



President lauds blind cricket team for bringing fame to Pakistan, highlighting DAPs' capabilities

The members of the Pakistan Blind Cricket team on Monday called on President Dr Arif Alvi here wherein he lauded them for bringing laurels to Pakistan besides highlighting globally the capabilities of differently-abled persons. (Details on Page 8)



NEPRA hikes electricity price by Rs7.05 per unit

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority raised the per unit price of electricity by Rs7.05 on Monday. According to a notification issued by NEPRA on Monday, the hike was included in lieu of fuel adjustment charges for the month of January. The additional amount will be added to bills for the month of March. However, the price increase will not be applicable for lifeline consumers and K-electric consumers.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Successful

Pakistan Navy demonstrates successful shooting down of aerial target by surface to air missile.



Pakistan Navy demonstrates firepower in Exercise Sea Spark 2024

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Navy successfully demonstrated its firepower in the North Arabian Sea at the end of Exercise Sea Spark 2024, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday.

Fleet Vice Admiral Mohammad Faisal Abbas witnessed the firepower display, in which the ships hit air targets with surface-to-air FM 90 missiles.

The demonstration of live missile firing is a testament to the operational capability and tactical preparedness of the Pakistan Navy, the military media wing said.

Commander Abbas expressed full satisfaction with the operational readiness of the Pakistan Navy, stating "Our force is ready to make the coun-

try's maritime borders impregnable."

On February 21, the launching ceremony of Pakistan Navy's state-of-the-art fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel, PNS Yamama, was held at M/s DAMEN Shipyard Galati in Romania.

Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Owais Ahmed Bilgrami, graced the occasion as the chief guest, marking a momentous occasion for Pakistan's maritime capabilities.

The Vice Chief of the Naval Staff emphasised the critical role of maritime security amidst prevailing conventional and non-conventional threats in the Indian Ocean Region. He underscored the Pakistan Navy's pivotal contribution to maintaining safe and secure sea lanes crucial for maritime trade.

Pakistan to mark 5th anniversary of 'Operation Swift Retort' on February 27

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Armed Forces of Pakistan, along with the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) and Services Chiefs, commemorate the fifth anniversary of "Operation Swift Retort."

February 27, 2019, marked a significant event in our history, demonstrating the resolve of the people of Pakistan

and the professionalism of the Armed Forces in response to unwarranted aggression from India, motivated by political considerations and electoral concerns. Despite desperate Indian attempts to favourably shape the information space, the events of that fateful day showcased absolute operational ascendancy of Pakistan's Armed Forces over the Indian side.

The steadfastness and competence of Pakistan's Armed Forces were acknowledged by military experts and

analysts throughout the world, effectively debunking frivolous Indian claims which could not stand to factual scrutiny.

The strategic foresight to return the downed pilot in interest of peace, from a position of strength and after having dominated the opposing force decisively, is unanimously hailed, to this day, by the international community as a remarkable gesture of political maturity and superior statecraft.

As a state committed to peace, we shall continue to emphasize the importance of peaceful coexistence with our neighbours.

Any aggression against the people of Pakistan, our sovereignty and territorial integrity, will however be responded immediately, with full might and without any hesitation. Every single time.

INSHALLAH. Pakistan Armed Forces Zindabad, Pakistan Paindabad

Maryam Nawaz sworn in first woman Chief Minister of Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday took the oath as the Chief Minister of Punjab during a grand but solemn ceremony at the sprawling lawns of the Governor's House here.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman administered the oath to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif who became the first-ever elected woman chief executive of a province in the country. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Zaman read the orders of the appointment.

On this historic occasion of a woman taking over reins as Chief Minister, Maryam Nawaz Sharif was flanked by her father and Pakistan Muslim League



- Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and uncle Prime Minister-designate Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif while she also placed a photo of her late mother Palsoom Nawaz Sharif in front of her on the occasion.

Instead of the traditional Darbar Hall, the oath-taking was held at the lawns of the Governor's House to make room for more guests to watch their popular leader making history. The ceremony started with

recitation of verses from the holy Quran followed by Naat e Rasool e Maqbool Khatam un Nabiyeen Muhammad (P. B. U. H.).

The ceremony was attended by a large number of diplomats, Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) leadership, MNAs, MPAs, representatives of the armed forces, government functionaries including the Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Zaman, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwer, lawyers, senior journalists, anchors, and a large number of party workers.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's family including her husband Capt. (Retd) Safdar, son Junaid Safdar, daughters and grand-daughters were present

on the occasion. Former Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz Sharif and Salman Shehbaz were also present.

The U. S. Consul General in Lahore Kristin Hawkins, Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren, Turkiye Consul General in Lahore Durmus Bastug and Iranian Consul General in Lahore Mehran Movahed were among the distinguished guests.

Conspicuous among the party leaders were Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Talal Chaudhry, Amir Muqam, Attaullah Tarar, Rana Sanaullah Khan, Pervaiz Rasheed, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Ayaz Sadiq, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Rohail Asghar, Khurram Dastgir Khan, and Mian Javed Latif.

PTI condemns Maryam's 'selection' as CM



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Barrister Gohar condemned the 'selection' of Maryam Nawaz as chief minister of Punjab on Monday. Gohar said that Maryam's ascent into government of the province will be remembered as a 'stain' on democracy.

He also added that people who had actually lost the election on February 8 have been put in charge of governing Punjab. Gohar also said that Maryam's 'selection' as chief minister would prove to be a setback for stability in the province.

He added that Maryam's chief minister ship would add to the fear already bubbling inside the people of Punjab.

71,000 Out-Of-School Children brought back to schools in Islamabad: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi Monday informed the Senate that around 71,000 Out-Of-School Children (OOSC), out of 81,000, had been brought back in educational institutes of the federal capital, with 86 per cent enrollment. Responding to a motion regarding the increasing number of out-of-school children and its impact on the country's future, he said, that last year during an inter-ministerial conference, which is one of the biggest forums, provinces had been asked to play their active role in increasing enrollment of the OOSC in educational institutes.

According to Pakistan Education Statistics, working under the Ministry of Education, the data about providing education to school-children by provinces is compiled annually, he added. After every five years, he said, the survey was conducted regarding out-of-school children and the last survey was carried out in 2021-22. In the PSDP, he said, Rs700 million had been allocated for enrollment of out-of-school children in the federal capital, while Rs 25 billion for the rest of the country.



Delegation of foreign trainee diplomats visits Safe City Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of foreign trainee diplomats from Tajikistan, Kenya, Mexico, Bahrain, Belarus, Iraq, Kosovo, and the Maldives visited the Safe City Islamabad.

A public relations officer on Monday said that, the delegation was briefed by SSP Safe City regarding the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center. They were thoroughly briefed about the procedures and advantages of this project. Furthermore, the delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad was playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pucar-15" helpline. He said that the delegation also met with CPO Safe City/Traffic and was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras, they play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city and preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens, he added.

The diplomats were briefed that crimes were resolved through the Safe City Command and Control Center, while the face recognition cameras have been installed at the entry and exit points of the city.

FM Jilani lauds "bold decisions" of interim govt as term nears conclusion



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Monday lauding the "bold decisions" of the caretaker government on economic and foreign policy fronts thanked the colleagues and cabinet members for their tireless efforts to serve the national cause. The foreign minister, in a series of posts on his X timeline, called it a "great honour" to serve Pakistan and its people.

He said that despite confronting various challenges, on the economic and foreign policy front, the caretaker government under the leadership of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar took bold decisions, to stabilize the economy, avert a major crisis in the country's neighbourhood and demand global action against climate change. The interim government also called for an end to the unimaginable violence orchestrated by Israel in Gaza and send relief goods to our Palestinian brothers and sisters, he added.

Murad Ali Shah elected chief minister of Sindh for third term

Bureau Report

KARACHI: PPP's Murad Ali Shah was elected the chief minister of Sindh for the third term on Monday. He secured the maximum 112 votes.

This marks the PPP's government for the fourth time in the province.

The polling for the Sindh CM was set to begin at 2:00pm, according to the schedule announced by Sindh Assembly Speaker Owais Qadir Shah. However, the session began after around a 40-minute delay.

Shah was up against Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) candidate Ali Khurshidi who ended up with 36 votes amid a boycott by the PTI and the JI. Meanwhile, MPAs of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the Jamaat-e-Islami have announced that they would boycott the proceedings for the Sindh CM's election.

Journalist Asad Toor arrested by FIA, lawyer says

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Journalist Asad Toor has been arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency, his lawyer said on Monday. Lawyer Imaan Mazari posted on X on Monday that Toor was arrested by FIA officials after being detained in the Agency's headquarters for hours.

She also said that the office had been locked and lights switched off. Toor spent over four hours in the office.

He was summoned by the FIA's cyber crime wing for a second time on Monday on charges related to defamation of judges of the Supreme Court. However, he claimed that he had not been told about any allegations and had been asked to answer a questionnaire.

Journalist Imran Riaz Khan has already been arrested by the FIA in connection with the same case. He was arrested a day before he was set to appear in FIA Lahore.

AJK PM visits Mirpur shrine of Sufi Saint Baba Pera Shah Ghazi

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwarul ul Haq paid a surprise late night visit to the shrine of revered Sufi saint Hazrat Baba Pera Shah Ghazi and Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh. The PM, on the occasion, offered Fatah for the departed souls and placed floral wreaths at their graves. He also prayed for peace and security of Pakistan and the freedom of the Indian occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir. He also visited the Chillah Gah the place where the Sufi saint used to worship in solitude. Speaking on the occasion the PM said that all possible facilities should be provided to the pilgrims who visit the Darbar during or after the Urs. He said that in view of the future needs Darbar Sharif would be expanded further so that the pilgrims coming here do not face any kind of difficulties.



Maryam's victory as CM Punjab ensures added economic-ideological stability: Sardar Attique



Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan President Muslim Conference and ex-Premier of AJK has heartily congratulated Mohtarama Maryam Nawaz Sharif on her election by the provincial assembly as the Chief Minister of Punjab. "This victory augurs full assurance for greater progress and prosperity of the people in Punjab and robust socio-political and ideological stability and strength of Pakistan, says in his congratulatory message.

In his felicitation message Monday Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that his political party, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, will happily extend all cooperation to the newly elected Chief Minister and her administration in the Punjab in all politico-ideological spheres. "Jammu and Kashmir people feel enhanced pride in the victory of Mohtarama Maryam Nawaz Sharif as Chief Minister in the historic ideological context and bonds of Punjab with Jammu and Kashmir state", he added.

Punjab govt announces relief measures for public during Ramazan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The Punjab government has issued directives to provide relief to the public during the month of Ramazan. Commissioner Multan Division, Mariam Khan, has tasked deputy commissioners with formulating plans under the Ramazan Package 2024. Commissioner Mariam Khan chaired a review meeting to assess arrangements for Ramazan and performance of price control magistrates. Commissioner Mariam Khan emphasized on improving the performance of price control magistrates, urging them to ensure their presence in markets and prioritize field inspections over paperwork. Deputy commissioners provided detailed briefings during the meeting, attended by officials from relevant departments.

National anti-polio campaign has started in the Multan Division

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: National Anti-polio campaign has started in Multan Division, Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan ordered a zero tolerance policy for the success of the campaign and said that the cooperation of parents is indispensable for polio-free Pakistan. To protect against polio, administer polio drops. Strict legal action will be taken against parents who refuse to breastfeed. He said that the national anti-polio campaign will continue till March 1. In Multan division, 10869 teams will administer polio drops to more than 2.6 lakh children.

General Bus Stand Polio camps have also been established in public places. This is welcome that no case of polio has been reported in the division this year and the Multan division remained polio free in the environmental sample test. A detailed briefing was also given by Director Health Services Dr. Waseem Ramzi, CO Health Dr. Faisal.

Railway Premium Union congratulates Asad Manzoorbat



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad (Railway Premium Union Chairman Ziauddin Ansari, President Sheikh Muhammad Anwar, General Secretary Khair Muhammad Tunio, Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry and others have expressed their hope while congratulating Asad Manzoorbat Advocate on being elected as the President of Lahore High Court Bar, as he has shown hope in a courageous way for railway employees, especially His selfless and voluntary role in providing justice to railway gang men in upgradation cases will continue. Leaders of Premier Union said his services to railway workers are unforgettable.

He said that no society can develop without justice, so it is expected that lawyers and the judiciary will do justice. We will work together for the promotion of lawyers and judiciary in the country.

Press Conference

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq talking with the media persons after attending the Mubarak Ahmad Sani case hearing in Supreme Court, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Anjuman Tajran Chowk Shaheedan to solve business problems of traders

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: President and Vice President of Anjuman Tajran Chowk Shaheedan Purani Sabzi Mandi Multan Rana Muhammad Owais Ali, General Secretary Malik Usman Khokhar of Central Organization Tajran Pakistan Group have said that we have always served the traders and to solve the problems of the traders. We have tried day and night because of our efforts, the problems of our market today are more have been resolved due to which a few people are suffering a lot due to the actions in the market which have been occupied for the last 40 years in the name of the market union which today the market people have liberated but They want to push this market into the dark for a while I thank all the shopkeepers of my market who rejected the so-called busi-



ness leaders and showed confidence in all my office bearers for solving the problems of the business community. All the businessmen of the market are standing by their side Account for the elements that are leading to the desecration of such a sacred sector as trade. We, God willing, will continue the journey of development which we started from 2023 till 2025 and then, God willing, we will fulfill our promises to our shopkeepers by conducting clean and transparent

elections in the market, and we will be leaders, he expressed these views. Malik Usman Khokhar, newly elected General Secretary of Purani Sabzi Mandi Talking on the occasion of being felicitated and on this occasion he expressed good wishes and garlanded Malik Usman Khokhar while on this occasion Patron-in-Chief Idris Butt, Chairman Irfan Siddiqui, Malik Qadeer Khokhar, Malik Imran Qayyum Bhatta, Rana Muhammad Ali (alias) Mimi including Arsalan Bukhari,

Sheikh Haris, Rana Uzair Mimi, Arsalan Siddiqui, Hamid Bhatta, Sheikh Majid, Asif Hasan, Hafiz Muhammad Zubair Mimi, Imran Azam, Chacha Hassan, Ustad Fayyaz, Ustad Niaz, Hassan Butt, Haji Karim Bakhsh, Makhdoom Farhan, Imran Qureshi, Mohammad Sadiq, Zohaib, Afaq, Umar Shahzad and others were also present. Rana Muhammad Owais Ali added that it should be remembered that a few months ago General Secretary Afaq Bhatti died suddenly due to a heart attack. After his death, all the officials of the market. And after consulting all the shopkeepers, Malik Usman Khokhar has been elected to the post of general secretary. will use all abilities to resolve and Under the leadership of Quaid Khawaja Sulaiman Siddiqui, the businessmen will continue the mission of passion to serve the community

All Parties Women's Conference holds event on Kannan Pooshpura massacre

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Under the auspices of the All Jammu and Muslim Conference Women's Wing, an All-Parties Women's Conference was organized regarding the Kannan Pooshpura tragedy which was presided over by the Chairperson Muslim Conference Women's Wing Samia Sajid. In the All Parties Conference, former ministers of the government, senior Muslim League leader Noreen Arif, senior Muslim Conference leader Shamim Ali Malik and Maryam Kashmiri specially participated the function. Speaking at the event, the speakers said that Kannan Poshpora It is deplorable and

condemnable that the victims of Kannan Pora collective humiliation are not getting justice. On the night of February 23, 1991, Indian soldiers killed about 100 women between the ages of eight and eighty during a siege and search operation in Kannanpooshpura area of Kupwara district of gang rape. The tragic tragedy of Kannan Pooshpura was a deliberate conspiracy by the Indian authorities to keep Kashmiri women away from the freedom struggle. The speakers praised the brave Kashmiri women for their active role and sacrifices in the freedom movement. He paid tribute and expressed regret that Kashmiri women are the biggest target of the coward-

ly Indian forces. Indian soldiers use the humiliation of women as a weapon to punish, humiliate and intimidate Kashmiris. In the ceremony, President Muslim League-N-Women Wing Azad Kashmir Maryam Kashmiri, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Leader Laiba Ahmed, Jamaat-e-Islami Leader Shagufta Naz, President International Forum Foresters Women Wing Dr. Mayra Khan, Sadr Al-Maqdis Foundation Shazia Awan, well-known political and social leader Arjmand Qureshi, refugees Sakina Liaqat Awan, President Muslim Conference Women City Muzaffarabad Abida Munir Qureshi, Former President Muslim League Nawaz City Muzaffarabad Saira

Chishti, Member District Council Nasreen Akhtar Raja, Parveen Fatima Member of Jamaat-e-Islami, President Muslim Conference District Muzaffarabad Fasa Sajid Raja, President Constituency Khawra Ayesha Munsif, President of Women Wing Kotla Amna Farid, General Secretary of Women Wing City Muzaffarabad District Zahra Fatima, Sayeqa Rasheed, Uroq Durrani, Shabnam Hajra, women from all schools of thought participated in the event. Speaking, the speakers said that the incident of mass rape of Kashmiri women on the night of February 23, 1991 is a heinous crime that cannot be



described in words. The tragic incident of Kashmir 1991 will be remembered. We will never forget this event. The speakers

thanked the Chairperson of the Women's Wing, Samia Sajid Raja, said that the organization of such a conference is a welcome move, it

has sent a positive message to the women of Occupied Kashmir. We are grateful to Samia Sajid Raja who organized this event.

Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:18 am
Zohr 12:21 pm
Asr 4:21 pm
Maghrib 6:01 pm
Isha 7:24 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04

AIOU aims to digitize examination process

PPN

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has launched a new initiative to improve the examination system of the university. The aim of this initiative is to digitize the process of creating question papers. This will help to prevent duplication, eliminate cheating, and save time. To implement this new system, a training workshop was organized for faculty members from the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Sciences. During the workshop, the faculty members were trained on the creation of an "item bank" of question papers. Items (question papers) for BS (ODL) programs will be created in the first phase, followed by the development of an item bank for Matriculation, FA, Associate Degree, Post Graduate Diploma Programs, Teachers' Training Programs, MPhil and PhD programs in the second phase. Each course will have an item bank with 300 MCQs, 100 short questions and 50 long questions. The examination department will be able to prepare the paper of any course in no time with the help of course coordinators, faculty members and experts. It is pertinent to mention here that the old pattern of papers did not have MCQs. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood instructed examination department to include MCQs for the convenience and better understanding of the students.

Mushaal urges int'l community to take notice of India's 'barbaric'

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick urged the international community and human rights organizations to take notice of the rising tendency of custodial rape and using rape as weapon of war by inhuman and brutal Indian forces. Mushaal, who is also a wife of unlawfully incarcerated senior hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, said that the brutal occupation forces had been using sexual abuse of women in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as weapon of war for the last over seven decades but the international community and world powers observed criminal silence in this regard. She said that the notorious Indian law enforcers involved in the heinous crimes, who were given a license to carry out all inhuman, immoral and unlawful acts to



silence the dissenting voices in the occupied valley. Mushaal pointed out that the dirty and ugly face of Indian was exposed by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which revealed that India had recorded 275 cases of custodial rape between 2017 and 2022, adding that these incidents, documented across various states, involve perpetrators from law enforcement, armed forces and other custodial facilities, reflecting a misuse of power under the guise of state protection. The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment recalled that

Incidents such as the gang rape in Kunan Poshpora in 1991, the double murder and rape in Shopian and the gang rape of young Asifa Bano are among the most harrowing examples of the nightmare faced by women in Kashmir. She stated the NCRB showed that even Indian women were not saved from these mentally sick Indian forces, which clearly indicated that they were not human beings rather they were beasts, who did not even know nothing about humanity and women rights. Mushaal highlighted that the gravity of situation could be judged from the fact that over 11,000 cases of sexual violence have been reported since 1989 in IIOJK, leaving nearly 23,000 women widowed and over 107,805 children orphaned. She went on to say that Indian fascist forces could cross all limits of brutalities and inhuman acts but they could not dampen the courage of Kashmiri freedom fighters.

Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan Dr Maen Khreasat, Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) take keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition of Suzan Alsaid title "Touch of the Love" at Pakistan National Council of the Arts in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Telenor Pakistan and EFU Life enhance customer protection with innovative insurance bundles

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan and EFU Life have entered into a strategic partnership to introduce innovative life and health insurance solutions to the Telenor customer base. As the first initiative, both entities have designed unique GSM mobile bundles for Telenor users. Telenor subscribers can activate these bundles through My Telenor App, EasyPaisa, and other retail channels. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in enhancing customer protection and financial inclusion in Pakistan. The partnership between Telenor Pakistan and EFU Life aims to address the evolving needs of customers by offering



innovative and easily accessible insurance solutions. By integrating insurance coverage directly into Telenor Pakistan's GSM mobile bundles, customers will now have access to enhanced protection, providing them with peace of mind and financial security. This collaboration is a testament to our commitment to innovation and customer-centricity," said Ahsan Maykan, VP Consumer Marketing and Digital Platform, at Telenor Pakistan. "By partnering with EFU Life, we are bridging an untapped gap and providing our valued customers with convenient access to insurance services, further enriching their digital experience." During the launch ceremony with Telenor Pakistan, Mohamed Ali Ahmed, CEO, EFU Life said, "We are excited about the

strategic partnership, stating that it marks a pivotal moment for both organizations. Our primary focus is on delivering the best possible experience for Telenor subscribers. We are dedicated to tailoring our products to meet the specific needs of our customers, ensuring that they not only meet but exceed expectations. The partnership between Telenor Pakistan and EFU Life holds the potential to create a positive impact on a broad audience by improving accessibility to insurance services and fostering financial inclusion. Both companies are committed to driving innovation and delivering value to their customers through strategic collaborations and technological advancements.

ICCI invites German SMEs to explore Pakistan for JVs and investment

PPA

ISLAMABAD: A German delegation led by Matthew De Shaw, Country Head Pakistan of the German Association of Small and Medium Size Businesses (BVMW) visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to discuss collaboration between the SMEs of Germany and Pakistan to achieve win-win results for both countries. Pervez Akhtar, President, German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce also accompanied the delegation. Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan offers good oppor-



tunities to foreign investors and German SMEs should explore Pakistan for JVs and investment. He said that Germany is a very important country for Pakistan and we want to further strengthen business and invest-

ment relations between the two countries. He said that Pakistan and Germany should focus on improving bilateral trade as the current trade volume between them is not up to the desired level. He said that ICCI would like to work with BVMW to promote direct connectivity between the SMEs of both countries. Speaking on the occasion, Matthew De Shaw, Country Head Pakistan of the German Association of Small Businesses (BVMW), said that there are immense possibilities for cooperation between the SMEs of Germany and Pakistan. His organization is taking steps to connect SMEs in both countries. He said that Pakistan is a large market and the German business community wants to take advantage of its potential. The experiences of German companies in terms of investment in Pakistan are excellent. We need to learn from these experiences to further strengthen cooperation between the private sectors of both countries. Akhtar Parvez, President of German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, said that German companies want to invest in Pakistan. Our Chamber is working to facilitate them. The Pakistani business community should benefit from the opportunities available in Germany and focus on technology transfer. Engr. Azhar ul Islam, Vice President ICCI stressed for regular exchange of business delegations between Pakistan and Germany to explore all untapped areas of cooperation.

PRCS organizes blood donation camp at the US Embassy

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) successfully organized a blood donation camp at the United States Embassy. The camp was efficiently managed by the Regional Blood Donors Center of the PRCS, where 116 individuals selflessly participated, extending their arms to donate blood, with a notable presence of the medical unit from the US Embassy. It is worth mentioning that the PRCS conducts blood donation camps at the US Embassy twice a year. On this occasion, Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, shed light on the low rate of blood donations in the country and commended the cooperation extended by the US Embassy. The awareness campaign regarding blood donations continues throughout the year under the auspices of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society. Chairman Laghari emphasized that the campaign to raise awareness about the critical need for blood donations persists throughout the year under the auspices of PRCS. He reiterated the significance of this noble act in saving lives, stressing the indispensable role that regular blood donations play in alleviating the suffering of patients in dire need of transfusions. His call resonated particularly with the youth and members of intellectual circles, urging them to embrace their responsibility in this regard.

Pakistani art has been based on Islam and geography. Quratul Ain Malik



PNP

RAWALPINDI: First Punjab Painting Competition in Chakwal held at Deputy Commissioner Complex. Deputy Commissioner Chakwal Ms. Qurat Ul Ain Malik was the chief guest of the prize distribution ceremony. Additional Deputy Commissioner (R) Bilal Bin Abdul Hafeez and Deputy Director Arts Council Muhammad Shakoor was also present on the occasion. While addressing the participants of the competitions Deputy Commissioner Chakwal said that Pakistan has a rich history of fine arts painting and sculpture. Traditionally, Pakistani art has been based on Islam and geography. Music, painting, sculpture, poetry and dance are branches of fine arts. The chief guest further said that the talent of the youth of Chakwal will be in limelight to the world through the painting competition. There is a lot of interest in art in Pakistan and there is talent among them. Recently an Arts Council was established in Chakwal. Deputy Director Muhammad Shakoor said that the painters have depicted natural scenes with beautiful colors in the paintings. Each painting is very unique in itself with hundreds of emotions embedded in it. Abdul Hadi won the first prize, Mehwish Tariq won the second prize, and Jawaria Noor won the third prize in the competitions. At the end of the ceremony, the Chief Guest also distributed cheques and certificates of appreciation to the position holders.

Dubai Islamic Bank issues clarification

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Apropos the Press Release issued by the Standing Committee of the Senate of Pakistan comprising of its honourable members, M/s. Dubai Islamic Bank wishes to clarify to its customers and the public at large about complaint of an alleged fraud by a customer. The matter is being investigated by FIA, which process is being aided by the Bank for a fair investigation. The Bank is constrained to not comment upon it further since the same is also sub judice in a Court of law. The Bank is a responsible corporate citizen of Pakistan that believes in respect and rule of law. This statement is issued by the Bank without prejudice.

Nestlé Pakistan reports full year results for 2023

PNP

LAHORE: Nestlé Pakistan ended the year on a positive note, with an increase of 23.4% in its revenue as compared to FY 2022. The results were shared after the Board of Directors' meeting at the Company's Head Office. Employee well-being, people development and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion remained fundamental during the year with several programs aimed at inspiring, empowering and developing our workforce. The percentage of female leaders grew to 23.4% in 2023, from 18% in 2022. 2023 was an important year for the Company; it marked 35 years of Nestlé in Pakistan. Nestlé Pakistan continued to be a force for good, investing PKR 3.2 billion in the country with a focus on sustainability. PKR 2 billion of the investment were spent on renewable energy. Our Nestlé for Healthier Kids (N4HK) program, extended its outreach to more than 360,000 kids and 2,300 teachers across the country. Enrollment of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) beneficiaries as Rural Women Sales Agents, a program that we run in partnership with BISP, was increased to 3,000. Corporate donations were also made to Akhuwat, Pakistan Red Crescent Society and SOS Villages, among others. The Company maintains a cautiously optimistic outlook for 2024, despite continuing challenges on input costs. The Company's focus on resilience and contribution to the national economy will continue.

NTU inaugurates All-Pakistan Business Plan Competition in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad, Pakistan – February 26, 2024: The National Textile University (NTU) ignited the spark of innovation today with the commencement of the All-Pakistan Business Plan Competition (APBPC), organized by the Faisalabad Business School (FBS). The event, inaugurated by Dean FBS, Dr. Sajjad Ahmad Baig, at 11:30 AM, witnessed the participation of numerous teams from universities across Pakistan. Dr. Sajjad Ahmad Baig, in his inaugural address, emphasized the crucial role of creative business ideas, entrepreneurial spirit, and a focus on innovation in today's rapidly evolving technological landscape. He stated, "In this era of cutting-edge technology, the ability to translate ideas into action and embrace innovation is paramount for success."

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
Email: spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Magical Bonding - A Tale of Love towards Pakistan and Pak Army - II

In the intricate fabric of human rights, freedom serves as a foundational pillar that upholds and safeguards the dignity, autonomy, and well-being of individuals. Within Pakistan, citizens are endowed with a multitude of freedoms that empower them to live in accordance with their own convictions, aspirations, and principles. Ranging from the freedom of expression to the pursuit of happiness, these liberties form the bedrock of a dynamic, inclusive, and democratic society.

city promotes tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect among adherents of various faiths, fostering social cohesion and harmony within the community.

Within Pakistan, citizens also enjoy the right to privacy and personal autonomy, safeguarding their dignity, integrity, and individuality against unwarranted intrusion or surveillance by governmental or non-governmental entities. Respect for personal autonomy is vital for nurturing trust, independence, and self-determination among citizens, enabling them to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives on their own terms.

Education is widely regarded as a cornerstone of democracy, providing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to fully engage in society and contribute to its progress. In Pakistan, citizens possess the right to access quality education that is free from discrimination and barriers, empowering them to develop critical thinking, creativity, and civic engagement. Additionally, the right to cultural participation ensures that individuals have the freedom to express, celebrate, and preserve their cultural heritage, language, and traditions, enriching the diversity and vibrancy of society as a whole.

At the core of every nation lies the valor, sacrifice, and steadfast commit-

ment of its armed forces. Serving as the guardians of our sovereignty, security, and liberty, the men and women who serve in our military embody the highest virtues of courage, integrity, and selflessness. By honoring our allegiance to our armed forces, we pay homage to those who stand at the forefront, ready to defend our nation and uphold the principles we hold dear.

Central to our admiration for our armed forces is the acknowledgment of their pivotal role as defenders of our sovereignty and independence. Through their unwavering vigilance, preparedness, and sacrifice, our soldiers ensure the safety and security of our nation from external threats and aggression. Whether safeguarding our borders, combating terrorism, or providing humanitarian aid in times of crisis, the members of our armed forces serve as a bastion against tyranny, oppression, and injustice, preserving the freedoms and values we cherish.

Beyond their duty in protecting our nation from external dangers, our armed forces also serve as promoters of peace and stability both within our borders and on the global stage. Through their involvement in peacekeeping missions, humanitarian relief efforts, and disaster response operations, our soldiers exemplify the ideals of compassion, service,

and solidarity. Their dedication to maintaining peace and aiding the vulnerable epitomizes the highest standards of humanity, motivating us to aspire for a world characterized by cooperation rather than conflict and dialogue over violence.

In times of adversity and crisis, our armed forces emerge as unifying forces, rallying citizens from all backgrounds in a shared commitment to our collective defense and welfare. Irrespective of differences in race, religion, or origin, our soldiers stand united as comrades-in-arms, bound by a sense of duty, camaraderie, and mutual respect. Their sacrifices and service transcend political and ideological divides, underscoring the strength of unity and solidarity in overcoming challenges and shaping a brighter future for all.

As custodians of our nation's military legacy and traditions, our armed forces embody the values of duty, honor, and sacrifice that have shaped our national identity across generations. From the valor of our forefathers to the bravery of those serving today, the military heritage of our nation serves as a testament to the resilience, determination, and fortitude of the human spirit in the face of adversity. By paying homage to the legacy of our armed forces, we honor the memory of those who came before us and inspire future generations to carry forward the proud tradition of service and sacrifice.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Gaza aid delivery halved since January

The amount of aid reaching Gaza fell by half in February from the month before, the head of the UN agency that assists Palestine refugees (UNRWA) warned Monday. "February registered a 50% reduction of humanitarian aid entering Gaza compared to January," Philippe Lazzarini, the UNRWA chief, said in a statement on X. "Aid was supposed to increase not decrease to address the huge needs of 2 million Palestinians in desperate living conditions."

He listed some of the obstacles to aid delivery, including lack of political will, the regular closing of the two crossing points into the enclave, as well as insecurity due to military operations and the collapse of civil order. He said a ceasefire, "lifting the siege to allow meaningful lifesaving aid and commercial supplies, are long overdue". On average, nearly 98 aid trucks entered Gaza this month, UNRWA said in its latest situation report, issued on Monday. The agency noted "significant difficulties" in bringing supplies through the Kerem Shalom and Rafah crossings due to security constraints and temporary closures. "UNRWA has at times had to temporarily stop discharging supplies due to security concerns. Security to manage the crossing has been severely impacted due to the killing of several Palestinian policemen in Israeli airstrikes near the crossings recently," it said. Ground operations and heavy fighting continue across the Gaza Strip, particularly in northern Gaza, Deir al Balah and Khan Younis, the agency reported. People fleeing intense fighting in and around Khan Younis continue to head further south to overcrowded Rafah. Some 1.5 million Palestinians are sheltering in the city, which remains a focus of international concern amid the threat of an all-out Israeli offensive. "Increased airstrikes in Rafah, including in residential areas without prior warnings have heightened fears that they will further hamper overstretched humanitarian operations," UNRWA said. At the same time, people have been moving out of Rafah towards Deir Al Balah and Nuseirat refugee camps in the Middle Area of Gaza, even though there. Over 75 per cent of Gaza's population, up to 1.7 million people, have been displaced since October 7.

UN agencies continue to warn of the deepening hunger crisis in Gaza. More than two million people are facing crisis or worse levels of food insecurity, according to the UN humanitarian affairs office, OCHA. Additionally, only one of the three water pipelines from Israel is operational, but at less than half capacity, 83 per cent of groundwater wells are not operating, all wastewater treatment systems are not working, and there is no access to clean water in the northern governorates.



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

Time to translate words into actions on Gaza

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

In the past, some, whether ignorantly or otherwise, claimed that peace in Palestine could only be achieved through "unconditional negotiations."

This mantra was championed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when he cared enough to pay lip service to the "peace process" and other US-originated fantasies. Back then, he spoke of his readiness to hold such unconditional negotiations, while constantly arguing that Israel did not have a peace partner.

All of this was, of course, doublespeak. What Netanyahu and other Israelis were, in fact, saying was that Israel should be freed from any commitment to international law, let alone international pressure. Worse, by declaring that Israel had no Palestinian peace partner, the Israeli government essentially canceled the hypothetical "unconditional negotiations" before they even took place.

For years — in fact, for decades — Israel was allowed to perpetuate such nonsense, empowered, of course, by the total and unconditional support of Washington and its other Western allies.

On the contrary, Israel had been planning to carry out a genocide against the Palestinians all along.

Israel has already carried out terrible war crimes against Palestinians, during the Nakba in 1947-48 and in successive wars ever since. Each crime, large or small, was accompanied by a campaign of ethnic cleansing. More than 800,000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed when Israel was established on the ruins of Palestine 76 years ago. An additional 300,000 were ethnically cleansed during the "Naksa," the war and "setback" of 1967.

Throughout the years, the mainstream Western media did its best to completely hide the Israeli crimes, minimize their impact or blame someone else entirely. This process of shielding

Israel remains in place today, even when tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed since Oct. 7 and when the majority of Gaza, including its hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, civilian homes and shelters, have been erased.

Considering all of this, anyone who still speaks of unconditional negotiations — especially those conducted under the auspices of Washington — is, frankly, only doing so to help Israel escape international legal and political accountability. Luckily, the world is waking up to this fact and, hopefully, this awakening will mature sooner rather than later, as the Israeli massacres in Gaza continue to claim hundreds of innocent lives every single day.

The collective realization that Israel must be stopped through international measures is accompanied by an equally critical realization that the US is not an honest peace broker. In fact, it never was.

To appreciate the ruinous role of the US in this so-called conflict, just marvel at this fact: While practically every country that participated in the International Court of Justice public hearings between Feb. 19 and 26 formulated its position based on international law, the US did not. "The court should not find that Israel is legally obligated to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from occupied territory," the acting legal adviser for the US State Department, Richard Visek, embarrassingly said.

So, 76 years after the Nakba and following 57 years of military occupation, the US' legal position remains committed to defending the illegality of Israel's conduct throughout Palestine.

Compare the above stance to the rounded, courageous and legally grounded position of almost every country in the world, especially the 50-plus countries that requested to speak at the world court hearings.

China, whose words and actions seem far more consistent with international law than many Western nations, went even further. "In pursuit of the right to self-determination, Palestinian people's use of force to resist foreign

oppression and complete the establishment of an independent state is (an) inalienable right well founded in international law," Chinese representative Ma Xinmin told the court.

Unlike the cliched and noncommittal position of the likes of UK Foreign Minister David Cameron on the need to make "irreversible progress" toward an independent Palestinian state, the Chinese position is arguably the most comprehensive and realistic articulation.

Ma linked self-determination to liberation struggle, sovereignty and the inalienable rights of people, which are all consistent with international laws and norms. In fact, it is these very principles that have led to the liberation of numerous countries in the Global South.

Considering that Israel has no intention of freeing the Palestinians from the grip of apartheid and military occupation, the Palestinian people have no other option but to resist.

The question now is: Will the international community continue to defy the US position in words only or will it formulate a new approach to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, thus bringing it to an end by any means necessary?

In his statement to the International Court of Justice last week, British barrister Philippe Sands, who is a member of team Palestine, offered a roadmap as to how the international community can force Israel to end its occupation. "The right of self-determination requires that UN member states bring Israel's occupation to an immediate end. No aid. No assistance. No complicity. No contribution to forcible actions. No money. No arms. No trade. No nothing," he said.

Indeed, it is now time to turn words into actions, especially when thousands of children are being killed through no fault of their own, but merely for being born Palestinian.

Dr. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist and author. He is editor of *The Palestine Chronicle* and nonresident senior research fellow at the *Center for Islam and Global Affairs*.

Israel will pay a price for sabotaging its own reputation-I

Baria Alamuddin

The latest hearings at the International Court of Justice are nails being hammered into the coffin of Israel's international standing. More than 50 countries are submitting evidence questioning the legality of Israel's "occupation, settlement and annexation" of Palestinian territories. This runs parallel to hearings at the same court considering whether Israel's actions in Gaza constitute genocide.

South Africa's representative denounced Israel's "fundamentally illegal" policies as an "extreme form of apartheid." Saudi Arabia criticized Israel's "dehumanization" of Palestinians as "disposable objects." Egypt said: "Israel cannot invoke self-defense to maintain a situation created by its own illegal conduct." Belize condemned Israel's "racist apartheid" and "excessive use of force, arbitrary killing and mass incarceration." Israel unsurprisingly refused to participate, but apparently cajoled Fiji to speak on its behalf — a move angrily denounced by Fijian citizens. Brazil's president accused Israel of genocide and compared its Gaza offensive to the Nazi Holocaust.

We are witnessing the situation of Israel and its dwindling number of supporters aligning themselves against almost the entire civilized world. Israel's leaders arrogantly brought this global backlash upon themselves with a brazenly disproportionate military campaign in Gaza in which two thirds of the official 30,000 death toll are women and children, along with hundreds of thousands of others maimed, orphaned, or suffering other life-destroying losses. An entire displaced population teeters on the brink of starvation.

This utter collapse in Israel's international reputation has correspondingly left its biggest international champions seriously exposed

— in particular the US. Among other young, cosmopolitan anti-war demographics, America's Arab communities wield influence as never before: notably in Michigan, where anti-war anger risks swinging the presidential election against Joe Biden.

This has given rise to a panicked and incoherent hodgepodge of policies. Although the Biden administration last week affirmed that settlement building was illegal, it utterly undermined that welcome U-turn by simultaneously urging the court against a legal mandate for ending the occupation, arguing that control of the West Bank was justified by Israel's "very real security needs." Britain resorted to the tortuous logic of acknowledging that the occupation was "illegal," while claiming that this was a bilateral dispute and therefore outside the court's jurisdiction.

Such rhetorical gymnastics will hardly appease global publics horrified that Israel's genocidal campaign continues to be fueled by US arms, US funding and US diplomatic cover. One Palestinian American activist accused Biden of bankrolling genocide, and said his policies were "like showing up to a five-alarm fire with a cup of water while giving fuel to the arsonist." China's usually tight-lipped UN Security Council envoy categorized the US's ceasefire veto as "giving a green light to the continued slaughter."

With European nations besieged by similar pressures, a growing nexus of states have sought to steer the EU in a markedly less pro-Israel direction. Spain and Belgium's prime ministers jointly denounced "indiscriminate killings of innocent civilians." Ireland has sought to build consensus toward recognizing a Palestinian state. Even reflexively pro-Israel governments in Germany and Britain have been compelled to rethink their language and actions, so as not to completely lose touch with millions of citizens outraged by the carnage.

To be continued

Poland, France, Germany and Ukraine commemorate second anniversary of Russian invasion of Ukraine

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Embassies of countries comprising the Weimar Triangle (Poland, France, Germany) and Ukraine joined hands in organizing a commemorative event dedicated to the Solidarity with the Ukrainian people. The gathering marked the second anniversary of an unprovoked Russian full-scale invasion against Ukraine. The documentary "Culture vs. War" and exhibition "Generations of War," featuring works created by Ukrainian artists, were shown during the event which took place at the Poland's Embassy grounds. Ambassadors: of Poland - Maciej Pisarski, Ukraine - Markian Chuchuk, France - Nicolas Galey, Germany - Alfred Grannas addressed the participants.

The ambassadors highlighted the bravery of resistance shown by the Ukrainian people against the Russian invaders throughout the course of the two-year conflict. They also underlined the sacrifices made by Ukraine's Armed Forces in repelling Russian assault. The speakers also mentioned the devastation of homes, schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure, as well as the suffering of Ukrainians, including children.

Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is an attack against the rules-based international order and its core elements, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity. It constitutes a dangerous precedent that cannot be left unanswered, as Ambassador Grannas stated. Therefore, the world community of responsible and peace-loving nations must vehemently oppose and confront any infringement of international law.

As Ambassador Pisarski underlined, Ukraine cannot be forgotten, nor can the significance of the war be overlooked. Russia's strategy is to wear the defenders and those who help them down, to make them tired and to make the world forget so they can



achieve their nefarious goals. Therefore, it is imperative to sustain backing for Ukraine's endeavor to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity to determine its own course in the future. One of the priorities priority of the Weimar Triangle is to help

Ukraine facing the Russian aggression as long as necessary. Supporting Ukraine is an investment in ensuring the security of Ukraine, Europe, and the world. It is a shared responsibility of the entire global community to aid Ukraine in resisting the illegal Russian invasion.

There is no "Ukraine fatigue". There are no divisions among all those who, since the beginning of the aggression, have been on Ukraine's side. We remain fully united and committed, and we will remain so - Ambassador Nicolas Galey pointed out.

The Ambassador Chuchuk, also referred to the attitude of his compa-



triot, stressing that despite being vastly outmatched by a nuclear-armed power with significantly larger economic and military resources, Ukraine has held

its ground. Furthermore, he also highlighted President Zelenskyy's Ten-point Peace Formula, a comprehensive plan to end the war including cessation of



hostilities, food security, nuclear safety, energy security, justice, human rights, and respect for the UN Charter, which Ambassador

Chuchuk emphasized as the sole viable peace offer.

The impacts of the war extend well beyond Ukraine's boundaries, with its repercussions being experienced globally, including Pakistan. As Pakistan voice matters, Ambassador Chuchuk called for joining peaceful efforts that aligns with Pakistan's commitment to

upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states. He concluded that with steadfast determination and continual international cooperation, peace can be achieved not just in Ukraine but all over the world.

Head of missions and diplomats from numerous countries based in Islamabad as well as representatives of Pakistani institutions, local experts, think-tank representatives, human rights activists, and journalists, attended the event.

Khojaly genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh is a dark chapter in human history: Speakers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: MUSLIM Institute and the Azerbaijani Embassy in Islamabad jointly organized a seminar on "Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: A Crime against Humanity, the 32nd Anniversary of the Khojaly genocide". Among the speakers were Chairman, Senate Defence Committee Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Dewan of Junagadh and Chairman MUSLIM Institute Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Ambassador of Turkey H. E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and President CSAIS Institute Maj. Gen. Khalid Amir Jaffery. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh was one of the most contentious issues of the twentieth century. Armenian nationalists have been following



a policy of ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani people for the last 200 years. From 1948 to 1953, around 150,000 Azerbaijanis were deported from Armenia. Similarly, in 1988, 250,000 Azerbaijanis were forced out from their historical territories thereby leaving Armenia a mono-ethnic state. The Khojaly genocide—the unforgettable tragedy of the 20th century—was a result of the aggressive and criminal policy of Armenia. Undoubtedly, this genocide was a historical crime against humanity.

In February 1992, Arme-

nian forces reportedly seized the Azeri-populated town of Khojaly. Armenian militants started the massacre of civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh. In this massacre 613 innocent Azerbaijanis, including 106 women and 83 children, were massacred. Eight families were exterminated. Four hundred and seventy-six people were permanently disabled. A total of 1275 people were taken hostage. According to the medical examinations reported in international media, several of the victims of the massacre, including women, chil-

dren, and old people were killed with unusual brutality that is even difficult to describe. Despite the Armenian occupation and genocide, the people of Azerbaijan remained steadfast, and as a result of the 2020 Armenian aggression, war broke out again and Armenia had to concede defeat after 44 days of conflict. The speakers further said that remembering the martyrs creates stability in the nations. At the same time, the narrative of the oppressor needs to be challenged, otherwise the atrocities in Indian Illegal Occupied Kashmir, Myanmar and other regions cannot be stopped. Similarly, the perpetrators of genocide in Indian Gujarat and recent Karnataka need to be brought to justice. The speakers said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan are two brotherly Islamic countries which are closely related to each other in the spirit of Islam. Rela-

tions between the two countries are based on mutual trust, that's why Pakistan has given full moral and diplomatic support to Azerbaijan without any interest, in the war caused by Armenia's illegal occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh. Pakistan has always supported the principle stance of Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh, that's why Pakistan has not recognized the Armenia till date. This position of Pakistan is in fact in line with the ideas of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

Speakers further stressed that we have to further strengthen the bilateral relations by cooperating with each other at the regional and international levels and promoting bilateral cooperation in other fields including military, education, trade and other fields while keeping in view the ground realities.

Punjab's first woman CM Maryam Nawaz will work to lift the people out of poverty: Raja Shabir

Spokesman Report

LONDON: The senior leader of PML-N and Chief Executive Councilor of Raja Group of Companies, Raja Shabir Kakarvi, nominated Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz as the chief organizer of PML-N and elected the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab with a huge majority. congratulated and said that Maryam Nawaz will work to lift the people out of poverty—Maryam Nawaz is a political worker and our leader Mian Nawaz Sharif trained her politically – she ran a vigorous election campaign and in politics – Maryam Nawaz remained imprisoned in



the worst period—Maryam Nawaz will prove to be the best Chief Minister for Punjab—and Punjab will develop more than before—and Inshallah Mian Shahbaz Sharif will be elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan next week and Pakistan will lead to development again.

Abbas Bukhari elected Secretary General of RITBA

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Tax consultant Syed Muhammad Abbas Bukhari has been elected as Secretary General of the Rawalpindi Islamabad Tax Bar Association (RITBA) for the next two years. Bukhari has earned a master's degree from the University of London and holds a specialisation in contract law from Harvard University, while RITBA has tax experts, chartered accountants, cost and management accountants, advocates, and income tax practitioners as its members.

Speaking at the occasion, Syed Muhammad Abbas Bukhari said that he is grateful for the choice voters made and that he will try his best to meet the expectations of the community.

He said that at present the country is suffering from a severe economic crisis, from which budget preparation is of utmost importance.

He said that the government will be given concrete and workable proposals for budgeting and a plan to increase direct taxes as indirect taxation has increased to dangerous levels.

He said that RITBA will take steps to build trust between the FBR and the taxpayers so that the



scope of taxation can be widened, as the country's survival depends on it.

Mr. Bukhari said that the potential of taxation in the country is double the current volume, which can be realised by enhancing the trust level between all the

stakeholders.

He underlined that confidence-building among tax collectors and taxpayers is of primary importance and can result in an economic turnaround.

One of the more significant problems with our tax system

is the deep-rooted injustice that has been incorporated into the system for a variety of reasons. This is both by default and by purpose.

He said that people who are documented and in the tax net pay a significant amount of taxes,

not because they choose to do so but because of the nature of their work or business.

On the other hand, many who can escape paperwork have been able to get away with paying very little or nothing, he observed.

Many of such individuals



have been rewarded repeatedly through amnesties of one kind or another. A great number of taxes are also eliminated to benefit specific classes.

Some entire sectors and industries have, at one point or another, been exempt from being subject to taxation, which cannot be justified, he observed.

Despite promises made by successive governments, they have been unable to expand the tax net. The need for revenues increases every year so do the indirect taxes which increase the unfairness of the tax system.

The tax expert said that wholesale, retail, agricultural income and some other sectors are paying very little tax, which needs to be increased.

Until the tax system is balanced and transparent, taxpayers are not harassed, and proper use of proceeds is not ensured, the development of the country will remain a dream.

He underlined that people will consider paying taxes as a duty instead of a problem only when they believe that the tax paid by them will be used for the development of the country.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
63,305.93	62,815.81
Day's High	Day's Low
63,732.50	62,915.39
Index Value	Change
10,663,704,987	+490.12
Percentage	Time
+0.78%	26 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,684.30	-21.98
Percentage	Time
-0.29%	26 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,078.43	-53.10
Percentage	Time
-0.14%	26 Feb, 1:30 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,233.71	+135.03
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	26 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	183
Bahrain Dinar	742.91	750.91
Canadian Dollar	207	209
China Yuan	38.82	39.22
Danish Krone	40.56	40.96
Euro	303	306
Hong Kong Dollar	35.7	36.05
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.46	914.46
Malaysian Ringgit	58.49	59.09
New Zealand \$	173.05	175.05
Norwegians Krone	26.36	26.66
Omani Riyal	725.54	733.54
Qatari Riyal	76.74	77.44
Saudi Riyal	74.2	75
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	27.04	27.34
Swiss Franc	317	319.5
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	76	76.7
UK Pound Sterling	351.5	355
US Dollar	279.4	282.3

Engro Corp revenues show robust growth of 35% in 2023

PPA
KARACHI: On a consolidated basis, Engro Corporation's revenue grew by 35% to PKR 482 billion in 2023, while consolidated PAT before accounting impact due to remeasurement of thermal energy assets increased to PKR 66 billion versus PKR 46 billion last year, recording an EPS of PKR 63.01.
Major variance is attributable to higher urea sales, efficient plant operations, higher earnings from dollar-denominated businesses, and efficiencies derived through cost optimization.
However, after incorporating the accounting impact due to remeasurement of thermal energy assets, the consolidated PAT stood at PKR 36 billion with an EPS of PKR 38.60 in 2023.
Engro Corporation announced a final cash dividend of PKR 2/- per share for the year. This is in addition to the PKR 46/- per share dividend announced during the year, bringing the cumulative payout to PKR 48/- per share.
Proposed Divestment of Thermal Energy Assets
Referring to the various disclosures made at PSX by the Company regarding the ongoing discussions with Liberty Mills Limited along with other parties acting in concert, the Company is now evaluating to execute the proposed divestment of the Company's thermal energy assets comprising of shareholding in Engro Powergen Qadirpur Limited, Engro Powergen Thar (Pvt.) Limited and Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company Limited held via Engro Energy Limited through a sale of shares process.

SECP vide SRO 986 (I)/2019 dated September 2, 2019, has granted specific exemptions to Independent Power Producers (IPPs) from the applicability of IFRS 9, IFRS 16 and IAS 21. As a result of this, debt component recovered from CPPA-G as part of tariff approved by NEPRA is recorded as revenue in the profit or loss statement over the life of the loan. However, the corresponding depreciation expense related to the IPP is recorded over the term of the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The term of the loan being shorter than the term of the PPA results

Wrong choices bankrupted country, starved public: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAABAD: 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 decision of PML-N to contact all parties in the national interest and bury revenge politics forever is highly beneficial for the country. This is the first important step towards political stability in the country, which will result in economic stability and save the country from bankruptcy, he said.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that former Speaker of the National Assembly and newly elected member of the National Assembly, Ayaz Sadiq, has said that he and Saad Rafiq will contact the

leaders of all parties and persuade them to hold a grand dialogue in the interest of the country.

In this regard, he promised, the support of the Speaker of the National Assembly will also be obtained, while no politician will be put in jail.

He has said that all political parties must come together, as the country cannot afford more political instability.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that this decision has been taken at a time when many international organisations and journals are raising questions about the future of Pakistan, and the people are also disappointed.

The economies of all the neighbouring countries are performing better than Pakistan, and the market capitalization of a company in neighbouring India, the Tata Group, operating since 1870, has reached \$365 billion. This is more than the total GDP of Pakistan, which



is currently \$341 billion. The market capitalization of Tata Consultan-

cy, a subsidiary of the same group, is equal to half of Pakistan's GDP, and this country always prefers to stay away from Pakistan and remain in a cold war situation, which is a momentary concern for us.

He said that our wrong economic policies have bankrupted the country and starved the people. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that along with political stability in the country, relations with all neighbouring countries should also be improved, and addition to borrowing should be removed.

There have been wars between China and India, and there is often tension, but despite this, their mutual business is increasing. On the other hand, we are not ready to do anything in this regard, but we keep dreaming of eradicating the adversary off the face of the planet with empty pockets.

Handmade items

ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying traditional handmade items during a festival at a shopping mall in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

AkzoNobel Pakistan inaugurates a new manufacturing facility at Faisalabad

PPA

FAISLABAD: AkzoNobel Pakistan Ltd, a leading global manufacturer of paints and coatings, today officially inaugurated its new manufacturing plant in the Allama Iqbal Industrial City of Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Spread over an area of 25 acres with a cumulative investment of 8 billion PKR (approximately USD 28 million / €26 million), the Faisalabad plant stands tall as AkzoNobel's biggest investment in Pakistan till now.

Flagging off the official opening ceremony of AkzoNobel's Faisalabad plant were the guests of honour—Ms. Henny de Vries (Hon'ble Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Pakistan), and Mr. Nadeem Babar (Chairman, Shams Power) in the presence of key AkzoNobel officials including Mr. Fred Moreux (Director—Manufacturing and Supply Chain, South Asia Pacific), Ms. Marieke Bleyenbergh (Global Director—Health Safety Environment and Security) and Mr. Mubbasher Omar (Chief Executive Officer, AkzoNobel Pakistan Limited).

"Building on AkzoNobel's 60-year legacy of delighting paint and coatings customers in Pakistan with world-class solutions, the investment in the greenfield site reaffirms our commitment to invest and grow in Pakistan, with Pakistan. It is also reflection of our confidence in Akzo-



Nobel's strong market position today, as well as our vision for tomorrow – to be at the forefront of the growing paint and coatings industry," said Mubbasher Omar, Chief Executive Officer, AkzoNobel Pakistan Limited.

Sharing how the plant is a 'New Moon' for AkzoNobel, Mubbasher adds, "Leveraging our global R&D capabilities and expertise, the Faisalabad plant unlocks new value for AkzoNobel. It fuels our ambitions to diversify with sustainable innovations and enter new segments in the domestic market, while providing

new opportunities to delight customers beyond Pakistan."

The integrated facility manufactures paint, wood finishes and coatings including automotive and specialty, coil and protective coatings.

The plant aims to meet the increasing customer demand across decorative paints and B2B segments such as architecture, automotive vehicle refinishes, electronic components, furniture, domestic appliances, sports equipment, construction, power, steel and infrastructure.

Tax net should be broaden and cost of doing business should be reduced: Saqib Rafiq

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Industry (RCCI) President Saqib Rafiq has said that immediate steps should be taken to reduce cost of doing business. Addressing the All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference in Rahim Yar Khan Saqib Rafiq said that the economic and industrial activities have shrunk due to increase in production cost.

Saqib Rafiq said that the policy should be made in consultation with the stakeholders, at this time the Pakistani economy is facing many challenges, there is an energy crisis, renewable energy i.e. green energy has to be promoted, without promoting the industry, economic progress is impossible.

Whether it is SMEs or large-scale industry, both sectors are suffering from high cost of doing business, electricity and gas are many times more expensive. The scope of Business Facilitation Centers should be spread across the country, he added.



Rana Sakhi Abbas Manager Sales and Operation of Futech Energy with MD Futech Energy Rana Kashif on the occasion of an exhibition.

Trina Solar Sees Growing Market for Solar in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's increasing demand for solar energy is on the rise as both residences and businesses increasingly recognize solar power as a reliable and cost-efficient source of electricity.

According to Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BloombergNEF), Pakistan imported USD\$1.11 billion worth of solar products from January to September 2023, equivalent to an estimated 4GW of modules. This coincides with the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) releasing framework guidelines in September 2023 to expedite power purchase agreements for solar projects and integrate solar onto public building roofs.

Wang underscores the significant impact on households and businesses, noting, "Reducing the cost of electricity makes a substantial difference, especially given the recent surge in electricity prices over the last 18 months, driven by high fuel prices and general inflation. Additionally, residences and businesses in areas experiencing prolonged power blackouts can now tap into an alternative source of electricity rather than relying solely on the grid."

Dave Wang, Subregional Head of Trina Solar Asia Pacific, emphasizes the company's commitment to empowering diverse enti-

HBL Zarai Services: Pioneering Sustainable Agriculture for National Development

PPA

BUREWALA: HBL launched a new company, HBL Zarai Services, a significant step forward in the realm of agricultural development and food security in Pakistan, in Burewala today. This is in alignment with Pakistan's strategic priorities and under the visionary scope of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

The inauguration ceremony for HBL Zarai Services was attended by clients, regulators and senior executives of the Bank. The Chief Guest for the event was Dr. Inayat Hussain, Deputy Governor—SBP.

On the occasion of the ceremony marking the launch of HBL Zarai, Sultan Ali Allana, Chairman—HBL said, "We have been actively pursuing programs and introducing solutions for the growth and progress of the Agricultural Sector since the privatization of the bank in 2004. Alhamdulillah HBL Group today is the single largest institutional provider of financial services for this segment of the economy directly impacting over 350,000 farmers.

Muhammad Aurangzeb, President & CEO—HBL, emphasized the Bank's unwavering dedication to sustainability stating, "Pakistan's agricultural landscape stands at a critical jun-

ture. While agriculture remains the backbone of our economy, its potential to drive growth and prosperity has yet to be fully realized.

Amer Aziz, CEO—HBL Zarai Services stated, "This unique venture positions HBL to play a leading role in improving value chains across every economically significant sector, thus fostering sustainable agricultural practices and promoting food security nationwide.

The prime values that HBL Zarai holds will remain raising farm yields and empowering farmers by increasing their income levels. We will be guided by our vision of "We are who we serve."



Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally won by Chaudhry Zain Mehmood

Asim Tanveer

BAHAWALPUR: 19th International Desert Jeep Rally won by Chaudhry Zain Mehmood. Chaudhry Zain, 2nd Position Sahibzada Sultan Mahmood completed the 462 km track in 3 hours 51 minutes and 42 seconds and was declared the winner of Desert Jeep Rally.

Completed in hours 6 minutes and 25 seconds Sahibzada Sultan covered the track in 4 hours 9 minutes and 1 second and finished second and third respectively.

Mir Nadir Magsi crashed out of the race before reaching the starting point. In prepaid category B, Asad Shadikhel clocked 4 hours 14 minutes. And by settling in 27 seconds, Gohar Sangi 4 hours 26 minutes to the first place. And by covering the distance in 58 seconds, Mian Irfan is in the third place by covering the distance in 4 hours 35 minutes and 4 seconds.

Haris Khan 5 hours He finished third in 19 minutes and 13 seconds. Similarly, Zafar Baloch finished the prescribed distance in 4 hours 42 minutes and 3 seconds, Taj Khan finished second in 4 hours 52 minutes and 15 seconds, while Umar Iqbal Kanju finished in 4 hours



54 minutes. And the third by covering the fixed distance in 10 seconds The number remains.

ICC slaps two-match ban on Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga

A Sports

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday, imposed a two-match ban on Sri Lanka's T20I captain Wanindu Hasaranga over a strong criticism against umpire Lyndon Hannibal.

"Hasaranga was found guilty of breaching article 2.13 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to 'Personal abuse of a Player, Player Support Personnel, Umpire or Match Referee during an International Match,'" the ICC said in a statement.

"Hasaranga's accumulation of five demerit points (he got three for this infraction) results in a conversion to two suspension points. This means he will either get a ban for one Test match or two ODIs or T20Is, whichever comes first, for the player or player support personnel."

The Sri Lankan skipper was also fined 50 per cent of his match fees and will miss his side's first two T20Is against Bangladesh next month.

The incident occurred in the final T20I of the three-match series between hosts Sri Lanka and Afghanistan when umpire Hannibal did not rule Wafadar



Momand's high full toss to Kamindu Mendis as a no-ball.

Mendis shuffled down the pitch but the delivery would have gone above the waist height of the batter had he been standing at the popping crease.

The batter asked the umpire to check the no-ball, however, according to the ICC playing conditions a player can only ask the umpire to review a decision in case of a dismissal.

A dot and wide ball followed the last-ball six from Mendis, which was not enough as they required 10 to win.

Following Sri Lanka's defeat, their captain Wanindu Hasaranga did not mince his words and ruthlessly criticized the umpire over the debated decision.

"That kind of thing shouldn't happen in an international match," said Hasaranga. "If it had been close [to waist height], that's not a problem. But a ball that's going so high... it would have hit the batsman's head if it had gone a little higher."

"If you can't see that, that umpire isn't suited to international cricket. It would be much better if he did another job."

Romanza Open in Multan ends in fine fashion Share

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: second Romanza Open was held from 19 February to 25 February 2024. The prize distribution ceremony was held at Romanza Golf and Country Club. It has the honor of being the biggest golf event of Pakistan. More than 300 professional and amateur golfers from all over Pakistan participated in this prestigious tournament, including international golfers like Hamza Amin, Mr. Florian Pregant and Mr. Bernard Neumeier. The lush greens, and eco-bunkers amaze the players and leave an incredible impression on their golfing experience. The tournament has been very well organized and showcased some brilliant newbies.

The event concluded with the distribution of prizes. International golfers said that Pakistan is a safe country and the food here is very delicious. The special guest, Project Director DHA Multan Ahmad Rizwan Ghamman congratulated all the winners for their outstanding performance and wished the success of the event and Pakistan. I highlighted the importance of developing golf skills.



Multan Sultans announce Ihsanullah's replacement for PSL 9

A Sports

Khanewal-hailed off-spinner Ali Majid Shah replaced right-arm speedster Ihsanullah in Multan Sultans' squad for the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9.

According to the details, the PSL 9 technical committee approved Sultans' request to replace Ihsanullah with Shah.

Ali Majid Shah has thus far played 17 T20s and picked up 16 wickets with the best bowling figures of 3/27.

Notably, the right-arm pacer has been bowling in the nets but could not receive the green signal from the medical team and was consequently ruled out of the entirety of the ongoing extravaganza.

Ihsanullah played a pivotal role in Sultans' run to the final of last year's edition as he ended up as the



second-highest wicket-taker of the tournament, picking up 22 wickets in 13 matches.

The Sultans, however, appear unfazed by his absence as they occupy the top spot in the PSL 9 standings with eight points in five matches.

But the 2021 champions face a stiff challenge from Quetta Gladiators, who are second with six points from four matches.

Notably, the Sultans ended the Gladiators' winning streak on Sunday to maintain their dominance at the top of the table.

The home side, courtesy of Mohammad Rizwan and Reeza Hendricks' half-centuries registered a formidable total of 180/4 on the board.

Chasing a mammoth 181, the Gladiators had a slow start and lost Jason Roy in the third over with a mere 16 runs on the board.

Saud Shakeel played an entertaining 24-run knock from 13 balls, which featured four boundaries and one six before David Willey sent him back to the pavilion.

Skipper Rilee Rossouw joined Khawaja Nafay on the crease and powered Quetta Gladiators to make a comeback with a 62-run stand in just 38 balls.

Rossouw played a quick knock of 30 runs from 18 balls which included two sixes and a boundary but fell to Aftab Ibrahim as Khushdil Shah pouches a low catch.

This proved to be the turning point as Multan Sultans' bowlers picked timely wickets to deny Quetta Gladiators' comeback.

Nafay played a 36-run knock from 31 balls with the help of two boundaries and as many sixes before perishing in the 15th over with 124 runs on the board.

Sherfane Rutherford smashed two sixes during his cameo of 21 runs from 14 balls, while Akeal Hosein remained unbeaten with 9 off 13.

With 23 needed off the final over, Quetta Gladiators managed only nine runs, finishing with 167-9 as Abrar Ahmed (12) got out on the final ball.

Babar, Arif lift Zalmi to edge United in a high-scoring thriller



A Sports

LAHORE: Babar Azam's quickfire century, followed by Arif Yaqoob's five-wicket haul propelled Peshawar Zalmi to an eight-run victory over Islamabad United in the 13th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 here at Gaddafi Stadium on Monday.

Chasing a mammoth 202-run target, the United fell short of the victory despite a sensational partnership between Azam Khan and Colin Munro.

The United had a shaky start to the run chase as they lost Jordan Cox (13) in the fifth over with just 32 runs on the board.

The United then lost two more wickets in quick succession as Shadab Khan (6) and Salman Ali Agha (14) walked back after modest contributions.

Azam Khan joined Munro in the middle with the United reeling at 73/3 in 9.3 overs and turned the game on its head with an astounding knock.

The right-handed batter dominated the 108-run stand with Munro, scoring 75 off just 30 deliveries with the help of six boundaries and as many sixes.

His magnificent knock ended on the final delivery of the 18th over when he mistimed a shot off Naveen-ul-Haq.

His partner Munro followed his footsteps on the next delivery which prompted a lower-order collapse. The left-handed batter made 71 in 53 balls, hitting seven boundaries and a six.

Spinner Arif Yaqoob brought the game back into Zalmi's command by picking up three more wickets in the penultimate over and finished with astonishing figures of 5/27 – the first five-wicket haul of the PSL 9.

The United then needed 19 runs off the final over and they eventually came up short despite Naseem Shah's six on the second delivery.

Besides Yaqoob, Salman Irshad, Naveen, Luke Wood and Saim Ayub made one scalp each.

Put into bat first, Zalmi's openers Saim Ayub and Babar once again scripted a flourishing start with a 73-run partnership.

The in-form duo dominated the United bowlers and scored at a brisk rate until Ayub was cleaned up by Salman Ali Agha in the eighth over.

Ayub remained a notable run-getter for the Zalmi with a 21-ball 38 which featured three boundaries and two sixes.

His dismissal fuelled United with momentum and their captain solidified their position by striking twice in the next over, removing Mohammad Haris and Haseebullah Khan.

The successive blows had reduced Zalmi to 80/3 in 8.4 overs and the former champions, as a result, went into a defensive mode.

The Zalmi then lost two more wickets – Paul Walter (19) and Rovman Powell (eight) – in quick succession and slipped to 124/5 in 14.5 overs.

But Babar Azam launched a ruthless counterattack on the United with belligerent hitting and turned the game on its head.

The highlight of his sensational hitting was an expensive 18th over when he clobbered four boundaries and a six to young Humain Shah.

He then hit a boundary on the first delivery of Tymall Mills' final over and followed it up with a single to bring up his second PSL century.

Hasan Ali, wife Samiya blessed with second child

A Sports

Congratulations pour in for Pakistan cricketer Hasan Ali and his wife Samiya Hasan as the couple were blessed with their second child, a baby girl, on Monday.



The pacer, who is representing Karachi Kings in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9, took to Instagram to announce the birth of his second daughter Hazal Hasan Ali.

"We are pleased to share that Alhumdulillah we have been blessed with a baby girl earlier this morning," the caption read. "Both mother and daughter are healthy. We request you all to remember us in your prayers."

It is pertinent to mention that the couple got married in 2019 and have a daughter, Helena, together.

Hasan Ali has represented Pakistan in 145 fixtures across all three formats. He has bagged 240 wickets and amassed 894 runs with two fifties to his name.

He was part of the Pakistan squad that won the ICC Champions Trophy in 2017 in England. He was named Player of the Tournament for his 13 wickets.

The right-arm pacer has represented Karachi Kings in three PSL 2024 fixtures where he picked up five wickets and scored nine runs so far.

His best performance thus far for the Kings came against arch-rivals Lahore Qalandars on Saturday when he picked up two crucial wickets for just 29 runs in his quota of four overs.

Lionel Messi scores brace as Inter Miami win in MLS opener

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Lionel Messi created both goals as Inter Miami made a winning start to the new Major League Soccer (MLS) season with a 2-0 victory over Real Salt Lake on Wednesday.

The Argentine World Cup winner, who played the entire game, put aside any concerns about his early season fitness with an excellent performance for the bookmakers' title favourites.

"He looked loose, fine and showed a lot of speed," coach Gerardo Martino said of Messi, who missed the back end of last season for Inter Miami with injuries and was also sidelined for part of the pre-season.

The other three members of Miami's former Barcelona

quartet, debutant Luis Suarez, midfielder Sergio Busquets and left-back Jordi Alba, all started in front of a capacity crowd.

Against a cautious Salt Lake side, Messi went close to opening the scoring in the 18th minute with a curling free-kick from 30 yards out which was headed off the line by Justen Glad.

He then brought huge cheers from the crowd when, on the edge of the box, his route was blocked by a player down on the floor, but he chipped the ball over him and let loose a shot which was blocked.

But Miami got in front when Spaniard Sergio Busquets found Messi and the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner cleverly slipped the ball through to Finnish forward Robert Taylor, whose low shot

beat RSL keeper Zac MacMath.

The goalkeeper should have kept the effort out but it was a goal which forced the visitors to open up after the interval and their more aggressive approach caused Inter some problems.

Cristian Arango blasted a half-chance high over the bar for Salt Lake and then, after Busquets sloppily gave the ball away, Andres Gomez burst goalwards but the Colombian winger fired wide.

The Utah side should have made more of the space they found as Miami struggled in the early stages of the second half but paid the price for a lack of precision.

Sensing his team needed another goal or two to make sure of the points, Messi upped

his work rate and began to take control of the game.

Dropping deeper to collect the ball, he launched several attacks with his own swift bursts forward allied with his trademark close control.

The 36-year-old weaved down the inside left channel to find space for a cross to the back post to Julian Gressel but the German put his effort wide from the tight angle.

Then Lionel Messi burst again from deep and found Suarez who picked out Diego Gomez and the Paraguayan midfielder buried his shot low into the far corner to make it 2-0.

That trio almost combined again for a third with Messi slipping to Gomez who then served Suarez but the Uruguayan's effort



was saved by the outstretched leg of MacMath.

Martino was delighted to see two of the lesser heralded members of his cast on target.

"This is what should happen with a team. Normally Luis and Leo would be the ones most

associated with the goal, but the fact that Robert and Diego have converted and (Messi and Suarez) have been the assistants is always a positive thing," he said.

The former Argentina, Mexico and Barcelona coach said he was sure that Messi and Suarez would

be able to recapture some of the magic they had shown during their seasons at the Camp Nou.

"They know each other so well but we have to find that partnership that worked already in Barcelona," he said.

For Taylor, who enjoyed a rich spell of form immediately after Lionel Messi joined the club and was a key part of the team which won the Leagues Cup, it was a positive opening to the campaign.

"It's the start we wanted, I mean, there's still some things that we need to work on. Obviously, it's the first game of the season, but the positive thing is the three points and we'll build on this," he said.

Inter Miami return to action on Sunday at Los Angeles Galaxy.

High spirits

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Blind Cricket team called on the President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday.



Photo: PID

President lauds blind cricket team for bringing fame to Pakistan, highlighting DAPs' capabilities

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The members of the Pakistan Blind Cricket team on Monday called on President Dr. Arif Alvi here wherein he lauded them for bringing laurels to Pakistan besides highlighting global-

ly the capabilities of differently-abled persons. In the meeting held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said that through their participation in tournaments, the team also inspired other blind cricketers.

President lauds blind cricket

team for bringing fame to Pakistan, highlighting DAPs' capabilities

He said that during the recent years, blind cricket got special attention and recognition in Pakistan. The active role of the Pakistan Blind Cricket Board in promot-

ing and holding contests is welcoming, he added. Calling for the encouragement of the blind cricket team, the president also called for acknowledgement of the cricketers' impressive role to highlight the team's efforts and achievements.

The team management briefed the president about the team's performance. The team members thanked President Alvi and First Lady Samina Alvi for their encouragement. First Lady Samina Alvi was also present in the meeting.

Secretary Health receives briefing on polio drive

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani has monitored polio vaccination activities in the federal capital and interacted with polio teams on Monday. The secretary received briefing about activities on the first day of the ongoing nationwide polio immunization campaign.

Secretary Shallwani visited the Community Health Centre in Union Council Shah Allah Ditta along with district administration officials and the senior leadership of the Polio Programme NCO Coordinator Dr. Shahzad Baig and found it to be equipped with adequate polio vaccine supplies, well-trained fixed teams, and administrative support staff. He also visited polio vaccinators in the field as they went door-to-door immunizing children. In his interactions with vaccinators, Secretary Shallwani appreciated their hard work and dedication to protecting the future generations of Pakistan from polio and encouraged them to continue their mission with the same enthusiasm. As part of his visit, the health secretary also visited a transit vaccination team in Zam Zam



Plaza, Dhoke Abassi area of UC Rural, and spent time with the team there which was busy in vaccinating children on the move. Transit teams play a crucial role in vaccinating children who travel and might be missed in house-to-house campaigns. The Health Secretary said, "For decades polio has continued to be a constant threat for our children, devastating lives and leaving them paralyzed. We cannot allow this disease to persist." He added Pakistan reported only six polio cases last year and stands much closer to eradication than ever before, and this last mile requires even more effort than before. "Polio eradication is and will remain a top priority for the Government of Pakistan," he said. "I am personally overseeing this campaign in different parts of the country to visit teams and communities, especially those in high-risk areas, to understand the remaining challenges and to support the programme as we strive to end polio from the country." The Health Ministry is conducting the second nationwide polio vaccination of the year this week to vaccinate more than 45.8 million children under five across the nation to protect them from paralytic polio. The campaign will continue until March 9.

Cabinet okays construction of 80km segment of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a fresh push towards completion of a multibillion-dollar gas supply project, the outgoing federal cabinet gave the nod to complete the first phase of the 80-kilometre Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project within the country's territory.

Sources told that the federal cabinet, through circulation of summary, gave its approval to start building an 80-kilometre segment of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline at an estimated cost of \$158 million (Rs44.2 billion). According to sources, the pipeline would be laid from the Iranian border to Gwadar and take a year to complete. Government sources claimed that the funds for the project would be provided from the Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC).

The development came after



Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) approved construction of the 80-kilometre Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project within the country's territory.

"The CCoE approved the recommendations of the Ministerial Oversight Committee for the IP Project (Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project) constituted by the prime minister in September 2023 whereby the committee recommended to start work on the 80km segment of the pipeline inside Pakistan, i.e. from Pakistan border up till Gwadar in the first phase," said an official statement issued by the Ministry of Energy, rather than the Ministry of Finance.

ECP to conduct open hearings for SIC reserved seats

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan decided on Monday that the matter of Sunni Ittehad Council's reserved seats will be settled through open hearings.

A five-member bench of the ECP will take up the matter of reserved seats on Tuesday.

The bench will be led by Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja and will include all four ECP members.

The ECP has still not notified the returned candidates for 23 reserved seats in the National Assembly.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had fielded its candidates as independents in the general election after the bat symbol had been denied to the party.

The group emerged as the largest in the National Assembly and decided to merge with the Sunni Ittehad Council to be recognised as a party.

However, the SIC has still not been issued reserved seats in the assembly. Meanwhile, the government is already gearing up to call the session for members to be sworn in.

ASP Shehrbano speaks up over Lahore Ichra incident

Monitoring Desk

LAHORE: Gulberg Circle Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shehrbano Naqvi is being hailed as a hero after she saved a young woman wearing a dress with Arabic calligraphy printed on it from a mob attack in Lahore's Ichra Bazar.

A day earlier, a charged mob gathered outside a shop in Lahore's Ichra Bazaar after someone alleged that a woman's shirt had Quranic verses printed on it. The woman, who was accompanied by her husband, sought refuge in a nearby shop. As per eyewitnesses, most of the people in the mob were either customers, visitors or passersby. The garment traders - who gave shelter to woman - were aware of the calligraphy print being available in the market. But despite the traders' explanation, the angry mob insisted on a "blasphemy" charge.

The woman's dress had the word "Halwa" printed in Arabic letters on it, meaning "beautiful or sweet" in Arabic.

Upon receiving information about the incident, the Punjab Police - led by ASP Syeda Shehrbano Naqvi - arrived at the scene and took the woman into their custody, saving her from the charged crowd. A video clip, now went viral on social media, showed the girl hiding in a shop and shivering with fear. In a video shared by the Punjab police on X, the



ASP could be seen rescuing the woman from the bazaar while a mob hurled abuses in the background.

Another video showed her addressing the mob, urging them to trust the police while convincing them that no blasphemous act had been committed.

Talking to ARY News exclusively, ASP Shehrbano Naqvi provided details on how the incident unfolded. "At 1:30pm, we received a call that a blasphemous act took place in Ichra market," she said, adding that the caller mentioned that a woman was wearing a 'inappropriate dress' with calligraphy seemed to be Quranic verses.

Upon arriving at the scene, the female police officer said, a charged mob had gathered around the shop where the

woman was. "There, it emerged that the woman was very scared and the mob was religiously charged," she said.

"It was a critical moment. I had to act swiftly to ensure the safety of the woman and prevent any harm from coming to her," Shehrbano stated, emphasising the urgency of the situation.

The police official further stated that the calligraphy on the woman's clothes did not bear Quranic verses. "It was a tense situation, but we had to maintain control and ensure the safety of everyone involved," she added.

Her decisive actions have garnered widespread praise, with the chief of Punjab Police Dr Usman Anwar advocating for her to be honoured with an award for her exemplary courage.

Govt. takes multiple steps to reduce losses in SOEs: Solangi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaz Solangi informed the Senate on Monday that the government had taken multiple steps to reduce losses in State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Winding up the debate on a motion moved by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed regarding the performance of SOEs, which according to a World Bank report is worse in Asia, he said further reforms, including the restructuring of the loss-making institutions would be decided by the newly elected government and the Parliament.

The minister said "There is consensus on the need to end losses in State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs); however, there are differing opinions. Some believe that privatization is the sole solution, while others argue for professional management to enhance their efficiency." He said "The final decision on this matter will be made by the elected government and the parliament," adding that more than 200 institutions were currently experiencing losses, including those in the power, communica-

tion sectors, and Pakistan Railways. According to a report from the Ministry of Finance, he said, these institutions had incurred losses amounting to Rs730 billion. However, profitable institutions earned an overall income of Rs570 billion, he added. He informed the House that the net loss was approximately Rs160 billion, with sectors such as power, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), National Highway Authority (NHA), Railways and Steel Mills contributing to these losses. He highlighted that losses incurred by the NHA alone were close to Rs170 billion. A policy regarding SOEs was approved in September 2023 to assess their performance, with the Ministry of Finance establishing a Central Monitoring Unit for this purpose. Furthermore, amendments have been made to laws for reforms in various institutions, including NHA. The Minister informed the Senate. Senator Mushtaq Ahmed claimed that 50 percent of Pakistanis were living below the poverty line and facing high inflation. Senator Sania Nishtar asked for the privatization of the loss-making SOEs to avoid burden on the national exchequer.

Balochistan MPA, Senators announce support for PPP

City desk

ISLAMABAD: Newly elected Member of Balochistan Assembly from Awami National Party, Zamarud Khan, Senators Dawood Khan and Nawabzada Umar Farooq called on President Pakistan Peoples Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari.

They announced their support for Presidential elections, said press

release issued here by the party secretariat.

Zamarud Khan MPA also announced to support for PPP in forming the government in Balochistan. The ANP also announced to play a more dynamic role in government formation in Balochistan.

Ali Madad Jattak and Mir Ali Hasan Brohi were also present on the occasion.

PM Kakar accepts DG PTA's resignation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar accepted the resignation of Pakistan Telecom Authority Muhammad Jahanzab Rahim on Monday.

A notification from the Establishment division said that Rahim's resignation was accepted on Monday but would go into effect on February 29.

Rahim was serving as director general for telecom wireless in the PTA, essentially in charge of mobile services and mobile internet initiatives in the country.

He is also the focal person on telecom for the Special Investment Facilitation Council.

He is now set to take up the post of member telecom in the Ministry of Information and Technology.

Ali Amin Gandapur to contest KP CM election as independent

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Amin Gandapur is set to independently contest the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister election, sources within the PTI said.

According to them, Gandapur has not joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) as he has submitted papers for PTI provincial president in the upcoming intraparty election.

The CM-designate who was elected to the provincial assembly from

Dera Ismail Khan, will remain independent as he will not be able to contest in PTI intraparty election once he joins SIC.

It is pertinent to mention that the PTI lawmakers from the National Assembly along with provincial assemblies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Punjab joined the SIC to secure reserved seats.

The PTI was ousted from the election as a party after the Supreme Court upheld the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to strip the party of its iconic 'bat' symbol.

NA Secretariat summons inaugural session on Feb 29 as president 'rejects summary'

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Secretariat has convened the lower house of parliament's session on February 29 at 10am following President Arif Alvi's refusal.

In a statement on Monday, the secretariat said the NA session is bound to take place on the 21st day of the general elections under Article 91 of the Constitution.

The president could have summoned the session on the 21st day but he did not, the secretariat officials said.

The NA secretariat said the president and speaker's notification is not required to summon the session on the 21st day of the polling.

Earlier today, sources told media that outgoing Speaker Raja Pervaiz

Ashraf has "decided" to convene the inaugural session of the new lower house of parliament on February 29 amid a looming constitutional crisis.

The development came moments after President Arif Alvi reportedly rejected a summary to summon the NA session, sources said, in which MNAs-elect will take oath.

While the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has allocated reserved seats to political parties, it has not awarded reserved quota to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) after the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed independent candidates joined their ranks.