

bracing Financial Inclusion & Business Transformation

resident's Secreteriat, Islamabad

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

involved in blackmailing and Such action, he said, was The prime minister, in a a clear violation of the Artistatement, said that the people

cle 5 and other articles of the Constitution and the laws of the land. "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.

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



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.

🐞 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. He hailed millions of young voters who had expressed their confidence in the democratic system. He added that if their confidence in the system was shaken. it would not be in the country's interest, and called for respecting the mandate of the people. He He said that financial inclusion maintained that the blockage of was not possible without political

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.

Speaking on the occasion, the President called for enhancing the inclusion of deprived sections of society, especially women and persons with disabilities, in the mainstream of the economy through the digital transformation of the financial sector for socio-economic development.

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. "If left unad-

dressed, Pakistan would export raw labour without any value-addition", he added. He cited the

PTI announces alliance with

Sunni Ittehad Council, MWM

example of China which had lifted towards financial inclusion which 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

was not possible without advancements in the mobile industry.

Photo: PID

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.

> Earthquake jolts Gilgit-Baltistan, adjoining areas

腾 🛛 City Desk

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

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

SC summons *petitioner in* plea against elections

腾 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 Hilali, 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.

😂 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, that his party won 170 to 180 seats Punjab and KP will join the Sunni Ittehad Council.

The decision was taken after 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 in the NA, but the results were rigged'. Speaking on the occasion, Omar

prolonged consultation between 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 alli-

ance with the PTI is 'unconditional'.

Hunza.

IHC suspends success notifications of Tariq Fazal, Khurram Nawaz, Anjum Ageel 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 and Raja Khurram Shahzad success notification was Nawaz. 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

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

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 complete record.

NA-46 (Islamabad), Dr Tariq Shoaib 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 腾 City Desk

pressurising them.

of Pakistan had spoken with a

clear voice on February 8 and

proven track record of violent

behaviour and vigilantism

(however) are now using different tricks, including

weaponisation of social media

in blackmailing, vigilantism

and pressurising civil servants to switch their loyalties from

the State of Pakistan to the

violent gang," he added.

"Some elements with a

had given a split mandate.

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

IHC summons PM Kakar again in missing **Baloch students' case**

腾 🛛 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has summoned Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar for the third time on Februarv 28 after the latter skipped today's court appearance in missing Baloch students' case.

IHC judge Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani issued orders while hearing the missing Baloch students plea.

"The caretaker prime minister should not go to Karachi for the next hearing, but appear before the court," the IHC judge added.

"No one is above the law here," he said.

IHC judge Justice Kayani also inquired about other caretaker ministers as well as the defence and interior secretary.

The court also formed a three-member committee and adjourned the proceedings till February 28.

A day earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) issued a fourpage written order summonning the Caretaker Prime Minister in missing Baloch students' case

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked during the case hearing that those found involved in enforced disappearances should be awarded double death penalty. "Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq should appear in person before the court on Monday at 10:00pm and explain the bench why a case should not be registered against him", Justice Kayani said.

On the plea of the Assistant Attorney General seeking adjournment of the hearing Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani said," I am showing leniency that both DGs are not being summoned".

AAG Usman Ghumman earlier told the court one of the 12 missing students has also been recovered. He said the Attorney General was not available today seeking adjournment of the case.

The court however, rejected the state lawyer's request.

The IHC in a previous hearing had given February 13 (today) deadline to the federal government for recovery of the missing Baloch students.

The court in a written order had also summoned final report of all Baloch missing persons regarding their reaching to their homes.

"The court is not demanding statements on oath from the Prime Minister, Interior and Defence Secretaries and security institution for now. If the missing persons not recovered, statements on oath will be demanded and legal proceeding will be initiated," the court order read.

Attorney General submitted a list of the Baloch students missing in enforced disappearances. The court was informed that 12 Baloch missing students' cases have been unresolved.

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake,

2 The Spokesman

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

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





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.

Samosa Patti



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 Angoor Adda Border. 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 trying to provide all possible facilities Afghan side, two kilometers away from to the two injured.

Ähmedzai 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

Allama Tahirul Hasan calls for end of politics of chaos in Pakistan 腾 🛛 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 inter-

nal 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 Shahzad 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 Shahzad 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

😹 ΡΡΔ

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking achievement for Pakistan, Prof Dr. Jamil Asphar Jami, Dean of the



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



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

😂 Spokesman Report

KOTLI: Leaders of Azad Kashmir Movement for larly, the books in the grave-Protection of Khatam e yards of Qadianis in Goi and Nabuwat(End of Prophet- Tatta Pani sectors, which hood), while welcoming have Kalima Tayyaba and the release of the prison- Quranic verses should also of destruction of Islamic rituals from Tatta Pani Tehreek e Tahfiz e Khatam Bhabara Qadiani Apostate, Nabubwat Hafiz Maqsood have demanded the Kotli he catagorically added that administration to abide by the law while implement-

from other centers of Qadianis in Kotli district. Simiers arrested in the case be removed. In a statement happen he warned. issued by spokesperson of

If the administration and law enforcement agencies ing the decision of the High fulfill their responsibilities, Abrar Ahmad Mughal,

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

The leaders of the movement, Maulana Muhammad Saleem Ejaz, Qari Abdul Waheed Qasmi, Maulana Jameel Ahmad Jami, Raja Asif Khan, Dr. Court. Make it complete and then the law and order situ- Maulana Abdul Razaq, as well.

remove the rituals of Islam ation will also be remained 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

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

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 Tonato 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 Godfrey. He readily agreed, and now



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.

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 ICES-CO 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.

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 highstakes 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.







Islamabad 15º – 23º Clear

SERVICES **Namaz Timings**

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

Rescue (Police) Bomb Disposal Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad1122 & 16 Emergency Ambulance...... 1122 & & Rescue Services 4451122 ...9266044 Motorway Police .

Motorway Police 9270601-20 **Women Police** Stations

Islamabad . 9222596 Rawalpindi . 9270601-20

ENQUIRY Edhi Ambulance **PIA Flight Info**

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HOSPITALS			
CMH	56111		
MH			
MH			
Cantt Hospital	9270907-		
DHQ			
RGH	9290301·		
Holy Family	9290322		
PIMS	9261170-7		
Polyclinic	9218300-0		
Shifa International			

Legends, Shahid Afridi and Jahangir Khan to attend SAF-GCT Combined Annual Dinner 😂 PNP

KARACHI: Sports legends Shahid Afridi and Jahangir Khan will attend an event here at a hotel on February 23, 2024, where their memorabilia and that of other eminent Pakistani athletes will be auctioned. The event is being jointly organised by the non-profits Shahid Afridi Foundation (SAF) and Green Crescent Trust (GCT) to generate resources to provide quality education to deprived and underprivileged, out of school children in Sindh and Balochistan. Both the non-profits joined hand five years back to enrol out-of-school children in Sindh. Other eminent sportsmen whose memorabilia will be expected to auctioned on the occasion include Javed Miandad, Jansher Khan, Samiullah, Kalimullah, Shaheen Shah Afridi, and Babar Azam. The auction for the noble cause will be held in the presence of 250 plus prominent businessmen and industrialists of Karachi, A special feature of the event will be humorous poetry to be rendered by eminent poets Khalilullah Farooqi, khalid irfan and Hakeem Nasif to entertain the audience. SAF Chairman, Shahid Afridi, said that his non-profit was fully keen to once again get the fullest support from Karachi's business fraternity to accelerate the drive to educate children from deprived families. GCT CEO, Zahid Saeed, said that his non-profit had the resolve to work together with committed non-governmental organisations, government agencies, and concerned philanthropists to resolve the issue of out-of-school children in Sindh in the shortest possible time.

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 challeng-

es, 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-promot-

ing activities. Recognizing the FASP's remarkable achievement of reduction in related mortality securing 11 awards for Pakistan in the Bloom Oman competition, she praised their contribu- cacy on behalf of persons with

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 rates over the past five years. Further, she called for advo-

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.

Heavy rain

ISLAMABAD: People travelling in Metro on their way bus during heavy rain in the Federal Capital. Photo: Online Ashfaq wins silver, bronze medals in international competition 😂 PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chef Mohammad Ashfaq won Silver medal in black, Bronze medal in best Cuisine of Pakistan and 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. Älhaj Vohra



😂 🛛 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Traders should actively participate in the education system of children, this was said by Central President Cloth Board Étihad 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 tableaus, 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



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 attacks in Pakistan in 2023. are virtually impossible to compromise and that minimize the number of potential vulnerabilities

When looking at the threat landscape in Paki-stan, 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



"Being an emerging country

and accepting digital transformation at good pace, Pakistan has very important role to play in Asia. As the cybersecu- ened complexity of cyberat-

rity landscape evolves, cyber threats continue to become diverse and sophisticated. This trend is particular-

ly evident due to the emer- (GReAT) gence of advanced technolo-

ing geopolitical and economic security threat landscape in turbulence within the META the META region has flucregion. These factors collec- tuated significantly. In the tively contribute to the surge region, Turkey saw the highin cybercrime and the heighttacks.", comments Amin Hasbini, Director of META Research Center Global Research and Analysis Team

According to Kaspergies like AI and the escalat- sky's analysis of the cyber-

est 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%).

🍋 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 Shafqat 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.

New govt should prioritise economic growth, poverty reduction

腾 Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD:: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreeke-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 staterun 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

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. He said that even in these situations, the rulers are unwilling to cut costs and disregard merit.

Failing public sector companies are

7% of GDP, and poverty is increasing 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.

Editorial/Opinion

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

4 The Spokesm	
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Upcoming **Government: High** hopes, greater expectations

ith a new cabinet is set to swear-in; people are pinning hopes that those to be entrusted with the portfolios will demonstrate high degree of efficiency to resolve their problems at grossroot level

Back then, there have been several economists stressing that Pakistan's economy is facing economic crisis for the last few years. Then, there are few others with the belief that some signs of improvement have emerged as result of the decisions taken by the previous coalition government put the economy on track. Overall, the final hope lies in the coalition government as how it could meet challenge of bringing economic stability by and large correlated to political stability. Amongst main problems people of the country facing is steep inflation being measured as the highest in ratio (28%) here contrary to other countries of South Asia. High interest rates, unemployment and the burden of unnecessary taxes especially on utility bills are equally putting lives of the people in awesome circumstances. The miseries are multiplied further following dearth of clean drinking water, sewage issues with shortage of basic amenities of life, needed to get immediate attention after cobbling together the coalition government since no political party succeeded to rule solely after the elections results, said Khawaja Shafique and Ghazanfar abbas, the traders unionists. They expected the upcoming government to give priority to the said issues as 'people are dying to meet common living standard of their lives'. The supremo of PML-N, Mian Nawaz Sharif in the recent electoral campaign has pledged to bring down prices of essential commodities and create employment opportunities. The expected coalition rule of the government is unquestionably going to be the most challenging one in terms of ensuring economic recovery that couldn't be achieved without combating corruption. MPA Nadeem Qureshi expects the government to control corruption for it drains public resources away from education, healthcare, and effective infrastructure. Dr Muqarrab, Professor of Department of Political Science of Bahauddin Zakariya University pressed on the country's leadership to hold primary focus on re-building the economy. He said the incoming government will have to reduce dependence on IMF, riding of foreign loans with abstaining from the default risk hovering over the country. To him, that would be the government's foremost challenge ahead of the formation in just few days. Residents of Surij Miani, known vicinity situated in NA-149 covering 108 Kanal of area with more than 20 commercial buildings is having narrow roads caused trafficking jam as routine affair of life. The inhabitants expect the government to widen the main road in the bazaar on priority basis after getting into power. Amir Dogar, the PTI- backed independent candidate being elected from the constituency told the scribe the matter was in the queue already and pledged to get it resolved when his party would come into power.

Vill SC Nullify the Elections 2024?

High Court voiced their profound concern over separate yet crucial issues. The ne Court took a stern stance regarding a petition filed to declare the 2024 Elections null and void, emphasizing the gravity of such a legal move and expressing dissatisfaction with the subsequent withdrawal of the appeal. Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court addressed the disappearance of 12 Baloch students from Islamabad, expressing deep frustration and dismay over the violation of their fundamental human rights enshrined in the constitution and the law of the land. Interestingly, both cases are intertwined, albeit in different ways, with the establishment. In the Supreme Court case, a retired Brigadier filed the appeal to declare the 2024 election null and void, implicating the country's electoral process. Conversely, in the High Court case, the nation's esteemed spy agencies were implicated regarding the disappearance of individuals. While the issue of missing persons warrants attention, let's delve into the Supreme Court case concerning the election appeal.

Delving into the motives behind the retired Brigadier's petition before the Supreme Court of Pakistan reveals a concern for the fairness and integrity of the electoral process, especially amidst allegations of widespread rigging. However, in filing the application, the retired Brigadier may not have fully grasped the financial implications of the re-elections to the state, political parties and the candidates, and the complex political dynamics at play within Pakistan, potentially underestimating the nuances of the situation.

The futility of the petition became evident as major parties like PML(N), PPP, and MQM accepted the election results. PTI, while forming the government in KP

oday, both the Supreme and opting for opposition roles elsewhere, is concurrently engaging in legal and political battles to contest the alleged electoral malpractices. Despite serious reservations about the fairness of the process, parties like GDA, JI, and JUI have refrained from demanding the nullification of the elections. Instead, aggrieved parties are

pursuing their grievances through legal avenues, such as Election Tribunals Analys and the Supreme Court of Pakistan, or through political activism. These realizations

may have dawned on the Brigadier later, may be coupled with pressure or intimidation.

either personally or from external forces, prompting him to withdraw the petition. Alternatively, he may have reconsidered the implications of pursuing the case further and decided to step back for personal or strategic reasons. However, the Supreme Court's decision to proceed with the hearing indicates that they saw merit in investigating the allegations of rigging, regardless of the petitioner's withdrawal. Alternatively, the latest confession of the Commissioner Rawalpindi where he implicated the chief election commis-

sioner and the Chief Justice in the alleged massive and blatant riggings might be the actual reasons which might have prompted to the Supreme Court to take up this petition on its guise discuss the commissioner's confession and allegations in an attempt to clear the chief justice from his alleged involvement in the rigging.

As the legal battle would unfold, the Supreme Court would face the arduous task of navigating complex political terrain. Though the petitioner's plea raises fundamental questions about the credibility of the electoral outcome, none of the political parties, the legal fraternity or civil society

the elections null and void. All of them have preferred to resort to the legal battle and wage democratic campaigns to seek justice.

In this scenario, if the supreme court proceeds with the hearing, it might first determine the competency of the retired Brigadier to file any appeal to nullify the

elections. This typically involves demonstrating a personal stake in the outcome of the election, such as being a candidate who lost due to the alleged irregularities. Moreover, the petition must be based on specific and verifiable grounds, **Qamar Bashir** such as evidence of wide-

spread irregularities, rigging, or violations of electoral laws. The court may consider mere dissatisfaction with the elections as insufficient reason to petition the supreme court.

The Supreme Court may also take into account that major political parties like PPP, PTI, PML(N), or MQM have accepted the election results and may be hesitant to become parties to the petition. Conversely, smaller parties that were marginalized in the elections, as well as individuals or civil society organizations advocating for electoral transparency and accountability, may step forward to defend the petition. They may argue that the pervasive irregularities have undermined the legitimacy of the results, warranting judicial intervention to nullify the elections.

The aggrieved political parties like PTI, JI, GDA and JUI if summoned by the SC may argue that though the election process was replete with irregularities, the overall integrity of the election was not compromised to the extent that would warrant nullifying the results. Additionally, they may stress the importance of address-

have ever voiced their intention to declare ing the genuine grievances by alternative avenues such as legal challenges or democratic campaigns.

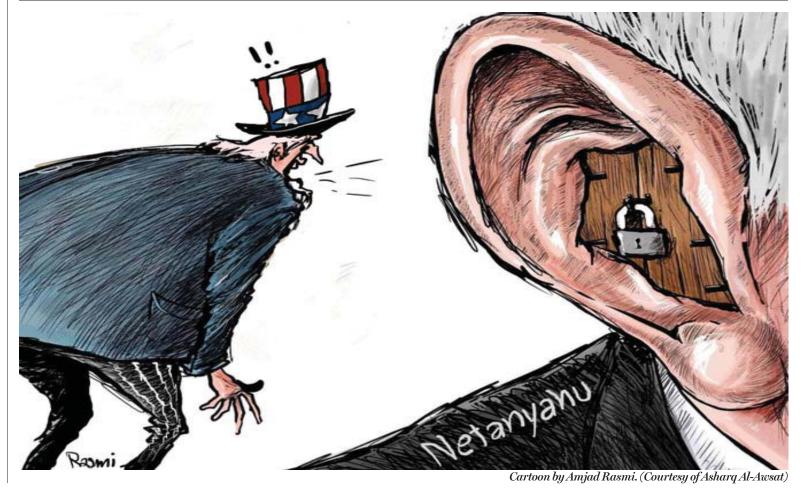
The Supreme Court after meticulously weighing the arguments may consider various options while deciding the case. If the evidence fails to substantiate widespread rigging or irregularities that significantly undermine the election's integrity, the supreme court might dismiss the petition. And if credible allegations warrant further investigation, ordering a recount or an inquiry in specific constituencies to rectify concerns without nullifying the entire election.

However, in the event of irrefutable evidence of systemic fraud that fundamentally compromises the election's fairness, declaring it null and void may be the necessary course of action, ensuring democratic principles prevail and future electoral integrity is maintained.

The Supreme Court's determination to proceed with hearing the petition, even after its withdrawal, underscores the gravity of the situation surrounding the 2024 elections. It reflects an attempt by the Chief Justice to clear his name and may reflect the Court's commitment to address the widespread allegations of rigging that have garnered attention nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The direction taken by the Supreme Court in this pivotal case could significantly impact the outcome of the controversial elections. Its findings have the potential to guide the country out of its current political, economic, and financial challenges or further entrench it in political and legal turmoil. Therefore, the Supreme Court's actions carry immense weight and importance in navigating the country's future course.

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



Prices of fruits, vegetables go beyond affordability level

Fakhar-e-Alam

s the sun rays bath the mud house of poor fruit seller, Ayaz Khan starts his journey from his village to the fruits and vegetable market hoping to purchase apples, guavas, bananas, and citrus at reasonable rates to support his six members of the family on the financial front.

Donned in traditional attire-woolen chadar, Chitrali cap, and wearing Peshawari Chappal, Ayaz Khan (32), who is assisted by his elders brothers, wakes up early in the morning and starts his Chingchi rickshaw soon after having breakfast and rushed to the fruit market Pabbi Nowshera, expecting to get fresh fruits through open auction on reasonable prices by anticipating sale.

Associated with the inherited pain-sticking business for the last 12 years after the death of his father Sher Ali Khan at village Mohib Banda Nowsehra, the motivated fruit seller said that he suffered financial losses in case perishable fruits and vegetables were not sold on time.

"These days many consumers just ask about prices of fruits and vegetables and return empty handed due to exorbitant prices forcing us to wait till late at night with a hope to sell out stock of perishable goods to avert financial loss." The citrus of Khanpur Haripur and Manki Sharif Nowshera is almost out of common man's reach after its prices soared to record Rs. 350 per dozen in local fruit markets against Rs. 280 last year.

The alarming surge in vegetable and fruit prices in Peshawar and Nowshera districts raised significant concerns among the citizens, prompting them to call upon the district government to ensure the availability of essential food items at reasonable rates and take strong action against price hikers and hoarders.

A visit to vegetables and fruit markets at Chamkani Peshawar by this scribe revealed that one kilogram apple was being sold at Rs300, banana at Rs150 per dozen, gauwa Rs150 strawberry at Rs 600 per kilogram, citrus at Rs 350 per dozen and citrus fruit Rs 300 which was almost beyond of purchasing power of the under privileged.

"I came to purchase fruits for engagement party of my granddaughter but the prices are sky high this morning and will come again at night hoping for its reduction at Pabbi fruit market," said Misal Khan, a retired Information Officer while talking to media. Complaining about soaring prices of fruits and vegetables after election 2024, Khan said that district administration has failed to regularly check prices of daily use items including fruits and vegetables and people were left at the mercy of price hikers and hoarders in Nowshera and Peshawar.

Professor Dr. Zilakat Malik, former Chairman, Political Economics Department, University of Peshawar said that Pakistan has ranked 99th out of 121 countries facing challenges of food insecurity, malnutrition, stunting and hunger due to population bulge, low agriculture productivity and climate change.

He said the massive flash floods 2022 had destroyed over 1.7 million hectares of an agrarian land and major agricultural products such as rice, tomatoes, onions, wheat, and other vegetables in all provinces of Pakistan and have cost 800,000 heads of livestock, thus exposing an additional 2.5 million people to hunger, malnutrition, stunting and poverty especially in Sindh and Balochistan provinces.

He said the prices of fruits and vegetables increased after the agriculture sector had suffered at USD \$3.7 billion due to 2022 flooding, adding approximately 14.6 million people need adequate food security and agricultural assistance in floodhit areas of the country.

Ms Javeera, spokeswomen BISP KP told the news agency that Benazir Nashonuma is a Conditional Cash Transfer program linked with health and nutrition for addressing stunting in children besides promoting dietary diversity.

Considering the high percentage of stunting, the government has also rapidly expanded the program to all districts of the country with establishment of 488 facilitation centers at tehsil and district-level health facilities, she said.

The budgetary allocation for this initiative was increased from Rs. 4.9 billion to Rs. 20 billion (410 percent increase) for FY 2022-23 that had been further increased to Rs. 32.3 billion (61 percent increase) for FY 2023-24.

Zafarul Mani, KP Secretary Food said that an inclusive mechanism was put in place for monitoring and control of fruits and vegetables in the province. He said that an online food price and control system has been developed through which citizens check the daily prices of essential items and lodge complaints against overcharging vendors or hoarders on which prompt action is being taken.

He said PMRU was empowered to generate weekly reports regarding the set key performance indicators (KPIs) of price magistrates which had also been tasked with ensuring the real-time performance tracking of price magistrates through the KP Inspection Mobile App.

Mani said the district price control committees have been notified with the powers to conduct price review meetings besides notifying fresh price lists of fruits and vegetables for every district, including the newly merged areas.

The market committee has been empowered to monitor the daily auction of fruits and vegetables markets along with providing price lists of the daily auction which will be updated through the "price module" mobile application besides ensuring that price lists of all perishable items on a daily basis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he added.

International Perspectives on Our Elections - II

larly among marginalgroups. Hindrances to voter registration, including documentation shortages, limited polling cising their voting rights. Additionally, gender

disparities persist in voter turnout, with women frequently encountering cultural, social, and logistical barriers to electoral participation.

Political polarization and violence pose grave threats to free and fair elections in Pakistan. Coercive tactics such as harassment, intimidation, and violence are commonly

employed to suppress dissenting voices and manipulate electoral outcomes. The targeting of political figures, activists, and journalists further undermines the democratic process and stifles political expression. Addressing the underlyimperative for cultivating conditions conducive to democratic elections.

The absence of comprehensive electoral reforms perpetuates many of the existing challenges within Pakistan's electoral system. Despite calls for reform from civil society, political entities, and international observers, progress has been sluggish, and substantive changes remain pending. Reforms addressing issues such as campaign finance regulations, electoral demarcations, and the autonomy of electoral bodies are indispensable for ensuring transparency, equity, and answerability in elections.

The media's role in shaping public opinion

oreover, voter disenfranchise- and electoral outcomes is paramount. Howevment allegations remains a er, concerns regarding media bias and manipsignificant concern, particu- ulation are prevalent in Pakistan, with certain outlets openly endorsing political entities and ized and underrepresented disseminating misinformation to sway public sentiment. The dearth of impartiality and professionalism in media coverage understation accessibility, and intimidation tactics, mines the credibility of the electoral process impede numerous eligible citizens from exer- and impedes voters' ability to make well-informed choices



Addressing these electoral challenges demands concerted efforts from all stakeholders, including political leaders, civil society entities, electoral authorities, and citizens themselves. Meaningful reforms, including bolstering electoral oversight mechanisms, enhancing voter education and awareness initiatives, promoting

gender parity in politics, and fostering a culture of transparency and accountability, are indispensable for nurturing a more inclusive and resilient democracy in Pakistan. By confronting these challenges head-on and upholding demoing causes of political violence and fostering an cratic principles and values, Pakistan can chart a environment of tolerance and inclusivity are course toward a brighter and more democratic future for all its inhabitants.

In the pursuit of elections that are free, fair, and inclusive, it is imperative to address the interconnected challenges of ignorance and poverty. These intertwined issues not only undermine the integrity of electoral processes but also perpetuate social disparities and obstruct the realization of democratic ideals. Recognizing the importance of tackling ignorance and poverty is crucial for fostering more equitable societies and ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to participate meaningfully in democratic governance.

To be continued

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Tuesday, February 20, 2024

International

The Spokesman 5

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

ear 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.

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 deserof forests, eco-landscapes and biodiversity. On a huge area of the dried-up bottom of the Aral Sea, a new desert has formed-54 thousand square kilometers as the Regional Environmen-



(for comparison: it is compa- tal Protection Program for the rable to the territory of Croatia and much larger than Estonia, Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland).

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 Kazakhtification of vast territories, loss stan's chairmanship, we will continue to implement two main programs approved by the IFAS Board: Aral Sea Basin Program-4 (ASBP-4) and its Aralkum, with a size of more than systematic monitoring, as well

Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REPPSD CA). The period of implementation of the ooth 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 Inde-

pendence, 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

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 drained bottom of the Aral Sea a separate main area, consisting opment of environmental inno-

are found not only in the Tien 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 devel-

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

"Improvement of water quality in rivers and reservoirs, taking into account international standards, elimination and prevention of pollution, including industri-Kazakhstan and other countries are working on joining the Protocol on Water and Health to Dushanbe, called on the parties 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 important role. It is worthwhile Aral Sea basin, studying the state of glaciers in the upper reaches of transboundary rivers, developing transboundary eco-corridors, regional networks of specially rations and joint statements. 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 Asia's actions to achieve the globmechanism 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 auto-I consider such a project as mated 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 al waste" to be very important. meeting of the Council of Heads of States-Founders of the IFAS held on September 15, 2023 in to begin implementing these initiatives.

Strengthening regional cooperation with international development partners, UN structural entities, financial institutions and the donor community plays an to intensify activities within the framework of generally accepted international environmental conventions, action plans, decla-

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 al SDGs and its positioning as a single region.

Sincerely, Chairperson of the IFAS Executive Committee Askhat Orazbay

<u>Chinese New Year</u>

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



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 partic ipate 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. in 1974 in Alentejo, south of



José Luis Peixoto (born José Saramago Literary Award, amongst others, and Portugal) is one of Portugal's his prose and poetry books most renowned contempo- have been translated into rary authors, winner of the 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 depu-

ty 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 loselose," 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 unsolvable 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."

The Spokesman

Economy/Commerce

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

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

Pakistan: PSX 1	uu-Snare 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			
IIIUEX Value	j-			
38,627.99	-145.13			
	•			
38,627.99	-145.13			
38,627.99 Percentage -0.37%				
38,627.99 Percentage -0.37%	-145.13 Time 16 Feb, 4:50 pm GMT-5			
38,627.99 Percentage –0.37% Asia Pacific: Nikk	-145.13 Time 16 Feb, 4:50 pm GMT-5 cei Stocks Average			
38,627.99 Percentage –0.37% Asia Pacific: Nikk Index Value	-145.13 Time 16 Feb, 4:50 pm GMT-5 cei Stocks Average Change			
38,627.99 Percentage –0.37% Asia Pacific: Nikk Index Value 38,470.38				

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
NewZealand \$	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

New government must cut business costs: Mian Zahid Hussain

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.

ment companies are wasting trillions of rupees

priorities, and Pakistan's GDP is expected to

Mian Zahid Hussain said that in these situ-

businesses to survive, but despite this, the

He said that the people still understand that

their quality of life will be improved by the polit-

ical leaders. A good environment will be provid-

ed for employment and business, and the inter-

emain at only two percent.

people have not lost hope.

The business leader said that failing govern-

🐞 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, mismanagement, and corruption have led to

Traditional vegetable

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



Hotel One by Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts Wins Traveller

the fall of the country's economy which needs 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 every year, the economy is suffering from wrong 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 ations, it has become difficult for people and 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.

easypaisa Empowers users with 'Savings Pocket' for Financial Independence

腾 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; rath- launched 'Savings Pocker 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 et' 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 goalbased 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.

2,651 new companies incorporated in January: SECP

ertr earra eterning		
US Dollar	279.3	282.2

Foreign Diplomats

potential of Chakwal

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad and Chak-

try organized a cultural caravan of foreign

wal Chambers of Commerce and Indus-

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,

General, UBG Pakistan also accompanied

former President ICCI, and Secretary

The caravan visited the Universi-

mad Bilal Khan, Vice Chancellor, and

Dr. Samia Anwar of the Department of

briefed the foreign diplomats about the

wal that attract tourists worldwide.

Archeology warmly welcomed them. They

historical and archeological sites of Chak-

The caravan also visited the Katas Raj

Temples, which hold immense histori-

cal and religious significance. Prof. Dr.

Muhammad Bilal Khan, Vice Chancel-

lor, 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 pilgrim-

age sites in Pakistan and members of the Hindu community from Pakistan and

abroad visit this place every year as a part

ist site in the area. Mian Khawar Saleem,

a member of the Chakwal Chamber of

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan

ber of Commerce said that ICCI had

already taken a delegation of foreign diplomats to Skardu last year, and this

cultural caravan in collaboration with

of showing the foreign diplomats the

promote tourism in the area.

wonderful tourist places of Chakwal to

Chakwal Chamber of Commerce is a part

Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Cham-

Commerce hosted the lunch in honor of

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 tour-

of their spiritual journey.

the cultural caravan.

ty of Chakwal where Prof. Dr. Muham-

diplomats to the district Chakwal to

laud the tourism

🐞 PPA

the caravan.

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 Kham, 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.

2024 Spring F

腾 PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2.651 new companies in January 2024, showing an increase of 10% compared to the corresponding period last year. The total number of registered companies now stands at 212,108. Total capitalization (paid-up capital) with regard to newly incorporated companies is PKR 5.2 billion.

In January, around 58% of companies were registered as private limited companies, 38% as single member companies, and 4% as public unlisted companies, not-for-profit associations, trade organizations, limited liability partnerships, and foreign companies. Five foreign companies also registered their place of business in Pakistan. Around 138 foreign applicants were registered from overseas through eServices. Almost 99.85 percent

The information technology sector took the lead with regards to incorporation with and the US.

356 companies, trading with 319, real estate development & construction, and services with 277 each, tourism with 145, education with 116, food & beverages with 94, corporate agricultural farming with 93, e-commerce with 72, engineering with 65, chemical with 61, power generation with 58, marketing & advertisement, and textile with 55 each. Furthermore, pharmaceutical, mining & quarrying with 53 each, healthcare with 48,, fuel and energy with 45, transport with 44, cosmetics & toiletries with 33, communication with 28, broadcasting & telecasting with 27, lodging, and auto and allied with 22 each, cables & electrical goods with 19, paper & board with 18, and 196 companies were

Foreign investment has been reported in 68 new companies, having foreign investors from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hungry, Japan, Malta, Nigeof companies were registered ria, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, UAE, UK, Ukraine,

FPCCI to Work to Diversify & Enhance Exports to China

😂 PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram trade with China in Yuan has 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 Mr. Asif Sakhi, VPs FPCCI, under tremendous pressure its exports on an incrementally sustainable basis - as China is not only a neighboring and friendly country; but, also a huge market for

He expressed his optimism on

the trend where the Pakistani reached 14 percent in 2023; whereas, it was a mere 2 percent in 2018.

It is pertinent to note Karachi and relayed FPCCI's sentiments to H. E. Mr. Yang Yundong, Chinese Consul General in Karachi, towards potential Pakistani exports. 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 that Mr. Aman Paracha & as Pakistan's rupee has been visited Chinese consulate in and kept depreciating on an past few years consecutively due to the dwindling foreign exchange reserves (FER); current account deficit (CAD)



online.

unprecedented rate for the and repeated abruptions in external financing.

Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, maintained that trade, invest-

greatly help Pakistan embark is an excellent case study for on a high-growth and pover- Pakistan to learn from its ty-reduction trajectory; just economic transformation, ments, JVs and industrial like the China has achieved

collaborations with China can over the past 3 decades. China he added.

registered in other sectors.

Sports Tuesday, February 20, 2024

The Spokesman

'Quetta Gladiators could part ways with Sarfaraz Ahmed'

😹 Sports Desk

LAHORE: Sarfaraz Ahmed, who was leading Quetta Gladiators in the PSL since its inception in 2016, was sacked as frontman days before the tournament. He was replaced with South Africa batter Rilee Rossouw

Tanveer Ahmed, on a private channel, claimed Sarfaraz Ahmed was not been leading the frankcise well in the past couple of editor and its Director Moin Khan had talked about it on television channels on several occasions.

Tanveer Ahmed was of the view that if franchise owner Nadeem Omar had himself announced the decision, he management decided to save their face would have to face a lot of criticism by

be organized smoothly," he said this while talking at the

first game of 3-match series

between Higher Education

Commission (HEC) and

Netherland's OHC Bully

hockey club teams at the

on Monday.



the media, so the Quetta Gladiators' Shane Watson's arrival. and probably delayed their decision till

He said Quetta Gladiators could part ways with Sarfaraz Ahmed, adding that

he could play less games in the ongoing edition and not be part of the team at all for the next season.

Under the veteran cricketer's leadership, the side finished as finalist in the inaugural edition and won the tournament in the following season. They were eliminated in the playoff stage in 2018, before winning their second title in the 2019 edition.

Since then, they haven't moved past the group stages in the past four editions.

It is pertinent to mention that Quetta Gladiators got off to a winning start in PSL 2024 as they won their campaign opener against Peshawar Zalmi by 16 runs

Olympian Khawaja Junaid urges *Maryam* Nawaz to prioritize hockey



😂 Sports Desk

LAHORE: Hockey Olympian Khawaja Junaid has urged the Chief Minister Punjab designate Maryam Nawaz to put sports and revival of national sport hockey on top of her agenda when she takes oath of the office of the Chief Minister Punjab.

Talking to APP at the National Hockey Stadium here on Monday, he said the national sport hockey has suffered due to neglect during the past three decades and it is time that the political leadership of the country plays its active role in the revival of hockey in the country.

Hockey Olympian Khawaja Junaid who runs a hockey academy for children aged 7 and above in collaboration with the

Peshawar won the national under-13 cricket tournament



😂 🛛 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Peshawar won the National Under-13 Cricket Tournament. Peshawar defeated Karachi by 40 runs in the final played at Boranwali Ground Faisalabad on Monday

Peshawar won the toss and batted first and scored 165 runs for the loss of 7 wickets in the stipulated 30 overs.

Mursaleen Khan scored 51 runs not out which included three fours. Farooq Akbar scored 33 runs with the help of two fours and a six and Mohammad Saad scored 32 runs.

Hasan Ahmed took 3 wickets for 23 runs from Karachi.

In reply, the Karachi team was dismissed for 125 runs. Faisal Qurban remained the top scorer by scoring 38 runs with the help of six fours.

Sanaullah bowled well and took 4 wickets by giving 17 runs. Hamdan Faisal dismissed 3 players for 15 runs.

Carlos Brathwaite, Sikandar Raza join Lahore Qalandars for PSL 9

😂 A Sports

LAHORE: Defending champions Lahore Qalandars got a much-needed boost as renowned all-rounders Carlos Brathwaite and Sikandar Raza joined the squad ahead of their second Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 fixture.



According to the details, both Brathwaite and Raza will be available for selection for the Qalandars' clash with Quetta Gladiators here on Monday.

"Sikandar, known for his all-round skills and dynamic presence on the field, joins Lahore Qalandars with a wealth of experience. His ability to contribute with both bat and ball adds a valuable dimension to the team's strategy. He is part of Qalandars' core and was retained in their roster but missed the opening game due to prior commitments in ILT20, which concluded on February 17 in Dubai," the Qalandars said in a press release.

"Carlos Brathwaite, a T20 specialist and a renowned power-hitter, brings his explosive batting provess and strategic bowling to the Lahore Qalandars lineup. He has been called up to strengthen the Qalandars' bench.

"Both players are set to be available for the entire tournament, starting today, adding depth and international flair to Lahore Qalandars' quest for glory.

"The team's management expresses confidence in the newly acquired talent and believes their addition will play a pivotal role in the squad's success.

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Notably, the defending champions had a dismal start to their PSL 9 campaign on Saturday as they succumbed to an eight-wicket defeat against two-time champions Islamabad United.

Lahore Qalandars face a stiff challenge as they look to bounce ack by defeating Gladiators, who started their PSL 9 campaign



The next match will be February 21 while Islamabad will host the third match on February 30.

National Hockey Stadium Dr Asif Tufail and IG HEC defeated Nether-Punjab Dr Usman Anwar land's OHC Bully hockwere the guests of honour on ey club team by a narrow this occasion. Hockey Olymmargin of 2-1 in the first pians Khawaja Junaid (chief game of 3-match series. organiser), Shahbaz Senior, Ammar and Usman Ashraf Taugeer Dar and Khalid scored one goal each for Bashir and a large number HEC team while skipper of male and female hockey Ruben Kattier netted the enthusiasts were also presonly goal for visiting OHC ent on this occasion.

Besides them top offi-

The guest team will play cials of Holland Embassy three matches in Pakistan. and Punjab Police, including DIG Mehboob Aslamplayed at the same venue on DIG Ather Ismael, Honorary Dutch Consul General Asma Hamid were also present on this occasion.

Dr Asif Tufail further said that Punjab Sports Department has laid modern FIH-approved turf at the National Hockey Stadium and we are quite confident to host more international hockey teams at National Hockey Stadium. "Definitely, it is a historic day. The visit of 21-member Dutch hockey club team marked

the return of an international hockey team to Pakistan after 21 years. This visit will play a significant role in the revival of international hockey in Pakistan".

Dr Asif Tufail said that this visit will play a key role in strengthening sports ties and fostering goodwill between the two nations. "This series will be very helpful in the promotion of hockey among the younger generation. Sports Board Punjab will continue to play its role in the growth of hockey among the youth," he added

Islamia University Bahawalpur Won the Inter-University Baseball Championship

🐞 Quratul Ain Asim

Bully hockey club team.

BAHAWALPUR: Pakistan Inter-University Baseball Championship 2024 ended at Emerson University Multan in the final match, Islamia University Bahawalpur defeated the University of Central Punjab by seven scores to six and won the title of champion for the second time in a row in the final match consisting of eleven innings. By UCPMudassar 2 while Saeed Waqqas Saeem and Musa scored one each Mubariz Hasan and Usman while Fazal Rabi and Zaheer Shaukat were the techniscored two each from Islamia cal officials, Professor Dr. University while Irfan Rehan Ramzan, Vice Chancellor and Wahid scored one each. Emerson. University Mult-But his team won while Atif an The winning team was in all eleven inningsIt was a distributed trophies and gold sensational final of its kind at medals to the players. Tourthe university level, in which nament Organizing Secrethe match was played up to tary Zafar Khan Sherwani, eleven innings. Moham- Director of Sports Emerson mad Jameel Kamran, University Multan was also

Zafar



Hussain Warawith them. Speaking to the ich, Makhdoom Muzafplayers on this occasion, Vice far, Alam Imran Mughal, Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Sajid Rashid Zohaib, Malik Ramzan said that baseball is one of the famous sports of Pakistan. One is the reason for usIt is an honor that we have hosted the second consecutive championship at the Pakistan level in which university students from all over Pakistan participated in an excellent manner, thanks to our Director Sports Zafar Khan Sherwani and his team. We have the best facil-

ities for the development of baseball in the futureMuhammad Jameel Kamran said that Emerson University Multan, maintaining the tradition, hosted a wonderful event at Pakistan level for which we are grateful to Vice Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Ramzan and Director Sports Zafar Khan Sherwani. And we hope that it will be the same in the futureOrganizing Secretary Zafar Khan Sherwani said that baseball has become a traditional game in which there are more suitable development opportunities for young players, so in the future We will also continue to work for the promotion of this game in which He congratulated Islamia University Bahawalpur, its manager Qazi Irfan and coach Mohammad Hasan Jameel and the players for winning the championship for the second time in a row. Punjab Sports Board (PSB) and Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy (KJHA) has invited Dutch hockey club OHC Bully to play three matches against HEC Youth team.

"Maryam Nawaz leads the youth and is a visionary politician. It is a good omen that a woman will take assume the seat of Chief Minister in Punjab," Khawaja said, adding that national sport should be on the top of her agenda for the next five years.

He invited the designate Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz to be among the youth at the National Hockey Stadium on February 21 (Wednesday) even before assuming power. He called upon the Chief Organizer Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) to watch the match between visiting Dutch OHC Bully and the HEC Youth team and meet the budding local hockey stars and international play-

About the visit of a European hockey club after a lapse of 21 years, Khawaja Junaid paid rich tribute to Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, ambassador of the Netherlands embassy in Pakistan Ms. Henny Fokel de Vries for their support in making this visit of a European hockey club possible.

He expressed the hope that visit of the Dutch hockey club will enhance soft image of the country abroad and serve as a gateway for the other hockey teams to visit Pakistan.

on a winning note.

PCB to operate directly under PM Office: report

腾 A Sports

LAHORE: The affairs of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) have been transferred from Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) to Cabinet Division.

According to a notification issued today, the cricketing body will now run directly under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and will no longer be answerable to the Ministry of IPC.

Furthermore, the notification stated that the IPC Secretary will not be a member of PCB's Board of Governors.

The development came after Mohsin Naqvi was elected unopposed as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel The elections were held at the National Cricket Academy, Lahore, where Punjab's caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi was elected unopposed as the 37th chief of the PCB. Naqvi will serve as Pakistan Cricket Board chairman for three years.

Following the resignation of Zaka Ashraf as PCB chairman, caretaker PM Anwaarul Haq Kakar appointed Shah Khawar as the election commissioner of the Cricket Board.

In January, after serving for at least seven months as PCB Management Committee chairman Zaka Ashraf stepped down from his position.

In a statement, Ashraf said he was working for the betterment of Pakistan cricket.

However, expressing disappointment over the working conditions, he said he was unable to work amid such circumstances. "It's not the prime minister's prerogative to nominate new chairman," he added.

Young Nafay helps Gladiators' ease past Lahore Qalandars for second

😂 Sports Desk

LAHORE: Young Muhammad Nafay played a match-winning knock of 60 n.o. to help Quetta Gladiators eased past a challenging total of 187-7 by the reigning champion Lahore Qalandars for the second consecutive win of the HBL PSL 9 at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Monday. It was also the second loss for the Lahore Qalandars in as many matches.

22-year-old Nafay, who had occupied the crease at the fall of Saud Shakeel in the seventh over of the Gladiators' innings, exhibited maturity and calm et before Saud Shakeel fell for 40 (23) much beyond his years as he played with aggression and flair helped the team win the match with five balls to opening partner to the hut in the very spare. Nafay played Shaheen, Haris Rauf and Zaman Khan with equal ease and hit the at will.

for the first over their innings in which Shaheen Shah Afridi had conceded five runs. The Quetta, at no stage of the match felt threatened by the formidable line-up of Lahore Qalandars. Though the newly-appointed captain Rilee Rossouw 18 (13) did not score big for the second consecutive match but his influence could be seen in all areas of the match.

Saud Shakeel and Jason Roy once again started from where they had left against Peshawar Zalmi and hit another 69 runs partnership for the first wickoff a searing Zaman Khan yorker in the seventh over. Jason Roy followed his next over when he played an ambitious stroke off Sikander Raza and lost his middle stump for 24 runs off 19 balls. The Quetta Gladiators kept the The openers had amassed a huge open-

required run-rate under control except ing partnership of 157 runs in their first er Sahibzada Farhan off the bowling match of the campaign against Peshawar Zalmi the other day.

Saud Shakeel, for the second night in a row, was the aggressor-in-chief and played an aggressive knock which culminated through a unplayable yorker from Zaman Khan. Sherfae Rutherford 14 (12), Sarfraz Ahmed 11 (8) and Akeal Hosein 9 n.o. made small contributions but these were sufficient to the team's cause after Nafay's heroics.

Though all bowlers except Jahandad Khan bagged a wicket including Shaheen, Haris, Zaman and Sikander Raza for the Qalandars but no bowler could stop the run-flow due to their own failings. Lahore Qalandars must rue the missed opportunities in the field. Jason Roy was dropped on 20 by Zaman Khan at the short third man off Jahandad Khan while Sarfraz was dropped at zero by wicket-keep-

of Haris Rauf. The Qalandars also conceded at 10-15 runs off misfielding.

With nothing to be proud of their innings except for the consecutive fifty plus runs for Sahibzada Farhan 62 (43) and a cameo from the 20 year all-rounder Jahandad Khan 45 (17) n.o. which helped Lahore Qalandars post a par total of 187-7. No other batter could make a significant contribution as the Gladiators' bowlers kept the noose tightened. Mohammad Amir was once again able to keep the batsmen under check with his pace and guile but it was Akeal Hosein who bowled a miserly spell of four overs for 13 runs and claimed two wickets. Mohammad Hasnain also picked two wickets but he conceded 50 runs. Mohammad Wasim and Abrar Ahmed shared one wicket between them.

Young Khawaja Muhammad Nafay



was adjudged Player of the Match for his match-winning and age-defying knock as two new future stars, Muhammad Nafay and Jahandad Khan, have made their credentials known to the world in this match.

Islamabad United haved travelled to Multan to play Multan Sultans at their home ground at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Tuesday (tomorrow) while no match will be played at the Gaddafi Stadium.



The Spokesman

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.



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

腾 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

ECP committee probes former Pindi commissioner's allegations

腾 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 start ed 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

腾 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 both the parties agreed to continue said that he was indebted to PTI the struggle against alleged rigging for taking his party into confidence in the Feb 8 general elections.

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 lead-

er 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

Large oil, gas reserves discovered in Sindh

腾 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

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 nalysis, the gas quality is anticipat

🐞 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 Mooney, underscored the UK's dedication to partnering with Pakistan in addressing the climate crisis:

No provision

for declaring



proud to support initiatives strate the potential for climate Sindh, provided insights into action and sustainable devellike the Climate Finance opment in Pakistan. I hope Accelerator, which play a crucial role in unlocking that they can use today's event climate finance and support- and the training that they have ing innovative projects in received to help them find Pakistan. Climate change is investment." one of the defining challeng-

Najam Shah, Secretary, es of our time and the projects Forest & Wildlife Depart-

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 "The UK Government is showcased today demon- ment, from Government of 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 collabora-

tion 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.

Palestine and Israel," she added. Regard-ing the International Court of Justice open

hearings about Israel's historical occupa-

tion 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 inter-

national law issues regarding the right to

self-determination, international human-

itarian 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 legit-

imate national rights and interests, she

added. Mao Ning said that China stood

ready to work with the rest of the inter-

national community to continue making

positive contributions to an early settle-

ment of the Palestinian question and the

realization of lasting peace and stability in

China opposes, condemns acts against civilians in Rafah, Gaza: Mao Ning elections 'void' in Constitution:

Marwat 腾 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.

😂 Spokesman Report

BEIJING: 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 the Middle East.

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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

ed 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**



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

Spokesman Report

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 Londonbased 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 Bashrat 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.