



CM Sarfraz Bugti invites armed groups to mainstream in victory speech

Sarfraz Bugti, who was elected unopposed as the chief minister of Balochistan, on Saturday reiterated that his government plans to continue engaging in dialogue with armed groups active in the province. Bugti was sworn in as the chief minister of Balochistan... (Details on Page 8)



Pakistan condemns India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods

Pakistan condemned India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods imported by a Karachi based commercial entity. In response to the media questions regarding Indian seizure of commercial equipment destined for Pakistan, the FO spokesperson in a statement said, "These reports are reflective of Indian media's habitual misrepresentation of facts." (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Addressed

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the 1st Karachi Festival of Books and Libraries on Saturday.



Photo: PID

President for storing collection of books in digital form

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The President Dr. Arif Alvi on Saturday while laying a great emphasis on archiving the collection of books digitally said that the future of the country depended on education and knowledge. He expressed these views in

the launching ceremony of the 1st Karachi Festival of Books and Libraries at Governor House here on Saturday. The President said that the digitalization of historical books and material was necessary. He said that the books played a vital role in developing associations with others.

He said, 'Access to Information has become easy these days,' which was difficult in the past. Dr. Alvi while referring to the present era said that it was a strange period in which children prefer using mobile over reading books. He said that his grandson and granddaughter did not read books except those on the school

syllabus. The President said that he was fond of reading books and he gave its credit to his parents. Dr. Alvi said that he read approximately 30 to 40 books in a year. He said that the Muslims had worked hard on libraries whereas they entered the field of Press in 1730 or 1735 almost 300 years later than the rest of the world due

to some reservations. He said that 20.62 million children were out of school and it was a big challenge. Earlier, Co-founders of the festival Aziz Memon and Syed Khalid Mahmood, President of Karachi Library Association (KLA) Farheen Mahmood, and others spoke on the occasion.

Mobile operators provide relief in the aftermath of heavy rains in Gwadar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In response to the recent heavy rains in Gwadar, the mobile operators have swiftly mobilized to provide relief to the subscribers along with maintaining their network. Jazz is extending its support by providing free 50 minutes (Jazz & PTCL) to subscribers in the affected areas for a period of 3 days. Furthermore, Zong is providing free-of-cost services to subscribers in the impacted areas. Subscribers can avail 20 On-net minutes for 01 day by dialing *9090# free of charge. Ufone users across the affected areas will receive 70 Ufone and PTCL free minutes with a validity of 7 days with no call set up charges levied on these free minutes. Telenor users can dial *345*29# to receive 10 Telenor minutes without any charges for the next 4 days.

Sher Afzal Marwat castigates Shehbaz Sharif over 'mandate theft'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat on Saturday castigated PML-N nominee for prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, over alleged mandate theft, vowing to continue the party's struggle until "recovery of mandate". Addressing a PTI rally in Islamabad today, he said that the people of Pakistan gave the mandate to those - who were accused of orchestrating May 9 violence - wherein military installations came under attack following arrest of Imran Khan. Lambasting his political rivals, Sher Afzal Marwat said that the public has exposed them all on February 8, regretting that PTI's mandate was stolen through Form 47. "The incumbent government's reality was stealing prisoner no: 804's mandate," he added. He further said that Imran Khan was innocent but imprisoned for seven months, adding that the PTI founder's only sin was chanting 'absolutely not' and striving for real freedom (Haqeq



qi Azadi). Marwat urged the Supreme Court to take notice of the violation of Pakistanis' fundamental rights under the judiciary's watch. "Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Parvez Elahi, Bushra Bibi, Yasmin Rashid, Sanam Javed, and other PTI leaders have been unjustly jailed for the past two years," he told the protesters. "We will continue our struggle and protest in the courts, parliament, and on the streets until Imran Khan is released and the recovery of our mandate," the PTI leader concluded. Pakistan's National Assembly is set to witness a one-to-one contest for the post of prime minister of leader of the house tomorrow (Sunday) as nomination papers of allied parties' candidate Shehbaz Sharif and PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) candidate Omar Ayub have been approved, ARY News reported on Saturday. Newly-elected National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq approved the nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif and Omar Ayub Khan for the prime minister election after scrutiny. The election for the Prime Minister will take place during the session of the National Assembly scheduled for Sunday at 11 am. The election would be conducted through the division of members in the House. Pakistan People's Party and PML-N got their speaker and deputy speaker elected with ease in Friday's session, defeating the SIC and PTI-backed candidates. Following the prime minister's election, the newly-elected lawmakers will also elect a new head of the state on March 9, marking an end to the tenure of PTI-backed President Arif Alvi.

PTI spokesperson decries use of force against peaceful protestors

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson vehemently denounced the fascist, coercive tactics and the unlawful use of state machineries to disrupt the peaceful but massive protest across the country against the theft of the public mandate on Saturday. He lashed out at the police for detaining peaceful protestors and erecting obstacles to deny the people their constitutional right to peacefully demonstrate to reclaim their stolen mandate. He said that people came in droves on the call of their beloved leader PTI Chairman-for-life Imran Khan to protest against polls fraud, which proved that the mandate thieves rod to the power on the coattails of the stolen votes. PTI Spokesperson stated that the erection of unconstitutional obstacles and massive police deployment in the way of protests clearly showed the level of fear of the fake government of mandate thieves.

Aamir Dogar denies PTI wrote any letter to IMF

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A still from the Aaj Exclusive show on March 02, 2024 shows Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Aamir Dogar responding to a query. Aamir Dogar has denied that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has written any letter to the International Monetary Fund, urging the lender to ensure Pakistan election audit before any bailout talks. "Have you seen the letter? There is only clamour for. If there will be any letter from our side that will be sent officially to somewhere or published or a media talk on



it, it will be then [discussed]," he said in an interview with Tariq Chaudhry on Aaj Exclusive aired on Saturday. When asked if he was saying that no letter has been written yet, he said: "I think no letter has so far been written." The denial from Dogar, the

Sunni Ittehad Council's chief whip in the National Assembly, comes three days after chairman Barrister Gohar Khan told a news conference in Islamabad that the party sent the letter to the IMF. According to PTI spokesperson Raoof Hasan, the letter was being sent "under the instructions and on behalf" of Khan. Party's Zulfikar Bukhari had confirmed the letter to Reuters. The PTI had agreed to support the lender's financing facility for Pakistan on condition that free and fair elections be held in the country during the last interaction between Khan and IMF represent-

atives in 2023. The international lender had sought support from all political parties after agreeing with Islamabad on the \$3 billion standby arrangement. Last week, the IMF declined to comment on the country's political situation after Khan's aides said they would urge the Fund to call for an independent audit of the disputed elections before any more talks with Islamabad. The multi-party coalition, which is expected to make the central government, slammed the letter. Imran Khan's party called on the IMF to honour its commitment to demanding free and fair elections.

Three terrorists killed, four injured in Karak operation: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: At least three terrorists and four others got injured in an exchange of fire with security forces during an operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district on Saturday, the military's media wing said. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations said that weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the site of the operation. The killed terrorists remained involved in numerous terrorist activities against law enforcement agencies as well as civilians, according to



the ISPR. The operation was conducted on the reported presence of terrorists. "Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism," it said.

Umar Farooq Zahoor: Man who bought Toshakhana gifts a proclaimed offender?

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), in its report submitted to Islamabad High Court (IHC), has made startling revelations against Umar Farooq Zahoor, who reportedly bought Toshakhana gifts from deposed prime minister Imran Khan in 2019. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) nullified first information reports (FIRs) registered against Khush Bakht Mirza alias Sophia Mirza by her ex-husband Umar Farooq Zahoor at the Secretariat Police station, Islamabad. In the case of Khush Bakht Mirza versus The State and Others, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir of the high court invalidated the FIRs in a 16-page judgment. The FIA, in its report, stated that during the course of verification Umar Farooq Zahoor was contacted to ascertain the contents and ownership of the complaint, but to no avail. "Consequently, it transpired that the complainant [Umar Farooq Zahoor] is wanted in multiple FIRs of the FIA Lahore viz FIR Nos 343/2020 [PS FIA AHTC Lahore] and 36/2020 & 40/2020 [PS FIA CCC Lahore] etc," the FIA added. Terming Zahoor a 'proclaimed offender', it stat-

ed: "The Non-bailable arrest warrants and Proclamations Orders were duly issued against him by the competent courts, and the same are part of the FIA and the Court records. Moreover, he had been subject to INTERPOL Red Notice twice, and Exit Control List (ECL)." The FIA believes that Zahoor was abroad at the time of filing his complaint and registration of FIR No.465/2022 of PS Secretariat Islamabad Police against the ex-DG FIA, the officials of FIA Lahore, and others. Meanwhile, IHC revealed that the FIRs were initiated following Zahoor's application, although investigations indicate his absence abroad during that time. The court ordered Islamabad Inspector General of Police to conduct investigation, covering false statements regarding Zahoor's whereabouts. If Zahoor did indeed visit the station, the In charge Police Station will be held accountable for their failure to take action. Zahoor's name hit headlines when he claimed in an interview to have bought from the former PTI government an expensive Graff wristwatch, which was gifted by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to then PM Imran Khan, for over \$2 million.

Shehbaz Sharif, Omar Ayub in one-to-one contest for PM slot

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's National Assembly is set to witness a one-to-one contest for the post of prime minister of leader of the house tomorrow (Sunday) as nomination papers of allied parties' candidate Shehbaz Sharif and PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) candidate Omar Ayub have been approved. Newly-elected National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq approved the nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif and Omar Ayub Khan for the prime minister election after scrutiny. The election for the Prime Minister will take place during the session of the National Assembly scheduled for



Sunday at 11 am. The election would be conducted through the division of members in the House. MQM-P, IPP, and PPP have all backed the PML-N's candidate, ensuring that he will be smoothly elected for the prime minister's slot once again. On the other hand, Omar Ayub does not have the numbers. Ishaq Dar, Hanif Abbasi, and Khurshid Shah submitted the documents on behalf of Shehbaz Sharif. Seven MNAs are proposers and seven others are seconders for the former PM's nomination papers.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz approves the 5-Year Health Plan

Kiran Asim / Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: Step-by-step reforms in Punjab's health system and up-gradation of hospitals, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif approved the 5-year plan.

Upgradation, construction and rehabilitation plan of BHU and RHC, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's directive to keep the external and internal design the same

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz ordered to form a Health Advisory Council to ensure transparency, government officials, professionals and public representatives will be involved.

Directing hospitals to provide medical equipment by determining public needs, order to meet shortage of incubators for newborns on priority basis

Review of proposals for medical centers for the treatment of heart, cancer and other diseases in each district, guidelines for Urdu signboards and floor air-lining in hospitals to guide patients.

In order to bring health facilities to



the doorsteps of the people, the plan of the field hospital project is called for, mobile health units will be sent to suburban areas and villages on fixed days.

The pilot project will start from Lahore, the mobile unit will have medical officers, LHV's and other staff besides necessary medical equipment. Public awareness and health screen-

ing priority, a special hospital will be established to provide the best facilities for cancer treatment to poor people: Maryam Nawaz Sharif

Better treatment facilities for every

citizen is my commitment, Board of Management will include professional members on merit, MS will be appointed purely on merit.

There is no tolerance for corruption,

there should not be any hospital in Punjab where doctors, staff, medicines and required medical equipment are not available: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's instructions

Aware walk to celebrate mother and child health week held in Mirpur

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: An awareness walk was organized in District Health Office Mirpur to celebrate mother and child health week. It was inaugurated by Commissioner Mirpur Division Chaudhary Shaukat Ali. Commissioner Chaudhary Shaukat Ali while speaking said that under the Public Health Department The successful programs that are being organized are producing the best results.

It is very important to take care of the health of the mother and the child. If the mother and the child are healthy and protected from diseases, then a prosperous society can be established. is giving the best services, there is also an awareness campaign about the health of the public so that everyone can get all the information regarding their diet and health.

He told everyone associated with the public health department that mothers and children During week 4 to 9 March 2024, play your full role so that diseases related to mother and child health can be cured.

In the awareness walk organized by



District Health Office Mirpur, District Health Officer Dr. Fida Hussain Raja, Additional District Health Officer CD Dr. Maida Kausar, Additional Principal Medical Officer Dr. Fatima Yaqub, Deputy Drug Controller Dr. Zaheer Iqbal, Assistant Coordinator National Program Dr. Faria Javed, District Education Officer Niswan Saba Owais, District Population Officer Kamran Hussain, District Information Officer Muhammad Javed Malik, Assistant Director Surveillance Muhammad Riaz, Assistant Director Training Waqas Ahmad Khan, Data Focal

Person Muhammad Ehsan and other people related to health department participated. Earlier, an awareness walk was conducted under the leadership of Commissioner Chaudhary Shaukat Ali and District Health Officer Dr. Fida Hussain, in which Doctors, paramedics, midwives and lady health supervisors of the National Program, lady health workers participated, the awareness walk was started from the covered office of the District Health Officer, Mirpur, which passed through Allama Iqbal, KIC Road and ended back at the office of the District Health

Office, Mirpur.

According to the instructions issued by the District Health Officer Mirpur, Dr. Fada Hussain, from 4 to 9 March 2024, lady health supervisors, lady health workers and vaccinators of the Public Health Department will administer tetanus immunization to children and tetanus to pregnant women.

According to the schedule, health supervisors will organize health sessions in the area to educate the community about the health of mothers and children. Speaking at the end of the walk, District Health Officer Mirpur Dr. Fida Hussain said that the health of mothers and children. According to the program decided with reference to, teams have been appointed for immunization in which 410 children will be vaccinated and 15116 children will be given stomach worm pills.

While 115 pregnant women will be given tetanus vaccines. 1041 health session in the community and the desired target given in the schools will be completed anyway. He said that in view of the climatic conditions, the focus is on health education.

District Admin starts the steps to deliver the "Neghaban Ramadan Package"

Waqar Paracha

KHANEWAL: On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration of Khanewal has started the steps to deliver the "Neghaban Ramadan Package". Distribution of ration bags to poor people from 1st of Ramadan Preparations have been started-10 kg bag of flour, 2 kg sugar, 2 kg gram flour, 2 kg rice and 2 kg ghee will be given to the needy families-Deputy Commissioner Waseem Hamid Sindhu prepared the bags of "Neghaban Ramadan Package". Inspected and

Weighed the packets of goods, while talking about the quality check, he said that the work of verification of indigent persons is going on rapidly-Indigent persons have been selected under Benazir Income Support Program, NADRA data-Assistant Commissioner Ahmed Naveed Baloch. And Sadaf Akbar briefed the Deputy Commissioner-



Police arrest women leader and 10 workers of PTI

Kiran Asim / Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: According to PTI Information Secretary Multan District Amir Qureshi Said On the call of the central leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf against rigging in the elections, Tehreek-e-Insaf held a protest demonstration in front of the Multan Press Club in Multan city. Immediate action of the police, more than 10 workers of Tehreek-e-Insaf, including female leader Qurban Fatima, were arrested. According to the incident.

A rally was held under the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf local leader candidate for MPAPP 218 Zahoor Bhatta and PP 220 Makhdoom

Zahid Bahar Hashmi. The activists raised slogans against planned rigging of the election results and to release the founding chairman of Tehreek-e-Insaf, Imran Khan. During the rally, when the vehicle of PML-N MPA Salman Naem passed there, the PTI workers shouted slogans against Salman Naem. More than 10 PTI workers, including female leader Qurban Fatima, were arrested by the police while protesting. According to police officials, the arrested workers have been shifted to Sadar police station. While PTI leaders Makhdoom Zahid Behar Hashmi and Zahoor Bhatta managed to escape from there.



Submitting nomination papers for Multan Press Club elections for 2024-25 completed

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: The process of submitting nomination papers for Multan Press Club elections for 2024-25 has been completed. According to the list issued by the Election Committee, one candidate Shakeel Anjum on the seat of President, two candidates on the seat of Vice Presidents, Khalid Chaudhry, Noman Khan Babar, Khalid Sheikh and Asad Ali Raghieb, two candidates Nisar Awan and Aamir Hussaini on the seat of General Secretary. Three candidates for two seats of joint secretary Hafiz Sarfraz Ali, Mohammad Sharif Joya and Mehboob Malik, only one candidate for one seat of Finance Secretary, Farhan Anjum Mulghani, submitted papers. While 26 candi-



dates submitted papers for the fourteen seats of Majlis-e-Amila. Among

them R. Anuman Ali, Khalid Sheikh, Furqan Nazar Bhatti, Asad Raghieb,

Shahid Imran, Mehboob Chaghtai, Adnan Khan, Aslam Javed, Mehboob Malik, Ejaz Tareen, Mehtab Haider, Adnan Akram Sheikh, Shoaib Iftikhar Joya, Junaid Malik, Ayaz Ali, Sheikh, Nadeem Haider, Tariq Ismail, Saleem Bhatti, Khawaja Ashraf Siddiqui, Rafiq Qureshi, Tariq Mehmood Qureshi., Mazhar Javed, Mumtaz Khan Niazi, Salman Qureshi, Adeel Khachi, Asghar Nadeem Baig are included. Chairman Election Committee Zafar Ahir, members Faseel Sahoo and Ibrik Sobhani will scrutinize the papers today Sunday March 3 as per the election schedule. The appeals will be heard tomorrow on March 4, the nomination papers will be returned and the final list will be issued on March 5.

6th Engineering Capstone Expo-Pakistan -2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Engineering Council-PEC conducted 1st Ever MEGA ENGINEERING CAPSTONE EXPO (FYDP-Final Year Engineering Design Project Exhibition) in KHUZDAR on 2nd March 2024 "Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology" (BUET), Khuzdar Balochistan and 2nd CAPSTONE in Balochistan Regional (1st was conducted at BUTTEMS Quetta in 2023). CAPSTONE EXPO is a project of PEC Pakistan Development committee - PPDC which is the 6th EXPO in continuation at National level (2 held at Federal Capital Islamabad Region; 2 held at Lahore, Punjab region and 2 in Balochistan). In this Expo 4 Universities participated and 77 shortlisted projects out of which 9 projects were PEC funded.

Engr Muhammad Najeeb Haroon Chairman Pakistan

Engineering Council (PEC) & Ex-MNA, inaugurated the ceremony as chief guest. Welcome address of the ceremony delivered by Engr Dr. Sohrab Bizanjo in which he appreciated the PEC and PPDC for organizing 1st ever MEGA event at KHUZDAR Balochistan. 1st time PEC chairman is in KHUZDAR that is the privilege in the history of KHUZDAR. Purpose of this CAPSTONE is to minimize the industrial-academia linkage and to bring market compatible projects/ideas.

Engr Mir Masood Rashid convenor PPDC and advisor to chairman PEC, had CAPSTONE briefing and discussed about the 10 MEGA projects launched by PEC which all have been successfully launched and available online for easy access to stakeholders, students, Engineers, Industries, employers, universities and foreign organizations. These 10 projects having tangible deliverables and beneficiaries are

now reaping the benefits especially Pakistan-Engineers and society. Ten projects all available at pec-ppdc.org: STEM education; Day-Trip Learning; Final Year Design Project-FYDP; CAPSTONE; E-Library; Graduate Internship Training Program (6 months paid program); PEC E-gateway for e-procurement; 17-UNSDG's adoption roadmap and Parliamentarian Caucus advocacy role).

In CAPSTONE Engineering Universities showcased their Engineering students' projects that pertains to market/industry, in which industries were present to participate and select projects as per their business need. CAPSTONE is the PEC initiative 1st time in Pakistan by PEC Pakistan Development Committee (committee convenor Engr Mir Masood Rashid). This opportunity granted by PEC free of cost to help our universities gain more market exposure as well as be able to network with

world-class manufacturers of different varieties of engineering products. Market compatible projects being sponsored by PEC. More than 1000-foot fall at the inauguration ceremony whereas visitors over 1500. Distinguished guests from different universities and industries present along with Engr Dr Mushtaq Ahmad - VCMCKRU, Engr Dr Kamran Sami-VC BUTTEMS, Engr Maj Umar Farooq- NUST and Engr Ghulam Usman Babai.

Engr Muhammad Najeeb Haroon chief guest in his address highlighted on the Engineering community critical role especially in such situation in which Pakistan is currently trapped. He promised that INSHALAH such programs will continue so that Engineers who are core pillars of society may have platform to contribute which is a must need for PAKISTAN. Its continuous and consistent struggle that can make a difference and bring the country back on track to

development journey.

As we cannot be always as underdeveloped country which is already over 75 years now, we have to set the right direction so that developed country journey be travelled which is only possible when right direction is set and adoption of certain steps like STEM education (where from school passing level students be educated on the importance of science and technology), bringing practical projects from FYDP and CAPSTONE to market and promote localization of industries.

Engr Dr Maqsood Ahmed-GB-VC BUET, recalled that CAPSTONE one of the great initiatives of PEC which we request to continue in future like this 3 years tenure for betterment of Engineers, Society and Pakistan. Engr Nasir Majeed VC PEC Balochistan appreciated the efforts and initiatives taken by PEC chairman and PPDC committee to get the reach of PEC in all cities of Pakistan



which was never before. All 4 Universities of Balochistan Participated with complete zeal being 1st ever MEGA event:

Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology, Khuzdar; BUTTEMS, Quetta; NUST Balochistan Campus (NBC), Quetta; Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences (LUAWMS), Uthal.

Prize Distribution: Project selection criteria: All projects commercially viable and sustainable: 1) Leading Entrepreneur; 2) Industry/business relevant; 3) Social/Civic impact; and 4) Innovation



Islamabad

15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:12 am
Zohr	12:20 pm
Asr	4:23 pm
Maghrib	6:05 pm
Isha	7:28 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

Umeed Foundation honors first batch of girls after successful completion of vocational training

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Umeed Foundation is a registered organization with an objective of providing Free Education to Underprivileged and Needy Children. Umeed Foundation firmly believes in Women Empowerment and Gender Equality. Its Vocational Training Center offers free basic stitching training to young girls from deserving families and after successful training they get a free sewing machine, which enables them to work on their own and generate income to support their families.

On 6th March 2024, the first batch of Umeed Vocational Center girls completed their training successfully. On this occasion, a ceremony has been arranged at Serena Hotel Islamabad to give certificates and free stitching machines to the girls. Mr. Alfred Grannas will be the chief guest of this ceremony. Other participants will be donors & members of Umeed Foundation, Representatives of Pak German Business Community, Government Officers from NGO registration department & people from other foreign missions.

Other initiatives of Umeed

8th Edition of Women International Film Festival returns to Islamabad

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Women International Film Festival (WIFF) kickstarter on Saturday, March 2nd 2024.

With more than 1,300 submissions this year, the two-day event showcased 31 short and feature length films received from UK, Iran, France, Germany, Ukraine, Spain, Lebanon, Egypt, Russia, Estonia, Poland, Japan, Mexico, Italy, Canada, Chile, Turkey and Argentina, out of which five films made by Pakistani filmmakers, Hum Awaaz, Made with Love, Prolific Hustling, Woman of Courage, and 10 more minutes were also showcased.

Judged by a jury panel composed of esteemed filmmakers; Mehreen Jabbar, Usman Mukhtar and Marya Javed, the Best Film award, worth 350 Euros through anonymous donation, went to the film Paris Bruxelles by Marjorie Lhomme from France. With the support of the British Council, the Best Pakistani Film Award of 100,000 Pakistani Rupees went to Made with Love by Kainat Thebo.

The festival opened with two days of public screenings at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), with the

support of Embassy of Spain in Pakistan, Ambassade De France Au Pakistan, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Islamabad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the British Council, and Dawn News English as our official media partner, City Fm 89 as our official radio partner with JazzCash as our official digital payment partner. The founder & director of the festival, Madeeha Raza, spoke about the 8 years journey of this initiative and how it has exponentially and organically grown, giving independent filmmakers the much needed exposure and appreciation.

Parwaaz Film Lab was also re-launched this year and took place over the same two days with participants from all over Pakistan. It was led by renowned Spanish filmmaker Elena Molina, director of the acclaimed "Remember My Name," alongside the insightful contributions of guest speaker and British Pakistani film director Annusheh Rahim. This year the festival will continue with four days of intricacy screenings at Fatima Jinnah Women University for a campus screening, the Black Box Sounds for the Ukrainian Films Sidebar, Alliance Française d'Islamabad for the French and Pakistani



Films Sidebar, and a closing reception with film screenings at the Residence of Spain.

Over the years, WIFF has aimed to fill the gender gap in film, besides widening

appreciation for independent cinema by creating a platform for diverse storytellers from all over the world. The overarching aim is to promote female filmmakers by building and uniting the next wave of

talent and connecting the film community. It is evident that we need more such opportunities for women so they can take their stories to the screen and share with the community.

Promotion

Mr. Justice Iqbal Hameed ur Rehman, Chief Justice Mr. Justice Khadim Hussain M. Shaikh and Justice Syed Muhammad Anwar of the Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan awarded a Shield to Mr. Muhammad Tariq, Deputy Registrar Judicial on the occasion of his promotion to BPS 20.



Photo: Online

CBD Punjab reviews progress on Walton Railway Crossing and Walton Road Upgradation projects

PPA

LAHORE: Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) has paced up development work on the Walton Railway Crossing Flyovers and Walton Road Upgradation projects, following the official inauguration of CBD Route 47. These strategic infrastructure initiatives signify a concerted effort to enhance connectivity and alleviate traffic congestion in Lahore.

Recent progress on these pivotal projects showcases significant advancements. The MSC wall of Flyover Two has been completed up to the

sub-grade level, while Flyover One's MSC wall stands at an impressive 70% completion rate.

Furthermore, substantial headway has been made in abutments and transom work, setting the stage for the imminent placement of girders, a crucial milestone in the project timeline.

In a proactive move to ensure project alignment and timely execution, CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, presided over a comprehensive project review meeting. The meeting was attended by Executive Director Technical, Riaz Hussain,

Director Project Management Asif Iqbal, Director Construction Asif Babar, Director Architecture and Planning Sameer Aftab Sial and senior officials from Nespak and NLC. The meeting provided a platform for detailed progress updates and strategic deliberations.

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin reiterated the paramount importance of adhering to project timelines, emphasizing the transformative impact these infrastructure endeavors will have on Lahore's urban landscape and the daily commute of its residents.

The completion of conduit

and sewer works up to Qainchi marks a significant milestone, underscoring the project's commitment to comprehensive infrastructure development.

Additionally, the commencement of ADA Nullah remodeling further underscores CBD Punjab's holistic approach to urban planning and development.

Scheduled for completion by the end of April 2024, the Walton Road Upgradation project is poised to redefine transportation infrastructure in Lahore, promising enhanced connectivity and improved quality of life for its residents.

Dr. Hafsa Jamshed nominated for National Engineering Excellence Award

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A great honor for National Textile University Faisalabad, NTU engineer Dr. Bhako Jamshed has been nominated for the National Engineering Excellence Award. Engineer Salt Day will be held on March 4. Dr. Hafsa Jamshed is one of the most professional and capable personalities in the field of engineer salt.



First Punjab Theater Competition winners announced

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Actors are the National Asset of the country who play an important role in promoting the country's culture and also provide entertainment to the people these views expressed by the Chief Guest Mr. Saqib Rafiq, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry and President Board of Management Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi after distributing the prizes to the first, second and third winning teams on the occasion of the theater competition under the auspices of the Department of Information and Culture, Govt. Deputy Director Punjab Arts Council Muhammad Shakoor said that the Divisional and Provincial competitions of the first Punjab Theater Talent Hunt is an important achievement of the Punjab government. The following theater teams participated in said competition Shazia Theater Group, Patan Lok Natak, Royal Theatre, Rawalpindi Cultural Theatre, Dolphin Communication, NCDF Pakistan, Abbasi Culture Theatre, Green Channel Theater Group. The said teams received great appreciation from the people by giving excellent performances. Ifat Chaudhry, Afzal Chahal and Shakeel Adnan are the panel of judges. The Provincial Theater Competition will be held on March 9, 2024 in Lahore. In which the team that gets the first position from every division will be able to participate.



Gold price per tola jumps Rs3,500 in Pakistan

Gold prices surged in Pakistan on Saturday in line with the increase in the international rate. The yellow metal was priced at Rs220,300 per tola after gaining Rs3,500 during the day.

The 10-gram gold was sold at Rs188,872 after an increase of Rs3,001 according to rates shared by the All Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association (APGJSA).

On Friday, gold prices in Pakistan had increased by Rs1,100 per tola. With a premium of \$20, the international rate of gold on Saturday was set at \$2,103 per ounce after an increase of \$36 in the international market, APGJSA said.

Meanwhile, silver rates increased Rs30 per tola to settle at Rs2,600.

Faisalabad Safe City Project to be completed before May 31: RPO

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The first phase of Faisalabad Safe City Project (FSCP) would be completed before May 31 starting online monitoring of eight bazaars, Iqbal Park and other important commercial centers of the city, said Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan, Regional Police Officer (RPO). Addressing the business community in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that in next phase industrial belt of Khurrianwala, FIEDMC, Jaranwala and Samundri Roads in addition to the adjoining areas of motorways would be included in this project.

He said that earlier monitoring cameras were installed under CPLC and police vision but they proved unsustainable. He said that when he took over charge as RPO most of these cameras were lying un-functional. "He made them functional" he said and added that when caretaker Chief Minister and IG visited Fais-

alabad after the incident of May 9, he briefed them on this minimal structure of safe city. He said that the CM instantly announced a safe city project for three cities including Faisalabad with an estimated cost of Rs. 100bn. He said that the cost of FSCP was around Rs. 4bn but he used indigenous technology and started work on it with only Rs.140/150 million. He said that there was a grey structure for the proposed site of FSCP which was completed within a record period of 45 days.

"Under this project latest and hi-tech cameras are being installed at 32 sites", he added. About change in police culture and people friendly policing, he said that front desks have been established in 80 police stations and timeline has also been fixed for the registration of FIRs. He also mentioned the services offered by Police Khidmat Markaz, driving schools and said that earlier its income was poured in the police welfare head, however now this amount has been dedicated for the

welfare of the families of police martyrs and the education of the police martyrs and active police employees.

He said that a fixed percentage of the amount collected through challans was dedicated for the concerned field police staff in KPK and motorway police, however now we have decided that 15% of this amount would drop in the welfare fund for the sustainability of the different projects launched by the Punjab police. He said that the crime rate increases with population explosion and drop in economic activities.

He said that maximum FIRs were registered but out of 78,000 FIRs registered during 2023 include 19,000 FIRs of the previous year. About cyber-crime, the RPO said that earlier FIA was handling these cases but it lacks capacity to investigate a large number of cases hence it has been decided to involve police in such cases and a separate cybercrime wing would be created very soon in Punjab police. He said that



digitization is a continuous process, the police of today are quite different from the force of 20 years ago. "However, it is a continuous process as there is always room for improvement", he remarked.

He also informed that a police van service has been launched to visit industrial and commercial units to issue character certificates of their employees in addition to providing the facility of learner's and permanent driving permits.

He assured that any incident brought into his notice would not remain unat-

tended. Responding to a question, he said that out of 47 police posts in Faisalabad only five were officially approved. "These posts were earlier closed down but later on these were restored to ensure protection to the life and property of the masses."

City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (Retired) Muhammad Ali Zia in his brief address said that every complaint is being registered with a proper system of follow up by the higher officers. Earlier President FCCI Dr. Khurram Tariq

welcomed the RPO, CPO and his team and said that he has elevated FCCI to the highest level during his tenure of approximately one and half year which is indicated by the record visits of the foreign diplomats and high ups.

He appreciated the system introduced by Punjab police on the pattern of martyrs of the army to encourage and acknowledge the sacrifices offered by the police officials. He appreciated the services of RPO to make the safe city project functional in a record period of time and said that he should focus on other industrial areas in its second phase. Vice President Haji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli, Rana Sikandar Azam, Muzamil Sultan and Syed Zia Alumdar Hussain took part in the question-answer session while Senior Vice President Dr. Sajjad Arshad offered vote of thanks. Dr. Khurram Tariq and Dr. Sajjad Arshad presented FCCI mementos to RPO and CPO respectively. The RPO also recorded his impressions in the FCCI visitor's book.

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

New Govt: Leveraging CPEC-2's Agriculture component - I

The immediate challenge facing the upcoming government of Mr. Shahbaz Sharif will be to provide urgent relief to the people bearing the brunt of high petroleum and commodity prices, soaring unemployment rates, and hyperinflation.

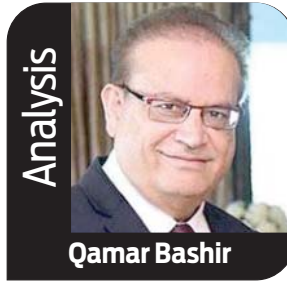
The economic and financial advisors of the PML(N) and establishment are most likely considering a range of measures to alleviate these hardships. These measures may include stabilizing essential food supplies through targeted agricultural support, streamlined procurement processes, steady flow of food items to the market, providing targeted subsidies, improving distribution channels and enhancing transparency in supply chains. Besides providing direct relief measures such as cash transfers and utility bill assistance.

and 64% of the population, which translates to roughly 99 million to 103 million people. Contributing approximately 18.5% to 22.35% of Pakistan's GDP, the agricultural sector holds immense potential for growth.

Doubling its efficiency and productivity could propel its contribution to a staggering 37% to 44.7%, significantly bolstering the national economy. This remarkable surge would be fueled by increased output, reduced waste, export opportunities, and job creation across various industries underscoring agriculture's crucial role in the nation's economy and the livelihoods of its citizens.

adoption, and value addition, leading to food security and economic prosperity. The JWG had held various meetings, focusing on crucial areas such as capacity building, germplasm resources exchange, agriculture product processing modernization, technology extension, fisheries sector boosting, and establishing Foot-and-Mouth Disease-free zones in Pakistan. JWG also prioritized enhancing the skills and knowledge of Pakistani farmers, improving crop and livestock varieties,

advanced oil extraction facilities. While significant milestones have been achieved, they have fallen short of expectations. To achieve the full potential of CPEC-2, a high level of political commitment is required from both the newly elected government and the establishment. Additionally, all stakeholders must agree to expedited implementation. This should be coupled with simplification of procedures, creating a corruption-free environment, streamlining bureaucracy, fostering public-private partnerships, and ensuring transparency and communication. These factors are key to building trust and ensuring the successful implementation of CPEC-2.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Instead, the government should prioritize leveraging the agricultural components of CPEC-2 to provide self-sustained, permanent relief to the common man. This is crucial, considering that roughly 34.5% of Pakistan's population, or approximately 69.58 million to 81.38 million people, are in need of immediate relief. Addressing agriculture-related challenges through CPEC-2 becomes even more pronounced when considering the scale of the population affected.

In Pakistan, the agriculture sector is of paramount importance, as it directly or indirectly employs between 62%

The new government, facing significant financial challenges with a debt obligation of over \$25 billion, equivalent to the entire yearly exports of the country, needs to prioritize the agricultural component of CPEC 2.0 as the cornerstone of its economic strategy to directly address the crucial issue of stabilizing essential food prices.

China and Pakistan with a view to deepen cooperation in the agriculture sector had established a Joint Working Group (JWG) and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in November 2018 aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity, technology

reducing post-harvest wastage, facilitating technology transfer, ensuring livestock health, and enhancing access to market information and trade opportunities.

In addition, Several protocols were signed to export agricultural commodities from Pakistan to China and involve Chinese businesses in Pakistan's agriculture sector. Chinese enterprises like M/s Royal Group and CMEC had initiated projects for genetic improvements in buffalo and dairy farming, and large-scale farming and processing industry for chili crops, respectively.

Additionally, Qingfa seeds has introduced high-quality seed production methods for canola crop and established farmer training centers, focusing on modern farming techniques and

Foremost, the government should negotiate with China for the swift transfer of technologies related to high-yielding, drought-resistant crops. This can provide immediate relief by boosting domestic production of essential food items in the next planting season. Additionally, prioritizing training programs for farmers on these new technologies will ensure their effective utilization.

The government should clearly communicate to China its focus on immediate relief measures. Negotiations should prioritize projects with a faster turnaround time that directly impact essential food items. This approach will not only address the immediate needs of the population but also lay the foundation for long-term agricultural sustainability.

To be continued

UN Women calls war in Gaza 'a war on women', 9,000 killed

UN Women, a United Nations agency dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, has called the war in besieged Gaza "also a war on women". In a statement Friday, the agency estimated that 9,000 women have been killed by Israeli military forces since Oct 7.

However, it said, the figure is likely to be higher as many more are reported dead under the rubble. "While this war spares no one, UN Women data shows that it kills and injures women in unprecedented ways," UN Women said in a press release issued Saturday. At the current rate, an average of 63 women will continue to be killed if the fighting goes on. Roughly 37 mothers are killed every day, leaving their families devastated and their children with diminished protection.

This week, UN agencies warned the Security Council of looming famine in Gaza, where the entire population, 2.3 million people, will soon face acute levels of food insecurity – the highest share ever recorded.

A UN Women rapid assessment of 120 women, conducted last month, revealed that the majority, 84 per cent, said their family eats half or less than what they did before the war began. Although mothers and adult women are tasked with sourcing food, they are the ones who eat last, less, and the least.

Most women indicated that at least one person in their family had to skip meals during the previous week. "In 95 per cent of those cases, mothers are the ones going without food, skipping at least one meal to feed their children," UN Women said.

Nearly nine in 10 women also reported that it is harder to access food than men. Some are now resorting to scavenging for food under rubble or in dumpsters, or other measures. Meanwhile, 10 out of 12 women's organizations in Gaza reported being partly operational, according to a UN Women report on the gender aspects of the conflict, issued in January. "Unless there is an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, many more will die in the coming days and weeks," the agency said. "The killing, bombing, and destruction of essential infrastructure in Gaza must stop. Humanitarian aid must get into and across Gaza immediately."



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

Traditional Attanr: Exploring cultural kaleidoscope of KP

Asmat Shah Garwaki

In the heartland of Pakistan lies Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a region where ancient tribes and communities of diverse mores live together, signifying its rich cultural heritage of traditional Attanr.

Amidst the rugged landscapes, folklore, and historical landmarks, besides being home to the Ghandara civilization, the unique traditions of Pashtun (Pashtun) communities coupled with captivating traditional Attanr (traditional dance) on joyous occasions paint a vibrant picture of unity and cultural diversity.

The rhythmic beats of dhol reverberate through the air as the youth gather for traditional Attanr during marriage and parties. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, this dance is a captivating display of the agility and strength of the performers and continues even today in the present era of social media. Brag Attanr (male-female combine), which is almost done by family members on the first day of the wedding ceremony.

"Attanr is a unique traditional dance mostly performed on the occasions of marriage, birthday parties, and other joyous festivals," said noted singer Gulzar Alam while talking to APP.

With graceful movements and colorful embellishments, people bring to life stories passed down through generations, preserving their heritage with every twirl and spin," said Bakht Muhammad, senior research officer of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Museum and Archeology Department.

"In a world where diversity is often seen as a source of division, KP stands as a testament to the beauty that emerges when different cultural threads are woven together. The Khattak and Mehsud dances, showcased in the lively Attanr, offer a glimpse into the cultural wealth of a region where traditions are not merely relics of the past

but living, breathing entities that evolve with time while retaining their essence." Bakht said Mehsud, Khattak, and Yousafzai attanrs were used in the past to warm up tribesmen ahead of a battle or war to get psychological advantage over the warring tribe or external aggressors.

"Mehsud dance is believed to originate from South Waziristan centuries ago and was mostly used by Mehsud tribes in a bid to bring the warring tribe under pressure before the start of a battle in a bid to ensure their independence, protect lands, mines, caves, or settle disputes in case of unsuccessful negotiations by the peace jirga," said Bakht Muhammad.

In the Mehsud dance, the active members of the Mehsud tribe equipped with guns gather, and the loud gunfire by them creates an echo in the area that adds to the fierce and proud energy of the dance, besides creating an ineradicable imprint on the minds of the spectators.

The practice of Mehsud dance continued even in the colonial era in Waziristan, where Mehsud, Ahmadzai Wazir, Bhattani, and other tribes known for their bravery had never allowed the British to establish their rule in erstwhile Fata.

Sir Olaf Caroe, who acted as the former Governor of the British Indian Frontier, said, "The Masud tribe is a people who can never even think of submitting to a foreign power. From 1860 to 1937, the English forces repeatedly attacked Mehsud positions but never got a foothold in the area." Like the Mehsud dance, the subcontinent's oldest and most popular Khattak dance was also being practiced in KP.

"Being the national dance of Pakistan, the Khattak dance, introduced by Pashtun's Khat-tak tribe in the 14th century, is still performed mostly on occasions of weddings, births, and welcoming functions of VIPs in the province, including merged tribal districts," he said.

He said that Khattak dance had given birth to many dances, including braghoni, shahdola,

bangra, balballah, chatrali, etc.

"The dance was very popular during the Mughal and British eras, who recruited Khattaks in their respective armies for their heroic warfare skills on battlefields. The Mughal rulers were highly impressed with the bravery of Khattaks, including freedom fighter Khushal Khan Khattak, who stood for the freedom and unity of Pakhtoons," he said.

"In KP, cultural diversity is not just celebrated; it is embraced, nurtured, and passed on, ensuring that the tapestry of traditions continues to flourish for generations to come," said noted TV actor Javed Babar.

Abdullah Bettani, a resident of Tank who sustained an accidental bullet wound to his leg during an aerial firing at a function, continued to perform his favorite Attanr dance despite his disability. "Despite the injuries that made it hard for me to move my legs to perform Attanr at festivals, he still performs it for a few moments with school friends on happy occasions, especially on Eid," he said.

Local dancer Z. Usman Khattak, a resident of Karak, said that Attanr, Khattak, and Mehsud dances in southern districts were more than just dances. "If we talk about Khattak dance, it's a mixture of traditional Attanr and other traditional dances, and it requires super fitness to perform."

Caretaker KP Minister for Information, Culture, and Tourism, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, said that promotion of culture and tourism was being promoted to enhance the country's soft image worldwide.

Besides holding painting and art exhibitions, he said the government was providing excellent opportunities to artists, poets, musicians, and singers to showcase their work. Highlighting the cultural diversity of KP, including merged districts, the minister said tourists and art lovers are being welcomed to explore the province's rich cultural diversity.

G7 chair Italy assumes new importance in West - I

Andrew Hammond

Prior to becoming Italian prime minister in 2022, there were widespread reservations in the West about Giorgia Meloni's suitability for high office. However, her foreign policy actions so far, including her strong support for Ukraine, have surpassed initial expectations in key Western capitals.

The latest indication of this will come on Friday with Meloni's trip to North America to see US President Joe Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, partly in her capacity as chair of the G7 in 2024. She will get a warm welcome in both Washington and Toronto, despite her previous spats with Trudeau.

Top of the billing is Meloni's White House meeting. She has built up a good relationship with Biden, who initially had significant concerns about her far-right political roots.

She has more than surpassed his expectations with her strong support for Ukraine, despite Italian public opinion being more sympathetic to Russia than much of the rest of Europe. The US president is also aware that, within Rome, anti-establishment political parties like The League — which forms part of the government coalition — had, prior to the Ukraine conflict, sought a reevaluation of Italy's relationship with Moscow, including calling for the lifting of pre-2022 EU sanctions.

However, on Saturday, the second anniversary of the start of Russia's invasion, Meloni chaired the first meeting this year of the G7 leaders. This meeting confirmed their strong unity in support of Kyiv, as well as their determination to continue providing Ukraine with assistance and to strengthen sanctions against Moscow and any entities that allow sanctions

to be circumvented. Meloni also declared that one priority of this year's G7 will be "working on the reconstruction of Ukraine as a way to bet on a future of peace, freedom and Euro-Atlantic prosperity for this nation." Moreover, she asked that the Russian authorities shed light on the circumstances surrounding the death of Alexei Navalny, while condemning the repression of political dissidents in Russia.

Beyond Ukraine, Meloni has also moved to terminate Rome's membership of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. Italy's 2019 decision to join this huge infrastructure scheme sent shock waves across the Western world, as it became the first (and so far only) member to sign up under the administration of then-Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. This produced a strong rebuke from the Trump administration, with Garrett Marquis, the US National Security Council spokesman at the time, asserting that there was "no need for the Italian government to lend legitimacy to China's infrastructure vanity project."

The rationale for U-turning on this issue is not just related to Western security. In addition, there is little evidence that Italy has economically benefited from the deal. Over the last four years, Italian exports to China have risen only modestly, to about €16.4 billion (\$17.7 billion dollars) in 2022 from a baseline of €13 billion in 2019.

While Italy is not always seen as a top-tier global power, the reason Biden cares so much about the Rome-Washington relationship is the former's continued systemic importance in Europe and the wider West. This includes its chairing of the G7 during this critical year, with the conflict in Ukraine still underway and key elections taking place in multiple nations, including Russia, the US and the UK.

To be continued

FACE Music Mela 2024

Celebrating the Power of Music and Cultural Harmony

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Foundation for Arts Culture and Education (FACE), Islamabad announce the eagerly awaited 8th edition of the FACE Music Mela that took place on March 1st and 2nd, 2024, at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad.

Dedicated to uniting communities through the transcendent language of arts and cultural exchange, FACE has been at the forefront of fostering a vibrant cultural landscape in Pakistan.

The FACE Music Mela stands as a testament to this mission, having evolved into a hallmark event on the nation's cultural calendar since its inception in 2014.

With each passing year, the festival has witnessed remarkable growth, drawing in music enthusiasts from across the nation and beyond. From attracting 20,000 attendees in 2019 to a turnout of over 25,000 in 2022, the FACE Music Mela continues to captivate audiences with its rich tapestry of musical diversity and talent.

This year's edition promised to be nothing short of spectacular, showcasing a dynamic lineup of musical acts representing a



kaleidoscope of genres from both Pakistan and around the globe.

Besides many other acts, highlight of the festival were the collaboration between an American band—B. E. L. (Bryce Lamar, Evan Hatfield, and Lis Viegas)—and ten talented Pakistani musicians, as part of the music residency program supported by the U. S Embassy, known as ArtEngage.

The first day was formally commenced by the Deputy Chief of Missions U. S Embassy Islamabad Andrew Schofer. He commended Foundation for Arts, Culture and Education's efforts for providing opportunities like FACE Music Mela to the local and traditional artists to showcase their musical talents. Mr. Schofer exclusively thanked the founder and CEO of FACE Mr. Zeejah



Fazli for organizing the stage for a remarkable fusion performance by both the American and Pakistani artists. Festival-goers were treated to the mesmerizing collaborative performances featuring Ali Adil, Islamuddin Habib, Kashif Ali Dani, Shaukat Ali, Sattar Jogi, Nimra Rafique, Ritika Dhanja, Sidra Kanwal, Rimsha Qureshi, and Horeya Asmat from Pakistan, alongside the renowned Sain Tanveer, dhol player from Punjab, Imran Aziz, and Uzair Jaswal. Day two witnessed electrifying performances by Khumariyaan and Shamooin Ismail, further igniting the stage with their unmatched energy and charisma.

The festival's main stage witnessed a fusion of cultures and musical influences, with performances by Rimsha Qureshi, Nimra Rafiq, B. E. L, and the Global Harmony Ensemble, comprising artists from both the United States and Pakistan.



As a beacon of Pakistan's rich musical heritage and creative prowess, the FACE Music Mela 2024 invited attendees to immerse themselves in the enchanting sounds and rhythms that have defined the nation's cultural identity for generations. Photos by Raja Farid



Talent and hard work

Evan Hatfield's musical talent dazzles audience

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: With his extreme talent and hard work, Evan Hatfield has become an inspiring new talent within the world electronic music scene. He has become known for his high-energy live performances, where he combines his sitar with a variety of synthesizers, drum machines, and sequencers for a truly exquisite and unique musical journey. Recently, he visited Pakistan at the invitation of the Foundation for Arts Culture and Education (FACE). He performed at a Face Music Mela 2024 held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, Pakistan.

Evan Hatfield's explorations of North Indian Classical music and deep electronic beats have gained the support of DJs and producers throughout the world such as Goldcap, Lee Burridge, Mercan Dede, and many more. His music has been released on a variety of record labels such as Desert Trax, Do Not Sit On the Furniture, Inward Records, and Pink Turban. Being a genre-defying artist, Evan Hatfield is not one to miss as he dazzles audiences with his sitar and mesmerizing grooves.

In an exclusive interview with Daily the Spokesman he said, "I play sitar and study the music



said, "I grew up in a very musical family. Thinking back, I had no choice but to pursue a music career. From a young age, I studied classical piano, as well as saxophone and guitar. When I was a teenager, my grandparents traveled to India and bought me an electric sitar they found in a music store in New Delhi. When they brought it home, I fell in love with the instrument, although at that point, I had

during that time began to go to warehouse parties and electronic music shows. For quite some time, I have been interested in electronic music."

Expressing his thoughts, he said "The thriving underground music scene in LA opened my eyes to what is possible. The more I studied and practiced that sitar, the more I could see the worlds of electronica and sitar intertwine and began producing my electronic music. During this time, things were rough for me financially. I lived in an old broken-down RV outside Paul's house. To make ends meet, I busked on the streets of old town Pasadena. Eventually, I managed to gain recognition through my work and began gigging with many LA bands. Among these bands were Paracosmic, TV Broken 3rd Eye Open, The Blood Moon Howlers, Matt Koelsch, The Bash Dogs, and many more. He concluded with comments that while playing with all these different bands, I learned what it takes to be a musician. It is a tough road, but highly rewarding.



"I play sitar and study the music of northern India. I incorporate classical Indian music and the ragas of India with my electronic music and create a unique fusion of ancient melodies and futuristic music production."

of northern India. I incorporate classical Indian music and the ragas of India with my electronic music and create a unique fusion of ancient melodies and futuristic music production." He shared his passion for music and started a career.

Adding further to this he

no idea how to properly play it. I tried to play it like an open-tuned guitar and just enjoyed the sound of how the strings resonated. A few years later, I was referred to Paul Livingstone and began taking lessons from him. I eventually moved to LA to study more intensely with Paul, and

Photos by Raja Farid

Pakistan's trade deficit contracts 30pc in Jul-Feb FY24



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's trade deficit shrank 30% to \$14.9 billion during the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

The monthly data released by the Bureau noted that the country's exports increased by nine percent (\$1.681 billion) to \$ 20.351 billion during July-February 2023-24 compared to \$ 18.670 billion in the corresponding period of the last fiscal year.

Imports declined by 11.87 percent to \$ 35.223 billion during the first eight months of the current fiscal year as compared with \$ 39.969 billion in the same period of the last fiscal year.

On a month-on-month basis, the trade deficit narrowed down by 13.49 percent to \$ 1.712 billion in February 2024, as compared to \$ 1.979 billion in January 2024. Exports recorded a 7.84 percent decline to \$ 2.573 billion in February 2024 when compared with \$ 2.792 billion in January 2024. Import increased by 10.19 percent to \$ 4.285 billion in February 2024 when compared with \$ 4.771 billion in January 2024.

The trade deficit narrowed by 1.95 percent on a year-on-year basis and stood at \$ 1.712 billion in February 2024 compared to \$ 1.746 billion during the same month of 2023.

The imports increased by 8.89 percent on a YoY basis and remained \$ 4.285 billion in February 2024 compared to \$ 3.935 billion in February 2023. The exports increased by 17.54 percent on a YoY basis and remained \$ 2.573 billion in February 2024 compared to \$ 2.189 billion in February 2023.

PSDF, NAVTCC signed MOU impart skills among youth of across the country



PPA

LAHORE: Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTCC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through which PSDF will impart training on the behalf of NAVTCC among the youth of across the country.

By the virtue of the MOU, the outreach of PSDF has now expanded across the country, from earlier limited to Punjab.

Both the organizations will collaborate in imparting skills training to the youth of the country in the training programs in Construction, Hospitality and IT Sectors. These training will be imparted with a focus to at least 30 percent of graduates getting employment. The training would be imparted in 16 districts across the country including, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Rhaim Yar Khan, Karachi, Hyderabad, Sakhar, Peshawar, Nowshera, Abbottabad, Queta, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad

Furthermore, both the organizations have agreed to collaborate in curriculum upgradation and development of the TVET sector.

Speaking on the occasion, COO PSDF Ali Akbar Bosan stressed the need to learn the international practices and improve the local TVET curriculum to global standards. "There is a need to bridge the gap between the local and international curriculum so the country produces the skill manpower in accordance with the international demand," he said adding that by doing so Pakistani workforce can place in a better way in the international market.

Chairman of NAVTCC Gulmina Bilal Ahmad urged imposing the youth emergency. There is a need to take the targeted steps to stop failing the youth and make them useful and important to society. She stressed the need of more focusing on Balochistan for churning out more and more training there.

Board member of PSDF Dr Ijaz Nabi observed that by signing of the MOU with NAVTCC, the PSDF has been now moving towards its objectivity of creating a skill development institution. He suggested more expanding of the PSDF across the country and industries other than the government fundings.

Dubai is all set to host ICCI Business Conference on March 4

PPA

DUBAI: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry is all set to host the Global Business Conference on March 4 in Dubai. The preparations for the Business Conference have been completed. A 160-member delegation of industrialists and traders led by ICCI President Ahsan Bakhtawari has reached Dubai to participate in the conference. Global investors from Pakistan, Dubai and Gulf countries including the whole world will participate in the conference. Representatives of the SIFC will brief the global investors.

ICCI President Ahsan Bakhtawari said regarding the conference that the business conference is a great opportunity to attract foreign investment in Pakistan. The sustainable solution to the economic problems facing Pakistan is in investment. He said that the



Islamabad Chamber of Commerce is working to attract investors in various sectors. The Dubai Business Conference is also a part of this series. He said that the cooperation of the Government of Pakistan, Dubai authorities

and Pakistani diplomatic missions is very important for the conference. The conference will inform global investors about the opportunities available in Pakistan. He said that a comprehensive system has

been developed in the minerals, agriculture and IT sectors through the National Investment Facilitation Council. Global investors need to take advantage of this. He said that the National Investment Council is playing an important role in ensuring safe investment in Pakistan and addressing the concerns of the business community.

Through this conference, we want to send a message to global investors that investment in Pakistan is not only safe but also very profitable compared to many countries in the world. Government policies and institutional cooperation are very important for Pakistan to make investment safe.

The ICCI President said that the Dubai Business Conference is a great opportunity not only for global investors but also for investors based outside Pakistan to participate in the conference and learn about investment opportunities in Pakistan.

Interesting

ISLAMABAD: Visitors are buying handmade items during stone exhibition at a shopping mall in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Affordable power rates vital to attain sustainable industrial growth: Gohar

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz on Saturday stressed the need for ensuring affordable power rates for the local industrial sector to attain sustainable industrial growth as well as enhance the competitiveness of manufacturing sector of the country. In a press statement, the minister underscored the significance of maintaining energy prices at 9 cents per unit for local industry, adding that it was essential for the survival of the industrial sector, which was a source of job creation, export production, and import substitution.

The minister emphasized for prioritizing industrial growth to stimulate economic prosperity by enhancing exports and making the local manufacturing sector viable to achieve ambitious targets in global markets, including China, GCC countries, Africa, ASEAN, EU, UK and USA. The provision of electricity at 9 cents per unit to industries aims to provide a level playing field for local industries and enhance their competitiveness globally, he said adding that the proposal was also approved by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), reflecting the government's commitment to supporting industrial growth. Gohar Ejaz expressed optimism that the new government would decide on the issue, enabling industries to operate more efficiently and contribute significantly to national economic prosperity.



ca, ASEAN, EU, UK and USA. The provision of electricity at 9 cents per unit to industries aims to provide a level playing field for local industries and enhance their competitiveness globally, he said adding that the proposal was also approved by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), reflecting the government's commitment to supporting industrial growth. Gohar Ejaz expressed optimism that the new government would decide on the issue, enabling industries to operate more efficiently and contribute significantly to national economic prosperity.

Vietnam international textiles expo concludes

PPA

The Vietnam International Trade Fair for Apparel, Textiles, and Textile Technologies - VIATT, ended today at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center (SECC) in Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam, known as a major player in textiles and apparel worldwide, displayed its industry strength at the fair.

The fair hosted over 400 exhibitors from 16 countries and regions, amidst prominent domestic confidence. It covered apparel fabrics, yarns, fibers, garments, home textiles as well as technical textiles and nonwovens, textile processing and printing technology. The total of 35,000 attendees visited the fair, contributing to its vibrant atmosphere and success.

07 Pakistani exhibitors, which included well-known companies like Siddiqsons Limited, Sapphire Textile Mills



Limited, US Dyeing & Finishing Mills and Kay and Emms Pvt Ltd, were geared up for the fair. The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) had also hosted a pavilion featuring participants such as Kintex Group, M. K Sons Pvt. Ltd and Softwood Textile.

Mr. Amer Abdullah, the General Manager of Marketing at MK Sons, expressed satisfaction with the fair, noting the overall positive response from visitors. He emphasized the significant growth of the garment industry in Vietnam, presenting excellent opportunities for Pakistani fabric manufacturers to export their products. He observed a rising demand for fabric from Vietnam, indicating a promising market trend for the industry.

Mr. Asad Abbas, Marketing and Sales Manager at Sapphire Textile Mills Limited mentioned that it was their first time participation at the fair. He suggested that things could improve in the future, maybe within two years, showing optimism for growth opportunities. Overall, he felt the fair was good.

Mr. Asad Abbas, Marketing and Sales Manager at Sapphire Textile Mills Limited mentioned that it was their first time participation at the fair. He suggested that things could improve in the future, maybe within two years, showing optimism for growth opportunities. Overall, he felt the fair was good.

Central Karyana Merchants Association, LCCI discuss rate lists, hoarding, quality control

PPA

LAHORE: A Central Karyana Merchants Association Punjab (CKMA) delegation here Saturday visited the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) to discuss their issues including rate lists, hoarding and quality control.

The CKMA delegation led by its President Hafiz Arif Gujjar briefed LCCI President Kashif Anwar about the issues faced by Karyana merchants. Other members included General Secretary Sheikh Rizwan Shaukat, Chairman Sheikh Waqas, Senior Vice Chairman Mian Amir Shahzad, Vice Chairman Chaudhry Sajid Islam, Senior Vice President Chaudhry Falak Sher and others.

The delegation members stated that the biggest issue for Karyana merchants is the rate list, which is arranged based on average rather than on the basis of superior quality and inferior quality rates. They emphasized that respective Deputy Commissioners of districts need to ensure accuracy and timely provision of rate lists.



The delegates mentioned that it is the manufacturers' responsibility, not the retailers, to apply stickers on perishable goods under Track and Trace System. Furthermore, retailers cannot ensure the quality standard as it is also the responsibility of the manufacturer. They stated that there is no mechanism in place for fixing prices in the country.

They claimed that CKMA Punjab has always cooperated with the government and has organized Ramadan and other bazaars from their own pocket. They urged the Punjab Chief Minister to address the issues of Karyana merchants.

The delegation suggested that at least two representatives of the Central Karyana Merchants Association Punjab should be included in the government's Price Control Committee (PCC). They stated that instead of focusing on raids, FIRs, and penalties, other activities should be prioritized. They said that the crackdown on traders should be stopped, asserting that instead of food authorities and other institutions, a centralized body should be established for Karyana merchants.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar assured that Lahore Chamber would raise the issues of Karyana merchants on every platform and make all possible efforts for their resolution. He said that Lahore Chamber has an open-door policy aimed at resolving members' issues quickly.

UK-Pakistan Inward Trade Mission visits SCCI



Bureau Chief

SIALKOT: The UK-Pakistan Inward Trade Mission visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to engage with the local business community here on Saturday.

Upon arrival, the delegates received a warm welcome from Vice President (VP) SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh. President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Noman, Sialkot Business Community and WCCI Executive Committee Members.

During the meeting, Vice President SCCI M Amer Majeed Sheikh emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations between the UK and Pakistan. He said the visit presented a unique opportunity to boost trade and investment between the two nations. He conveyed his appreciation to the delegation for attending the exhibition "We-Exhibit 2024", highlighting its role in promoting and supporting women empowerment. The VP SCCI said the presence of the delegation signified a crucial step in strengthening bilateral relations and exploring new avenues of collaboration and trade. He said that the relationship between the UK and Pakistan was deep-rooted, built on shared values and a vision for a prosperous future.

President of the Greater Birmingham Chambers

of Commerce Ahmed Jamal Nasir Awan remarked that there was substantial potential for trade between Pakistan and the UK. He expressed his appreciation for the advanced technology utilised by Forward Sports and noted his impression upon observing the significant contribution of women in the workforce to the economy.

Representative of the British High Commission Fabian Hartwell expressed his satisfaction with the collaboration between the British High Commission and the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) to organise the "We-Exhibit 2024" in coordination with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). He stated that promoting women empowerment was a primary agenda of the UK government and affirmed their commitment to continue supporting and promoting women empowerment in collaboration with the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The delegation UK-Pakistan Inward Trade Mission included British High Commission Representative Islamabad Fabian Hartwell, ITC Representative Eva Chang, FCDO Representative Hanifa Begum FCDO Representative Farzana Juna.

HBL PSL 9th Edition

Rawalpindi Stadium play matches washout due to rain: PCB

Asim Tanveer

RAWALPINDI: The opening day of the Pindi-leg of HBL PSL 9 has been washed out after the Islamabad United and Quetta Gladiators fixture, the 18th match of the tournament, was called off as well followed by the abandonment of the Lahore Qalandars vs Peshawar Zalmi game, at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

The two teams, Quetta Gladiators and Islamabad United, placed in second and fourth spot on the points table respectively, bagged one point each after the second game of the double-header was called off an hour before the scheduled start of play due



to rain.

Karachi Kings will face table-top-

pers Multan Sultans tomorrow at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi while the HBL PSL 9 action will return to Rawalpindi on March 4 as home team Islamabad United taking on Peshawar Zalmi.

The 17th match of the HBL Pakistan Super League 9 between Peshawar Zalmi and Lahore Qalandars was called off due to persistent rain and a wet outfield at the Pindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi today.

The Pindi-leg of the HBL PSL was scheduled to kick off with a double-header on Saturday, of which the first game saw Zalmi, placed third on the table, and Qalandars placed sixth on the table, sharing a point each.

Shabbir ascends to the top in 10th J. A. Zaman Open Golf

Tahir Amin Malik.

After the third round of this four rounds Professional Golfers Segment of 10th J. A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship being contested at the congenial and marvellous Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course, the most dynamic player of the championship is the two hundred titles winner Muhmmad Shabbir of Margalla Greens. He is certainly a contender beyond compare and with a remarkably outstanding round of 67 on the third day of this esteemed and august golf championship, he curbs the progress of his rivals like Matloob Ahmed, Hamza Amin, Muhammed Munir and a few other powerful peers. By playing to perfection in the course of the third round on an exceedingly windy day, Muhammed Shabbir registered laudable birdies on holes 5,6,7,8 and 9, five in succession and succeeded in moving ahead of quite a few matchless rivals, thereby developing a healthy lead and looking most enabled out of the whole field. Through sheer mastery and incredible excellence Shabbir grappled adequately with prevalent challenges and demonstrated his prowess at a critical juncture of this J. A. Zaman Open Golf Championship. In



the course of play in the third round eighteen holes, the concentration was intense and also fiercely faultless was his control, though hampered by a back spasm. His three rounds scores add upto 209, seven under par.

Though up against windy conditions and a spell of hail storm oriented rain M. Shabbir was extremely satisfied with the golf course conditions at the Lahore Gymkhana Golf and praised the Zaman Family for a wonderful all round effort and the inspirational support of Hamid Zaman, Head of Zaman Family.

As things stand, Shabbir's performance with a

three rounds aggregate score of 209, seven under par is so perfect that the other contenders can now hope to fight it out for the second slot. The other heralded ones playing well are M. Nazir (Rawalpindi) placed at a score of 210, six under par and Ahmed Baig (Royal Palm) placed at 211 and Muhammed Alam of Garrison at 212.

Other notable ones looking fairly good are Minhaj Maqsood with a three rounds aggregate score of 213, three under par, Matloob Ahmed 216 and Kashif Masih, also at 216.

In the amateurs event Shahzeb Jahan of Rawal-

pindi takes over the leadership reigns in amateur race from his club mate Tipu Raja. Shahzeb is at a score of 148 while Tipu Raja is at 149. Following them are Hussain Hamid (Royal Palm) at 154 and Usama Nadeem (Sargodha) at 15

Today is the final day of this grand championship and at the conclusion of the championship, the prize distribution will be held in the evening at 3.30. P. M. at Lahore Gymkhana Golf Club lawns. The Zaman Family will honor the top performers at the 10th J. A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship concluding moments.

Reasons behind Lahore Qalandars' debacle in first leg of PSL 9

The Lahore leg of the ninth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) concluded with home side Qalandars' massive 60-run loss against Multan Sultans at the Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday. This embarrassing loss was the defending champions' sixth consecutive defeat in the event so far.

It was not expected that this was how the two-time champions would perform in the ongoing edition of the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) flagship event, as many considered Shaheen Shah Afridi's men as the favorites to clinch the elusive trophy for the third time in a row. As their chances of qualifying for the playoffs seemed to have perished, this piece delves into the reasons behind the Lahore Qalandars' miserable run.

Lahore Qalandars' inability to field a good combination of playing XI was largely because of their poor planning at the draft held on December 13, 2023.

Aaqib Javed's side focused more on picking players for an already well-established top-order and went for Sahibzada Farhan and Rassie van der Dussen. The two have played some good cricket and are among the top run scorers of the event so far, but instead of shaking the base of their batting, the management could've picked one between the two and improved their middle order by picking a more power-hitting option that would score runs in the middle.

As a result of picking Van der Dussen and Farhan, the number four batting position has seen frequent changes. First, they tried Abdullah Shafique for the position, and, being a top-order batter, he couldn't deliver in the role which is why West Indies ODI skipper Shai Hope replaced him. The wicket-keeper batter couldn't perform well, so Kamran Ghulam took his place for the clash with Multan Sultans, but he also fell prey to the pressure.

Runs haven't come for Fakhar Zaman's bat as of yet. Hence, someone should've risen to the occasion and gathered some runs in the middle or towards the later part of the innings. With their batting and run-scoring prowess, Mirza Tahir Baig, Fakhar Zaman, and Abdullah Shafique played a pivotal role in Lahore Qalandars' trophy-winning run in 2023.

Lacklustre bowling performance The very basis of Lahore Qalandars' title-winning squads in 2022 and 2023 was their bowling attack but this time the formidable bowling lineup hasn't been up to par.

Zaman Khan, who performed well for Lahore Qalandars in the powerplay and the death previously, hasn't been on the song during the ninth edition of the PSL. His economy is 12.55, while he claimed six wickets.

Before the PSL, Haris Rauf was not in his best form as his performance in the Asia Cup 2023 and subsequently in the ODI World Cup 2023 wasn't up to the mark. We witnessed a few glimpses of his return in the ongoing PSL, but his bowling wasn't up to the standard he set for himself till the match against Karachi Kings, where he claimed a wicket and gave away only 22 runs in his four overs.

PSL 9: Quetta Gladiators, Islamabad United match washed out

A Sports

RAWALPINDI: The heavy rain in the city continued to play spoilsport as the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 9 match between Quetta Gladiators and Islamabad United was washed out here at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

As a result, both Gladiators and United shared a point each.

The 2019 champions solidified their grip on the

second spot in the standings with nine points in six matches, just one shy of leaders Multan Sultans while the United remained fourth with five points in as many matches.

Quetta Gladiators next face Karachi Kings at the same venue on Wednesday while Islamabad United will lock horns with Peshawar Zalmi on Monday.

Earlier today, the persistent rain in the city washed out the first match between Lahore Qalandars and Zalmi

as well.

Due to the constant downpours, the toss was delayed initially as covers were placed on the ground.

The rain stopped briefly, prompting efforts from the groundsmen to dry the ground, but the rain returned, ultimately leading to umpires deciding that no play could be possible.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel

Lahore Qalandars gained their first point in the ongoing PSL 9 as they were

awarded one point along with Peshawar Zalmi after their match was called off.

Notably, Lahore Qalandars, who are defending champions of the PSL, are currently lying at the bottom of the points table after suffering six consecutive losses.

Their next face two-time champions United in an away clash in Wednesday's doubleheader.

Meanwhile, Peshawar Zalmi are sitting in third position with seven points.

Pakistan Deaf Cricket team announced for T-20 Deaf World Cup

Tahir Amin Malik.

Pakistan Deaf Cricket team announced by Irfan Miraj, President Pakistan Deaf Cricket Association for the up coming T-20 Deaf Cricket World Cup, 2024 starting on 6th March. In a Press Conference President Deaf Cricket Association Irfan Miraj said that their will be six teams will take part in the T-20 Deaf International Cricket world cup which is included Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia, and South Africa, and Pakistan Deaf Cricket team will depart for UAE on 4th March and will play the first match against South Africa on 6th March, 2024. Irfan Miraj said that in this regards the training camp of Pakistan Deaf cricket team has already started from 26th February at Aleem Dar Cricket academy, Lahore. He said that I hope Pakistan will perform well again and will come in the victory stand and brighten the name of Pakistan. He said that I and my management team thanked to the sponsors particularly Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi for their supporting role of Deaf Cricket Team. The team consists, Zaka Ahmed, Captain, M. Qamar Naveed, vice captain, Manzoor Khan, M. Faizan Khan, Adnan Ghani, Mudassar Nazir, Asad Hussain Jutt, Bilal Yousaf, M. Basit Abbasi, Jabbar Ali, Rashid Ali Jutt, Adeel Qadir, Bilal Khan, Ehsan Ullah, In officials. Irfan Miraj, Syed Muhammad Kumal Kazmi, Komal Rafique, Umar Fayyaz, Usman Ul Ghani, and Tanveer Ahmed.

Govt urged to patronize Pakistan Bridge Federation



GM Ghalbi

Government funding and patronization is essential for any sport to grow and produce medal-winning results in international competitions. The game of bridge is progressing in the right direction in our country and it can scale new heights in future if it is provided official patronization like other games.

Pakistan Bridge Federation (PBF) Secretary Ihsan Qadir and former Director PBF/President Lahore Bridge Federation Ghalib Ali Badesha expressed these views while talking to this scribe at Lahore Gymkhana on Sunday.

Pakistan Bridge Federation (PBF) is an affiliated body with Pakistan Sports Board and World Bridge Federation. PBF fielded bridge teams in WTC (World Teams Championships held biannually), WBG (World Bridge Games held every 4 years), BFAME (Zone-4 Championships held biannually) and Asian Games (held every 4 years since 2018).

Veteran bridge administrator Ihsan Qadir, who is also Secretary of Bridge Federation of Asia & Middle East (BFAME) and Director World Bridge Federation (WBF), said though PBF is getting some govt funding due to extraordinary efforts of PBF President Mubasher Luqman but we needed official patronization and a bit bigger funding on regular basis. "The amount we get from govt is usually spent on our routine administrative affairs. We require around Rs 20 to 25 million for sending our teams in an int'l bridge event".

Answering a query about present state of bridge in Pakistan, Ihsan Qadir said that some of our top players moved abroad, some passed away and some got sick and in this way, we can say that our bridge is not in an ideal condition. "Right now, we have around 300 active bridge players in Pakistan but majority of them is 50 plus. However, despite all these limitations, Pakistan bridge is better than Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and UAE".

When asked about next bridge event, Ihsan Qadir informed that PBF is going to organize a 4-day Pakistan National Bridge Championship in last week of April. "Actually, this championship was to be held in the last week of March but we have to postpone it for a month due to Ramadan ul Mubarak".

Elaborating the details of event, Qadir informed that the teams from all over the country will participate in this prestigious event which will be competed in four categories—Ladies, Open team, Mixed team and Seniors category. "We will hold Pakistan National Bridge Championship on international pattern and accordingly, every team will consist of 4 to 6 players".

Responding a query about the calendar year national and international bridge events, Qadir informed that PBF is used to organize National Bridge Championship and National trials in alternate years. "In National trials, we select a national team for participation in World Bridge Championship. In the first phase, the selected national team participated in BFAME event and if selected there then it goes to World Bridge Championship," he explained.

Qadir further informed that PBF is planning to stage three major bridge championships in a year on regular basis to provide maximum playing opportunities to national players to express their potential. "We planned to hold first bridge championship in March-April in Lahore, second in September in Islamabad while the third event will be played in December-January in Karachi".

Replying a question about PBF's planning and measures for the growth of bridge game, Ghalib Ali Badesha, the seasoned captain of national bridge team, said that without govt's involvement and patronization, the game of bridge could not be promoted to a satisfactory level. "Govt has carved out a plan to promote mind sports (chess, draft and scrabble) in different schools and colleges of Islamabad".

Elaborating his point, Badesha said PBF has requested govt to include the game of bridge in their mind sports plan. "We want that govt should write to different school and colleges in four or five big cities of Punjab on the pattern of Islamabad plan. If it happens, then we will be able to incline plenty of youth towards game of bridge and expand our pool of players adequately," he opined.

Highlighting medal-winning prowess of Pakistan bridge players, Badesha said that our bridge players have exhibited wonderful performance at Asia level several times winning 33 medals in BFAME events since 1981. "Our aim is to take Pakistan's bridge game to a level where our players can offer handsome performance and win medals in World Bridge Championship," he added.

He informed that Pakistan Seniors were 2nd in 2023 BFAME held at Lahore. National bridge team also represented BFAME in the World Cup at Morocco.

Usman Khawaja forced to remove 'dove' sticker on bat

A Sports

LAHORE: Australia opener Usman Khawaja was made to remove the dove sticker, which symbolises world peace, on his bat during the third day of the ongoing first Test against host New Zealand.

The incident took place in the 19th over of Australia's second innings. Usman Khawaja, who has been a vocal critic of the Israel-Palestine conflict, batter broke his blade and asked for its replacement.

After going through different bats, he picked one and it had the "dove" logo on it. The officials stepped in and asked the cricketer to remove it.

It is pertinent to mention that the opening batter wanted to wear shoes emblazoned with the hand-written slogans "Freedom is a human right" and "All lives are equal" in the first Test of the three-match series against Pakistan in December. But he was told that it flouted International Cricket Council (ICC) rules on



messages that relate to politics, religion or race.

When Cricket Australia (CA) expressed their hopes that the opener would uphold

the rules, Usman Khawaja covered the slogans with a semi-transparent tape.

However, the words written on his shoes remained partially visible — only

in close-up — in the colour of the Palestinian flag.

Later, Khawaja donned a black armband to show solidarity with Palestine.

But he was still charged by the apex cricketing body for staging a muted protest against the ongoing war in Palestine.

Usman Khawaja vowed to fight the ban on his footwear, calling it "a humanitarian appeal".

He doubled down on his stance just before going in to bat in the first Test.

"I just think that so much has happened in the past that sets a precedent," Khawaja told Fox Cricket.

"Other guys that have religious things on their equipment, under the ICC guidelines that's not technically allowed, but the ICC never says anything on that," he added.

Australian captain Pat Cummins said he was "really proud" of his teammate and of other squad members who had spoken up for what they believe in.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by President Awami National Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Aimal Wali Khan called on former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari at Zardari House, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

NA speaker approves Shahbaz Sharif, Omar Ayub's nomination papers for PM election

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday approved the nomination papers of Pakistan Muslim League-N's Shehbaz Sharif and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) leader Omar Ayub Khan for the prime minister election.

According to a press release issued by the National Assembly secretariat, the Speaker approved the nomination papers for the Prime Minister's slot after the scrutiny of the papers.

The election for the Prime Minister will take place during the session of the National Assembly scheduled for Sunday at 11 am. Only two candidates submitted their nominations for the slot.

The nomination papers for MNA Main Muhammad Shahbaz were proposed by MNA Syed Khurshed Ahmad Shah, Khawa-

ja Muhammad Asif, Tariq Bashir Cheema, Rana Tanvir Hussain, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Zaman, Attaullah Tarar, Abdul Aleem Khan, and seconded by MNAs Romina Khurshed Alam, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Laghari, Ahsan Iqbal, Kessoo Mal Kheel Das, Anusha Rahman Khan, Hanif Abbasi, Jamal Shah Kakar.

The nomination papers of Omar Ayub Khan for Prime Minister of Pakistan/Leader of the House were proposed by MNAs Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Asad Qaiser, Riaz Khan Fatyana, Umair Khan Niazi, and seconded by MNAs Mohammad Sanaullah Khan Mastikhel, Ali Khan Jadoon, Mujahid Ali, and Malik Mohammad Amir Dogar.

The election for the Prime Minister would be conducted through the division of members in the House. As per the Constitution,



before the voting process begins for the slot of Prime Minister, "bells" will ring for five minutes inside the Parliament House to inform every member — in case they are not present in the chamber at the moment — to gather inside. Once the process begins, the doors will be locked, and no one will be allowed to enter or leave the hall till the PM's election is concluded.

Under the supervision of the Speaker, voting will be held through division. For example, if there are two candidates, the

Speaker will say that 'whoever wants to vote for candidate A can go to lobby A' and 'whoever wants to vote for candidate B, can go to lobby B. If there are three candidates then there can be a lobby C as well.

At the entrance of the said lobbies, there will be a member of the Assembly Secretariat staff who will record the name of every Member of the National Assembly in the register. The whole process will be open and people sitting in the galleries will be able to see who votes for whom.

The political parties have to vote collectively and every member has to vote for the candidate that their party is voting for.

Section 91(4) of the Constitution states, "The Prime Minister shall be elected by the votes of the majority of the total membership of the National Assembly: Provided that, if no member secures such a majority in the first poll, a second poll shall be held between the members who secure the two highest numbers of votes in the first poll and the member who secures a majority of votes of the members present and voting shall be declared to have been elected as Prime Minister: Provided further that, if the number of votes secured by two or more members securing the highest number of votes is equal, further poll shall be held between them until one of them secures a majority of votes of the members present and voting."

CM Sarfraz Bugti invites armed groups to mainstream in victory speech

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Sarfraz Bugti, who was elected unopposed as the chief minister of Balochistan, on Saturday reiterated that his government plans to continue engaging in dialogue with armed groups active in the province.

Bugti was sworn in as the chief minister of Balochistan after he secured a vote of

confidence from the provincial assembly.

Governor Abdul Wali Kakar administered oath to the newly-elected CM in a ceremony held at the Governor House.

In a 65-member house, at least 41 MPAs voted in favour of Bugti. JUIF and the National Party did not participate in the voting process.

JUIF has 13 lawmakers in the Balochistan Assembly and

National Party 4.

"Deterrence and dialogue are the two options that the government has to address the [law and order] situation in Balochistan," he said in his victory speech.

Bugti urged the Baloch dissidents to continue their struggle while adhering to the Constitution of Pakistan as he resolved that there would be no compromise on the state's writ.

The nomination papers for the chief minister election were submitted on Friday. Since Bugti was the only candidate in the election he was declared a winner but the formal election process was completed only on Saturday when a vote was held.

On Saturday, Bugti arrived at the Balochistan Assembly in official protocol.

Balochistan's speaker and deputy speaker too were elect-

ed unopposed on Friday.

Bugti joined PPP before the February 8 election. He served as the federal interior minister in the caretaker setup for months but stepped down days before the election schedule was announced to become a candidate in the election.

After winning a provincial assembly seat he resigned from the Senate of Pakistan last week.

Israel continues genocidal war on Gaza Strip, again in 148th day

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the continuation of the genocidal war committed by the occupation government against our people for the 148th day in a row, which is no longer limited to mass massacres by bombing, but rather the death of Palestinian civilians, including children, women, the elderly, and the sick due to starvation, malnutrition, and the absence of necessary medicines and treatments. Especially in light of Israel's prevention of the entry of aid and its destruction of the vast majority of hospitals and injured among Palestinian civilians, imposes a certain Israeli death collar on them, and constantly pushes them



towards further displacement of the entire population. Residents of the Gaza Strip.

The Ministry believes that Israel and its leaders disregard all international resolutions, appeals and demands

to protect civilians and bring in aid, and paint in the record of the world and humanity the ugliest forms of massacres and a stain that cannot be erased. Here, the Ministry expresses its extreme astonishment at the weakness of the American positions and its reactions towards what Palestinian civilians are exposed to, and it believes that the actions of the United States do not benefit a superpower capable of forcing Israel to protect Palestinian civilians and secure their humanitarian needs. The Ministry does not see any justification for the actions of the United States. It is as if it is a marginal country that is powerless in the face of the arrogance, tyranny and extremism of the government of its ally Israel, especially with regard to securing the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

Pakistan condemns India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday condemned India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods imported by a Karachi based commercial entity. In response to the media questions regarding Indian seizure of commercial equipment destined for Pakistan, the Foreign Office spokesperson in a statement said, "These reports are reflective of Indian media's habitual misrepresentation of facts."

She said, "This is a simple case of import of a commercial lathe machine by a Karachi based commercial entity which supplies parts to the automobile industry in Pakistan. Specifications of the equipment clearly indicate its purely commercial use. The transaction was being conducted through transparent banking channels with



all the relevant documentation." She said the relevant private entities were pursuing the matter against this unjustified seizure. "Pakistan condemns India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods. This disruption of free trade underscores the dangers inherent in arbitrary assumption of policing roles by states with dubious credentials." "Such acts also highlight the growing impunity of certain states in violating international norms and taking arbitrary measures in violation of international law," she added.

KSA hosting 'LEAP-The Global Tech Event' from March 4 to 7, 2024

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Is pleased to announce that

H. E. MUHAMMAD AZFAR AHSAN
Pakistan's Former Minister for Investment & Founder, Nutshell Group

Will be addressing

LEAP
The Global Tech Event

SESSION DATE & TIME:
March 4, 2024 at 14:10 hours
Investor Hall, Riyadh Exhibition & Convention Center, Malham, Riyadh

CO-ORGANISED BY

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Pakistan's former Minister for Investment and Founder of Nutshell Group, will be attending as a speaker at LEAP. He will deliver a keynote address during the session titled "The Intersection of Technology, Government Policies, and Inno-

vation" on March 4, 2024, at 14:10 hours at the Investor Hall, Riyadh Exhibition & Convention Center, Malham, Riyadh.

As the world's most attended tech event, LEAP draws over 175,000 participants from across 183 countries, making it an unparalleled platform for global dialogue and collaboration in the tech industry.

KCEU's chief Ali Raza Syed condemns fake cases against Kashmiri leaders in IIOJK

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Brussels-based Chairman of the Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU), Ali Raza Syed has strongly condemned fabricated cases against the prominent Kashmiri leaders Abdul Hameed Lone and Maulana Sarjan Barkati.

In a statement issued in Brussels that reached and was released to the media here on Saturday, the Chair of the KCEU, Ali Raza Syed, said that these Indian actions are based on totally fake charges. He added that the Indian government uses such cases against the Kashmiris as an instrument to prevent their struggle for the right to self-determination.

It is important to mention that Indian authorities in Illegally Occupied Kashmir have recently registered fake cases against Abdul Hameed Lone, Maulana Sarjan Ahmad Wagay, alias Sarjan Barkati, and his wife.

Chairman KC-EU Ali Raza Syed said that although India wants to create fear among the Kashmiri leaders through such fake charges and other pretexts of state terrorism, the brave Kashmiris will not be afraid of this Indian state terrorism.

FIR lodged against miscreants who harassed woman in Lahore's Ichhra Bazaar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore police lodged a first information report against dozens of miscreants who harassed a woman wearing a shirt with Arabic-script print in the city's Ichhra Bazaar earlier this week.

Given the sensitivity of the issue, the police have sealed the copy of the FIR.

Suspects had accused the woman of "blasphemy" as they confused the Arabic alphabet and words with the Quranic verses.

She was saved by a woman police officer who escorted her to safety after hundreds gathered. She later gave a public apology.

In videos that went viral on social media, the woman looked scared, sitting in the far corner of the restaurant, and shielding her face with her hand as others made accusations against her.

The dress had the word "Halwa" printed in Arabic letters on it, meaning beautiful in Arabic.

Around 300 people had crowded outside the restaurant by the time they arrived, according to Assistant Superintendent Syeda Shehribano.