



Pink salt be projected as Pakistani product in world markets: President Alvi

President Dr Arif Alvi underlined the need for projecting pink salt as a Pakistani product in potential global markets after its value addition in line with the international standards. "A significant amount of foreign exchange can be earned by adding value to the local raw salt and making various products," he said during his visit to the Khewra salt mines. (Details on Page 8)



Humanitarian crisis in Gaza exposes Western double standard on human rights

Following the devastating loss of over 30,000 lives in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israel's continuous strikes since last October, the world is witnessing not only a harrowing scale of human suffering, but also the ugly truth of Western double standards regarding human rights. As government officials and representatives worldwide convene in Geneva for the 55th session of the Human Rights Council... (Report on Page 8)

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PATS Exercise 2024

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir addressing to Closing ceremony of PATS Exercise 2024.



Photo: ISPR

7th PATS exercise concludes with impressive ceremony

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: 7th Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Exercise-2024 was concluded at Kharian Garrison with an impressive Closing Ceremony.

General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The 60 hours rigorous "Patrolling Exercise" aimed at enhancing combat skills through sharing of innovative ideas and experiences by the participants of the forum.

Seven teams from Pakistan Army and fifteen teams from friendly countries including Bahrain, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Turkiye participated in the exercise. Azerbaijan, China, Germany, Indonesia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Myanmar witnessed the exercise as observers.

The exercise was conducted from 25-27 Feb 2024 in the semi mountainous terrain of Punjab. Over the years, the exercise has gained much prominence as a very competi-

tive professional military activity for the friendly countries.

While addressing the ceremony, COAS appreciated the participating teams for their professionalism, physical & mental endurance and high morale displayed during various stages of the exercise.

COAS reiterated mutual learning during such exercises and highlighted that PATS is the right forum, which appropriately combines professional military skills and tactical acumen of all participating soldiers fostering much needed team spirit in the face of evolving character of war. To this effect, Pakistan Army upholds rich soldierly attributes of "character, courage and competence which have amply been displayed by our men in the face of fight against terrorism".

At the end, COAS gave away individual and team awards to the participants of the exercise.

International observers and Defence Attachés of participating countries also attended the ceremony and appreciated its professional conduct.

Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Commander Mangla Corps.

Pandemonium in National Assembly as newly elected MNAs sworn in

The ruling coalition nominates Ayaz Sadiq for NA speaker

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's maiden session began more than one hour after the scheduled time on Thursday. The Sunni Ittehad Council - which has over 80 seats after PTI-backed candidates joined it - protested and chanted slogans when Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf began the session.

The pandemonium continued as the Speaker administered the oath of office to the newly elected MNAs.

NA record shows at least 282 MNA in the 336-member house took the oath on Thursday. At least 23 reserved seats in the National Assembly have not been allotted to any political party.

Ruling coalition candidate for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, his brother Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari, and



PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were also present in the House.

After the MNAs were sworn in, PTI's Barrister Gohar and

Omar Ayub spoke on the point of order. They reiterated PTI's stance on the election rigging and said members sitting to their left were 'alien' in the house.

PTI also said that without a decision on the 23 reserved seats that were to go to SIC, the house was not complete.

When PMLN's Khawaja Asif

rose to counter their claims, PTI/SIC members raised slogans in an attempt to dissuade him from speaking.

Speaker Ashraf said no one raised slogans when PTI's Gohar was speaking on the point of order.

Finally, Khawaja Asif countered the PTI claims by saying that SIC had not submitted a list for the reserved seats and that it had told the ECP that it had no claim on the seats.

As soon as Asif ended his point of order he removed his wrist-watch and waved it to the House in an apparent reference to the allegation against PTI founder Imran Khan.

The speaker adjourned the NA session until 10 am on Friday when the House will meet again to elect a new speaker and deputy speaker.

Continued on Page 8

World community must focus all efforts for ceasefire in Gaza: China: Mao Ning

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning on Thursday said that the international community must act now and focus all efforts on bringing about a ceasefire and protecting civilians in Gaza. She made these remarks during her regular briefing in response to a question about a proposal of Qatari mediators to Israel for a pause in its war in Gaza during the upcoming Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Mao Ning said, "As the conflict drags on, the dire humanitarian situation continues to worsen in Gaza. The international community must act now and focus all efforts on

bringing about a ceasefire and protecting civilians." She said that China supported all diplomatic efforts conducive to de-escalation and easing the humanitarian crisis.

"We call on all parties concerned to stop fighting immediately, do everything possible to prevent casualties among innocent civilians and prevent an even worse humanitarian catastrophe," she added.

US urges new Pakistan govt. to prioritize economy, continue engagements with IMF

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: The United States supports Pakistan's efforts to "break free" from the vicious cycle of debt and financing, a State Department Spokesperson has said, urging the new government to continue working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other global financial institutions. "Pakistan's new government must immediately prioritize the economic situation because the policies over the next several months will be crucial to maintaining economic stability for Pakistanis," Spokesperson Mathew Miller told his daily news briefing on Wednesday.

The spokesperson was responding to a question at the daily State Department briefing about a letter sent by ex-PTI's Chairman Imran

Khan's to the IMF, suggesting to link the next loan facility to an audit of the Feb 8 general elections in the country. "I'll just say with respect to the IMF that we support Pakistan's efforts to break free from the vicious cycle of debt and international financing," the Spokesperson added. "The long-term health of Pakistan's government - or economy is crucial to its stability," Miller added. Pakistan has been facing financial challenges in recent years, with dwindling foreign exchange reserves and declining value of its national currency.

PM to be elected on Sunday

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly of Pakistan will elect the country's next prime minister on Sunday, March 3, according to a schedule announced on Thursday.

The nomination papers for the prime minister slot will be submitted on Saturday, March 2.

A scrutiny process will follow and will be completed by 3pm on the same day.

The National Assembly will meet on Sunday and MNAs will vote to elect the new prime minister.

The PMLN-led ruling coalition of six parties has nominated Shehbaz Sharif as its candidate for the prime minister slot. He will be facing PTI's Omar Ayub Khan. PPP has expressed its support for Shehbaz, but has not asked for ministries and will not be part of the government.

PTI leaders wear Imran Khan masks to NA



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Two prominent leaders of the PTI, Sher Afzal Marwat and Ali Mohammad Khan, wore masks depicting the face of their leader Imran Khan to the National Assembly on Thursday.

The duo arrived at the Parliament wearing the masks as the National Assembly met for the first time since the February 8 election.

Several other PTI-backed independently-elected lawmakers carried party flags to the House and raised slogans. Before entering the House, Marwat and Khan clicked photos in Parliament's corridors.

PTI's Babar Saleem Swati takes oath as KP Assembly Speaker

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Babar Saleem Swati on Thursday took oath as the speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session for Speaker and Deputy Speaker election was presided over by the outgoing Speaker Mushtaq Ghani.

Outgoing Speaker Mushtaq Ghani administered him oath after PTI's nominated candidate Babar Saleem Swati, an MPA from Manshera, was elected as speaker of KP assembly.

Saleem Swati bagged 89 votes whereas Peoples Party's Ihsan Ullah Khan managed to secure 17 votes.

Sindh declares rain emergency amid heavy rain forecast

Dastagir Bhatti

KARACHI: Sindh's Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Thursday declared rain emergency in the province after a weather forecast of a heavy rainfall in the province.

Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting over the weather emergency and directed for high alert at all local bodies, administration and hospitals.

The meeting also declared half-day duty at all government and private institutions in Karachi tomorrow (Friday) due to likely rain situation. "The people are requested to avoid going unnecessarily of their homes," Shah said. "Rainfall is expected in Karachi by 2:00pm," he said. "There are three to four spells of rainfall in the city tomorrow," he said.

Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's urs begins in Sehwan

Bureau Report

SEHWAN: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori inaugurated the urs and paid tribute to the revered saint.

Arrangements in this regard have been finalized by the district administration. More than 500 CCTV cameras have been installed at various locations in Sehwan city while 20 walk-through gates were installed at Shrine limits. Additionally, 500 policemen and 300 rangers personnel will be deployed for security responsibilities.

Drinking water facilities (Sabeel) have been installed at various locations throughout the city, and a medical camp has also been set up on the national highway in Sehwan Sharif.

Sindh Rangers to crack down on drug suppliers in SITE

PPA

KARACHI: The Sector Commander, Pakistan Rangers Sindh, Brig Muhammad Kabir Ahmad visited SITE Association of Industry and discussed law & order related issues with the industrialists of SITE area. He was accompanied by Wing Commander (63 Wing) Lt Col Jahangir Akhtar.

SITE President Muhammad Kamran Arbi welcomed the Sector Commander to the Association and appreciated holding of coordination meeting with industrialists of the area to listen to their grievances related to law & order. He updated the Sector Commander on the progress of anti-encroachment drive in SITE area made during past one month and said that there exists a strong supply chain of drugs in the area.

Addressing the Industrialists, Sector Commander said that there is need to

reduce interaction gap with industrialists of the area. Rangers have been given mandate for counter terrorism, extortion, target killing and kidnapping for ransom. We are however, available to support the industry in matters upon request like removal of encroachments which is to be initiated by civil administration (the DC office) as per procedure.

Patron-in-Chief Zubair Motiwala, speaking on the occasion said that due to prevailing economic conditions and increase in utilities tariffs and supply the export orders are being shifted to other neighbour's countries. He requested the Sector Commander to play role in providing peaceful working atmosphere to existing industries. The Sector Commander assured that people of Karachi along with Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) have sacrificed to regain peace in Karachi and our efforts to ensure law & order at any cost, shall continue. Chief Coordinator Saleem Parekh



said that the industries have also suffered due to KW&SC operation against water theft & sub-soil suppliers, but nevertheless they stood with

the LEAs in this operation. There is minor improvement in water supply from KW&SC but the shortage of water is still persistent. He requested

the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) to also underscore that KW&SC improves water supplies to SITE by raising the issue at appropriate forum.

Chairman of law & order sub-committee Abdul Hadi appreciated performance of the SITE Wing & its Commander and requested the Sector Commander to help Civil Administration in removal of encroachments of all sorts from SITE area. A formal request by DC Keamari has also been made to Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) to assist Police & Civil Administration for Anti-encroachment drive in SITE. He also highlighted the issues of Rangers Security Guards (RSG). Sector Commander assured amicable addressal of the same immediately.

Former President KCCI Muhammad Tariq Yousuf, SVP Muhammad Hanif Tawakkal, VP Muhammad Farhan Ashrafi, Former Presidents Abdul Rasheed & Riaz Uddin, members of the executive committee and representatives from general members attended the meeting in large number.

MCCI is an excellent platform for the promotion and growth of women's business

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Convener of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Wing Multan Mrs. Romana Tanveer Shaikh has said that half of the country's population women should leave their homes and play their role for their own and country's economic stability. We have to work together for improvement by walking side by side. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting of the Women's Wing at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Multan. Jahanzeb, Sajia Gurdizi, Nida Malik, Hadiqa Zafar, Hina Babar, Rabia Wahid, Maryam Farrukh, Afshan Asif, Shamaila Ahsan, Maria Shahzad while speaking in the meeting Mrs. Romana Tanveer Shaikh said that MCCI is an excellent platform for the promotion and growth of business. Come and take up entrepreneurship so that they can help their men in their family's economic prob-



lems. He said that attractive business opportunities are available for women exporters in countries like Dubai, Sri Lanka, Morocco, which we should take advantage of.

All possible support will be given to the women who do this and in advance. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Women Wing are trying to improve the business of

women related to business. Deputy Director of Trade Development Authority Multan, Aleena Gilani said that the members of TDAPMCCCI are women inside and outside the country. Provide opportunities to attend trade exhibitions and trade fairs so that our women entrepreneurs can introduce their products internationally and get orders for which

TDAP provides assistance in setting up stalls at subsidized rates.

Secretary General Muhammad Shafiq said that MCCI It is the business hub of the region with business information and support facilities. MCCI members are provided with all possible assistance in providing future e-commerce solutions and facilities.

Members of Multan Press Club will get Residential Plots from the Govt of Punjab

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: One thousand journalists Of Multan and Members Of Multan Press Club will get plots from the government to build houses. This was announced by the president of Multan Press Club and presidential candidate Mr Shakeel Anjum in his presidential address at a crowded meeting of the ruling Journalists Group at Multan Press Club Which was welcomed by the journalists present there by clapping and shouting slogans. President Press Club said that all the paperwork and related approvals for the new MDA colony in Multan have been completed. Only the final approval process from the provincial cabinet is left. After the completion of the government setup in the country, God willing, this phase will



also be completed. He also informed that these plots will be distributed among new and old sub-journalists.

Secretary General Nisar Awan, Mumtaz Niazi, Tariq Qureshi, Ayaz Ali Sheikh,

Rafiq Qureshi, Rana Rohail, Mehboob Chaghtai and Zia Ashraf also addressed this meeting.

While Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry senior Journalists Asim Tanveer.

Ejaz Tareen, Arshad Reza Zaidi, Aqeel Chaudhry, Nadeem Kazmi and large number of journalists including Finance Secretary Farhan Anjum Mulghani were present.

AE Power receives enthusiastic response at Solar Expo Pakistan

PPA

LAHORE: AE Power made a significant impact at Solar Expo Pakistan, held in Lahore's Expo Centre, showcasing its commitment to spearheading Pakistan's green energy revolution.

The event attracted considerable attention, signalling a growing national interest in sustainable energy solutions.

The expo provided AE Power with a platform to underscore its mission of democratizing green energy access for all Pakistanis. By advocating for widespread solar adoption, the company not only aims to lower electricity costs for households but also to mitigate climate change effects.

Rana Abbas, AE Power's CEO, emphasized the crucial role of government support in driving solarization efforts. He stressed the need for policies facilitating easier transition to renewable sources, advocating for attractive net metering tariffs to incentivize solar uptake.

Sardar Attique condemns Indian ban on IIOF&K MUSLIM Conference

Abdul Majeed Tahir



RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan President Muslim Conference and ex-Premier of AJK has vehemently condemned Indian government's ban on Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir operating in India-held part of Jammu and Kashmiri state. Describing it as the savage political extremism by India the illegal occupant of Kashmir against dictates of UN Kashmir resolutions, Sardar Attique Khan urged on the Secretary General of the UN Mr Antonio Guterres to call an urgent meeting of Security Council on this latest Indian violation of human and political rights of the Kashmiris.

Sardar Attique warned that such fascist moves showed India deliberately wanted to vitiate peace in the region. Kashmir is contiguous to both Pakistan and China. Any war-like move by India in Jammu and Kashmir like the one she took today would engulf the entire region into hellish fire. We urge the international community to take note of this bullish posture of India, he stressed.

In his media statement here tonight the Muslim Conference chief said New Delhi's ban clampdown on 1932-established Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir exposes India's designs of regional hegemony. "Kashmir is a UN listed dispute. India is a party to this dispute in the UN. She is signatory to the UN Security Council's Kashmir resolutions. The UN Charter binds her not to tamper with the geographic and political map of the part of Jammu and Kashmir under her military occupation", he asserted.

He reminded the world community that Jammu and Kashmir does not form part of India under UN resolutions. Therefore she cannot curtail the political rights of the Kashmiris. Over one million Indian troops today occupy Kashmir busy reducing the Kashmiri population into a minority by planting RSS extremists in Kashmir, he decried.

DFP denounces Indian authorities for banning Kashmiri political parties

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has strongly condemned the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Muslim Conference Jammu & Kashmir (Sumji faction) and Muslim Conference Jammu & Kashmir (Bhat faction) as "unlawful associations".

In a statement issued here today the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal said that banning of political parties was part of India's broader campaign to crush the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle.

Terming these actions as a violation of democratic norms and basic human rights, the spokesman said that banning legitimate political voices has become a new normal in Kashmir.

He said that India must realize the fact that it cannot crush the Kashmiris' legitimate struggle by choking voice of dissent in the region. He said that such mean tactics cannot deter Kashmiris from pursuing their noble cause for which they have offered unprecedented sacrifices.

It may be recalled here that the Indian authorities have already declared six political parties including Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, Jammata e Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Muslim League as unlawful associations under notorious UAPA act.



A ceremony held in honor of Malik Abrar Hussain

PNP

ISLAMABAD: It is not an individual's honor, it is the honor of the entire Pakistani nation, the private sector of education is playing an important role in the educational, economic, political and social development of the country, Kashif Mirza said.

Malik Abrar Hussain's services for the improvement of the private education sector are unforgettable, this honor is the best recognition of his services, and the participants expressed their opinion.

Yesterday, at the International Islamic Schools of Excellence, Malik Abrar Hussain was awarded an honorary PhD degree by the State University of Maryland, USA. Kashif Mirza, president of All Pakistan Private Schools Federation, was the chief



guest. On this occasion Kashif Mirza Central President All Pakistan Private Schools Federation, Pir Syed Abdul Samad Shah Geelani, Muhammad

Ashraf Haraj Member BOG Federal Board, Secretary General All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, Malik Deen Muhammad Awan,

Rana Sobail Ahmed, Raja Ilyas Kayani, Irfan Muzaffar Kayani, Javed Iqbal Raja, Zulfiqar Ali Siddiqui, Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed, Professor Dr. Waseem Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Arif, Malik Hafeezur Rahman, Chaudhry Iftikhar Ahmed, Sheikh Khalid Parvez, Dr. Waqar Ahmed from the department of education and various walks of life.

A large number of related persons were present. The speakers congratulated Malik Abrar Hussain on this award given by the University of Maryland to a Pakistani educationist and said that it has brought the country's name to light and brought forth a role model for others.

The speakers said that the services of Malik Abrar Hussain for the improvement of the private education sector are unforgettable and this honor is the best acknowledgment of his services.

Skin Care Society of the University of Faisalabad organized a Skin Care Expo

Abdul Majid

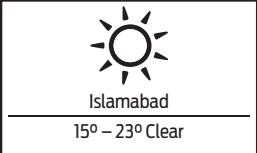
FAISALABAD: The Department of Dermatology and Skin Care Society of the University of Faisalabad organized a Skin Care Expo at Salem Campus with the aim of promoting awareness and promotion of products free of harmful effects developed on modern lines for skin care. In the exhibition, 12 stalls of products prepared by the students of the Department of Dermatology were set up.

Dr. Amir Ali Chaudhry, Principal Professor of University Medical and Dental College, Dr. Tanzeela Khalid, Head Professor of Department of Dermatology, Dr. Ghulam Abbas and Dr. Shahid Shah from GC University Faisalabad, Chief Executive Officer of Masa Health Club, Dr. Bedi Idris, renowned Gynecologist, Dr. Nazia Ehsan and directors and marketing managers of leading cosmetics industries visited the exhibition.

The experts inspected the products made by the students and highly appreciated the techniques and skills offered to solve skin care and acne problems.

Experts said that organizing such exhibitions will help in promoting linkages between academic institutions and industries.

In this competition of cosmetics products, the Shoestopper team won the first position and Alito Body Lab won the second position. At the end, certificates and prizes were also given to the teams who prepared the best products.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:15 am
Zohr12:21 pm
Asr4:23 pm
Maghrib6:04 pm
Isha7:27 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Fly Jinnah introduces daily non-stop flights connecting Lahore to Sharjah in the UAE

PPA

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's low-cost carrier, announces the launch of its latest international service, connecting Lahore city to Sharjah city in United Arab Emirates. This exciting addition to Fly Jinnah's expanding network marks a significant milestone in the airline's commitment to providing affordable and convenient travel options for passengers. The new service will connect both cities with daily non-stop flights starting from March 27, 2024.

Commenting on the occasion, Fly Jinnah's spokesperson said: "We are delighted to introduce our newest addition to our expanding network, reaffirming Fly Jinnah's commitment to continually providing diverse travel options supported by affordability, reliability, and convenience. We are looking forward to welcoming our passengers aboard our new flights."

Following the recent launch of Islamabad - Sharjah route, Fly Jinnah is extending its reach in the UAE with a new service that will connect another Pakistani city with the third-largest city in the United Arab Emirates and a vibrant hub in the Gulf region, Sharjah. This strategic step will further strengthen the ties between the two nations, creating more opportunities for business and leisure travelers.

ICCI delegation visits POF to explore business opportunities in the defense industry

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President visited the Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) and held a meeting with Lt. Gen. Syed Tahir Hameed Shah, Chairman POF to explore business opportunities for the private sector in the defense industry.

Lt. Gen. Syed Tahir Hameed Shah, Chairman, POF briefed the ICCI delegation about the role of Pakistan Ordnance Factories, which is the country's premier defense production organization. He said that besides meeting the defense needs of the country, POF exports its products to several countries around the world. He said that POF imports many

parts and equipment to produce its finished products and said that POF would welcome local vendors who can supply it with parts and equipment according to the required standards. He said that POF is the largest defense industrial complex comprising 14 ordnance factories and three commercial subsidiaries. He said that the surplus products of POF are sold in the civil market and the standards of POF products are not less than any international company.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) lauded the role of POF in making the defense of the country stronger. He said that POF is playing a key role in moving towards self-sufficiency and in meeting the growing demands



of our defense sector and civilian security agencies, which is a source of pride for us. He lauded

the efforts of POF for capturing foreign markets by improving its efficiency, adopting quality financial management practices, and digitizing its processes to transform itself into a self-sustainable and progressive defense-industrial complex.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that defense exports are not only an important source of earning foreign exchange, but they also help in improving Pakistan's relations with other countries. He stressed that Pakistan should focus on SAARC, ECO and D-8 countries for promoting defense exports.

Maqsood Tabish, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Faseeh Ullah Khan, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Ms. Fatima Hassan, and others were in the delegation.

Seasonal flowers

ISLAMABAD: A man is taking photo of full blooming seasonal flowers on a tree at a green belt, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Rare diseases need govt attention

PNP

KARACHI: In recognition of Rare Disease Day, Roche Pakistan Limited held a panel discussion and press briefing to raise awareness about rare diseases in Pakistan, and to emphasize the unmet needs of patients especially when it comes to awareness, funding and government support. The panel comprised MD Roche Pakistan, Ms. Hafsa Shamsie, Roche's Head of Medical, Dr. Yasir Adnan as well as paediatric neurologist Dr. Raman Kumar and hematologist Dr. Munira Borhani and Dr. Saqib, Director Health Services, Health Department, Govt. of Sindh.

Ms. Hafsa Shamsie, MD Roche highlighted the fact that even for those who have been diagnosed, the lack of government healthcare spends and support makes the treatment burden for rare diseases even more difficult to bear. Rare diseases sufferers are the neglected outliers in Pakistan's healthcare system. Roche is a company that is committed to serving rare disease patients by



bringing innovative treatments that can help patients live a fully normal life or at least a much better quality of life. But, treatment is one side of the picture. Ensuring that patients have awareness about rare diseases, and access to these standard of care treatments is the other side of the picture.

Dr. Yasir Adnan explained that worldwide about 300 million people live with a rare disease. Moreover, with Pakistan having over 240 million people, the rare disease incidence in this country becomes

more acute with such a large population. Rare diseases like Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Hemophilia pose not only debilitating physical and health challenges for the sufferer, but also grave challenges for the families of sufferers and for the society at large.

Dr. Raman Kumar said spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a severe neuromuscular disease and one of the leading genetic causes of infant death. He said that even though there was a lack of data to assess the

prevalence of SMA in Pakistan, cousin marriages are the most common reason attributed for its occurrence and Pakistan had a very high frequency of cousin marriages.

Dr. Munira Borhani explained that Hemophilia A is a debilitating and life-threatening bleeding disorder. Hemophilia A severely affects the quality of life of patients who may experience spontaneous bleeding and bleeding due to trauma within the muscles, joints, and other internal organs, often 15-20 times a year.

COMSATS University Islamabad and University of Regina of Canada Forge Historic Global Collaboration

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards global cooperation, COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) and University of Regina, Canada, have sealed a landmark MoU for a five-year term, already endorsed by the Government of Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. Sajjad A. Madani, Registrar of CUI, and Mr. Haroon Chaudhary, Associate Vice-President (International) & Chief International Officer of the University of Regina, inked the MoU on behalf of their institutions during a physical ceremonial event.

The occasion was honoured by the presence of Mr. Michael Lazaruk, Head of the Commercial Program & Senior Trade Commissioner of the High Commission of Canada in Islamabad. H. E. Mr. Janbaz Khan, Consul General of Pakistan, and Mr. Ghulam Hussain, Vice Consul General, joined the ceremony virtually from Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Hammad Omer, T. I., Head, International Office, presented an overview of COMSATS University Islamabad and highlighted past engagements of the university with Canada established since 2004 and proposed further connections between CUI and Canada.

IIUI's research priority based approach led to meaningful progress in rankings: Rector

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. Samina Malik, Rector, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) said that the university gives top priority to the research and its results are evident as IIUI has made meaningful progress in various recent rankings.

The workshop was attended by around 100 scholars from various universities including IIUI, QAU, Minhaj University Lahore, Air University Islamabad, BUTTEMS Quetta, Quertaba University Peshawar, Hamdard University Karachi and the Women University of Multan. The workshop was designed in physical and online mode.

Prof. Dr. Samina Malik said that the trends in the research of social sciences have changed in previous years and it is the need of time to raise our standards according to the ones that are being practiced by academicians globally. She stressed upon the scholars to focus on research methodology as she opined that it is the most important part of research.

IIUI Rector distributed the workshop completion certificate among the participants, while shields were also presented to the resource persons. The resource persons included Dr. Sham Haider, Dr. Sajid Yousafzai, Dr. Yasir Hussain, Dr. Rabia Ali and Dr. Qandil Abbas.

In the workshop, the scholars covered various important topics such as introduction to research, data collection procedures and tools, formulation of smart research objectives, qualitative research methods, data analysis and methods of keeping research on track.

The closing ceremony of the workshop was also attended by Director IRD, Syed Hassan Aftab, Incharge Directorate of graduate studies, and Dr. Suhail Abdullah and coordinating team of the IRD.

TCL brings joy to SOS kids' with memorable PSL Stadium Experience

PPA

LAHORE: In a heartwarming gesture, TCL, Pakistan's No.1 LED TV brand, took a truly special initiative to bring joy to the hearts of over 50 children from SOS Village. Amidst the bustling excitement of PSL, TCL Pakistan extended an invitation to these deserving children, offering them an unforgettable experience at the cricket stadium. Transported to the iconic Gaddafi Stadium, the children were immersed in the electrifying atmosphere as they witnessed the thrilling PSL match between Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United. Surrounded by the cheers of passionate fans and the exhilarating energy of the game, their faces lit up with delight, creating moments of pure happiness.

Majid Khan Niazi, Marketing Director TCL Middle East and Africa, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "At TCL Pakistan, we believe in the transformative power of sports to unite communities and inspire positive change. By inviting the children from SOS Village to experience the exhilaration of a PSL match firsthand, we aim to create lasting memories and inspire dreams for a brighter future."

TCL Pakistan's collaboration with SOS Village underscores its commitment to social responsibility and uplifting the lives of children across Pakistan. Through initiatives like these, TCL Pakistan continues to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to corporate social responsibility, leveraging its resources and influence to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and communities nationwide.

FPCCI Rejected Implementation of Cass Tax in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh President Federation Of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) said that the KP Business Community rejects the imposition of 2% Cess on import on all imports into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is totally unjustified and unacceptable to business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This will result in price hike of essential commodities and hyperinflation.

Atif Ikram further said that instead of giving relief to the poor people of the province, problems are being created for the newly elected provincial government under a deliberate conspiracy by the bureaucracy, which cannot be ignored under any circumstances while our country is already running



in economic crises. He further said that the business community of the province and the importers and exporters are already in under burden of heavy taxes while the Cess levy of 2% on import and export trade by the care-taker provincial government will further increase the problems and complications which is to be condemned. It is surprising that instead of flourishing business activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to provide incentives, the KP Government further burdening the already pressed businessmen. FPCCI opposes the 2% cess in KP province and will raise voice for its withdrawal on all concerned platforms, he said. "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a militancy

affected province and business in this province is already under great stress due to poor law and order situation. "In the prevailing circumstances imposition of 2% cess is absolutely unjust with the businessmen of the province."

Atif Ikram demanded the newly elected provincial government and the expected Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur to immediately withdraw the decision of cess tax on import and export and provide relief to the poor people and the business community.

Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI further said that he will soon meet the newly elected provincial government and the expected Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and will try to resolve this problem.

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Proven Neutrality of Pak Army - II

Regrettably, there persists a culture of spreading propaganda without concrete evidence, as evidenced by this case.

The Interim Information Minister of Punjab vehemently refuted the accusations made by Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatta, dismissing them as a political ploy. He asserted that only someone who is mentally unstable or psychotic would make such claims. Additionally, he pointed out that Chatta is due to retire on March 13, implying that his statements might be motivated by a desire to enhance his political standing. The minister questioned why Chatta waited ten days to come forward with his allegations and speculated that Chatta may have political affiliations or ulterior motives behind his actions. He suggested that an investigation should be conducted into Chatta's claims, including an assessment of his mental well-being and how someone in his position could make such accusations.

Addressing journalists outside the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa emphasized the importance of presenting evidence when making accusations. He stated that accusations could be made about anything, but evidence must accompany them to validate their truth. The Chief Justice reiterated that he had no involvement in ordering elections, only in conducting them according to constitutional protocols. He challenged Chatta to provide evidence to support his allegations and questioned why Chatta implicated him without any substantiating proof. The Chief Justice highlighted the failure of attempts to prevent elections and emphasized the need for evidence-based claims.

The following day, the newly appoint-

ed Commissioner, Saif Anwar Jappa, took charge after the former Rawalpindi Commissioner, Liaquat Ali Chatta, and conducted a press conference alongside the District Returning Officers (DROs) of Jhelum, Attock, and Chakwal. Commissioner Saif Anwar Jappa refuted the allegations of electoral rigging made by his predecessor, asserting that the former commissioner had no involvement in the recent elections beyond coordination. He called for an independent inquiry into the accusations. During the press conference, the District Returning Officer of Rawalpindi demanded an investigation into the former commissioner's claims, emphasizing that the recent elections were conducted transparently and fairly, without any undue pressure. The Deputy Commissioner of Chakwal echoed these sentiments, denying any coercion during the elections. Additionally, the DROs of Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum, Chakwal, and Tala Gangun affirmed the transparency of the election process in all constituencies, dismissing the former commissioner's allegations as baseless and false. They asserted that they faced no pressure during the elections.

Another video statement surfaced from former Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatta, recorded on February 7, a day before the elections, in which he discussed the distribution of election materials, security measures, and other arrangements. In this statement, Chatta mentioned the distribution of election materials and ballot papers to presiding officers throughout the division, under

the custody of the police and the army. He also mentioned overseeing the distribution process with the Regional Police Officer (RPO) and expressed confidence in the orderly conduct of the elections. Chatta further stated that the elections would be held for 13 national and 26 provincial seats in the Rawalpindi division, with monitoring of the polling process on February 8 and additional security deployed at sensitive polling stations. There is a need for an investigation into the rapid change in his statement.

Surprisingly, the former commissioner of Rawalpindi, Liaquat Ali Chatta, has recently retracted his previous statement made during a press conference. In his statement, he had accused the chief election commissioner and the chief justice of Pakistan of involvement in electoral rigging. Chatta has now submitted a written statement to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) retracting his allegations against CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja and CJP Qazi Faez Isa. He admitted to supporting the narrative of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) regarding rigging in the general elections and defaming state institutions in exchange for a promising future position. According to him, a PTI leader from Lahore, with whom he had formed a close bond, made him this offer. Chatta also claimed that the entire plan was devised with the consultation and approval of PTI's senior leadership. It's disheartening to witness such occurrences in our country, where a high-ranking official makes baseless accusations against institutions and election trans-

parency, without evidence, and where the media propagates such misinformation.

It's unfortunate that we're witnessing a political group actively fueling animosity towards government officials and institutions. This group consistently seizes every opportunity to disseminate propaganda against these institutions. It's imperative to investigate the potential ties between former Commissioner Rawalpindi and this group. Additionally, this same group has initiated a nationwide anti-rigging campaign, alleging widespread electoral fraud resulting in the deprivation of their electoral mandate. There are reports suggesting that amidst this backdrop, a perilous campaign has been launched, where photos of various District Returning Officers (DROs), along with their families and children, have been exposed on social media, inciting hatred in a manner that threatens their safety. Allegedly, this campaign bears resemblance to past incidents, such as the May 9 saga, characterized by violent protests following the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan.

A handful of anti-state elements persistently strive to politicize the Pakistan Army, entangling it in controversies from the outset. In a world where trust and integrity are paramount, few institutions bear as much weight and responsibility as the military. Soldiers pledge themselves to honor, duty, and sacrifice, often confronting insurmountable challenges. However, this dedication can be jeopardized when false allegations are leveled against military members. The repercussions extend beyond individual lives, impacting morale, operational effectiveness, and the bedrock of trust upon which armed forces rely.

To be continued

Solar PV seminar titled retrospect, prospect held in Beijing

In 2023, China polysilicon, silicon wafers, cells, and modules output have all grown by more than 64% year-on-year. Simultaneously, our PV newly installed capacity was 216.88 GW, which is a year-on-year leap of 148.1%. Speaking of exports, the export volume of wafers, cells, and modules in 2023 increased by 93.6%, 65.5%, and 37.9% respectively year-on-year. The Chairman first stated the huge accomplishments. Overall, our PV application market has achieved unexpected development in 2023, exceeding the predictions of almost all insiders at home and abroad. As of 2023, our cumulative installed PV capacity has reached 609.5GW. However, blind optimism means the prelude to failure. What we also need to distinguish is that in the same year, the output value of domestic PV manufacturing (excluding inverters) exceeded RMB 1.75 trillion, a year-on-year increase of 17.1%, which has slowed down significantly compared with 100% in 2022. Moreover, corresponding to the growth in export volume, the total export values (silicon wafers, cells, and modules) was approximately USD 48.48 billion, a year-on-year decrease of 5.4%. It could be said that the shuffle has begun. Survival of the fittest is accelerating. All parties need to assess the situation to take advantage of the trend. Players are all in position. The PV industry maintains mushrooming, and a consensus has been reached that global renewable energy installed capacity will triple in 2030." Wang predicted that under conservative circumstances, global new photovoltaic installed capacity in 2024 will be the same as last year, reaching about 390GW. Optimistically, it could reach 430GW. As to China, the association forecasted a new PV capacity addition of 190-220 gigawatts (GW) this year, with consumption and demand for solar energy projected to remain high and steady in the coming years, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

With continuous breakthroughs in PV technology and a more diversified export market, renewable energy generation is predicted to play a dominant role in the power generation landscape by 2030. Another guest, Wang Jixue, Deputy Chief Engineer of China Electric Power Planning and Engineering Institute (EPPEI), echoed the view. In 2022, He Lifeng, then Director of the National Development and Reform Commission, announced that the country would plan to build a 450-million-kilowatt wind & photovoltaic base in the desert region. Currently, multiple projects have been planned and completed, and each project has confirmed 12 million kilowatts of new energy installed capacity (mainly photovoltaic).



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awdat)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: The land of hospitality

Muhammad Shakeel

Other than a hub of diverse cultural heritage, Ghandhara civilization and natural beauty, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also famous for its unique and mouth-watering traditional food cuisines that are commonly used in almost every household and markets of the region. It is always hard for the visitors to resist the temptation, aroma and flavor of the delicious food items.

The traditional food delicacies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Chapli Kabab, Roush, Mutton Karahi, BBQ and Painda are on the top list of foreign bloggers and U-tubers including Trevor James, Mark Weins and many more who visited the region. Mughal rulers' influence in the region had given birth to a number of kabab dishes, resulting in local recipes such as the chapli kabab that is served in thousands of kabab houses in the region for its delectable taste and spiciness.

The famous dish is fried in a specially designed pan prepared in pure animal fat that gives special aroma, salty taste and flavor to the popular cuisine. Almost every city and bazaars had abundant cuisines shops where Chapli Kabab is prepared with minced meat of buffalo, special ingredients and spices on firewood in a cozy environment. Though the origin of Chapli Kabab is unknown but Qari Javed Iqbal writes in his book 'Saqafat Sarhad Tarikh Ke Ayeene Me' (Frontier culture in the mirror of history) that Mughals, Turk-

ish, Ghaznis and Afghans, who entered subcontinent through historic Khyber Pass had preferred meat in their dishes that led to introduction of Chapli Kabab in the region.

'Mutton Karahi' also known as Karhi Ghost, Dumba Karahi, Balti Ghost and Dumpukhat Karahi are other famous dishes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attracting foodies from across the country. The lamb meat was cooked in its fat using a minimum of spices to keep its taste pure. The restaurants of Namak Mandi Bazaar were visited by tourists, Youtubers and vloggers to enjoy the dish where it is prepared. "What would be more enjoyable other than to eat lamb meat cooked in its fat on coal at Namak Mandi Peshawar where foodies enjoy it till late at night," said Engr Faheem Khan at Namak Mandi. "I frequented to Landikotal with family members to eat lamb Karahi that was cooked on the medium flame of firewood," he said and maintained that "I still remember that flavour despite passing a lot of time." Restaurants of Namak Mandi also prepare lamb karahi but the taste of dish that was prepared on firewood was tastier, he said. The only traditional food item that is available KP province only is Kachalo Paira.

The dish is sold in almost every bazaar of the province and relished by people due to its tangy taste and affordable price. Kachalo is a bulbous root of calocasia that is boiled and mixed with vinegar, red pepper, lemon juice and served with sauce prepared with tamarind, mint and yogurt. The origin of the dish, which is simple, is unknown but it included favorite among food items of

Peshawarites and local Pashtun population.

"My father started selling Kachalo Paira in Karimpura bazaar on a pushcart from 1981 and after him I started serving people in the same locality to earn two times bread for his family," said Muhammad Sulaiman alias Jani. "Although this traditional food is known to only old dwellers of the province, the younger generation also relished it due to its tangy and spicy taste."

He said the species has also made deep inroads in Attock, Punjab due to its unique taste and health benefits. "The dish is best to revitalize the taste buds of a patient after recuperation from a disease," he said, adding that a patient loses sense of taste after consuming medicines during illness and Kachalo Paira can help return his lost sense of taste and increase production of digestive juices due to tanginess of flavor developed by a combination of spices including tamarind, vinegar and homemade spices. Khaliqur Rehman, MPA-elect said that Namak Mandi Peshawar will be converted into Food Street where all these traditional cuisines would be served at reasonable prices. He said another food street at Fawara Chowak would also be established in Peshawar where special outlets of these cuisines to be established. The land that is famous for its hospitality has also welcomed food items of invaders and developed these culinary dishes according to their taste buds and living environment. These traditional foods need to be promoted through digital technology and social media to promote tourism in the country.

Unnecessary experiments, socio-economic conditions mar education standards

Asmat Shah Garwaki

Education standards in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have suffered due to unnecessary experiments and dwindling socio-economic conditions during the last two decades or so resultant into increase dropout ratio of students from educational institutions.

The political and economic instability besides socioeconomic imbalances and unnecessary experiments of the past governments have adversely affected education standards in the province where currently over 4.7 million children are out-of-schools. Bringing them under the education net would be challenge number one for the new elected government.

Detrimental to democratic and economic growth, the high rate of illiteracy in the province especially in merged tribal districts has not only risked the very existence of the education system but it also deprives the poor strata from quality education despite tall promises made by the democratic dispensation, resulting an increase in poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the country.

The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) 2021 survey has revealed that about 22.8 million children were out-of-schools (OSC) in the country including 4.7 million children aged between 5 to 16 years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa i.e 2.9 million girls and one million belonged to merged tribal districts.

In merged areas, 66 percent of children are out-of-school in North

Waziristan, 63 percent in Bajaur, 61 percent in South Waziristan, 51 percent each in Mohmand and Khyber, and 47 percent each in Kurram and Orakzai, signifying the lackluster education policies and hollow claims of the past successive governments.

"I left my education at primary school after the death of my father and started labour work to support my eight-member family and never look behind," said Kamal Khan, a resident of Pabbi tehsil while talking to APP. "To pay heavy loans obtained for the treatment of my father Hamayun Khan died due to pancreas cancer, I abandoned education and started job in construction industry to clear the loans and run house expenses due to poverty," he added.

"Education standards in KP has suffered as it was passed through different unnecessary experiments during the last two decades in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, resulting an increase in dropout ratio of students from schools and unemployment," said Professor Dr AH Hilar, former Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar while talking to the news agency.

Shahab Khan, senior planning officer KP Education Department said that about 15,667 new schools were required to enroll 300 such children (aged 5-9 years) per school for upcoming academic year, adding ALP (alternate learning pathways) were initiated for OSC. He said that 300,000 OSC would be enrolled in schools in KP in the next three years besides construction of 10,000 new schools and 1,000 ALP.

Early Child Education (ECE) policy is ready while teaching materials including teachers' guidebook and handbook

for such mode of learning prepared; adding transformation of Katchi into ECE was in progress besides completion of training of 790 master trainers and 425 teachers on ECE.

More than 4000 teachers in primary, secondary and middle schools recruited and about Rs30 million invested to support 489 literacy centers besides disbursement of Rs three billion in scholarships among students of the hitherto neglected tribal districts.

Similarly, more than Rs20 million have been spent on students in madrasahs in four years, while free textbooks and bags provided to more than 600,000 students in tribal districts besides over Rs20 million for digital skills of students in 2018-22. Besides shifting over 1100 schools to solar energy in the tribal districts, more than three billion rupees were allocated for solarizing of schools.

Former Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Department Mohtasim Billah Shah said the department has notified provision of free textbooks from class nursery to 12 for the academic year 2024-25. He said 100 free textbooks would be published from class nursery to class 03, 80 percent from class 04 to 05 while the remaining 20 per cent to be managed from old textbooks. Similarly, 50 per cent of textbooks would be published for class 06 to 12 and remaining 50 percent to be managed from old textbook.

The department has planned to explore the possibilities of soft copies of textbooks to be used through personal, registered cell phones or on tablets, laptops of the students for academic year 2025-26.

ISSI hosts Seminar on 'Pakistan's Space Policy: Tapping into the Space Potential'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a seminar entitled "Pakistan's Space Policy: Tapping into the Space Potential" on February 29, 2024. Maj. Gen. (R) Amer Nadeem, former Chairman of Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), delivered the keynote address. Eminent discussants from academia and think-tanks presented their perspectives. The seminar provided valuable insights into Pakistan's National Space Policy (NSP) and its space potential to accelerate socio-economic development. The key challenges, as well as options available for Pakistan, were discussed.

Maj. Gen. (R) Amer Nadeem, in his keynote address, highlighted the importance of international collaboration and emphasized its role in reducing costs and time in space missions. He advocated for strategic partnerships to leverage expertise and resources from other nations, enabling Pakistan to advance its space capabilities more efficiently.

Looking ahead, he outlined the National Space Program (NSP) 2047, underscoring its pragmatic approach tailored to Pakistan's current technological landscape. He stressed the necessity for strict prioritization of technologies that align with the country's immediate needs and capabilities.

In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored the salience of Pakistan's first-ever Space Policy, emphasizing that it provided a comprehensive framework for the future development of the space sector in line with emerging global trends and catering to Pakistan's crucial national needs. Noting the pivotal role of space technology in modern societies, he underscored the imperative for Pakistan to harness the space technology's potential for socio-economic development and security.

Earlier, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC, in his introductory remarks stated that today, the world has entered a new or second space age and major powers are involved in a space race. They are investing huge resources to develop and modernize their space programs with dual-use capabilities. Ms. Ghazala Yasmin Jalil, Research

Fellow at ACDC, ISSI, provided an overview of Pakistan's Space Program. In her presentation, she underscored that NSP is a step in the right direction and aims to tackle many challenges the space programme faces.

Dr. Ali Sarosh, Associate Professor, Air University Islamabad, talking about "Space Technology for Sustainable Development in Pakistan" emphasized the crucial role of space technology in fostering sustainable development and outlined key considerations for the NSP to contribute to this objective effectively.

Dr. Adil Sultan, Dean FASS, Air University Islamabad, delivered his remarks on "Pakistan Space Policy: The Way Forward" and emphasized the necessity for Pakistan to realign its space policy, advocating for a strategic shift from geopolitics to Astro politics.

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI, underscored that space technology is a new frontier that is vital to socio-economic development. He commended Pakistan's journey into space, marked by determination, creativity, and a steadfast commitment to harnessing the vast potential beyond



the Earth's atmosphere. The Seminar was attended by noted academics, area experts, scientists, think-tank representatives, practitioners, and members of the diplomatic corps.

Special technology zone authority signs development agreement with code STP

PPA

ISLAMABAD: CODE Science and Technology Park (CODE STP), Pakistan's pioneering privately managed technology zone company, is proud to announce the signing of a Zone Development Agreement for their flagship project, "The MARK" in Lahore with the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA). This landmark event marks a significant milestone in strengthening the Science & Technology sector of Pakistan.

The official signing ceremony, held at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, brought together the leadership teams of CODE STP and STZA, establishing a foundational alliance poised to drive innovation and accelerate growth within the burgeoning national technology industry.

In the wake of this agreement, CODE STP is set to enable a world-class technology ecosystem and establish a signature project, "THE MARK" - envisioned to be the tallest technology tower in Johar Town, Lahore. This 36-story skyscraper aspires to be a hub for tech enterprises, academia, and industry pioneers,



benefiting from STZA's fiscal and monetary Incentives program aimed at fostering a climate of innovation and economic growth in Pakistan.

The Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA), led by the Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan as President of the Board of Govern-

nors, serves as the federal regulator for Special Technology Zones (STZs) throughout the country.

The signing of the Development Agreement was done by Mr. Aamer Saleemi, Member Zones STZA, and Mr. Akbar Shaoukat, Board Member, CODE STP. The ceremony was

graced by the presence of notable dignitaries including the Member Zones, Chief Market Development Officer, Chief Legal Officer, Director Infrastructure and other leaders from STZA side, as well as shareholders and the Executive Management of CODE STP.

'Pakistan-Russia Virtual Trade Conference' in collaboration with RCCI and St. Petersburg Chamber (Russia)

RCCI in collaboration with Saint Petersburg Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Russia) organized the "Pakistan-Russia Virtual Trade Conference" at Chamber House.

In his welcome address President RCCI Saqib Rafiq lauded St. Petersburg Chamber for the cooperation and assistance for the virtual trade conference. He gave a short briefing on Pakistan and Russia trade relations, imports and exports, key sectors and future prospects of trade relations. Trade between Pakistan and Russia has been growing steadily, although it remains below its potential. Both countries have expressed the desire to enhance trade and

economic cooperation, he added. The total bilateral trade amounted to \$920 million in 2022-23. Pakistan's exports to Russia totalled \$74 million, while imports reached \$846m.

The trade between Pakistan and Russia primarily includes goods such as wheat, textiles, surgical instruments, rice, fruits, chickpeas and leather products from Pakistan, while Russia exports machinery, steel products, fertilizers, and energy resources to Pakistan, he added.

Ms. Ekaterina Lebedeva, Vice President of the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Arbi Abubakarov, Deputy Chairman of the

Committee for External Relations of St. Petersburg, Pavel Burlakov, Acting Trade Representative of the Russian Federation, Ms. Maria Qazi Joint Secretary MOFA, and RCCI office bearers and members attended the conference.

The moderator and host, Ms. Ekaterina Lebedeva, Vice President of the St. Petersburg Chamber, in her remarks, appreciated RCCI role for connectivity, networking and organizing this important conference.

Joint Secretary, MOFA, Ms Maria Qazi, shared key trade data on import and exports between Pakistan and Russia.

Mr. Shahid Saleem, Former Pres-

ident and Chairman International Affairs Committee highlighted the scope of trade opportunities for JVs and investment in various sectors including IT, Gem Stone, Agriculture and Renewable energy.

During Q/A session, participants shared key recommendations and highlighted the challenges mainly, financial settlements, banking channels, direct flights and barter trade etc.

In the end SVP Hamza Sarosh in his closing remarks said that we look forward to witness the positive outcomes that will undoubtedly emerge from the "Pakistan-Russia Virtual Trade Conference."

Mahesar leads historic ceremony



Special Report

AGHAM KOT: The grand and sacred ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the revered shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh, Bibi Maham Hazrat Khadija (SA), the daughter of Imam Musa Kazim (AS), unfolded in the historic locale of Agham Kot, Sindh. Hosted by the Department of Auqaf, Government of Sindh, the event marked a significant milestone in the spiritual heritage of the region. Munawar Ali Mahesar, the Provincial Secretary of Auqaf Sindh, ceremoniously initiated the construction work by laying the foundation stone amidst an atmosphere of reverence and solemnity.

Addressing the gathering, Munawar Ali Mahesar eloquently recounted the trials endured by the descendants of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) following the tragic events of Karbala. Forced to seek refuge far from their ancestral lands, many found solace and sanctuary in the welcoming embrace of Sindh.

Amidst the spiritual ambiance, Allama Ayaz Ali Qumi led the gathering in prayers, invoking blessings upon the endeavor. The Religious Affairs Committee added cultural richness to the event by presenting traditional Sindhi topis and ajraks to esteemed guests, symbolizing the unity and heritage of the land. Following this gesture, participants joined Munawar Ali Mahesar in a heartfelt tribute at the sacred shrine of Mausoleum-e-Masooma, Bibi Pak Maham (SA), adorning it with fragrant floral offerings, symbolizing their reverence and devotion.

Pakistan Society of Internal Medicine held a ceremony

PPA

LAHORE: Pakistan Society of Internal Medicine organized a wonderful ceremony to celebrate 400 days of the former caretaker provincial minister for health, social welfare and Baitul-Mal Professor Dr. Javed Akram. On this occasion, Secretary Health Department Punjab Ali Jan Khan, Secretary Social Welfare and Bait ul Mal Department Zahoore Hussain, DG Social Welfare Mudassar Riaz Malik, Special Secretary Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department Raja Mansoor Ahmed, Deputy Secretary Mirza Waleed Baig, Additional Secretary Dr. Asim Altaf, Principal Assistant to US President Joe Biden Shahid Ahmed Khan, Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, Dr. Soumia Iqtdar, Additional Secretary Admin Zahida Azhar, DIG Mehboob Alam, Dr. Zahid Parvez, Principal Ameer ud din Medical College Prof. Dr. Sardar Al Farid Zafar, Principal Gujranwala Medical College Dr. Iqbal Dogar, Prof. Eas Muhammad, Prof. Mohsin Aftab and eminent personalities from the medical field attended.

Pearl-Continental Hotel, Bhurban, wins top honours at Pakistan International Culinary Championship 2024

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pearl-Continental Hotel, Bhurban's exceptional culinary team, consisting of seven professional chefs, garnered notable recognition at the Pakistan International Culinary Championship 2024, receiving several awards across various categories, including Beef Practical Category, Seafood Practice Professional, Chicken Practical Professional, and many others. The Pearl-Continental Hotel, Bhurban, secured four trophies, eight gold medals, five silver medals, and three bronze medals.

The Pakistan International Culinary Championship (PICC) is an event endorsed by the prestigious World Chef Association and was held recently in Lahore with culinary enthusiasts and professionals from Maldives, Malay-

sia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and several regions across Pakistan. PICC 2024 hosts seasoned professionals worldwide and is a remarkable opportunity for young upcoming chefs to hone their skills and learn from skilled professionals.

Sharing his thoughts on the remarkable victories, the Chief Operating Officer Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group, Haseeb A. Gardezi, said, "We are humbled by this recognition from the World Chef Association and look forward to consistently enhancing our service standards to meet the varying needs of our guests, who remain at the core of our business strategies. Thank you, and well done, team Bhurban!"

Pearl-Continental Bhurban is renowned for its excellent hospitality services and diverse signature restaurants, offering an extensive range of culi-

nary delights from authentic Chinese cuisine and traditional Shinwari to classic Continental dishes. Additionally, the hotel prides itself on its exceptional food safety standards. It has recently attained ISO-22000 & HACCP Food Safety Management Recertifications with 100% Compliance for a second year running, underscoring its commitment to quality and excellence in culinary services.

Cluster General Manager, Pearl-Continental Hotel, Bhurban, Pearl-Continental Hotel, Muzaffarabad, and Cecil Hotel by Pearl-Continental, Nadeem Riaz Chaudhary, remarked, "It is a wonderful experience to have one's hard work recognized and rewarded on a global stage. We are humbled by our victories at PICC 2024 and will continue to do our utmost to facilitate the best and finest culinary experiences for our

valued guests."

On a related note, the Pearl-Continental Lahore team also achieved significant success at the championship, showcasing their culinary expertise and further establishing the Group's reputation for culinary excellence.

These awards signify Hashoo Group's longstanding legacy of nurturing the finest talent within its walls across numerous nationwide touchpoints, facilitating gold-star hospitality services for an ever-changing guest base.

Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premium conglomerate with a diversified business portfolio spanning national and international markets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts, PC Legacy, and Hotel One brands in Pakistan and has business interests encompassing Hashoo School of Hospitality Management-Pakistan's



premier hospitality and tourism education institution, information technology, investment, travel & tourism, and real-estate sectors.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
64,578.52	63,703.44	
Day's High	Day's Low	
64,801.63	63,827.25	
Index Value	Change	
13,051,765,015	+875.08	
Percentage	Time	
+1.37%	29 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,630.02	+5.04	
Percentage	Time	
+0.066%	29 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,873.01	-76.01	
Percentage	Time	
-0.20%	29 Feb, 1:11 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
39,166.19	-41.84	
Percentage	Time	
-0.11%	29 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	183
Bahrain Dinar	743.11	751.11
Canadian Dollar	207	209.2
China Yuan	38.82	39.22
Danish Krone	40.69	41.09
Euro	302	305
Hong Kong Dollar	35.7	36.05
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.32	916.32
Malaysian Ringgit	58.49	59.09
New Zealand \$	172.43	174.43
Norwegians Krone	26.36	26.66
Omani Riyal	725.68	733.68
Qatari Riyal	76.74	77.44
Saudi Riyal	74.4	75.2
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	27.13	27.43
Swiss Franc	317.76	320.26
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	76.15	76.85
UK Pound Sterling	353	356
US Dollar	279.3	282.2

Masses, businesses pinning high hopes on CM Punjab

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Thursday that CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz's priorities are high and praiseworthy. Masses and companies aspire for CM Punjab; therefore, she should devote all of her time to alleviating people's pain, remain in contact with the people, and ensure merit, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the people have experienced fake change, so now she should strive for a real change.

The business leader said that Maryam Nawaz Sharif has become the Chief Minister of Pakistan's most important province, Punjab, whose

population is equal to half of the country's population.

She is dedicated to service, and the priorities she has announced are welcome. She has promised that she will prioritise merit and transparency in all circumstances, and there will be no political recruitment in any department.

She has also claimed that transparency in financial matters will be ensured and no compromise will be made on it. Nepotism will be discouraged, and national interests will be kept above the party's interests.

She has admired honest officers, emphasising the importance of integrity in public service. She vowed to uphold merit and prevent any form of nepotism, stating that political appointments would not be tolerated under her administration.

She has also directed the concerned officials to prioritise the prevention of diseases like dengue and polio and to ensure the contin-

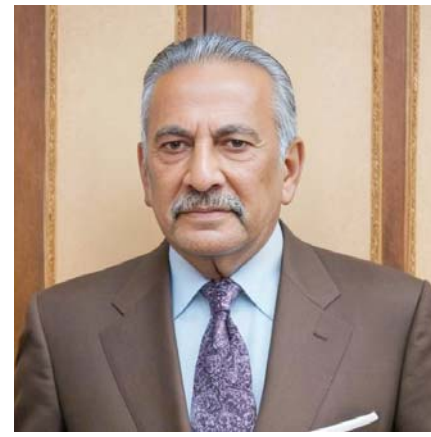


Photo: Online by Raja Farid

tion of public utility projects in the health sector. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the Chief Minister of Punjab should move the rusted government machinery in a positive direction and remove the corrupt elements from bureaucracy so that the condition of the public and economy can improve.

She should consult the masses and the business community on important issues so that the bureaucracy can be kept within its limits and things can move towards improvement.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that Maryam Nawaz Sharif should start the process of reforms so that government institutions can do their work and their losses are reduced. Honest and competent officers should be respected and rewarded.

He demanded that the culture of bribery should be abolished and merit should be ensured in all matters.

Searching

ISLAMABAD: Gypsy people are searching iron in scrap on a green belt at sector H-9, throwing from local factories in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

JS Bank records consolidated profit of PKR 18.3b in 2023

PPA

KARACHI: JS Bank announces its financial performance for the year 2023. Owing to its customer-first approach, JS Bank achieved remarkable growth across key financial indicators, solidifying its position as one of the fastest-growing financial institutions in the country.

During the year, JS Bank recorded a consolidated Profit before Tax (PBT) of PKR 18.3 billion (up 8x compared to the previous year) and an unconsolidated PBT of PKR 8.5 billion (up 4x compared to the previous year). Consolidated Earnings per share (EPS) grew to Rs. 5.99 and unconsolidated to Rs. 2.75.

Moreover, the Bank's consolidated deposits grew to over PKR 1 trillion, and unconsolidated deposits to



PKR 486 billion. JS Bank's consolidated Total Assets reached PKR 1.2 trillion, and unconsolidated Total Assets to PKR. 589 billion.

Commenting on the Bank's stellar performance, Basir Shamsie, President & CEO, said, "We are happy to announce JS Bank's financial performance for 2023. Our growth reflects the trust that our customers and shareholders have placed in us. Our teams are dedicated to navigating the dynamic market conditions and remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering top-quality products and services to our customers, shareholders, and the community at large."

NARC is a center of excellence for Agricultural Research, Dr Kauser Abdulla Malik

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kauser Abdulla Malik, Federal Minister for the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, chaired the launching event of the updated "Agro-Ecological Zones of Pakistan" at the National Agricultural Research Centre, NARC Islamabad. During his speech, Dr. Kauser commended the efforts of PARC scientists and stated that NARC is the centre of excellence and an exemplary organization.. He also emphasized the importance of establishing a dissemination mechanism to engage all stakeholders and suggested that provincial agricultural departments utilize the report.

Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, expressed gratitude to the Federal Minister for his keen interest in the report's preparation, highlighting its significance in identifying appropriate crops for diverse ecological conditions nationwide. He said



that Identifying agro-ecological zones in Pakistan is crucial as it helps tailor agricultural practices to specific environmental conditions, maximizing crop productivity. Understanding these zones can lead to more sustainable and profitable farming methods, better resource allocation,

contributing to food security and economic growth in the region.

The Incharge of the project, Dr. Arshad Ashraf, Provided thorough briefing of these ecological zones, while highlighting the potential crops, livestock and commodities in different agro-ecological zones.

SECP seeks public consultation on committee's report on "conduct of meetings of shareholders"

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) constituted a Committee of experts for comprehensive review of the manner of conduct of shareholder meetings by listed companies and identified reforms.

The Committee has submitted its report to the Commission which contains recommendations to improve transparency and efficiency in the manner of conducting shareholder meetings, election of direc-

tors, proxies, voting process, monitoring mechanism, address issues being faced by minority shareholders and ensure effective participation and value addition by institutional investors.

The Report of the Committee is placed on the SECP's website for public consultation.



All stakeholders, particularly the listed companies, are encouraged to share their insights on the Committee Report before March 30, 2024. Comments can also be sent via email to shareholder.committee@sec.gov.pk.

As the rupee weakens and people become poorer, elites grow richer

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Thursday that political disagreements after elections are natural, but they shouldn't grow to unmanageable levels as the country cannot afford further uncertainty.

Pakistan's worldwide rating will rise if the opposition becomes responsible, which will help the new government steer the country out of some of the most pressing problems, he said.

The new government should prioritise the success of the IMF review after which a new accord with the lender is necessary to save the country, he added.

In a statement issued here today, he said that it is astonishing that as the rupee weakens, the masses get poorer and the privileged get richer.

Dr. Hanif Mughal has said that political differences should not escalate to tension because it will further weaken the country's economy and increase the suffering of the people.

After the election, the political instability in the country is slowly decreasing, which is good, and if the politicians belonging to the



opposition show responsibility, the global ranking of Pakistan can improve, thereby getting more loans to save the country.

He noted that as the political tension in the country is reduced, the value of Pakistani bonds in the international market has also started to improve.

He said that the new government should keep the success of the last review of the IMF and start a new programme with the IMF at the top of its priorities so that the journey of economic stability continues.

He demanded that after the IMF agreement, relief should be given to the people who have been suffering from instability and inflation for many years.

With the agreement with the IMF, while the concerns about Pakistan will die down and local and international investors will see Pakistan favourably, the ongoing inflation in the country can also be reduced.

Dr. Hanif Mughal said that we need to improve the economy like the neighbouring countries. Until a few decades ago, the condition of Pakistan was better than all the neighbouring countries, but now it is the worst. In 1985, the dollar in Pakistan was four rupees more expensive than in India. Now the dollar in India is 80 rupees, and in Pakistan, it is 280 rupees. The difference has increased from 4 rupees to 200 rupees.

In forty years, the difference between the Pakistani and Indian currencies against the dollar has increased from four rupees to two hundred rupees which is not acceptable.

As the Pakistani rupee is getting weaker and people are getting poorer, the elites are getting richer, which is amazing. However, now this trend cannot continue because the country's integrity is at stake.

Bank Alfalah becomes largest service provider to benefit over 47% of BISP beneficiaries

PPA

KARACHI: In a remarkable feat towards social empowerment, Bank Alfalah, one of the largest commercial banks in Pakistan, is proud to announce the expansion of its partnership with Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) for digital social cash transfer to 4.4 million women beneficiaries all over Pakistan over the period of next three years.

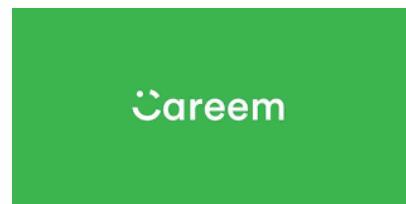
Commenting on the accomplishment of the significant milestone, Atif Bajwa, the President & CEO of Bank Alfalah, said, "At Bank Alfalah, we deeply value our longstanding partnership with the BISP, which spans over a decade. Our collaboration has been marked by a commitment to addressing challenges together and leveraging each other's expertise.

Winning the recent RFP and emerging as the largest digital service provider for BISP, the country's largest social cash transfer program reaffirms our dedication to serving the most vulnerable in society, reflecting our ongoing commitment to this important partnership."

Amer Ali Ahmed, Secretary of BISP, speaking at the event, explained, "Initially, BISP was utilising the services of only two banks, and the contracts of the same had expired some years back.

Dr. Muhammad Amjad Sagib, the Chairperson of BISP, emphasised the importance of collective responsibility towards uplifting the marginalised in his address. "Respective of designation, as human beings and citizens of Pakistan, we must perform our duties.

Careem and Dow University of Health Sciences Join Forces to Enhance Student Transportation



PPA

KARACHI: Careem, the pioneer of ride-hailing in Pakistan and Dow University of Health Sciences have announced a collaboration aimed at improving student transportation services. The partnership will offer discount packages to students as well as introduction of co-branded buses, providing convenient and affordable transportation options for students of Dow.

The collaboration was officially formalized at a signing ceremony hosted at Dow University of Health and Sciences, attended by esteemed dignitaries from Dow University of Medical Sciences and Careem. Representing Careem were, Sana Shakeel, Associate Director Business Development, Nuzair Virani, Head of Communications and Amnah Rizvi, Manager Partnerships. From Dow University of Medical Sciences, dignitaries present were Prof. M. Saeed Quraishy, Vice Chancellor; Dr. Ashar Afaq, Registrar; Mr. Tariq Shahid, Director of Marketing; Mr. Umair Zafar, Manager of Marketing; Mr. Hussain Mirza from the Marketing Department; and Mr. Naeem Tahir, Head of Public Relations.

Expressing his enthusiasm for the partnership, Imran Saleem, General Manager Ride Hailing at Careem Pakistan stated, "This collaboration marks a significant step towards enhancing the commuting experience for students. By providing them with access to safe and reliable transportation, we aim to alleviate some of the challenges they face in their daily lives."

Speaking at the event, Prof. M. Saeed Quraishy, Vice Chancellor of DUHS, expressed his profound excitement for the collaboration. He remarked, "Dow University's aim is to provide students with the best education as well as other facilities that aid them. This agreement with Careem will undoubtedly be a great link in this regard."

Successful conduct of Pakistan Federation Baseball Election in Lahore

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Federation Baseball proudly declares the triumph of its Elective General Council Meeting held on February 28th at Dera Restaurant in Lahore, steered by the adept leadership of Federation President Shaukat Javed. The event drew active participation from Provincial Baseball Associations and various wings of the Federation.

Election results resoundingly reaffirm the mandate for President Shaukat Javed and Secretary General Syed Fakhar Ali Shah. The leadership ensemble features Sr. Vice President Muhammad Hamood Lakhvi, Vice Presidents Arif Shahzad, Ayaz Khan, Haider Khan Lehri, and Muhammad Jamil Kamran. Tahir Mehmoode steps into the role of Treasurer, while Members at Large include



Shah Manzar Farid, Musdiq Hanif, and Tariq Nadeem. Special appointments include Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair as Executive Director and Sheikh Mazhar

as Media Director. Furthermore, Shah Manzar Farid has been elected Chairman of Baseball 5, and Mohsin Khan assumes the position of Chairman of the Selection Committee.

The distinguished presence of Mr. Arshad Sattar from the Pakistan Olympic Association marked a notable aspect of the proceedings.

President Shaukat Javed and Secretary General Syed Fakhar Ali Shah extend heartfelt gratitude to all participants and warmly congratulate the newly elected members. Syed Fakhar Ali Shah welcomes Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair as the new Executive Director, expressing appreciation for the trust vested in him by the president and the council.

The incoming leadership anticipates a dynamic four-year term, ushering in a promising era for the advancement and promotion of baseball across Pakistan.

Zia, Zain and Muhammad Abbis Shine in Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tourney

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Four more matches decided in the Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tournament at various cricket grounds of the City.

The highlights of the days play was brilliant Centuries by Ziaur Rehman 146 Malik Zainul Abidin 136 and deadly bowling by Muhammad Abbis 6/24.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-III Whites beat Zone-IV Reds by 6 Wickets at RLCA Gulberg Ground. Zone-IV Reds 186 all out in 43 overs. Ahsan ullah 57 7x4 2x6, Ahsan Ali 33, Uzaid Ali 21. Navaid Ahmed 3/34, Rizwan Ahmed 42, M. Abis 2/35.

Zone-III Whites 187/4 in 28 overs. Abdull Basit 59 6x4 4x6 not out, Rabaish Ahmed 49, Ahsan Ali 25. Israrul Haq 2/33, Karim ullah Khan 2/34.

In the 2nd Match Zone-I beat Zone-II Greens by 58 runs at Annu Bhai Park Ground. Zone-I Blues 265/8 in 45 overs. Zia ur Rehman 146 18x4 3x6, Shafi ullah 29, Farhan Ahmed 20. Wajeesh Fawad 4/28.

Zone-II Greens 209 all out in 44.1 overs. Aun M. Jaffri 56 3x4 1x6, Touheed Mushtaq 41, Syed Nawab 26. Hussain Mustafa 2/28, M. Izzan Khan 2/31.

In the third match Zone-I Greens beat Zone-V Reds by 132 runs at Student Cricket Ground. Zone-I Greens 271/4 5 overs. Malik Zainul Abidin 136 14x4, Muhammad Talah 87 17x4 2x6. Haris Bin Siddique 2/39.

Zone-V Reds 139 all out in 22.2 overs. Nasir Hussain 44, Jawwad Mahmood 29. Ateeq ur Rehman 3/27, Umer Zahid 2/22, Hafiz Asad Baig 2/38.

In the fourth Match Zone-VI Greens beat Zone-V Whites by 63 runs at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. Zone-VI Greens 207 all out in 39.2 overs. Habib ullah 63 10x4, Muhammad Farhan 50 7x4 1x6, Tayyab Hussain 33. Muhammad Abbis (sla) 6/24, Waseem Ahmed 2/23.

Zone-V Whites 144 all out in 35.3 overs. Hassan Shah 49, Nabeel Wahid 29, Waseem Ahmed 23, Shah Raza 22. Habib ullah 3/31, Zia ullah 2/16, Tayyab Hussain 2/34, Hamid Karim 2/51.

Jasprit Bumrah included in India's squad for final England Test

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will return to the team for the last Test against England in Dharamsala, confirmed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday.

Bumrah was rested from the fourth Test, which India won by five wickets and clinched the series with an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

Meanwhile, top-order batter KL Rahul remained unavailable for selection due to a quadriceps tendon injury and is currently in London to consult with doctors.

"The BCCI medical team is closely monitoring him and coordinating with specialists in London for further management of his issue," Board of Control for Cricket in India secretary Jay Shah said in a statement.

The BCCI also shared an update about the injured pacer Mohammed Shami who missed the Test series owing to a heel injury and underwent surgery recently.

"He is recovering well and will soon head to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to commence his rehabilitation process," Shah said of Shami.

India's squad for the final Test

Rohit Sharma (c), Jasprit Bumrah (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar, Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (wk), KS Bharat (wk), Devdutt Padikkal, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep.

Hasan Ali becomes the second bowler to take 100 PSL wickets



Karachi Kings' pace bowler Hasan Ali became the second bowler to claim 100 wickets in the history of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

The right-handed pacer achieved the historic feat when he dismissed Alex Hales during his side's clash against Islamabad United in the ongoing PSL season 9.

Prior to him, Peshawar Zalmi's Wahab Riaz was the first player to breach the 100-wicket mark in the PSL history. He is currently the highest wicket-taker in the league's history with 113 wickets.

Hasan Ali is closing on the record for the most wickets in PSL history, followed by Lahore Qalandars' captain Shaheen Afridi, who has taken 98 wickets so far.

For the unversed, Hasan Ali joined Karachi Kings ahead of the PSL 9 Draft courtesy of the trade deal with Islamabad United, involving Imad Wasim.

18th Sindh Games

Karachi: Karachi Women's team won the second position in Sepak Takraw event in the 18th Sindh Games. Captain Maryam Butt receiving the trophy from Chief Guest Test cricketer Touseef Ahmed. Syed Muhammad Talha, Noushad Ahmed, Dr. Arif Hafeez, Afzal Qureshi, Shabbir Ahmed are also in the picture.



Ronaldo 'can't stop' while exercising after receiving one-match ban

Football legend Cristiano Ronaldo uploaded a photo of him while exercising with the caption "can't stop" on his Instagram account on Thursday.

In a recent game, the Portuguese player, who plays for Saudi club Al Nassr, received a one-match ban for inappropriate gestures towards fans.

The Saudi Arabia Football Federation banned Ronaldo for his vulgar response to chants of Lionel Messi fans from the Al-Shabab club fans.

He was sentenced to have provoked the supporters during last weekend's 3-2 win for Al-Nassr after allegedly cupping his ear and repeatedly thrusting his hand forward near his pelvic area. The SAFF disciplinary and ethics committee said the 39-year-old cannot appeal the decision and he will subsequently miss today's home match against Al-Hazem.



Cameron Green century steers Australia to 279-9 in first New Zealand Test

WELLINGTON: Cameron Green slammed only his second Test century on Thursday to steer Australia to 279-9 at stumps on the opening day of the first Test against New Zealand here at Basin Reserve.

The visitors were tottering on 89-4 after being put into bat at the Basin Reserve before Green dug in for a rescue mission with the help of Mitchell Marsh, who made 40.

The 24-year-old Cameron Green brought up three figures with his 16th four in the final over to end unbeaten on 103 with Josh Hazlewood yet to score.

"Obviously it feels really good, mainly with where we were as a team," Green said.

"It was a pretty tough wicket out there... someone just needed to bat through so glad it was

me. Was nice to stick it out, and hopefully put a semi-competitive total on the board."

Green, batting at number four, fought back after New Zealand seamer Matt Henry took the key wickets of Steve Smith, Usman Khawaja and Marsh to end with 4-43 on a green pitch.

Henry dismissed Smith for 31 before lunch, bowled Khawaja for 33 after the break then snaggled Marsh and Nathan Lyon, for five.

Scott Kuggeleijn, restored to the side, also grabbed two wickets, removing out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne for one and Alex Carey for 10.

Black Caps rising star Will O'Rourke, who took nine wickets on his debut this month, bagged two more in the shape of Travis Head (1) and Mitchell Starc (9). Green said the wicket would



still offer plenty for the Australian quick bowlers on Friday.

Marsh and Green offered the main resistance with a 67-run partnership off 77 balls.

After winning the toss, Tim Southee and New Zealand's pace bowlers were frustrated by Smith and Khawaja as they put on 61 before Henry got the

breakthrough.

Smith, promoted to open for the second Test in a row after the retirement of David Warner, lasted 71 deliveries, crunching four boundaries.

Henry induced him to play back to a delivery that nipped and took the edge, with wicket-keeper Tom Blundell collecting

a sharp diving catch in front of first slip.

Labuschagne departed after a defensive knock, getting a thick outside edge to Daryl Mitchell at slip off Kuggeleijn, with Khawaja and Head following in quick succession.

Henry's inswinger took out the stump of Khawaja before Head went after O'Rourke but clipped the ball to Blundell.

Marsh crashed six fours and a six before Henry struck again straight after tea, with Australia's Twenty20 skipper attempting a pull shot that landed in Blundell's gloves. Carey departed for 10 before O'Rourke had Starc caught at second slip.

Pat Cummins was trapped lbw by spinner Rachin Ravindra with Henry taking his fourth when Lyon was also caught behind.

Rutherford's blitz lifts Gladiators to edge Kings in PSL 9 nail-biter

A Sports

KARACHI: Sherfane Rutherford displayed nerves of steel and steered Quetta Gladiators to a narrow victory over Karachi Kings in the 16th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 here at National Bank Stadium on Thursday.

Chasing 166, the Gladiators completed a tense pursuit on the final delivery when Rutherford struck Anwar Ali for a boundary at deep fine leg.

Earlier, Saud Shakeel and Jason Roy gave the Gladiators a solid start to the pursuit.

The opening stand yielded 57 runs and lasted on the last delivery of the batting powerplay when Hasan Ali got Saud caught at deep square leg. Saud scored an anchoring 24 off 20 deliveries, hitting four boundaries.

Gladiators' mainstay Roy then stitched brief partnerships with Khawaja Nafay (2) and Sarfaraz Ahmed (3) before finally perishing in

the 12th over, briefly after amassing his half-century.

Roy remained a notable contributor for the Gladiators in yet another PSL 9 fixture, scoring 52 off 31 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and four sixes.

The Gladiators then succumbed to further trouble when their skipper Rilee Rossouw perished in the next over after scoring a mere six.

Following the slump, Akeal Hosen and Sherfane Rutherford joined forces to produce a scintillating partnership and snatched a narrow victory for their side.

The pair batted sensibly and added an unbeaten 80 runs for the sixth wicket.

But the match-winning stand was majorly dominated by Rutherford, who top-scored for the Gladiators with a 31-ball 58, hitting one four and six sixes.

Hosen, however, made an important contribution with his 22 not out from

17 deliveries. His gutsy knock featured one boundary and a six.

For Karachi Kings, Hasan Ali and Zahid Mahmood bagged two wickets each while Shoaib Malik picked one.

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Put into bat first, the Kings got off to an unwanted start to their innings as they lost their captain Shan Masood (0) in the first over, bowled by Akeal Hosen.

But, their vice-captain James Vince partnered strongly with Tim Seifert and launched a counterattack.

The duo added a brisk 59-run stand and took Kings to 61/1 at the conclusion of the batting powerplay.

But Usman Tariq turned the game on its head in his first over by removing both set batters.

Seifert scored 21 off 11 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and a six while Vince top-scored for the Kings with a 25-ball 37 which featured eight



boundaries.

Following the back-to-back dismissals, Mohammad Nawaz joined experienced Shoaib Malik in the middle and knitted a crucial partnership.

The pair added 39 runs for the fourth wicket until Abrar Ahmed dismissed

Malik in the 13th over. He scored 12 off 20 deliveries.

Mohammad Nawaz, who dominated the fourth-wicket partnership with a brisk 28 fell in the next over. His 19-ball knock featured four boundaries.

Nawaz's dismissal sparked a lower

middle-order collapse as the Kings lost three more wickets — Kieron Pollard (13), Hasan Ali (2) and Muhammad Irfan Khan (15) — in quick succession and consequently slipped to 138/8 in 17.2 overs.

Veteran all-rounder Anwar Ali, however, offered late fireworks with an unbeaten cameo and bolstered Karachi Kings' total to 165/8 in the allotted overs.

He smashed one four and two sixes on his way to a 14-ball 25.

Abrar Ahmed led the bowling attack for Quetta Gladiators with 3/31, followed by Akeal Hosen and Usman Tariq, who bagged two each. Pacer Sohail Khan, on the other hand, made one scalp.

The five-wicket victory solidified Quetta Gladiators' command at the second spot in the PSL 9 standings with eight points in five matches while Karachi Kings remained at fifth with four points in as many matches.

Pink Gold

President Dr. Arif Alvi being briefed about salt mining during his visit to Khewra Salt Mine on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Pink salt be projected as Pakistani product in world markets: President Alvi

Spokesman Report

KHEWRA: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday underlined the need for projecting pink salt as a Pakistani product in potential global markets after its value addition in line with the international standards. "A significant amount of foreign exchange can be earned by

adding value to the local raw salt and making various products," he said during his visit to the Khewra salt mines.

He also emphasized to utilize the modern technology to minimize the loss of salt during the mining process besides adopting atmosphere friendly and responsible mining ways. He said Paki-

stan had huge reserves of high quality rock salt which was low cost and full of minerals.

The president also reviewed the tourist places inside the salt mine. On the occasion the president was briefed on various ongoing projects of the Pakistan Minerals Development Corporation in Khewra. He was informed about quali-

ty of the salt found in Khewra and various salt ingredients. Managing Director of Pakistan Minerals Development Corporation informed the president about various aspects of salt mining from Khewra Salt Mine.

The president was informed about the ongoing activities for salt mining. President Alvi also

inaugurated the salt library in the Khewra salt mine and visited the Asthma center. He also interacted with the patients undergoing treatment in the Asthma center in Khewra salt mine. He took special interest in the historical background of Khewra Mine and he also wrote his comments in the guest book.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif inspects Rawalpindi Ring Road's progress, sets completion target

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the completion of the Rawalpindi Ring Road project by December. She personally inspected the project site at Triahia.

During a briefing by Nespak, PMU, and FWO officials on the project's progress, it was revealed that the Rawalpindi Ring Road project commenced in September 2023 and is scheduled for completion by February 2025.

The 38.3 km long road's route has been cleared, and the relocation of utility services is in progress. The briefing also indicated that 24% of the project has been completed,



with plans for five interchanges, 11 overpasses, 2 river bridges, 6 drains, 1 railway bridge, 15

subways, and a rest area along the route.

Chief Minister Maryam

Nawaz Sharif highlighted the road's significance for Rawalpindi's transportation ease and

emphasized that the industrial zones along the road will be a game-changer for the city, providing employment opportunities for locals.

She stressed the need to complete the project within the two-year timeframe, ensuring round-the-clock work to meet the deadline with no compromise on construction quality.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also proposed naming the Rawalpindi Ring Road interchanges after the respective villages. Former Senator Pervaiz Rasheed, Members of Punjab Assembly Maryam Aurangzeb, Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary, concerned Secretaries, Commissioner, and other officials were present there.

Balochistan CM's election on Saturday

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The election for the new Chief Minister of Balochistan will be held on Saturday (March 2). Chairing the session of Balochistan Assembly on Thursday, the newly elected Speaker Abdul Khaliq Achakzai announced the schedule for the election of the Leader of the House (Chief Minister).

He said that the candidates for the slot of chief minister could submit their nomination form till 5 p.m. on Friday, while the election would take place on Saturday. The session was adjourned to meet again on 11 a.m. on Saturday. Later talking to media persons, the Speaker said that he would run the House impartially and would treat both treasury and opposition benches equally. He would endeavour to ensure the rule of law and supremacy of the Constitution. Achakzai urged the assembly members to rise above their political affiliations and work together for strengthening of democracy and welfare of the people.

Humanitarian crisis in Gaza exposes Western double standard on human rights

Xinhua

BELJING: Following the devastating loss of over 30,000 lives in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israel's continuous strikes since last October, the world is witnessing not only a harrowing scale of human suffering, but also the ugly truth of Western double standards regarding human rights.

As government officials and representatives worldwide convene in Geneva for the 55th session of the Human Rights Council, the protracted tragedy unfolding in Gaza underscores the imperative to safeguard the human rights of all ethnic groups and all people in a fair, equal and effective way.

Death is but one facet of the despair confronting civilians in Gaza. Since 2007, when Israel enforced a sweeping blockade, the region has been besieged by humanitarian crises, including shortages of food, medicine, and clean water for daily sustenance. The ongoing conflict only compounds the already acute scarcity of essential resources for survival.



Children sit among the rubble in Gaza City, (Photo by Mohammed Ali/Xinhua)

Just several days ago, United Nations (UN) humanitarian officials warned the Security Council that the entire Gazan population faces acute hunger; over half a million people are "one step away from famine."

Amidst the enormous humanitarian crisis in Gaza, one cannot help but wonder where the Western human rights champions are. Their absence in addressing the dire circumstances facing Gazans underscores the selective nature and double standards of their global human rights

advocacy.

In particular, the United States has opted to turn a blind eye to the plight of the Gazan people. Blocking repeated efforts by the Security Council to pass resolutions urging a ceasefire, Washington has consistently provided military support to Israel.

Take the latest U. S. veto on Feb. 20 as an example. Apart from the United States, which vetoed, and Britain, which abstained, the other 13 members of the Security Council voted in favor of the draft

resolution submitted by Algeria on behalf of the Arab states.

The vote's outcome demonstrated that the Security Council does not lack unanimity; rather, the United States' decision to undercut the global community's unified consensus prevents the majority from prevailing.

Through its unwavering support for Israel, including vetoing four Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire, some U. S. politicians have effectively emboldened a culture of impunity that undermines the very principles of justice and equity they claim to uphold.

This truth will not go unnoticed by the international community.

As the globe grapples with the aftermath of yet another humanitarian catastrophe, it is imperative that the world confronts the truths that lie at the heart of the collective failure to uphold the sanctity of human life: Western double standard on human rights stands as a formidable obstacle to the global promotion of human welfare.

Bilawal directs Sindh Govt to prepare for rainstorms



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhatto Zardari on Thursday instructed the Sindh Government to actively make preparations to cope with potential rainfall and storms in the province. The PPP chairman also directed all members of the Sindh Assembly and elected representatives of his party to play an active role in addressing the rain emergency, a news release issued by the Media Cell of Bilawal House said.

Bilawal emphasized that the Provincial Disaster Management Authority should actively engage in addressing the situation arising from the rains in collaboration with local bodies. He said that apart from promptly draining rainwater, the administration should improve traffic arrangements in major cities of Sindh to facilitate citizens in reaching their destinations without delay. He also urged the need for special care, particularly for pilgrims attending the Urs of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan Sharif during the heavy rains. He directed that advance arrangements should be made to ensure effective drainage of rainwater expected from the mountain ranges of Jhal Magsi and Khuzdar. Bilawal appealed to the citizens across Sindh to avoid unnecessary travel in anticipation of the stormy rains.

AJK PM berated Indian move to ban political parties in occupied Kashmir

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has condemned the Indian authorities' decision to declare two more political parties as "unlawful associations" under notorious UAPA act.

Reacting to Indian government's authoritarian measures to ban legitimate political voices in the occupied Kashmir, the AJK premier said that India's fascist regime led by Modi has snatched away all basic rights of the Kashmiri people.

"By imposing sanctions on fundamental freedoms and choking every kind of dissent in the region India is blocking all peaceful avenues of struggle for Kashmiris," the PM said, adding that in 1987 India virtually closed all roads to peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute by pushing



Kashmiris against wall. India, he said, had left no option for the Kashmiris except armed struggle.

The PM said that India's so-called democracy and secularism were nothing but a farce.

"Besides depriving the people of Occupied Kashmir of their internationally recognized right - the right to self-determination, India has also taken away essential fundamental freedoms from the Kashmiris," he said.

PTI seeks JUI-F's support in PM, NA speaker elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) sought Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl's (JUI-F) support in the elections for Prime Minister (PM) and National Assembly (NA) speaker slots.

As per details, the PTI delegation comprising its nominees for Prime Minister Omar Ayub and NA speaker Amir Dogar and others reached JUI-F chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman's residence in Islamabad.

Omar Ayub, the PTI's nominee for the prime minister's slot, said that they called on the JUI-F chief to seek their support in the election process. "We came here with a request to vote for the PTI's nominees in the elections for prime minister and National Assembly speaker slots," Omar Ayub.

When asked by a journalist, if the PTI founder is aware of the development, the PTI leader replied "Yes". He said that many political parties have reservations on the elections results.

ANP announces boycott of election process after JUI-F

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: After Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), the Awami National Party (ANP) also announced to boycott election process for constitutional positions in Senate and provincial assemblies.

As per details, ANP chief Asfandiyar Wali Khan in a statement said that his party would neither vote for any other party nor field its candidates in elections for the posts of Senate Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

"The ANP would also boycott the elections of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan chief ministers," he added.

Asfandiyar Wali Khan said that ANP wants civilian supremacy and strengthened democracy and the parliament. He said that the major parties have also offered the ANP of main positions in return for votes in the Senate and provincial assemblies.

Asfandiyar Wali Khan said that the ANP does not 'believe' in politics of power.

Pandemonium in National Assembly...

Continued from Page 1
The capital city administration has increased the security at the Red Zone in Islamabad, hours before the session.

The administration has closed the entry of unrelated staff to Parliament and the constitutional avenue. A heavy contingent of police has also been deployed at all entry points.

The decision was taken after the Sunni Ittehad Council announced its decision to protest against alleged rigging in elections inside Parliament and outside it.

Sources said that lawmakers from the ruling alliance would not allow any opposition MNA to get near to the dais of the speaker. According to the NA Secretariat, as many as 210 lawmakers are party of the treasury and the opposition has 101 MNAs.

The secretariat is still waiting for the notification of 26 elected MNAs as the decision on the reserved seats for women in KP and Punjab could

not be made.

President Arif Alvi summoned the National Assembly session on Thursday (today) to elect the custodian of the House and deputy speaker, hours after the outgoing speaker convened the session.

In a statement on X, the president said that his returning the summary for a National Assembly session was "very much in accordance with the provisions of Article 48(1)" of the Constitution.

The maiden session of the lower house of Parliament is scheduled to start at 10am, Radio Pakistan reported. According to the agenda, newly elected representatives would take oath during the session.

"It is not understood on what grounds it has been taken as a part act, though it was also aimed at the completion of the National Assembly in accordance with Article 51 of the Constitution," the president's statement said.