Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts Wins Traveller Review Awards 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Hotel One by Pearl-Continental secured 12 accolades at the Traveller Review Awards by Booking.com, with each property garnering a rating of at least 8 out of 10. These award-winning Hotel Ones are situated in Sargodha, Faisalabad, Sahiwal, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Islamabad, Murree, Bhurban, Abbottabad, Mansehra, and Swat.

Booking.com provides the largest travel marketplaces for established brands and entrepreneurs of all sizes and enables properties worldwide to reach a global audience and grow their businesses. The company also assesses the standards of service at various hospitality facilitators and awards ratings based on a holistic marking system at the Traveller Review Awards.

Acknowledging the victory, Haseeb A. Gardezi, Chief Executive Officer of Hotel One and Chief Operating Officer of the Education and Hospitality Division, Hashoo Group, remarked, "We are truly humbled by this recognition from Booking.com. We consistently strive to deliver the best-in-class services to our valued guest base, and accolades such as these motivate us to work even harder and exceed expectations every time! Thank you for your continued trust in our hospitality."

Ahmed Iqbal Saeed, Vice President



Operations, Hotel One commented, "We are grateful and honoured to be recognized by Booking.com's Traveller Review Awards. Our focus has always been on providing comfortable and memorable experiences for guests, and we will continue evolving with the customers' varying needs."

Sharing his thoughts on Hotel One's win, Glenn Fogel, Chief Executive Officer of Booking.com, said, "We know how much effort you put into making every guest's stay magical. You and your team do much more than just provide a place to sleep; your hospitality makes the world a friendlier, more welcoming place. I look forward to growing together in 2024 and beyond."

Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premium conglomerate with a diversified business portfolio spanning both national and international markets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts and PC Legacy & Hotel One brands in Pakistan and has business interests encompassing the information technology, investment, travel & tourism, and real-estate sectors.

Hotel One by Pearl-Continental, the distinguished select-service hotel chain under the Hashoo Group umbrella, has been a trailblazer in the budget-friendly, limited-service hotel industry since 2006. It has consistently delivered value, convenience, and reliability to guests across Pakistan.

FPCCI to Work to Diversify & Enhance Exports to China

PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the apex body considers China as one of the most important countries for Pakistan vis-à-vis diversifying and expanding its exports on an incrementally sustainable basis – as China is not only a neighboring and friendly country; but, also a huge market for potential Pakistani exports.

He expressed his optimism on the trend where the Pakistani trade with China in Yuan has reached 14 percent in 2023; whereas, it was a mere 2 percent in 2018.

It is pertinent to note that Mr. Aman Paracha & Mr. Asif Sakhi, VPs FPCCI, visited Chinese consulate in Karachi and relayed FPCCI's sentiments to H. E. Mr. Yang Yundong, Chinese Consul General in Karachi, towards China, its people and business

community. Mr. Aman Paracha, VP FPCCI, apprised that the increase in the trade volumes in Chinese Yuan is a global trend; and, it is peculiarly useful in Pakistan's case as Pakistan's rupee has been under tremendous pressure and kept depreciating on an unprecedented rate for the past few years consecutively due to the dwindling foreign exchange reserves (FER); current account deficit (CAD)



and repeated abruptions in external financing.

Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, maintained that trade, investments, JVs and industrial

collaborations with China can greatly help Pakistan embark on a high-growth and poverty-reduction trajectory; just like the China has achieved

over the past 3 decades. China is an excellent case study for Pakistan to learn from its economic transformation, he added.

Foreign Diplomats laud the tourism potential of Chakwal

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad and Chakwal Chambers of Commerce and Industry organized a cultural caravan of foreign diplomats to the district Chakwal to show them the tourism potential of the area. Diplomats from Azerbaijan, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Iran, Norway, Nepal, the Philippines, and Uzbekistan were in the cultural caravan. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICICI, and Secretary General, UBG Pakistan also accompanied the caravan.

The caravan visited the University of Chakwal where Prof. Dr. Muhammad Bilal Khan, Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Samia Anwar of the Department of Archeology warmly welcomed them. They briefed the foreign diplomats about the historical and archeological sites of Chakwal that attract tourists worldwide.

The caravan also visited the Katas Raj Temples, which hold immense historical and religious significance. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Bilal Khan, Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Samia Anwar, Department of Archeology, University of Chakwal briefed the caravan about the history of the Katas Raj Temples, which are dedicated to Lord Shiva, surrounded by a beautiful pond and date back to the 6th century. The caravan was informed that these temples are one of the most important Hindu pilgrimage sites in Pakistan and members of the Hindu community from Pakistan and abroad visit this place every year as a part of their spiritual journey.

Qazi Muhammad Akbar, Group Leader of the Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a reception in honor of the cultural caravan at Kalar Kahar, which is another amazing tourist site in the area. Mian Khawar Saleem, a member of the Chakwal Chamber of Commerce hosted the lunch in honor of the cultural caravan.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce said that ICICI had already taken a delegation of foreign diplomats to Skardu last year, and this cultural caravan in collaboration with Chakwal Chamber of Commerce is a part of showing the foreign diplomats the wonderful tourist places of Chakwal to promote tourism in the area.

Group photo

Ambassador, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the UAE in a group photo with Pakistani exhibitors during the Gulf food Exhibition at Pakistan Pavilion, World Trade Centre Dubai on Monday.



Photo: PID

Jamaat-e-Islami won't remain passive in face of rigging, asserts Siraj

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq has labelled the 2024 elections as a repetition of the 2018 elections, asserting that they would not result in a stable government.

In a statement released on Monday, Siraj remarked that Pakistani politics was dominated by feudal lords and



mafia with vested interests. He emphasised that if the prevailing political landscape in Pakistan was not rectified, the state itself could not be fixed.

The JI chief lamented the squandering of a substantial sum of Rs50 billion from the national treasury in the elections.

He cautioned that rigging and alterations in the poll

results would exacerbate chaos and corruption.

Siraj highlighted that hopes for economic and political stability had been dashed, noting that his party's mandate was stolen.

He asserted that the JI would not remain silent in the face of rigging, but would instead utilise constitutional and democratic means to expose it.

Climate Finance Accelerator Roadshow Showcases Innovative Pakistani Projects

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The UK-funded Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) Pakistan Investor Roadshow has kicked off its first day in Karachi showcasing eight climate projects from the agriculture, forestry, waste, and e-mobility sectors to Pakistani investors. The project developers pitched their innovative ideas to mitigate climate change to investors who also provided advice and feedback on the projects.

Each project has received months of capacity building from financial, technical and gender equality and social inclusion experts managed by CFA Pakistan's local delivery partner DAI Pakistan.

British Deputy High Commissioner, Sarah Moon, underscored the UK's dedication to partnering with Pakistan in addressing the climate crisis:

"The UK Government is



proud to support initiatives like the Climate Finance Accelerator, which play a crucial role in unlocking climate finance and supporting innovative projects in Pakistan. Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our time and the projects

showcased today demonstrate the potential for climate action and sustainable development in Pakistan. I hope that they can use today's event and the training that they have received to help them find investment."

Najam Shah, Secretary, Forest & Wildlife Department, from Government of

Sindh, provided insights into the government's stance on climate change, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts between government and non-governmental entities to achieve climate goals.

James Naughton, DAI Pakistan, highlighted the urgent need for action, stat-

ing, "Pakistan's climate adaptation goals require significant investments, estimated at around 14 billion per year. This necessitates an immediate response from both the private and public sectors. The CFA Pakistan Investor Roadshow brings together commercial project developers, financiers, and policymakers to catalyze investments in climate-friendly initiatives."

The event fosters collaboration between financial experts, investors, and project developers, aiming to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy. If funded, these projects have the potential to benefit communities across Pakistan through pollution abatement, employment opportunities, improved energy access, effective waste management, e-mobility solutions, and by promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

No provision for declaring elections 'void' in Constitution: Marwat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PTI Senior Vice President Sher Afzal Marwat on Monday asserted that there was no provision in the Constitution for declaring elections 'null and void', reiterating that his party cannot be deprived of its mandate.

Talking to journalists outside IHC premises, he demanded the constitution of a full bench to hear the elections' rigging case. "If the PTI is deprived of the mandate, people will lose trust in democracy and elections," he remarked. He also claimed that his house was raided at 2:00 am and the ones involved in the act wore masks.

China opposes, condemns acts against civilians in Rafah, Gaza: Mao Ning

Spokesman Report

BELJING: China on Monday opposed and condemned acts against civilian and international law and called on Israel to stop military operation immediately in Rafah in southern Gaza. "China is closely watching the developments in Rafah. We oppose and condemn acts against civilians and international law," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning told reporters at a regular briefing while stating China's position concerning the recent developments in Rafah.

"We call on Israel to stop military operations as soon as possible, do everything possible to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and prevent a more devastating humanitarian disaster in Rafah," she added. In response to a question about Israel prime minister's statement that his country won't accept an international mandate for a permanent solution to the Palestinian issue, the spokesperson said that the Two-State solution was the univer-



sal consensus of the international community to settle the Palestinian question.

"Implementing the Two-State solution is the only way to end the cycle of conflict between Palestine and Israel," she added. Mao Ning said that China stands ready to work with all parties to hold a more broad-based, authoritative and effective international peace conference as early as possible, formulate a concrete timetable and the roadmap for the implementation of the Two-State solution. "China supports Palestine and Israel in resuming peace talks soon for the ultimate peaceful coexistence between the two states of

Palestine and Israel," she added. Regarding the International Court of Justice open hearings about Israel's historical occupation of Palestinian territories, she said that on the ICJ advisory opinion. China had submitted its written statement on July 25 last year. The Chinese side will take part in the public hearings of the ICJ to have an in-depth elaboration on China's policy propositions on the question of Palestine, state China's positions on relevant international law issues regarding the right to self-determination, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and State responsibility, and express China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights and interests, she added. Mao Ning said that China stood ready to work with the rest of the international community to continue making positive contributions to an early settlement of the Palestinian question and the realization of lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Published by: Almash Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

ECP committee probes former Pindi commissioner's allegations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The special committee set up by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to probe allegations levelled by former Rawalpindi commissioner Liaquat Ali Chattha regarding rigging in polls has started work.

Sources said the committee had written a letter to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) to provide a copy of the transcript of Chattha's press conference.



The committee has started recording statements of district returning officers (DROs) of the Rawalpindi division. In this connection, the district returning officer of Murree on Monday recorded his statement.

PTI, JUI-P agree to 'work together' for political stability

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI-P), also known as Sherani group, agreed to 'work together' for country's development and political stability.

The agreement came after a PTI delegation - comprising Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Asad Qaiser, Omar Ayub Khan and others - met JUI-P leaders in Islamabad.

Addressing a press conference, JUI-P leader Maulana Gul Naseeb said that he was indebted to PTI for taking his party into confidence

in the current scenario and opting for an alliance for the way forward.

He also urged all major stakeholders, including political parties, to join hands for political stability and take country out of crisis.

Taking over the presser, PTI leader Gohar Khan said both the parties had affirmed to continue contacts. "We all agree that this country is ours, democracy should continue moving forward and we will take a step forward to improve the economy," he added.

The Barrister further said that both the parties agreed to continue the struggle against alleged rigging in the Feb 8 general elections.

Large oil, gas reserves discovered in Sindh

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a major development for the country's economy, large reserves of oil and gas have been discovered in the Khairpur district of Sindh.

According to the details, Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) claimed to have discovered large oil and gas deposits at a depth of 3762 meters in the Khairpur district of Sindh.

As per the Deputy Commissioner of Khairpur, successful exploration of new oil and gas reserves has been achieved in the Khawari block of Khairpur district.

This discovery has been officially communicated to the Pakistan Stock Exchange by OGDCL (Oil and Gas Development Company Limited).

OGDCL revealed that the initial

findings in Khairpur district, specifically at Khawari one well, located at a depth of 3,762 meters, while, preliminary tests showed that a daily gas reserves of 14.3 million cubic feet. Additionally, the well yielded 93 barrels per day of crude oil.

This new discovery is expected to lead to annual savings of millions of dollars for Pakistan.

OGDCL predicts that after further analysis, the gas quality is anticipated to be 13.3 MMCFD, while daily crude oil production is estimated to reach 93 barrels.

The company emphasized that the gas discovery was made after drilling to a depth of 3770 meters.

The Khewari block in Khairpur district is owned by OGDCL with a 95 percent share, while Government Holding Private Limited holds the remaining 5 percent shares.

Ambassador meets participants at European Diplomatic Academy



Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: Pakistan's ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union Amna Baloch on Monday met a group of participants of the European Diplomatic Academy and delivered a speech.

During her talk, the ambassador highlighted the existing contours of dynamics in South Asia.

She discussed pathways to engagement and role of the international community for prospects for peace and prosperity in South Asia. Ambassador meets participants at European Diplomatic Academy

Kashmiris to commemorate martyrdom anniversary of London-Based Kashmiri heroes

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Jammu and Kashmir communities prepare to mark the 51st martyrdom anniversary of London-based Kashmiri martyrs Hanif Shaheed and Basharat Shaheed in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and the United Kingdom on February 20th with reverence and renewed commitment to the Kashmiri cause.

Detailed programs, jointly organized by the AJK government and various social and human rights organizations, will be held at the mausoleums of Basharat Shaheed in Palak and Hanif Shaheed in Mirpur.

Notable figures and public will lay



floral wreaths and offer prayers at the grave-sites.

Special ceremonies will honor the memory of the 'Martyrs of London', emphasizing their sacrifices for Kashmir's freedom struggle.

These commemorations reaffirm Kashmiri resolve that Pakistan represents their ultimate destination and underscore their dedication to achieving self-determination.