

Thursday, February 01, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Billionaire Sultan Ibrahim sworn in as Malaysia's 17th king

Detailed News On Page-07

Iran warns US, No threat will go unanswered

Detailed News On Page-07



Babar 'not satisfied' with current form

Detailed News On Page-06



Given 14- year in Toshakhana case

Yet another 'hasty' sentence to Imran

Bushra Bibi also given 14-year sentence; PTI founder disqualified for 10 year; Party to file an appear in the IHC; a fine of Rs1.573 billion – 787 million each – to the couple

COURT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The legal woes of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan continue to multiply as an accountability court on Wednesday sentenced the former prime minister and his spouse Bushra Bibi to 14 years in prison with rigorous punishment in the Toshakhana reference. Accountability court's Judge Muhammad Bashir announced the ver-

Government

declared

Bani Gala

as a sub-jail

Bushra transferred

from Adiala Jail

to Bani Gala

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The govern-

ment has declared Bani

Gala as a sub-jail. According

to sources, Bushra Bibi, the

wife of the former Prime

Minister Imran Khan, con-

victed in the Tosha Khana

case, has been transferred

from Adiala Jail to Bani

Gala under tight security.

Bushra Bibi will be im-

prisoned there. Bani Gala

house is the residence of

Imran Khan in the federal

capital Islamabad. It should

be noted that the Account-

ability Court had sentenced

former Prime Minister Im-

ran Khan and his wife to 14

years of imprisonment with

hard labor in the Tosha Kha-

na case. After which Bushra

Bibi herself reached Adiala

Jail to arrest her.



dict, also disqualifying the former prime minister for 10 years while handing over a fine of Rs1.573 billion - 787 million each - to the couple. During the previous hearing, which was also held at Adiala jail, the court recorded Bushra Bibi's statement under Section 342. Khan told the court that his wife had nothing to do with the case and was being humiliated by being forcibly dragged into it. At the outset of the hearing today, Judge Bashir asked Khan if he recorded his statement. To this, the former premier said that he would submit his statement once his lawyers came. "I have been deceived as I was only called to mark my attendance for the hearing," said the PTI founder. On the other hand, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) termed the notification of Khan's jail trial in Toshakhana and the £190 million settlement cases as correct. The court also dismissed the PTI founder's petitions against the jail trial in the cases filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Continued on Page 06

PTI candidate Rehan Zeb shot dead in KP's Bajaur Poll postponed in NA-8, PK-22 after independent candidate shot dead

SAID ALAM KHAN

A sister publication of CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidate Rehan Zeb Khan was shot dead on Wednesday in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district, police said. The PTI-backed candidate was contesting elections from NA-8 and PK-22 seats. Rehan was present in Sadiqa-

spot. The attack comes in the backdrop of increased terrorist attacks that have plagued particularly Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces in recent months. With more than 128 million voters, various circles have raised concerns over the deteriorating security situation in the country, especially in the aforementioned provinces, with some lawmakers even

Continued on Page 06

bad Phatak Bazar area of the tribal district in connection with the election campaign when unidentified assailants fired upon him, leaving him dead on the

COAS chairs **CCC Briefs**

Zero tolerance for say verdict violence during political activity

Conference reiterates unequivocal support for Palestine and people of IIOJK

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, emergency meeting NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) presided over the 262nd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ, today. Forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and the citizens who have laid their lives for ensuring peace and stability in the country. Forum resolved that terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on behest of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan, will be dealt with full might of the state. COAS stated that Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity are sacrosanct and inviolable. Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence with all states, however, there would never be any compromise over country's sovereignty, national honour and aspirations of Pakistani people. The forum was briefed on the callous Indian campaign of extra-territorial and extra-judicial killings,

Continued on Page 06

ECP summons

The Interior Minister and Interior Secretary will attend the meeting

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Due to the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has called a meeting at 3 o'clock today. The Interior Minister and Interior Secretary will attend the meeting. Apart from the Chief Secretaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, IGs will also participate. The channel reported that the representatives of other intelligence agencies have also

Continued on Page 06

PTI, experts not to stand in IHC, SC

Imran moves SC against rejection of his nomination papers

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD:Following the verdict, PTI and leaders of other political parties as well as legal and political experts shared their views on the accountability court's verdict in light of its timing, which is just days ahead of the country's general elections, slated to be held on February 8. PTI leader and senior lawyer Ali Zafar complained the judgement was issued in haste and that the requirement of justice was not fulfilled. "Yesterday, PTI founder and lawyers said that 17 witnesses should be allowed to cross-examine, but the court told them to go to the high court after which permission will be given for cross-examination," he said, adding that today's verdict was issued before

Continued on Page 06



Jiang Zaidong, calls on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force. - DNA

Calls on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed

Chinese ambassador lauds Pakistan's role for regional peace

Both the dignitaries emphasized the need for enhanced Air Force to Air Force collaboration, with a particular emphasis on cutting-edge niche technologies in Cyber, Space and Electronic Warfare domains

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Mr Jiang Zaidong, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. During the meeting matters pertaining to evolving geo-strategic environment and regional developments were discussed. The dignitaries underscored the necessity of revitalizing the framework for operational training across all domains, emphasizing the paramount importance of preparedness and seamless coordination in the face of evolving security challenges. Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF's modernization drive in order to transform Pakistan Air Force into a Next Generation Air Force through induction of niche technologies with a special focus on indigenization and revamping of training. Highlighting the significance of the longstanding strategic partnership between the two countries, the Air Chief emphasized that PAF leadership wishes to further deepen the existing

Continued on Page 06

Xi receives Afghan envoy as Taliban seek recognition

Xi welcomed Bilal Karimi, the Taliban-appointed Afghan ambassador, in a formal ceremony at the Great Hall of the People, along with ambassadors from Cuba, Pak, Iran and 38 other countries.

News Desk

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday received the credentials of ambassadors from several countries, including neighboring Afghanistan, in what amounts to the first official recognition of the interim Taliban government by a major nation. Xi welcomed Bilal Karimi, the Taliban-appointed Afghan ambassador, in a formal ceremony at the Great Hall of

Continued on Page 06

Israeli war crimes continue as death toll nears 27,000

News Desk

GAZA CITY: The Ministry of Health in Gaza released the latest death toll in the Gaza Strip, on Wednesday, January 31, 2023. The Ministry confirmed that the Israeli occupation has killed 26,900 Palestinians, and injured 65,949 others since it launched its aggression on the Gaza Strip. Moreover, it added the Israeli occupation committed 16 massacres against Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip in only 24 hours, killing 150 and injuring 313. Meanwhile, The Hamas government media office has called on human rights organisations "to document this horrific crime". It said on Telegram that Israel was continuing to "exterminate" the Palestinian people without regard to

the decisions of the International Court of Justice, "which demanded that they stop the crime of genocide and ethnic cleansing". Meanwhile, The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has called for the formation of an international investigation team to look into accusations that Israeli forces executed prisoners. "According to testimonies of Palestinian citizens, more than 30 decomposing bodies of Palestinian martyrs were discovered buried in the northern Gaza Strip," the ministry said in a statement. "They were killed while blindfolded and with their hands tied, as clear evidence that they were executed... in the most horrific forms." "The Ministry believes that the discovery of this mass grave in

Continued on Page 06

Power tariff jacked up by Rs5.62/unit

Consumers will pay an additional amount in next month's bills

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Wednesday increased the electricity tariff by Rs5.63 per unit on account of monthly fuel adjustment (MFA). The decision was announced after the NE-PRA completed a hearing on the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) petition seeking a hike in electricity tariff by Rs5.63 per unit under fuel monthly adjustment for December 2023. The approval will put an additional burden of Rs49 billion on the power consumers. The consumers will pay an additional amount in next month's electricity bills. The recent power hike will not affect K-Electric and Lifeline consumers.

COMMENT

Ansar M Bhatti

AKISTAN'S political landrently experiencing level of cruelty. The nation has a history marred by political



victimization and witch-hunts, particularly during crucial voting periods. Practices such as mud-slinging, horse trading, and bashing have long been ingrained in Pakistani politics. However, the current situation has taken a darker turn.

A prominent political party has been effectively removed from the political stage, beginning with the imprisonment of its key leadership and culminating in the confiscation of its election symbol. The story doesn't end there. The party's founding leader, Imran Khan, has been handed a lengthy jail sentence. If relief is not granted by the higher judiciary, he faces spending the remainder of his life behind bars. This situation raises concerns about sheer injustice, as many are convinced that the prosecution and punishment of the PTI leader do not align with legal obligations. The need for a fair and just political environment in Pakistan has never been more pressing.

It is deeply distressing to note the unfortunate incident that occurred on

Are we heading towards a cul de sac?

The current situation has arisen due to the active involvement of politicians who, rather than fostering collaboration, have willingly served as instruments of discord against each other

January 31, where the PTI candidate from Bajaur Agency lost life due to an act of violence by unknown assailants. This tragic event highlights a disturbing trend where individuals resort to physical harm when unable to achieve their

goals through political means. In the past, similar incidents occurred, but they often went unnoticed due to the lack of a vibrant media landscape in Pakistan. During that era, the sole source of information was PTV, the only television channel in the country. Consequently, these occurrences failed to capture public attention. However, with the evolution of media, especially the rise of mainstream and social media, the situation has undergone a significant transformation.

The advent of various television channels, news platforms, and social media channels has enabled people to stay informed about events that may have otherwise been concealed. This heightened visibility has shed light on the experiences of individuals and the actions of political leaders in the past.

The accessibility and widespread reach of social media, in particular, have played a pivotal role in amplifying voic-

es and bringing attention to issues that were once overlooked. As a result, the public is now more aware of the historical challenges and events that have shaped their lives and political landscape. The evolving media landscape has empowered individuals to engage with and scrutinize their leaders, judiciary and other institutions fostering a more informed and vigilant citizenry.

One encouraging aspect of the current situation is the assurance that the election is scheduled to proceed on February 8. However, it's essential to acknowledge that a few voices express concerns about unforeseen events potentially disrupting the process before February 8. Despite various challenges and strategic maneuvers, it's noteworthy that the popularity of the PTI remains resilient, indicating a steadfast support base that has not wavered despite all odds. And that is exactly where the shoe actually pinches. The Establishment, it seems, has rarely faced a challenge as formidable as the one posed by the PTI and Imran Khan. Unlike previous instances, where efforts to tame a political party or leader may not have required maximum

exertion, the current situation demands an unprecedented level of diligence to contain the influence and momentum of the PTI and its leadership. Mainly three factors appear to have compelled influential individuals to pursue legal action against Imran Khan and ensure a resolution to the cases. These key elements played a pivotal role in driving the legal proceedings to a conclusive end:

Firstly, Imran Khan's recent article in The Economist, where he openly criticized the Establishment and assigned joint responsibility to them and the USA for his removal, likely fueled a sense of urgency among his opponents. This may have prompted them to expedite the closure of his political chapter before he

could garner further support. Secondly, the powers-that-be may have sought to conclude legal proceedings against him before the installation of a new political government. Dealing with an elected government might pose a more challenging task compared to a caretaker government, enabling them to exert influence more effectively.

Thirdly, a strategic assessment by influential figures may have led to the conclusion that imposing a sentence prior to the upcoming elections could dent Imran Khan's popularity. This potential decline in support might discourage his followers, possibly leading them to abstain from participating in the elections on February 8. Whether these gimmicks will prove effective remains to be seen; nonetheless, the incessant events have significantly eroded the credibility of the upcoming elections. Predicting the sustainability of the new government arising from these proceedings is challenging. If it falters, the potential outcomes include another election or an internal change. either of which would further jeopardize the fragile state of democracy and burden the masses. Unfortunately, even after 76 years of existence, Pakistan finds itself in a state of uncertainty. There appears to be no savior on the horizon capable of pulling the country out of its current predicament.

In summary, the current situation has arisen due to the active involvement of politicians who, rather than fostering collaboration, have willingly served as instruments of discord against each other. During Imran Khan's tenure, he displayed reluctance to engage with parties such as PML N or PPP, and now, the tables have turned, with him seemingly marginalized by these very parties. This detrimental trend needs to cease if the nation is to progress. It is imperative for politicians to prioritize unity over division, fostering a spirit of cooperation for the greater good of the country's advancement.

Malaysian envoy for coop with Pakistani hilal meat industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan on Wednesday emphasized the imperative of bolstering collaboration with Pakistan in the Hilal meat industry, highlighting the promising prospects of its potential for the production of Hilal meat, chicken, and dairy products.

He made the remarks during a guest lecture at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in connection with the 'Distinguished Lecture Series' of IPRI. The lecture, under the theme 'D plomatic Reflections' was focused on 'Pakistan-Malaysia Relations in the New Era.' The High Commissioner noted that Pakistan was Malaysia's third-largest trading partner export destination and second-largest import source. He said that the imports of palm oil by Pakistan from Malaysia had been increasing since the Malaysian Free Trade Agreement (FTA) came into effect

Pak HC-

designate to SL calls

on President

issuance

of SIMs

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan

Telecommunication thority (PTA) Zonal Office in Lahore, in close collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle, conducted successful raid against BISP Outlet located at Sharqpur. This BISP Outlet was found to be involved in activation of SIMs illegally. During the raid, 28 Active SIMs were discovered. The FIA team confiscated these active SIMs along with 01 HBL Konnect device as evidence. 01 person was also apprehended on the premises by the FIA team. FIA is currently investigating the matter further. PTA had filed complaint with FIA earlier based on information regarding illegal issuance of SIMs by the sale channel. The raids are part of PTA's ongoing efforts to prevent the circumvention of the Multi-Finin 2008. Pakistan imported 9% of its palm oil from Malaysia, while the rest was imported from Indonesia, he added. "As of January 2023, the total number of foreign workers in Malaysia is 1,493,581 whereas the number of registered Pakistani workers is 49,409, which is 3.31 percent of the total number of foreign workers in Malaysia," he remarked. It is estimated that currently Malaysia was home to more than 100,000 Pakistani diaspora, and the official recorded number of Malaysian diaspora stands at 150 people, while there are huge local Malaysian population living in Buner district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. As a way-forward, the envoy pointed out avenues such as elevating the existing Strategic Partnership and covering all areas of economics, technology and defence, enhancing leadership and people-to-people cooperation, addressing concerns in climate change and renewable energy sectors; evolving high-tech industry and benefiting from Pakistan's potential as a an agricultural powerhouse, and work

QUETTA: The speakers in

from all consortium Part-

for policy reforms for a shared and inclusive growth. The envoy said that as one of the founding members of ASEAN, Malaysia was highly committed to further strengthening ties between ASE-AN and Pakistan. He said that with an aggregate GDP exceeding USD 3 trillion, ASEAN was now ranked as the fifth-largest economy globally, poised to ascend to the fourth spot by 2050. He said that Pakistan was projected to be the 16th largest economy by 2050, and the total trade between ASEAN and Pakistan presently was over USD 11 billion. High Commissioner Azhar Mazlan said that Malaysia would never recognize Israel, until and unless there is a Two-State solution in the Middle East, and an independent State of Palestine is carved out. He remarked that Malaysia was a beneficiary of competent leadership, and through 12 consecutive Sustainable Programs, it has scaled new heights of suc-

Speakers unite for gender equality to combat poverty

the consultation organized by the National Commission on the Status of Wom-ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's en (NCSW) on Wednesday Commissioner-desagreed that promoting ignate to Sri Lanka Major gender equality to address General (Retd) Faheem Ul poverty, requires a multifac-Aziz called on President eted approach that tackles Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday. the root causes and empow-During the meeting, the ers both men and women. president said that Pakistan The participants raised attached great importance gender issues and poverty to its bilateral relations with a focus on the economwith Sri Lanka, which ic empowerment of women spanned over seven decand the eradication of povades of the strong bonds, erty. They submitted a set according to a President of recommendations that House news release. Presiincluded education and skill dent Alvi stressed the need development with Equal to further promote the peo-**Employment Opportunities** ple-to-people and cultural for all and especially womcontracts between Pakistan en and girls, enforcement of and Sri Lanka, besides conanti-discrimination laws and solidating the ties in the policies in the workplace. fields of economy and ed-NCSW consulted with proucation. He said that bilatvincial stakeholders on the eral trade volume with Sri preparation of the National Lanka must be increased to Report on "Need Analysis its full potential, adding the for Financing and Strengthgoodwill feelings of the two countries towards each othder Perspective for the Emer should be converted into powerment of Women and strong economic ties. APP Girls" to be presented by the Commission in the 68th PTA Session of the UN-Commisintensifies sion on the Status of Women, said a news release. The crackdown consultation was attended the representatives on illegal

atives from government departments, civil society organizations, NGOs, and media houses. The theme of the sixty-eighth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women that will take place from March 11 to 22, 2024 is "achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective." The subject consultation by NCSW in partnership Consortium members UN-WOMEN, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA was the concluding consultation in a series of dialogues conducted in Lahore, Peshawar, Gilgit-Baltistan Karachi, and Azad Jammu, and Kashmir. Chairperson NCSW Nilofar Bakhtiar extended gratitude to the consortium partners for their contin-NCSW and Consortium's pre-CSW consultations. As that is the overarching topic of CSW 68. She maintained that we look forward to working toward inclusive and sustainable remedies for gender-related challenges with a particular focus on economic empowerment and the eradication of pov-

gender experts, represent- time fight to foster gender equality while minimizing poverty by using an all-encompassing and integrated approach. Acknowledging the connections between gender issues and poverty is crucial, as is working together to address them with the help of communities, NGOs, governments, and the commercial sector. The opportunity to evaluate the progression and pinpoint persistent impediments limiting success was offered by this series of consultations organized around Pakistan. Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Muhammad Zubair Jamali applauded the accomplishments of NCSW, saying that women in Balochistan are progressive, viable, and performing their roles in every area. With emphasis on women's education, he declared that the government of Balochistan will state institutions for women's empowerment in every aspect of life. "We will investigate the forum's proposals with the help of NCSW and UN partners. Due to how closely related the problems of gender equality and poverty are, we must work collaboratively to forge a more equal and prosperous future. We



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy visiting stalls at Oil, Gas and Minerals Career Expo in Islamabad.-DNA

ISSI to collaborate with ICIMOD

During the interactive session, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood proposed forming an institutional relationship between ISSI and ICIMOD to strengthen cooperation on the range of mutual interest. He suggested developing a roadmap for collaborative events in 2024, fostering a closer working relationship between the two organisations. It was agreed that the designated focal persons on both sides would steer the collaborative process

ADIL SHAHEEN

ger Biometric Verification

System (MBVS).-APP

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), hosted a fruitful in-house session with Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal. The meeting brought together key representatives from both organizations, including Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood; Director CSP Dr. Neelam Nigar and CSP Research team; Mr. Shekhar Gimire, Director Operations, ICIMOD; and Dr. Faisal Mueen, Intervention Manager, ICIMOD. Ms. Aisha Khan, Executive Director, Civil Society Coa-

lition for Climate Change (CSCCC), also attended the meeting. n her introductory remarks, Dr. Neelum Nigar extended a warm welcome to the ICIMOD delegation, expressing hope for beneficial collaboration between the two organizations. For his part, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted ISSI's efforts in organizing various international and national conferences on climate change and its effects, multistake-holder consultations in the pre- and post-COP28 phases, and ISSI's commitment to deepen its collaboration with civil society on cross-cutting issues. He stressed that ISSI and ICIMOD should collaborate to promote shared objectives relating to raising awareness about the challenges posed by the effects climate change on moun-

tains and glaciers and climate resilience, including for mountain communities. Gyamtsho, in his remarks, emphasized ICIMOD's interest in working closely with ISSI on issues of mutual interests particularly focusing on the need for regional cooperation on climate change. He stressed the impact of climate change across South Asia, particularly in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region, advocating for international attention to the Third Pole. Dr. Gyamtsho underscored the need for enhanced transboundary cooperation in areas like water, air pollution, wetlands, ecosystems, and glaciology, citing the potential for South Asian countries to learn from Alpine and Arctic coalitions. Ms. Aisha Khan emphasized the

importance of training for media persons regarding climate change reporting. She also highlighted ICIMOD's role as a valuable data source for ISSI researchers and expressed optimism about increased exchanges between the two organizations, including for capacity building. During the interactive session, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood proposed forming an institutional relationship between ISSI and ICIMOD to strengthen cooperation on the range of mutual interest. He suggested developing a roadmap for collaborative events in 2024, fostering a closer working relationship between the two organisations. It was agreed that the designated focal persons on both sides would steer the collab-

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi talking to a cancer patient undergoing treatment at the hospital after inaugurating Cancer Care Hospital Manawan in Punjab's first government-built cancer hospital.-DNA

SCCI, UNDP collaborate to develop youth skills

Fuad Ishaq demanded

proactive steps to equip

young male and female en-

trepreneurs with informa-

tion technology, modern

techniques with assistance

from government and inter-

national institutions. The

SCCI chief highlighted the

importance of handmade

embroidery work and its de-

signers and asked UNDP to

further enhance such males

and females skills which

had a lot of revenue gener-

strengthen Industrial De-

velopment Bank of Pakistan

PESHAWAR DNA Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Fuad Ishaq and National Technical Specialist SDP-UNDP Abdul Haseeb Wednesday agreed on selection of top 10 industries regarding technical and information technology training for young males and females. Fuad Ishaq demanded the provision of immediate soft loans for male and female entrepreneurs through PICIC and IDBP. According to details, the meeting was held at the chamber house, which also attended by the chamber senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz and other officials concerned. The meeting discussed the provision of soft loans to youth ISLAMABAD : Federal Minthrough PICIC and IDBP, ister for Religious Affairs enhancement of their techand Interfaith Harmony nical skills, equipping them Aneeq Ahmed on Wedneswith information technology, modern business techniques and tools and other special training programs.

day stressed for following the Seerah of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in true sense in order to have a full comprehension of the Holy Quran. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Seerat Chair at Federal Urdu University, he said that truth was the basic trait of Seerat. Follow the truth, speak the truth and its implementation in every sphere of life were the lessons derived from the Holy Prophet's Seerah, he added. The minister said the establishment of the Seerat Chair at ation capacity. He urged to the Urdu University was a commendable initiative for guiding the new generation. The greatness of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) would contin-

ue to be articulated until

the Day of Judgment, and

essential for leadership,he added. Those doing the job of preaching Islam should align their conversations and discussion with the Holy Quran and Seerat Tayyiba, as both had been leading the human mindset and would continue to do till the end of time, he added "Today, we must reflect on whether we are disloyal to our Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). Our religion is complete, containing solutions to all issues. Knowledge and action are both necessary," he said, adding that students must be made aware of challenges such as secularism, artificial intelligence, and contemporary issues. Minister Aneeq said it was imperative to include a Seerat book in the curriculum from primary's to master's level. Vice-Chancellor Dr. Rubina Mushtaq, Dr. Mustafafeez Ahmad Alvi, Dr. Ahtesham-ul-Haq, and Dr. Hafiz

Abdul Rashid also spoke at the event. Dr. Mustafeez Ahmad Alvi, Head of Department of Islamic Thought and Culture at NUML, highlighted that the descent of the Holy Quran and the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) transformed the course of the world. He mentioned that the purpose of establishing the Seerat Chair was to help students to follow the Secrat Tayviba in their practical lives. "Accepting religion and adopting Seerat are one and the same," he added. Dr. Rubina Mushtaq, Vice-Chancellor of Federal Urdu University, remarked that the Western culture was having negative impacts on young generation.She said teaching the Holy Quran and Sunnah was essential for all departments of Urdu Universitv.Shields were presented to the dignitaries at the con-

Plantation drive on Rwp Ring road begins on Feb 15

as 20 percent physical work

of the ring road project

had been completed. After

the traffic network design

to link the ring road with

the motorway, work on the

Thalian Interchange would

be started, he added. Swan

Bridge should be complet-

ed as soon as possible, he

directed the authorities

concerned. The rest area

being built on the ring road

would be developed on

the pattern of Bhera rest

area, Liaquat Ali Chatta in-

formed. Liaquat Ali further

informed that the project

would be inaugurated on

August 14. The Ring Road

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta here on Wednesday said that the plantation drive on both sides of Rawalpindi Ring Road would be started from February 15. During a visit to the Ring Road Project camp office, the commissioner was given a briefing on the progress of the construction work. The Commissioner said that the ring road project would be completed within the stipulated time frame

would get employment opportunities near their respective areas, he said. Special attention should be given to the quality of the construction work, Liaquat Ali Chatta instructed and warned that no compromise would be made on the quality of the construction work. He said that after the completion of the ring road project, there would be a clear difference in the traffic flow of Rawalpindi city.

project would prove to be

a game changer for the

people of Rawalpindi, he

added. Once the ring road

is completed, the residents

Holy Prophet's Seerah must for Quran's comprehension



ANYONE WHO'S SOMEONE ...

reads Centreline



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Palestine Palestine Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Sudan

National Day

Jan 04 / Myanmar Independence Day

Armed Forces Day

Jan 12 / Tanzania

Jan 06 / Iraq

Jan 14 / Uzbekistan Armed Forces Day

Armed Forces Day

Jan 15 / Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Mali Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Laos Armed Forces Day

Jan 25 / Thailand Armed Forces Day

Jan 26 / Australia National Day

Jan 26 / India Republic Day

Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel....111 133 133 Marriott......051-2826121



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police)......15 Bomb Disposal.....15 Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad......1122 & 16 Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122 Motorway Police...9266044 Motorway Police, 9270601-20 Women Police Stations Islamabad......9222596 Rawalpindi......9270601-20

Enquiry

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WASA Rawalpindi.	.5555489
011	0001000



Hospitals

CMH	5611111
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa Internati	onal 4603666



pehai tillelitz		
CDA	9221334-43	
CDA	9208301-04	
Met Office	9250360-6	
RDA	5555864	
TMA	5770886	
Cantonment B	oard 9270151-3	

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Gohar hints at export target of US\$ 100b in next 5 years

Dr. Gohar Ejaz said that Pakistan needs to boost exports to improve its economy, therefore, the private sector should focus on diversification of exports to achieve better results for the economy

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister for Commerce and Interior said that the government intends to take Pakistan's exports to US\$ 100 billion in the next 5 years and the business community should play an active role in achieving this target. He said this while talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz said that Pakistan needs to boost exports to improve its economy, therefore, the private sector should focus on diversification of exports to achieve better results for the economy. He said that the business community should partner with the government in accelerating the economic development of the country. He said that the business community should also take an active part in corporate social responsibility activities to address issues of the poor segments of society and promote welfare activities in the country. He assured that he would coop-



of the business community to facilitate them in business promotion. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the ICCI is making efforts for the establishment of an Expo Centre and a new Industrial Estate in the region and the government should cooper-

ate in the completion of these projects. He said that ICCI should be given representation in the Export Development Fund. He said that a Facilitation Desk of Passport Office should be set up at ICCI and a separate immigration counter should be set up at airports for the taxpayers. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI

said that the government should offer a special package to the SMEs and the industry in the next budget to facilitate their better growth. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the Islamabad Police should be further strengthened by enhancing its workforce to ensure better security in the federal capital. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Lead-

er, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, Abdul Rauf Alam, Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Tariq Sadiq, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masud, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former Presidents ICCI, Ch. Waheed ud Din, Muhammad Naveed Malik. and others were in the ICCI delegation.

Tea import bill up by 5.53 percent to \$336.4 mln in 6 months

ISLAMABAD: Tea imports into the country witnessed an increase of 5.53 percent during the first half of current fiscal year as compared to the last year's corresponding period, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The tea imports into the country increased up to \$336.423 million during July-December (2023-24) compared to the imports of \$318.798 million in July-December (2022-23), according to PBS data. In terms of quantity, the imports surged by 9.12 percent as the country imported 139,751 metric tonnes tea during the period under review as compared to the imports of 128,068 metric tonnes. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the tea imports during December 2023 decreased by 16.80 percent to \$58.869 million from last December's \$70.759 million. The imports of the commodity however witnessed an increase of 9.81 percent in December 2023 when compared to the imports of \$53.608 million in November 2023, according to PBS data. The overall food group imports into the country during the first half of the current fiscal year witnessed a decrease of 19.48

COMSTECH organizes training course in histopathology

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH in collaboration with Benadir University in Mogadishu, Somalia organized 5-day extensive training course in histopathology. The course was inaugurated on Wednesday at Benadir University in Mogadishu. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH said in his online delivered welcome remarks that I congratulate the rector of Benadir University for taking lead in organizing first event of COMSTECH in your institution. He said that in Africa, histopathology assumes particular significance due to the high prevalence of

infectious diseases, tropical illnesses, and other emerging health challenges. He said that the accurate diagnosis of conditions, ranging from infectious diseases to cancers, is essential for effective healthcare management. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that the availability of trained histopathologists in the African region is rather limited. There is a pressing need for investment in the capacity building of histopathologists to build local expertise. Prof. Choudhary said that the world renowned histopathologist and COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar, Prof. Dr. Shahid Pervez is leading this comprehensive training course of histopathology for the capacity building

of Histopathologists of Somalia and Africa. He said that his team includes Dr. Nasiruddin, Associate Professor of Histopathology, and Dr. Zeeshan Uddin, Assistant Professor and consultant histopathologist, at the Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan. He said that I am confident that the participants of this 5-day training course will benefit immensely from these experts. The inaugural session was also addressed by the Rector, Prof. Dr. Mohamed Mohamud Hassan, and the Dean, Prof. Dr. Mohamed Mohamud Ali, of Benadir University. Prof. Hassan thanked COMSTECH for organizing this very important training course and

said that This event marks an important milestone in our pursuit of excellence in medical education, training and research. The Rector said that the knowledge of histopathology is key in the field of diagnosis of diseases. Prof. Shahid Pervez said that without histopathology, medicine is blind. He said that histopathology is very crucial in the diagnosis in lab tests. He emphasized that the role of histopathology solely depends on the skills and knowledge of the practitioners, that can only be achieved through learning and continuous reading. About 100 practitioners of histopathology and allied fields are participating in the training course physically.

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner-designate of Pakistan to Sri Lanka, Major General (retd) Faheem Ul Aziz, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

Snow-clad valley in Northern areas, majestic Margalla hills of Islamabad attracts tourists after rain

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the onset of snowy weather coupled with rain, various parts of the country are witnessing a majestic look with its picturesque views which have become an adventurous charm for tourists coming from other plain cities of the country. The snowfall and rain have boosted the tourism sector as tourists made a beeline to the valleys to experience the scenic views, according to a report aired by a private news channel. Despite biting cold, a great rush of tourists was witnessed on Sunday at popular tourist destinations including Murree, Malam Jaba, Kalam, Naran, Kaghan, Swat, Hunza, Ziarat, Chitral and Kashmir, like every year.

The first snowfall of the year in the upper areas of Swat, Malam Jabba, Murree hills has covered the high peak mountains and also spread a

white sheet on the lakes located in the high altitude turning the area into a fairy world, said a visitor of GB. The charm of the snowfall season in Murree is a captivating experience and offers a range of activities and sights to make it a must-visit destination, said a tourist while enjoying 4 inches of snow. The capital city of Pakistan after rain also added majestic colours to the city that lies at the foot of Margalla Hills, said a visitor of the city. Islamabad is a beautiful city with well-planned development and plenty of greenery, said a visitor from Punjab, adding, It would not be an exaggeration to say that Islamabad is amongst the most beautiful capitals in the world. "Trail 3 and 5 are the most attractive place for residents of the capital after a tough day at the office", said a The Kalam local in Islamabad. Valley is an awe-inspiring tourist resort, with high peak and snow-

capped mountains, majestic lakes, magnificent waterfalls, thick forests and lush green meadows, said a foreign tourist.

Tourists while enjoying snowy weather and adrenaline junkies alike say that Malam Jabba has a variety of options for the discerning traveler, said another visitor. Another local said Swat is also the best travel destination during winter. "The valley offers a variety of spots. This year we visited Malam Jabba for some fun and adventure and even went on the chairlift." According to PTDC and district administration of Rawalpindi. tourist are advised to use extra warm cloths, keep the window of the cars open for fresh air and continually clean snow from the exhaust pipe of vehicles. The tourists are also asked to switch off the engine while standing still and not use heaters for more then ten minutes in an hour.

RCCI hosts lunch for diplomats

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) hosted the lunch in the honor of OIC Ombudsman Association and Ambassadors at a local hotel in Islamabad. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq along with Group Leader and Chief Business Advisor FTO Sohail Altaf gave a warm reception to the visiting delegation. Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, President Seref Malkov of the OIC Ombudsman Association along with representatives from OIC nations. Ambassadors including H.E. Mehmet Paçac (Turkiye), H.E. Mohamed Karmoune (Morocco), H. E. Khazar Farhadov (Azerbaijan), H.E. Dr Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan (Egypt) Defense Attaché Egypt. Muhammad Saad, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Fauzia Vigar (FOSPAH),

ers, graced the event. Vice President RCCI Mr. Faisal Shahzad, Former Presidents, EC members, representatives from the trade associations, Mr. Tariq Jadoon, President of the Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry Rawalpindi, Women members and distinguished RCCI members were also present on the occasion. President Seref Malkov of the OIC Ombudsman Association paid gratitude for the warm hospitality and added that Pakistan is an important member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) and can work proactively by expanding its mandate from addressing the issues of bad governance to taking up human rights violations, corruption etc and also for international peace and reconciliation. He also expressed the association's commitment to expanding its membership and collectively

combating human rights violations prevalent across Muslim countries. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq in his welcome remarks appreciated the role of OIC Ombudsman Association for enhancing capacity and providing member countries with a platform to exchange ideas for better governance. Group Leader Sohail Altaf thanked the visiting delegation and remarked that it was an honor for us for hosting OIC Ombudsman members. In his speech, FTO Asif Jah said that I am grateful to Saqib Rafiq, President of Rawalpindi Chamber and Group Leader Sohail Altaf, who made the best arrangements for the OIC delegation. On this occasion, Chief Business Advisor FTO, Sohail Altaf also presented a resolution to condemn Israeli brutality and atrocities, which was supported by the participants by raising their hands.



accessibility to health and continuity of care.



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Mach attack martyrs funeral prayers held: ISPR

RAWALPINDI: The funeral prayers of the Mach attack martyrs were held at Headquarters FC Balochistan (North), Quetta who embraced martyrdom while fighting the terrorists in Mach, Bolan on the night of January 29 and 30. The funeral prayers of martyred soldiers identified as Lance Naik Rehmat Ullah, age 30 years, resident of district Dera Ghazi Khan and Sepoy Muhammad Zaman, age 28 years, resident of district Tank were offered in Headquarters FC Balochistan (North), an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said on Wednesday. The senior serving military officers, soldiers, and a large number of locals of the area attended the funerals. Later Bodies of the Shuhada were later dispatched to their hometowns, where they would be laid to rest with full military honour.-APP

ANF recovers 24 kg drugs operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Nar-

cotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 24 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He said that 2 kg Ice drug was recovered from a Bahrain-bound passenger going from Islamabad Airport while 774 grams heroin was recovered from another Bahrain-bound passenger going from Bacha Khan Airport. In the third operation, 700 grams Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar from Multan Airport, 684 grams hashish was recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah from Islamabad Airport while 460 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from the UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi and an accused was also arrested. 10 kg hashish was recovered from a passenger of Sohrab Goth Karachi and 5 kg hashish was recovered from an accused netted near Chamkani, Peshawar. 4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near Peshawar. In ninth operation, 1 kg opium and 526 grams hashish were recovered from three suspects netted in Lahore. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.-APP

47 women to contest polls on general seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as many as 47 women candidates from different political parties will contest on general seats of National Assembly and Provincial Assembly in upcoming elections. According to data available with APP, the record increase was witnessed in women aspirants of contesting on general seats after imposition of condition on political parties that at least 5 percent women should be awarded party tickets on general seats. Pakistan League-Nawaz Muslim (PML-N) has fielded candidates on the general seats of the National Assembly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa included, Sobia Shahid to contest polls from NA-29 and NA-31 from Peshawar while Farah Khan is participating in polls from NA-24. Similarly, on the general seats of the provincial assembly, Sobia Khan from PML-N will contest elections from PK-76, Shaista Khan from PK-46. Likewise, Basirat Khan will participate in elections from PK-94, Orkazai and Janzeeba Azam to contest from PK-108, Tank. About the participants of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on the National Assembly seats, it fileded Meher Sultana from NA-38 and Farzana Shireen from NA-39 on gen-

eral seats. -APP

Aggrieved journalists to challenge Bara Kahu plot allotment in court

The journalists have keenly noted a concerning trend where numerous seasoned journalists are being overlooked, purportedly due to their transition into ownership roles. Despite this narrative, it is noteworthy that several proprietors have been beneficiaries of plots in the Bara Kahu scheme

DNA

SLAMABAD: Hundreds of ournalists affected by the plots gathered in the National Press Club Islamabad to discuss the release of a controversial list against the allottees in the housing scheme by the Federal Ministry of Information and the Federal Housing Authority. A meeting was held in which, after coming up with different proposals, it was agreed that the case will be fought against the illegal

allotments of government housing schemes Behara Kahu and Sector F 14 and 15 in all forums including the high courts. Rules have been violated in them, the age, experience and seniority of the applicant have not been taken into consideration. It has been said in the resolution that senior journalists have been ignored in previous schemes including this scheme, incomplete lists have come to light, so complete lists should be provided. The journalists have keenly noted a concerning trend where

numerous seasoned journalists are being overlooked, purportedly due to their transition into ownership roles. Despite this narrative, it is noteworthy that several proprietors have been beneficiaries of plots in the Bara Kahu scheme. This observation raises questions about the fairness of sidelining senior journalists solely based on their newfound ownership status. The injustice lies in the failure to recognize the extensive contributions of these individuals, who dedi-

cated their entire careers to the profession. It is crucial to acknowledge that even after assuming roles as publishers of newspapers or periodicals, these journalists continue to actively practice their craft. Excluding them from considerations neglects their invaluable experience, knowledge, and commitment to journalism. The criteria for recognition and benefits should be inclusive, considering the enduring dedication these individuals have displayed to

the field, rather than disproportionately focusing on their transition to ownership roles. The participants of the meeting expressed no confidence in the Scrutiny Committee of Journalists and demanded the establishment of a new Scrutiny Committee in which the committee of affected journalists is also asked to be represented. In the resolution, the government agencies have been demanded to inspect the documents submitted by the applicants in both phases of

Bihara Kahu and other proposed schemes, to investigate the submitted affidavits and service records, to check the submission of fake documents. The registration of those should be cancelled. Already beneficiaries of government schemes

In addition to the members of the coordination committee, the former president of National Press Club Shakil Qarrar expressed solidarity with all the affected journalists and announced to support them in every forum for the establishment of merit and rights.

ECP grants

first-class

magistrate

powers to

Presiding

Officers

ISLAMABAD: The Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has delegated first-

class magistrate powers to the Presiding Officers to ensure the seamless execution

of the general elections in 2024. "All the Presiding Of-

ficers will have the powers of

magistrate from February 7 to $\overset{\circ}{9}$ in the upcoming general

elections on February 8," the

spokesman of the ECP told

APP. The spokesman said that

the Presiding Officers will be

able to conduct trials on the

spot besides the powers to be

able them to proceed under

Sections 169, 171 and 174 of

the Election Act. He said the

ECP had already granted the

powers of a first-class magis-

trate to the District Returning

Officers (DROs) and Return-

ing Officers (ROs) to ensure

smooth electoral process.

"The magisterial powers

were conferred upon District Returning Officers (DROs)

and ROs in accordance with

Section 193 of the Election

Act 2017.-APP



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi speaking during a condolence refence held for senior journalist Pervez Shaukat how passed away a few days ago. -Photo Mudassar Raja

remittances is worrying

ISLAMABAD Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Wednesday expressed concern over the continued fall in home remittances. He said the country's economic lifeline must be saved from the Hundi mafia and that the money received should be circulated, which has long been frozen in the unproductive property sector. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the government must find ways to encourage Pakistanis working overseas so that the volume of remittances could be increased. Up to \$ 30 billion a year is sent by Pakistanis living abroad. However, the banks withhold the dollars and pay the recipient families in local currency. This is where the government's interest ends. The money received is used to keep many families afloat, and a sizable portion of this capital is invested in real estate. The capital is stuck in property sector for years as investors wait for prices to increase, he informed. The business leader said the property mafia plunders some hard-earned money. In contrast, the remaining money is frozen for many years in the property sector which could be used for national development. He said that if this huge capital is directed to active sectors, it will play an essential role in developing industry and agriculture, but this has never been considered seriously. -APP

Continuous decline in

Education can help change country's fate: President

Arif Alvi on Wednesday said through the combination of education, intellect and morality, the youth could change the fate of the country. He said Pakistan needed leadership and proper use of intellect more than the solutions, which he believed the youth of the country was fully capable of playing this role. Addressing the convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), the president said the Chinese development was made on the basis of education and health, and Pakistan also needed to follow the Chinese model to achieve the goals of rapid development.

Citing an example of Vietnam that was destroyed during the war in 1973, the president said that in 1999, the fisheries' export of both Vietnam and Pakistan was US\$300 million that had now been increased to around \$11 billion a year

export of only \$500 million. "Resources do not develop the countries, education does", he added. Calling the successful graduates of the university as elite of the country, the president said they were elite because they had the privilege to secure a graduate degree in a country where 44% or more than 26 million children were still out of school. While comparing with the region, he said all the regional countries had 98% ratio of school going children. "Some 55000 schools had been built in the country so far, while to accommodate all out of school children, the government will have to build 50,000 more schools which is not an easy task keeping in view the resource availability in the country," he added. He pointed out that around 300,000 mosques in the country could be

dent Alvi regretted that the developed world that was claiming to be the champion of democracy and humanity had lost the sense of sympathies with the humankind. He said the world was now running on vested interests, as zero sympathies were being shown by the West amid the atrocities being done on innocent people of Gaza. He said Pakistan was hoping to get the Kashmir issue resolved by using the United Nations platform but despite passing of over 70 years, the issue was still unresolved. "If the exploitation of wealth ends in the world and every person gets its due right, the killing of the people will automatically be stopped," the president remarked. He advised the successful graduates of the university to continue their struggle for seeking knowledge in their practical life. He also asked the women graduates not to

sitting at home after getting marriage. He said in today's era of technology, women could easily manage their jobs and family works. The president said due to timely and prudent strategies of the government, Pakistan was declared as the world's 5th best performance country during COVID-19. Recognizing the leadership's decision of establishing the AIOU in 1970s, the president said the university was playing key role in imparting education to the people especially in remote areas of the country. Earlier, the president also conferred degrees and medals to the successful students. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Dr Nasir Mehmood said until now, some 5 million students had been graduated from the university. He said the university was providing free education to the transgenders, jail inmates, and children of the

Snowfall in Murree; CTP issue traffic advisory for tourists

utilized to educate the out

He requested the tourists to follow the advisory to avoid any kind of inconvenience or incident to have safe tourism RAWALPINDI: City Traffic possible facilities for the

Police (CTP) Rawalpindi on Wednesday issued an advisory for the visitors heading towards the hill station, Murree to enjoy snowfall. According to a CTP spokesman, the police on the directives of City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Taimoor Khan had devised a comprehensive plan to facilitate the tourists heading towards the 'Queen of Hills Murree' for spending recreational time with their families and friends in the chilly weather. He said, the CTP had deployed senior traffic officers to monitor traffic arrangements in the hill station to ensure smooth and safe traffic flow during the snowfall. A special traffic control room with landline numbe 051-9269200 had also been set up where the citizens could call around the clock for any kind of help, he added. He further said the control

room would organize all

tourists and make arrangements for handling any emergency. The spokesman informed that they had increased number of traffic wardens, junior traffic wardens - under the supervision of inspectors – who were deployed at all key points of the hill station. Moreover, they have designated several points for car parking. A number of main roads including Kashmir Point, Mall Road, Guldana Road and other roads had been closed for two-way traffic to ease traffic flow. He said though the snow blanket made the "Queen of Mountains" even more beautiful, which attracted a large number of tourists, but the motorists could face traffic congestion due to slippery roads and traffic congestion. The snowfall attracts thousands of tourists to these scenic sites which resulted in extra traffic load on the roads choking almost every artery linking Rawalpindi-Islamabad these hilly spots.

ue to the huge influx of tourists towards Murree, administration and CTP have issued an advisory here which appealed to the citizens to use their own line and avoid using the dual line as preventive measures. According to the advisory, the tourists are requested to use petrol-based vehicles and strictly prohibited to use CNG-based vehicles which may cause problems in cars due to extreme cold in the snow. In the advisory, the families with infants and asthma patients are also advised to avoid travelling to Murree. It also asked the tourists to strictly follow one way and don't violate it for the smooth run of traffic.

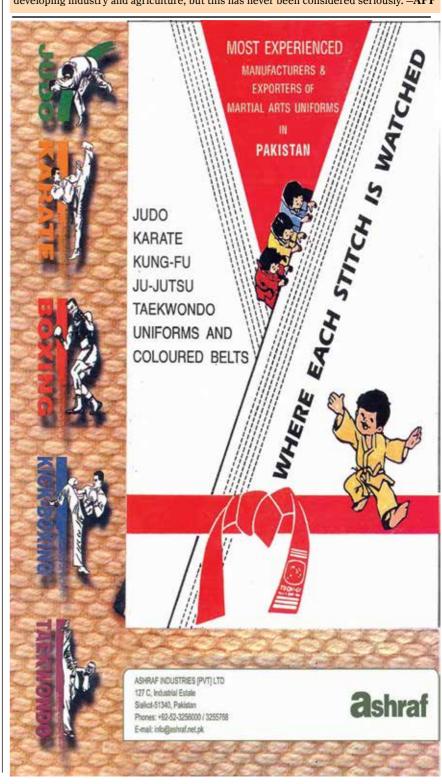
He requested the tourists to follow the advisory to avoid any kind of inconvenience or incident to have safe tourism.

Seminar to promote to promote Testing Laboratory

martyrs.-APP

ISLAMABAD: Council of Renewable Energy Technologies (PCRET) organized a joint Pak-Korea Seminar on Wednesday to discuss and promote the "Establishment of PAK-KO-REA Testing Laboratory for PV Modules and Allied Equipment". The seminar was arranged in collaboration with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) supported by Korea Conformity Laboratories (KCL). The project is supported by KOICA through grant-aid of USD 9.5 Million and local share of Rs. 185.8 Million is funded through the Public Sector Development Programme. The Pak-Korea Seminar was attended by a five-member delegation from KCL and Korea Energy Agency (KEA) along with representatives of KOICA Pakistan office. Senior officials of PCRET and the Ministry of Science of Tech-

nology (MoST).-APP



Stoltenberg still hawking his outdated wares

ATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg is taking full advantage of his visit to Washington this week to assist efforts to push lawmakers in the United States and the European Union to approve respectively billion additional assistance package and a 50 billion (\$54.5 billion) fourvear budget to support Ukraine in its conflict with Russia. The warm response the NATO chief has received from the Joe Biden administration on the issue was expected, because not only has the Ukraine crisis been orchestrated and continuously exploited by the Biden administration, but also Stoltenberg's extension of his fourth term as NATO chief from July last year to October this year was at Washington's insistence. That he will become the second-longest serving head of the military alliance by then speaks volumes of how much Washington needs a puppet such as him at the head of the organization to help ensure it is always ready to do the US' bidding. With Europe having started to show the desire to stand on its own feet, the US has sought to tighten its grip on the security alliance.

As predicted, instead of providing US lawmakers with any insightful, latest observations from the European front or on how to end the conflict that has proved costly for the whole world, Stoltenberg only acted as a clumsy mouthpiece of the Biden administration. Speaking at a news conference in Washington on Tuesday, Stoltenberg warned: "It will be a tragedy for Ukrainians if President Putin wins but it will also make the world more dangerous and all of us more insecure ... It will embolden other authoritarian leaders - not only President Putin, but also North Korea, Iran and China to use force." With many US lawmakers focused on opposing China, Stoltenberg went further in alleging: "Today it's Ukraine; tomorrow it could be Taiwan." Although the world knows it clearly that the Taiwan question is fundamentally different from the Ukraine crisis, Stoltenberg has never ceased trying to link the two on the international stage. But even the Biden administration is learning to speak with prudence when it comes to China-related issues, not least the Taiwan question, after reaching mutual understanding with Beijing in November on the need to repair bilateral ties and responsibly manage risks. Notably, Stoltenberg chose to avoid his usual preaching on human rights conditions in Ukraine this time. That largely stems from his awareness that US lawmakers are divided on the Biden administration's moves in the Middle East that have not only enabled the grave humanitarian crisis to unfold in Gaza but also cost US lives lately. Not surprisingly, Republican lawmakers who are pushing the Biden administration for tougher immigration and border control policies in exchange for approving more money for Ukraine did not lend an ear to his words. During Stoltenberg's decade-long tenure as its chief, NATO has expanded three times. Although he claimed each time that the expansion would boost Europe's security and make the world a safer place, the opposite has been true. It is to be hoped his successor bears that in mind.



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Historic deal fuels Northern Ireland govt functioning

efore the elections to Northern Ireland's assembly in 2022, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson repeatedly refused to say that he would accept a Sinn Féin first minister. What a difference a deal makes. Although Sir Jeffrey says that he didn't get all he wanted from the British government over changes to post-Brexit trade arrangements, it was enough to satisfy him. In return, he won't stand in the way of Stormont getting its first Irish republican leader, Michelle O'Neill. Sinn Féin is opposed to Northern Ireland's existence. By this weekend, Ms O'Neill could be in charge of it. This would be a seismic event in Northern Ireland. Two years ago, Sinn Féin became the first nationalist party to win a Northern Ireland assembly election. There are urgent reasons for Stormont to sit again, not least to spend the £3bn financial package on tackling hospital waiting lists and settling public sector pay claims. More's the pity that Stormont's power-sharing executive will not be revived in time to prevent Northern Ireland's transport workers going out on strike this Thursday. While the assembly was suspended, infighting within unionism has taken off. Many of the movement's leading lights look adrift from broader concerns. The death of Queen Elizabeth and the 2022 census result, showing more Catholics than Protestants in the north, are signs that the movement risks being left behind. As recently as 2017, unionists held a majority in the assembly, as they had done in every parliament or assembly since Northern Ireland was first established in 1920. Yet the last elections suggested an inbuilt unionist majority had gone. While Sinn Féin's success in the last assembly election was a dramatic result, the most substantive shift was the surge in support for the centrist, border-neutral Alliance party. With its roots - and increasingly its support - in moderate unionism, the party could be seen as a rebirth of Protestant liberalism. Alliance politicians have worked with Sinn Féin to oppose Brexit. Both parties accepted the Northern Ireland protocol, which keeps the region aligned with EU rules to avoid the border infrastructure that had proved divisive before the 1998 Good Friday agreement. The parties have also worked together on controversial issues such as abortion rights and equal marriage. This augurs well for the new assembly, which must vote by December to keep the protocol, rebranded by Rishi Sunak as the Windsor framework. Without details of the DUP's deal with the British government being released, there seem to be little but cosmetic changes made to the framework. The deal's timing is relevant as mainland checks on imports from the continent begin this week. The more the UK diverges from EU standards, the greater the potential cost of bureaucracy involved in exporting to and importing from Europe. Northern Ireland must be able to move on from the smoke and mirrors of Brexit, which has often been used to encourage the traditional insecurities of unionists. The devolved government in Belfast is in charge of most public services, including schools, hospitals, roads and the justice system. For it to function effectively requires the region's politicians to work together and not fuel new divisions. Closer ties with the EU would help by smoothing trade across the Irish Sea, Sir Keir Starmer, who is likely to be in power within a year and favours a better relationship with Brussels, could very well be

Henry Kissinger and American diplomacy

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



During World War II, Kissinger became a citizen of the United States and worked in the U.S. Army as someone who translated German. After the war, he went to Harvard University and got a bachelor's degree in 1950 and a Ph.D. in 1954. He continued working at

Harvard, and in 1957

enry Alfred Kissinger became the Secretary of State on September 21, chosen by President Richard M. Nixon. He held this position from September 23, 1973, to January 20, 1977. This was a big deal because he was the first person to be both Secretary of State and National Security Adviser. He had been the National Security Adviser since President Nixon started in 1969. But things changed on November 3, 1975, when President Gerald R. Ford removed him from the National Security Adviser role, although he still remained the Secretary of State. Kissinger was born in Germany as Heinz Alfred Kissinger. Life became hard for his Jewish family when the Nazis took over, so they moved to the United States in 1938 and settled in New York. That's when Henry's name was changed to Henry.

During World War II, Kissinger became a citizen of the United States and worked in the U.S. Army as someone who translated German. After the war, he went to Harvard University and got a bachelor's degree in 1950 and a Ph.D. in 1954. He continued working at Harvard, and in 1957, he became the Associate Director of Harvard's Department of Government and Center for International Affairs. In the 1950s and 1960s, Kissinger gave advice to different government groups, like the National Security Council's Operations Coordinating Board, the Department of State, the Operations Research Office, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In 1968, when Richard Nixon became the President, he picked Kissinger to be his National Security Adviser. After they worked closely together during Nixon's first term as President, Nixon did something unusual by appointing Kissinger as both the new Secretary of State and keeping him as the National Security Adviser. Kissinger started working for the government just two weeks before Egypt and Syria surprised Israel with an atthat the U.S. sent military supplies to Israel by air, helping Israel in the war and causing OPEC countries to stop sending oil to the U.S. Later, when a ceasefire was agreed upon through the United Nations, Kissinger traveled between Middle Eastern countries

to make agreements for them to stop fighting. This led to agreements between Egypt and Israel in January 1974 and between Syria and Israel in May 1974. Kissinger's efforts also played a part in OPEC deciding to end the oil embargo. When President Nixon resigned due to the Watergate scandal in August 1974, Kissinger stayed in his roles under the new President Ford. He helped Ford get used to dealing with other countries and continued the policies started by Nixon and himself, like improving relations with the Soviet Union, establishing relations with China, and working on Middle East peace. Kissinger was also a key figure in the negotiations for the Helsinki Accord in August 1975, a deal signed by 35 countries to improve relations between the East and West. In September tack in 1973. This event, known as the Octo- 1975, he helped with another agreement beber War, had a big impact on Kissinger's time tween Egypt and Israel, bringing them closas the Secretary of State. First, he made sure er to peace. During his time as Secretary, Kissinger faced controversy for influencing U.S. policies toward countries like Chile and Angola. He also dealt with new international issues like the law of the sea, which became important for U.S. foreign policy in the following decades.

CPI-2023 and elections

Qamar Bashir



This progress, the best since 2021, signifies an improved public perception of corruption reduction in the country, offering hope for future governance and development efforts. (For reference with a score of 1, Denmark is at position 1) Marium Aurangzeb, the PML(N) spokesperson and former Information Minister, swiftly criticized the jailed ex-Prime Minister and PTI founder for failing to combat corruption, a major pledge of his administration. Concurrently, she lauded Shahbaz Sharif for Pakistan's CPI score

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akistan's improvement in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2023, with its score increasing from 27 to 29 and its ranking rising from 140 to 133, marks a significant achievement since 2021. This advancement reflects a positive change in the nation's fight against corruption, potentially boosting its attractiveness for foreign investments and economic growth. This progress, the best since 2021, signifies an improved public perception of corruption reduction in the country, offering hope for future governance and development efforts. (For reference with a score of 1, Denmark is at position 1) Marium Aurangzeb, the PML(N) spokesperson and former Information Minister, swiftly criticized the jailed ex-Prime Minister and PTI founder for failing to combat corruption, a major pledge of his administration. Concurrently, she lauded Shahbaz Sharif for Pakistan's CPI score improvement during his term since April 2022, highlighting a significant governance milestone. This strategic narrative amplifies PML(N)'s governance credentials ahead of elections, contrasting their achievements with PTI's shortcomings. Historically, PML(N) have shown relatively lower corruption perceptions. Notably, during Nawaz Sharif's tenure in 1999, Pakistan ranked significantly higher at 87th. This ranking suffered in 2008, dropping to 133rd, but saw improvement in 2013 to 127th. The 2021 ranking fell again to 140th, yet, in a notable recovery, 2023 witnessed a climb to 133rd with a score of 29, marking a commendable progress in Pakistan's anti-corruption efforts. Following Bloomberg's positive economic review, Transparency International's CPI 2023 further boosts PML(N)'s pre-election momentum, showcasing their governance and anti-corruption strides. These accolades form a compelling narrative for PML(N), reinforcing their image as a transparent and effective party committed to reform, aiming to sway voters with a record of tangible achievements. Pakistan's CPI 2023 score of 29, while an improvement, underscores the need for introspection rather than celebration. This rating places it below even some non-democratic regimes, highlighting the gap between Pakistan and nations with robust democracies and strong legal frameworks, which consistently outperform in anti-corruption efforts. This situation calls for a strategic reassessment and enhanced reforms to elevate Pakistan's standing and

governance. Pakistan's CPI score of 29 and ranking at 133rd, contrasted with India's higher score of 39 and 93rd rank, underscores a significant concern. This gap highlights the urgent need for Pakistan to enhance its governance and anti-corruption measures to improve its standing and perception internationally, especially in comparison to its regional counterparts like India, which is recognized as a flawed democracy yet scores better. According to the report, the countries with strong rule of law, well-functioning democratic institutions, and effective governance, transparency, and accountability mechanisms sit on the top of the table like Denmark (score 90), Finland (87), New Zealand (85), and Norway (84). Conversely, the countries, characterized by conflict, restricted freedoms, weak democratic institutions, inadequate justice systems, broader governance and societal challenges and inequality and injustice sit at the bottom of the table such as Somalia (score 11), Venezuela, Syria, and South Sudan (each scoring 13). Given Pakistan's economic challenges and the urgent need to revitalize its financial stability and investor confidence, a robust anti-corruption drive is imperative. Eradicating corruption is not just about enhancing governance; it's crucial for leveling the economic playing field, fostering fair trade, attracting investments, and revitalizing tourism. It's a foundational step toward ensuring equitable access to services and bolstering public welfare, essential for Pakistan's rapid progress and global standing. For sustainable development and better international relations, this fight against corruption must be prioritized. Pakistan can engage with top-performing countries on the CPI index through diplomatic channels and international cooperation forums. By initiating dialogues, exchanging best practices, and seeking technical assistance or joint anti-corruption initiatives, Pakistan can learn from their successful strategies to improve governance, transparency, and accountability within its own systems. Collaborating on reform projects and participating in anti-corruption training programs can also be effective. Pakistan can also draw inspiration from Armenia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, which have significantly improved their CPI rankings through robust anti-corruption measures and reforms, particularly Armenia's post-2018 Velvet Revolution efforts. Adopting such proven strategies could be key for Pakistan to strengthen its corruption control mechanisms. For more insights, refer to Transparency International's report. Enhancing access to justice is fundamen-

tal in the fight against corruption, as it underpins accountability and deters impunity. By streamlining legal processes, broadening the definition of corruption victims, and empowering civil society to champion corruption cases, Pakistan can build a more inclusive and effective justice system. This holistic approach, learning from global best practices, can pave the way for substantial anti-corruption progress. While Pakistan's recent anti-corruption progress is encouraging, tackling grand corruption demands bolder measures. We must utilize international cooperation, leveraging the strengths of foreign justice systems with robust rule of law. This can involve collaborative investigations, asset recovery, and high-profile prosecutions that send a powerful message of accountability. Domestically, enhancing transparency is key. Publicly accessible data on legal proceedings, clear procedures, and an independent media foster public trust and deter manipulation. These combined efforts, local and international, will pave the way for a more robust, effective anti-corruption framework in Pakistan, ultimately building a fairer future for its citizens. A truly effective anti-corruption framework requires empowering its guardians - the justice system. This means shielding judges and prosecutors with security and dedicated reporting channels, fostering integrity through mandatory asset declarations and competitive salaries, and harnessing the power of community-based justice. Integrating informal systems through mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms can leverage local knowledge, improve access to justice, and build trust. By empowering both formal and informal systems, we create a more robust and impactful shield against corruption, ultimately safeguarding the future of Pakistan. Pakistan's improvement in the CPI-2023 underscores the potential for positive change with committed governance. This progress, while modest, marks a crucial step towards enhancing the nation's image and fostering an environment conducive to business, investment, and overall societal well-being. It's a reminder that, although the journey to eradicate corruption is arduous, it's attainable with persistent efforts, learning from global best practices, and reinforcing the rule of law and transparency. This momentum must be maintained and amplified to unlock Pakistan's full potential on the global stage.

-The writer is Press Secretary to the President(Rtd) Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC



Yet another 'hasty' sentence to Imran

From Page 01 Apparently, the jail trial was in view of the threats to the life of the petitioner, adding that it was not "malice". IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Jahangiri issued a detailed verdict while also rejecting the petitioner's objection over the appointment of the accountability judge. "Section 352 of the Criminal Code is applied in the Official Secrets Act case in the absence of a clear law." said the court. It added that the high court rules and Section 352 will be applied when the sessions court passes an order concerning the location. The court said that the objection over the notification of jail hearing being issued before the ref-

PTI candidate Rehan Zeb shot dead...

From Page 01

moving the Senate seeking poll delay in light of security threats. Previous general election campaigns have witnessed spasms of violence, with scores of candidates and voters targeted by bombings and gun attacks and it seems that the 2024 polls are likely to be no different as the country has witnessed a significant surge in targeting of electioneering activities and candidates. A day earlier, at least four people lost their lives after a blast targeted the former ruling party's rally in Balochistan's Sibi. Rehan is not the first Imran Khan-founded PTI leader to have lost his life in the runup to the polls as previously Shah Khalid was shot dead by unidentified men in the province's Swabi district.

Chinese ambassador lauds...

From Page 01 aviation cooperation and exchanges with China in the fields of human resource and technology so as to jointly address shared security challenges. He further said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic, defence relationship and time-tested friendship with China which are based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability". The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's efforts in promoting regional peace and lauded the steadfast determination of PAF leadership to ensure balance of power in the region. Both the dignitaries emphasized the need for enhanced Air Force to Air Force collaboration, with a particular emphasis on cutting-edge niche technologies in Cyber, Space and Electronic Warfare domains.

Xi receives Afghan envoy as...

From Page 01 the People, along with ambassadors from Cuba, Pakistan, Iran and 38 other countries. "China has understood what the rest of the world has not," Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's chief spokesperson, said Tuesday at an event on the social media platform X. "We are not in a unipolar world," Mujahid said while calling on Russia, Iran and other countries to take similar steps and upgrade bilateral diplomatic relations with Kabul. Xi told the new ambassadors that China is seeking deep friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation with their countries, Chinese state news

PTI, experts say verdict... not to stand in IHC, SC

agency Xinhua reported.

From Page 01 the high court's hearing could even be held. "It is a mistrial if cross-examination is not allowed. The cases against PTI founder are illegal and so is the sentence," Zafar maintained.

KTrade Securities becomes sponsor of Multan Sultan team

KTrade app is the most popular stock trading app in Pakistan with over 1 million downloads. We value the spirit of struggle, determination, optimism and teamwork which are shared with cricket and Multan Sultan

KARACHI: KTrade Securities (formerly known as KASB Securities), the leading stock trading platform in Pakistan has become the official sponsor of the Multan Sultan team for HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2024. This is the first time a capital markets firm from the Pakistan Stock Exchange has sponsored a cricket team at the premier cricket tournament in Pakistan. Cricket is more than a game, it is a celebration of hard work, persistence, struggle, competition and success. It brings us together as family, friends, society and nation. At KTrade, our mission is to connect Pakistani people to investment opportunities in Pakistan by helping them invest in stocks, bonds, government securities, commodities, mutual funds, and companies. We think financial planning and investment are critical for the well-being and success of every Pakistani household.



This should not be limited to only a select few. KTrade app is the most popular stock

trading app in Pakistan with over 1 million

determination, optimism and teamwork which are shared with cricket and Multan Sultan. "We are proud of our association with the Multan Sultan team. Multan Sultan is the underdog in the overdrive. They punch beyond their weight through passion and energy, which is the feat of a true champion. Their cricket is not only about the game on the field but about social and community development of a region which has deep historical value and entrepreneurial energy", said Ali Farid Khwaja, the Chairman of KTrade Securities. Hijab Zahid, General Manager of Multan Sultans also commented on the partnership: "We are extremely delighted to have KTrade on board. To have a respected stock brokerage firm in KTrade collaborating with us is a testimony of how popular Multan Sultans as a franchise is. Through this partnership, cricket is tapping into a new industry in Pakistan, which will prove to be beneficial for the game and the stock and commodity brokerage industry."

Lahore and Karachi share National Women's T20 title

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Lahore and Karachi shared the National Women's T20 Tournament 2023-24 title after rain forced the final match to be abandoned without a ball bowled.

The allocated prize money of PKR 1.5 million was divided between the two teams. Lahore ended the league stage reigning supreme in the points table, enjoying a 10-game winning streak. Meanwhile, Karachi had secured their place in the final after edging past Rawalpindi with a superior NRR. Rawalpindi captain Aliya Riaz and Multan captain Gull Feroza were jointly declared players of the tournament. Both players earned five Player of the Match awards - the most in the tournament. Aliya was the third-highest run-scorer of the tournament. finishing with 370 runs in 10 games, including three half-centuries and an unbeaten century. She also picked up 10 wickets in the tournament. Gull, the second-highest run-scorer, produced 479 runs on the back of five half-centuries and had five dismissals behind the stumps.

Lahore's Sidra Amin was awarded the best batter of the tournament for amassing 494 runs in 10 matches, including three half-centuries and a century. Lahore leg-spinner Ghulam Fatima was the most successful bowler of the tournament with an impressive tally of 21 wickets in 10 games at an average of 8.24 and an economy rate of just 4.44. Sidra Nawaz, also representing Lahore, was adjudged the best wicketkeeper of the tournament, having 15 dismissals behind the stumps, including six catches and nine stumpings. Players of the tournament - Aliya Riaz (370 runs & 10 wickets) (Rawalpindi) and Gull Feroza (479 runs & five dismissals) (Multan)

Best batter - Sidra Amin (494 runs) (Lahore), Best bowler -Ghulam Fatima (21 wickets) (Lahore), Best wicketkeeper - Sidra Nawaz (15 dismissals) (Lahore).

Babar 'not satisfied' with current form

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan captain and ace batter Babar Azam on Wednesday, disclosed that he is unsatisfied with his current performances and wants to continue pursuing excellence. Babar, who is representing Rangpur Riders in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), in an interview was asked about his current form. The right-handed batter responded that he was not satisfied and unveiled his goals to achieve many more milestones. "I am not satisfied with where I am right now, and there are still more milestones to achieve. When I fail, I talk to many people and learn from my mistakes," Azam said. He then acknowledged the challenge and threat the spin bowling poses on the tricky surfaces in Bangladesh but asserted that he strives to the fullest to adapt accordingly. "In the BPL, quality spinners pose a challenge, and I try to adapt my game according to the conditions everywhere. I have arrived here from New Zealand, and there is a difference in conditions between the two," Azam said. "I make an effort to play by staying on the wicket for partnership-building. Youngblood is a good thing in T20 cricket, but it needs to be accompanied by experience." – **Agencies**

Jay Shah reappointed as president of ACC

"I am grateful to the ACC Board for their continued trust. We must remain committed to ensuring the all-round development of the sport, with a special focus on regions where it is still in its infancy. The ACC is committed to nurturing cricket across Asia," Shah stated after his re-election

DUBAI: The secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Jay Shah, will continue as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), confirmed the Asian cricketing governing body on Wednesday. His reappointment as the continental body's chief was unanimously agreed upon during the ACC Annual General Meeting in Bali on Wednesday, 31st January. Jay Shah assumed the presidency of the ACC for the first time in 2021, succeeding Nazmul Hassan in January of that year. His term as the ACC president was extended until January 2024. At the age of 32 in 2021, Jay Shah became the youngest administrator to take on the role of ACC chief. Shah is now all set to continue in his role as the ACC chief for another two years. He completed his initial two-year term in 2021-22 and was reappointed as the ACC chief in 2023. "I am grateful to the ACC Board for their continued trust. We must remain committed to ensuring the all-round development of the sport, with a special focus on regions where it is still in its infancy. The ACC is committed to nurturing cricket across Asia," Shah stated after his re-election. Jay Shah guided the ACC through challenging times as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted world cricket. The men's Asia Cup took place in 2022 in the UAE after being relocated from Sri Lanka due to the latter's financial crisis. Shah also supervised the implementation of a hybrid model for the men's Asia Cup 2023, played in the 50-over format in Sri Lanka which was hosted by Pakistan, a decision for which he was greatly criticised due to never-ending rain in the country. - DNA

Mitchell Marsh win Australia's Cricketer of the Year award

SYDNEY: Mitchell Marsh concluded a remarkable comeback year by clinching the 2024 Allan Border Medal, presented to the most outstanding Australian men's cricketer of the past year, on Wednesday night during the 2024 Australia Cricket Awards

The all-rounder struggled to hold back tears as he looked back on his outstanding year, during which his return to the national team coincided with Australia being crowned Test and ODI world champions. The 32-year-old was reintegrated into the team by captain Pat Cummins and coach Andrew McDonald, and he fully repaid their faith.

Speaking in Melbourne, Marsh had to collect himself as he expressed gratitude to the duo for their belief in him. "I'd like to pay particular thanks to Ronny and Patty," he said. "You believed in me, I can't thank you enough for believing in me.

"I'm a bit fat at times and I love a beer but you see the best in me always and you've changed my life so thank you very much," he added. Marsh also paid credit to his team

and said it is a joy to play with his teammates. "To our team, I just love playing in this team now. I've had so much fun, especially over the last 12 to 18 months. We've had so much team success and \mbox{Im} really proud to have contributed to that over this period of time. "Everybody knows I love a good time and when you keep winning it iust gets better and better, so it's been great." Marsh was a decisive winner, concluding 79 votes ahead of Test and ODI captain Pat Cummins in a medal determined by players, umpires, and media. The West Australian benefited from reclaiming his place in the Test team during the Ashes, and he also played a pivotal role in Australia's impressive World Cup victory in India, contributing significantly in T20 matches.

He amassed the second-highest number of runs (1638 at 58.5) among Australian cricketers during the voting period across Tests, ODIs, and T20s, sharing this achievement with fellow World Cup hero Travis Head.

2024 Allan Border Medal voting $Mitchell\ Marsh-223$ Pat Cummins – 144 Steve Smith – 141 Mitch Starc – 135 Travis Head – 134. – Agencies

Pak down Switzerland in Hockey5s WC to clinch Challenger Trophy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan defeated Switzerland 10-1 on Wednesday to clinch the Challenger Trophy, awarded to the team which finishes in 9th place, during the ongoing Hockey5s World Cup in Muscat, Oman. Zikriya Hayat scored a hat-trick. Arshad Liaqat, Hanan Shahid and Rana Waheed Ashraf scored a brace each. Yesterday, Pakistan defeated Australia 11-3 in the 9th-12th place match to stay in the hunt for the Challenger Trophy. Captain Rana Waheed Ashraf scored five goals against Australia.

Pakistan were knocked out of the race for the quarter-finals of the Hockey5s World Cup on Monday stan just needed a draw against Poland in Pool A to make it through to the quarter-finals but the Green Shirts failed to grab the opportunity. Pakistan were 3-0 down at one stage but made a comeback to level proceedings at 6-6. However, Poland struck late to take the match away from Pakistan once again. Captain Rana Waheed Ashraf scored five goals for the losing side.

Pakistan played two matches on Sunday, losing one and winning the other. They beat Nigeria 11-5 to begin their campaign but went down 5-3 against the Netherlands.

The Netherlands will face Oman,

er today. According to the official FIH website, as its name suggests, Hockey5s is played with 5 athletes per team. It is particularly known for its non-stop end-to-end action, since the ball is in play for about 90% of a match, thanks to rebound-boards placed against the outside of the side-lines and back-lines. There are usually more goals with

Hockey5s than with the more traditional 11-a-side format of hockey, since players can score from anywhere after the attacking line. Furthermore, Hockey5s is played on a smaller pitch, which enables to bring hockey to new venues, even at

after losing 8-7 to Poland. Pakimeanwhile Malaysia will lock horns the heart of the cities. - Agencies Mali, SA reach Africa Cup of nations quarterfinals

Morocco joined the ranks of surprise casualties in AFCON as they suffered a 2-0 defeat to SA

SPORTS DESK

CAPE TOWN: Morocco joined the ranks of surprise casualties in the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) as they suffered a 2-0 defeat to South Africa . Meanwhile, Mali secured a spot in the quarterfinals. Bafana Bafana's Evidence Makgopa and Teboho Mokoena found the net in the second half, adding to Morocco's woes. South Africa once again proved to be a formidable opponent for the Atlas Lions, with Achraf Hakimi missing a penalty. Despite an impressive record since reaching the World Cup semifinals in Qatar two years ago, winning 11 out of 13 matches, Morocco's only two defeats in this period have come at the hands of South Africa. The shock last-16 result in the muggy Ivory Coast coastal city of San-Pedro came after Mali overcame Burkina Faso 2-1 in Korhogo, with Lassine Sinayoko scoring what proved the key goal.

Morocco joins defending champions Senegal, Tunisia, Algeria, Cameroon and Burkina Faso as teams ranked among the top 10 in Africa heading home early. On Saturday, South Africa will face Cape Verde in Yamoussoukro after hosts Ivory Coast and

Mali clash in Bouake. In the other quarterfinals, Victor Osimhen-inspired Nigeria face Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo meets Guinea on Friday. South Africa, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and DR Congo are former champions, while the other four title contenders are hoping to conquer Africa for the first time. While Morocco, thanks to their World Cup heroics, were favored to eliminate South Africa, two factors suggested there was a chance of a shock.

South Africa had won two and drawn two of five previous Cup of Nations meetings with Morocco from 1998. And despite being an African powerhouse for decades, Morocco has consistently flopped at the Cup of Nations since their lone triumph 48 years ago. Coach Walid Regragui called the repeated failures an "African curse," and the former national team full-back saw clinical South Africa pull off a deserved victory.

Makgopa stayed just onside to fire Bafana



in front on 57 minutes, and Morocco squandered a great late chance to equalize when Hakimi fired a penalty against the crossbar and over. A foul on Mokoena by Manchester United midfielder Sofvan Amrabat led to a VAR review that ended with a straight red card as he was the last defender.

Set-piece specialist Mokoena fired the free kick past Yassine Bounou and high into the net at the near post. Sinayoko scored his third goal at the Cup of Nations as Mali reached the quarterfinals for the first time since 2013 by defeating Burkina Faso 2-1 in Korhogo earlier on Tuesday. An early Edmond Tapsoba goal got Mali off to a great start in the last-16 tie, and Sinayoko doubled the lead just after halftime. Captain Bertrand Traore reduced arrears from a penalty for Burkina Faso, who had the ball in the net again only for Issoufou Dayo to be ruled offside. Victory was a welcome change of fortune for Mali, who has had two first-round and two last-16 exits since finishing third in South Africa 11 years ago. "It was a really tough match against a good side. We had to work extra hard, but I am glad we eventually got the result," said Sinayoko. "We can celebrate this victory while keeping at the back of our minds that there is still a lot of work ahead.'

Zero tolerance for violence during...

From Page 01 sored terrorism and targeting Pakistani citizens. The forum agreed that blatant violation of international laws by India and its real face be exposed to the world. The international community has already shown serious concerns over the criminal behaviour of India and its use of state apparatus for killing spree around the world. The forum reiterated unequivocal support for Palestine and the people of Gaza while noting the extremely negative fallout of the conflict and the potential to spill over in the wider region. The immediate need for a permanent ceasefire and enduring solution to the Palestinian question was unanimously recognised. In the same vein, Pakistan's resolve to support the people of IIOJK for their right of self determination was reiterated. Pakistan would continue to morally, politically and diplomatically support Kashmir brothers and sisters till justice is served in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions. The forum also discussed deployment of Pakistan Army to assist Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the peaceful conduct of General Elections 2024. Pakistan Army will perform assigned duties as per the Constitutional mandate, under the guidelines of ECP. No one would be allowed to indulge in violence in the name of political activity and sabotage the quintessential democratic exercise of conduct

ECP summons emergency..

of free and fair elections

From Page 01 been invited to participate in the meeting to review the law and order situation in both provinces. A leader of Awami National Party (ANP) was shot dead in Killa Abdullah town of Balochistan Wednesday. The incident comes as Pakistan has recently witnessed an uptick in terror activities, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. ANP leader Zahoor Ahmad was sitting in party office in Mezai Adda area of Killa Abdullah when unidentified gunmen sprayed it with bullets. Zahoor Ahmad died on the spot while a worker, identified as Moeen Khan, was injured in the attack. Yesterday, at least four people were killed while five were wounded in a bomb blast at a PTI rally in Balochistan's Sibi. The explosion occurred at a PTI election rally organised by party-backed candidate Saddam Tareen, who is contesting the upcoming polls from the NA-253 (Ziarat) constituency. On Monday last, an ANP candidate Aurangzeb Khan came under attack in Shangla in which his driver was injured. Police said unknown assailants opened fire at Aurangzeb Khan, ANP candidate for National Assembly constituency NA-11. The attack followed a gunbattle between the attackers and the guards of the ANP candidate which continued for a long time.

Israeli war crimes...

From Page 01

this brutal form reflects the scale of the tragedy to which Palestinian civilians are exposed, the mass massacres and executions of even detainees, in flagrant and gross violation of all relevant international norms and laws." Meanwhile, The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon- Hezbollah- continues to conduct military operations against the Israeli occupation enemy as the front along the Lebanese-occupied Palestinian border intensifies. Yesterday, Hezbollah announced the targeting of Israeli occupation forces in the "Tel Tayhat" with rockets, resulting in direct hits. Concurrently, Israeli media confirmed the launching of missiles from Lebanon toward the al-Manara settlement in the occupied Upper al-Jalil. David Azoulay, the head of the "Metulla" settlement council, publicly announced today that 130 settler housing units in "Metulla", out of 650, have been damaged since Hezbollah's operations began in the north, as per Israeli media outlets.

Azerbaijan lists polling station-set countries for **elections**

BAKU: The list of nations where polling stations have been set up in connection with the impending February 7 extraordinary presidential elections in Azerbaijan has become public, Trend reports referring to the Election 2024 (Independent Media Center). Polling stations have been set up in diplomatic missions and consulates of the countries in Italy, Korea, Kazakhstan (Astana, Almaty, Aktau), Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Belgium, UAE (Abu Dhabi, Dubai), Great Britain, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia (Tbilisi, Batumi), Jordan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (Bern), Netherlands, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Poland, Germany, USA (Washington, Los Angeles), Austria, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye (2 polling stations each in Ankara and Istanbul, Kars), Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Greece, Iran (Tabriz), Belarus, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, and Russia (2 polling stations in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg). To note, at the extraordinary presidential elections, Azerbaijani citizens abroad will vote at 49 polling stations organized in 37 countries. Voting in these countries will be held from 08:00 to 19:00 local time.-APP

Brody boosts charity with \$275,000 auction bid

IEDDAH: The Oscar-win-Hollywood Adrien Brody has delighted the organizers of a Saudi charity auction with a successful bid of \$275,000 for a painting. All the proceeds from the auction, held in conjunction with last weekend's Diriyah ePrix motor-racing event, will go to the Saudi Autism Families Foundation. The actor's bid was the largest single purchase at the auction, at which the sale of iewelry. cars, horses, and works of art raised \$1.8 million for the foundation. "We appreciate this gesture from Adrien, it means a lot to us," said foundation chairman Prince Saud bin Abdulaziz bin Farhan Al-Saud. "By organizing these charitable auctions, we aim to achieve sustainability in the services provided to people with autism in the Kingdom through an innovative charitable model, with the participation and humanitarian inspiration of all members of society in all their fields.' The foundation is dedicated to serving people in the Kingdom with autism, and offering support to their families. It provides essential services, support, and advocacy, and plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for those on the autistic spectrum.-APP

Türkiye attracts 49.2M foreign visitors in 2023

ANKARA: Türkiye greeted some 56.7 million visitors last year, with an annual surge of 10.33%, a senior official said Wednesday highlighting that the country's tourism revenue posted a substantial uptick reaching a record \$54.3 billion (TL 1.64 trillion). "The year 2023 was the year in which we broke records in data," Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy said during a presentation on the figures in Istanbul's Atatürk Culture Center (AKM). "The number of visitors reached 56.7 million in 2023," he said, adding that tourists from Russia, Germany and the United Kingdom spearheaded the arrivals drive last year. Some 6.3 million visitors from Russia visited Türkiye last year, Ersoy said, followed by 6.2 million German tourists and 3.8 million Britons. "England was among our prioritized target destinations during the pandemic. We improved regarding the U.K. market, where we had some 2.5 million before the pandemic, to 3.8 million afterward," he said. The number of foreign tourists arriving at Türkiye between January and December last year meanwhile surged by 10.4% to 49.2 million, the Culture and Tourism Ministry data showed.-APP

Sultan Ibrahim sworn in as Malaysia's 17th king

Sultan Ibrahim and his family have been estimated to be worth at least \$5.7bn

News Desk

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia installed on Wednesday a billionmotorcycle-riding sultan as the country's newest king, a ceremonial role that is expected to gain more significance in governance during his term. The Muslim-majority Southeast Asian nation is a constitutional monarchy with a unique system in which the king's post rotates between the chiefs of its nine Islamic royal Malay houses every five years. Dressed in dark blue ceremonial attire, Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar, the ruler of the country's southern Johor state, took his oath of office as he ascended the throne as Malavsia's 17th supreme monarch. "With this oath, I solemnly and truly profess to be faithful, to rule fairly for Malaysia in accordance with the laws and constitution of the country," the 65-year-old royal said at the na-

tional palace in Kuala Lumpur. The ceremony was witnessed by the other Malay sultans, government officials and various dignitaries. Sultan Ibrahim was elected by his fellow monarchs last year. Appointments to the role follow a rotation held since Malaysia's independence from British colonial rule in 1957. He replaces Al-Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah of the central state of Pahang - whose reign ended Tuesday – as the nation's new Yang di-Pertuan Agong or "He Who is Made Lord." Thousands of people lined the streets in the state capital of Johor Bahru early Wednesday morning to see off their sultan as he traveled from his palace in a royal entourage toward the city's airport. On arrival in Kuala Lumpur, he was greeted by members of Malaysia's ruling elite and officials as he inspected a guard of honor before taking his oath. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim welcomed Sultan Ibrahim and his



Queen Raja Zarith Sofiah in their new stations. "The people and I will continue pledging unwavering obedience and loyalty to His Majesty," he said in a Facebook post. "We pray His Majesty and the entire Royal Institution will be showered with blessings and always be in good health, wellness and sovereignty." A powerful and influential figure, Sultan Ibrahim presides over the country's southernmost peninsular state, which borders Singapore by a causeway. Holding significant business

interests, he and his family have been estimated to be worth at least \$5.7 billion, with shares in maior Malavsian firms as well as land in Singapore. A motorcycle enthusiast, he leads an annual motor vehicle tour of the state and also commands his own private army, the only state allowed to do so. Malaysia's kings serve as the official head of Islam in the country and commander-in-chief of its armed forces. While they hold only ceremonial power, they can appoint a lawmaker who has a parliamentary majority as the country's premier and exercise certain discretionary powers during a national crisis. A fiercely outspoken royal, Sultan Ibrahim vowed in a December interview with Singapore's Straits Times newspaper not to be a "puppet king." He said at the time: "There are 222 of you (lawmakers) in Parliament. There are over 30 million (Malaysians) outside. I'm not with you, I'm with them. "I will support the

government, but if I think they are

doing something improper, I will

tell them.' BowerGroupAsia director Arinah Najwa Ahmad Said told Arab News she expected to see a politically stable administration in the near future, with Sultan Ibrahim exercising a more "hands-on leadership." She said: "He would be more hands-on in governance. How hands-on it will be remains to be seen, but there would be a lot more oversight on things. "He will be a bit more vocal on certain issues and he will try to command a certain kind of order at least," She added that Sultan Ibrahim was also expected to focus on more socio-economic development especially in the state of Johor, given its border with wealthy neighbor Singapore. Malaysia's royalty has a lineage that dates back to the 15th century, and it commands great respect from the country's population of 33 million, especially from the Muslim ethnic Malay majority.

Green Pakistan smart farm project launches shipment

BEIJING: The inaugural shipment of equipment for the Green Pakistan Million Acre Smart Farm Project has been dispatched from China to Pakistan, marking a significant milestone in the country's agricultural development. This collaborative initiative, led by Dayu Irrigation Group and local partners, aims to revolutionize farming practices and contribute to the implementation of the Green Pakistan Initiative, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The delivery ceremony was attended by Mr. Zaeem, the president of the exclusive distributor in Pakistan, and Mr. Fu Shuai, Vice GM of Dayu Irrigation International Department, who emphasized the project's importance. "The Green Pakistan Initiative. launched on July 7, 2023, by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, aims to transform the agricultural landscape. We are dedicated to participating in this groundbreaking endeavor and contributing our expertise," stated Mr. Fu Shuai. Dayu Irrigation Group aims to integrate intelligent irrigation control systems into Pakistan's farming as part of the Green Pakistan Million Acre Smart Farm Project. By monitoring crop growth and optimizing water and fertilizer application, this system seeks to enhance yield, improve crop quality, and reduce labor costs for

farmers. –APP Militant rampage kills

dozen in DRC KINSHASA: Militants have killed at least 12 villagers in a spate of attacks in eastern DRC, a local official and a civil society leader said as the country's president ruled out dialogue with neighbouring Rwanda over a related conflict. The killings in DRC's North Kivu province took place on Tuesday and were carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces, armed militants believed to be linked to the Daesh terror group. The militants attacked three villages in the Beni territory, according to Kinos Katuho, the president of the local Mamove civil society organisation. Eastern Congo has struggled with armed violence for decades as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities. The armed groups have long waged campaigns of violence in the mineral-rich region and have been accused of mass killings. The conflict spiked in late 2021 when another rebel group, which goes by the name M23 and which had been largely dormant, resurfaced and initiated attacks to seize territory. The group allegedly has support from

neighbouring Rwanda, though the country denies ties.—APP

Saudi officials discuss advancing human rights

RIYADH : Dr. Abdullah bin Nasser Abu Thunain, deputy minister of human resources and social development for labor, met Dr. Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al-Sheikh, deputy chairman of the Kingdom's Human Rights Commission, in Riyadh on Wednesday. During the meeting, they discussed the partnership between their respective entities and agreed on initiatives to advance human rights in areas of mutual concern. These initiatives encompass enhancing worker protection, combating human trafficking and domestic violence, and advocating for the rights of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, families, children, and people with special needs. Both men also explored strategies to bolster the rights of these sectors of society and develop joint mechanisms for monitoring the welfare of social services beneficiaries. They discussed conducting studies and research related to the competencies of each entity and methods of addressing complaints. Abu Thunain underscored the paramount importance of upholding human rights, citing it as a cornerstone of the country's leadership.-APP

China surpasses Japan as top vehicle exporter Tokyo: China overtook Japan as the world's biggest vehicle

exporter last year, data from the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association showed Wednesday. The Chinese auto sector has boomed in recent years largely because of massive investments in electric cars, an area where Japanese firms have been more cautious. Japan shipped 4.42 million vehicles in 2023, the JAMA figures showed. That compared with 4.91 million exported by China, as reported by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers this month. China's customs bureau put the number even higher at 5.22 million, a huge year-on-year rise of 57 percent, with one in three of them fully electric vehicles. China had already been exporting more vehicles than Japan on a monthly basis, but Wednesday's data confirmed that it was also number one for a whole year. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, Japanese automakers including Toyota - re-confirmed on Tuesday as the world's largest company by unit sales - also make huge volumes of vehicles in other countries. In 2022, vehicle production in Japan excluding motorcycles totalled 7.84 million units, but overseas production was almost 17 million units. Instead of fully electric models. Japanese manufacturers have long bet on hybrids that combine battery power and internal combustion engines, an area they pioneered with the likes of the Toyota Prius. Just 1.7 percent of cars sold in Japan were electric in 2022, compared with around 15 percent in western Europe, 5.3 percent in the United States and nearly one in five in China. Japanese automakers have vowed to up their game, with Toyota aiming to sell 1.5 million EVs annually by 2026 and 3.5 million by 2030. The company has also invested heavily in battery technology and is banking strongly on being able to mass-produce solid-state batteries. This technology, though unproven so far on a major scale, means batteries will charge faster and give electric cars a much bigger range than conventional ones. Chinese company BYD this month snatched Tesla's crown for most sales of all-electric vehicles, having capitalised on Beijing's strong government support for the burgeoning sector.-Agencies

BEIJING: Ambassador Khalil Hashmi presented his credentials as the 22nd Ambassador of

Pakistan to China, to Chinese President Xi Jinping at an elegant ceremony at the Great Hall of People in Beijing.DNA

EU: Little progress in Serbia-Kosovo ties

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008, with most UN member states including the US, the UK, France, Germany and Türkiye

BELGRADE: The European Union's Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue said Tuesday that there has been little progress in the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. "Thanks to the dialogue, we delivered important results before the end of last year - the agreement on energy, the recognition of RKS (Republic of Kosovo license) plates, the end of the sticker regime (for license plates). This is concrete and visible proof. But there has been little progress in the big picture on the normalization of relations," Miroslav Lajcak told reporters after meeting with Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti in the capital Pristina. Lajcak held separate meetings with Kurti and President Vjosa Osmani. "We have the agreements from February and March last year, which means we no longer need to ask the question of what needs to be done. We don't even have to ask ourselves how to do it. The question is when to do it. And of course, if you ask me, I would say without delay, as soon as possible. Let's enter into the implementation," said Lajcak. Launched in 2011, the EU-led Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue aims to find a mutually agreeable solution for disputes in the framework of a legally binding agreement. Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008, with most UN member states including the US, the UK, France, Germany and Türkiye recognizing it as an autonomous country. Serbia, however, still considers Kosovo as its territory.-DNA

Myanmar junta eases rules as emergency ends

NAYPYIDAW: Myanmar's iunta has eased rules on the registration of political parties, state media has reported, hours before a state of emergency is set to expire. The junta seized power on February 1, 2021 after making unsubstantiated claims of electoral fraud during 2020 elections won resoundingly by the party of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. The military has said it will hold fresh elections but has repeatedly extended the state of emergency imposed when it seized power, as it battles opponents across swathes of the country. Wednesday's new order halves to 50,000 the number of members parties must have in order to contest national elections. and cuts the number of townships they must operate in. The notice signed by junta chief Min Aung Hlaing makes no mention of why the changes were made. Before the coup, Suu Kyi's NLD party trounced military-aligned rivals at the polls. -APP

IRGC chief warns US: "no threat will go unanswered"

The Zionists cannot keep a small territory in a war for months and they will definitely lose"

WEB DESK TEHRAN: The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned that Iran "will not leave any threat unanswered" as the United States seeks to escalate tensions in West Asia already inflamed by Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks on Wednesday, after US President Joe Biden said he had decided how to respond to a deadly attack on a US occupation base, for which he held Tehran responsible. "Sometimes, the enemies make threats. And these days too, we hear some threats in the US officials' rhetoric," he said at the final session of the national congress of 24,000 martyrs of Tehran

"We tell them (the Americans) that you have tested us and we know each other. We will not leave any threat unanswered." The IRGC chief stressed that, "We are not seeking war, yet are not afraid of it either." The warning echoed that of Iran's permanent mission to the UN, which said Tehran would "respond decisively" to any attack on its territory, interests, and nationals. Iran warns of 'crushing response' to any attack on its territory, interests Iran warns of 'crushing response' to any attack on its territory, interests Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations has firmly warned that any act of aggression against Iran and its people will be met with a crushing response.

Tensions have ratcheted up in West Asia due to the United States' support for Israel in the brutal Gaza war, which has killed at least 26,900 Pal-

than three months. On Sunday, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, carried out a drone strike on a military outpost in Jordan, known as Tower 22, killing three US soldiers and injuring dozens. US President Joe Biden pinned the blame on what he called "radical Iran-backed militant groups" and vowed Washington would respond. Iran said it has no links to the attacks on American occupation troops in the region as they are related to the conflict between resistance groups and the US military. Salami also said, "Palestine is on a path to victory. The Zionists cannot keep a small territory in a war for months and they will defi-

estinians, mostly women and

children, and injured 65,949

others over the past more

Greek-Turkish rapprochement won't be smooth: Mitsotakis

As both Türkiye and Greece seek fighter jets from the U.S., the Greek premier argues it's unrealistic to expect the recent normalization between the rival nations to be without turbulence

Foreign Desk

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis doesn't expect the recent normalization of ties between his country and Türkiye to be without turbulence. "Maintaining the good climate is essential, but anyone who believes that the rapprochement will progress without disruptions, I would say, is out of touch with reality and time," Mitsotakis was quoted by Greek media as telling a local radio interview. The premier's remarks come amid his government's ongoing defense agreement with the United States

and efforts to acquire a "qualitative advantage" over Türkiye that will bolster its deterrence capabilities and modernize its armed forces. There is a need to build on the significant progress we have achieved," Mitsotakis acknowledged, referring to the ongoing thaw between the Aegean rivals since last February. Türkiye and Greece have been at odds for decades over a series of issues, from territorial water claims over the Aegean to the rights of the Turkish minority in Greece and the ethnically divided island of Cyprus. Following the deadly earthquakes in southern Türkiye last year, hostile remarks waned

and mutual goodwill blossomed in Turkish-Greek ties, leading to rare in-person meetings between Mitsotakis and President Recep Tayyip Erdo an, as well as concrete results. During Erdo an's landmark visit to Athens in December, the sides announced a friendship declaration, visa facilitation for Turkish citizens for 10 Greek islands in the northern Aegean for up to seven days and the decreased flow of irregular migrants to Greece. The sides have since emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive atmosphere on the path to normalization, but both Ankara and Athens have this month

reached respective deals with Washington for fighter jets, raising concerns of fresh skirmishes in the Aegean.

Turkish and Greek jets often scuffle in the region, although the past three years have been relatively uneventful. Ankara has repeatedly warned its neighbor against entering an arms race with Türkiye, particularly on building a military presence on the disputed Aegean islands since the 1960s in violation of postwar treaties. The purchase of F-35 fighter jets from the U.S. and the upping of defense budgets are meant to counter the protection of Turkish interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece says it needs to defend the islands against a potential attack from Türkiye, but Turkish officials said continued militarization of the islands could lead to Ankara questioning their ownership. For Mitsotakis, the demarcation of the continental shelf and economic exclusive zone is the only "difference" between the countries, but even if the issue isn't resolved, Türkiye and Greece "should be able to coexist and focus on a positive agenda." "My intention is to visit Ankara next May as a reciprocation for Erdo an's visit," he said.



After 13 years

UAE sends ambassador to Syria

AGENCIES

DAMASCUS: The United Arab Emirates has dispatched the country's first ambassador to Syria after 13 years, following the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two Arab countries. The incoming Emirati envoy officially presented his credentials to Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal al-Mikdad at the Arab country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in the capital Damascus on Tuesday. According to Syria's official SANA news agency, Hassan al-Shehi conveyed to the Syrian side his commitment to enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries during his meeting with Mikdad. He also pledged to work to strengthen cooperation and achieve mutual progress between two Arab countries. For his part, Mekdad expressed Syria's deep appreciation for the UAE's solidarity with and support for Syria during challenging times. Shehi arrived in Syria on Monday to become the first envoy of his country to Syria since 2011. He had served as the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates in Iraq since 2015, and before that, had been the ambassador to Sudan.

Punjab CM inaugurates PALMS portal

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has formally inaugurated "The Punjab Arms Licence Management System" (PALMS) portal under which arms licences can be applied online across the province.

"The Punjab Arms License Management System" was signed between Home Department Punjab and NAD-RA on Wednesday. Under the "Punjab Arms License Management System" Arms Licenses can be renewed and amended across Punjab. Under "Punjab Arms License Management System" transfer of arms license to heirs will also be done online. Under "Punjab Arms License Management System" the arms license will be delivered to the home of the applicant. In this regard, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that with the implementation of "Punjab Arms License Management System" it will be possible to completely eliminate corruption in the issuance of licenses. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi appreciated the services of Home Secretary MianShakeel Ahmed and Additional Secretary Home (Judicial) Department Farwa Amir for launching "The Punjab Arms License Management System".

Stopping Genocide

Israel not listening to world

DNA

RAMALLAH: Despite the decision of the International Court of Justice, and before it, UN Security Council Resolution No. 2720, the resolution of UNGA, and hundreds of international and international demands, appeals, and warnings issued successively by many international officials and world leaders regarding the necessity of stopping the humanitarian catastrophe and targeting civilians in the Gaza Strip and securing their basic humanitarian needs, nothing changes on the ground because of the unwillingness of the rulers of Tel Aviv to listen or respect what the world says and expresses concern about, and what actually changes daily is the occupation leaders' insistence on deepening genocide of our people and expanding humanitarian catastrophe to include the entire population of Gaza Strip, including Palestinian civilians, as well as Escalating crimes against them and targeting them

wherever they are.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 01, 2024 | WWW.ISLAMABADPOST.COM.PK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts and the Embassy of Kazakhstan hosted a movie screening titled "Kazakh Khanate Diamond Sword" at the PNCA Auditorium in Islamabad. Caretaker Culture Minister Jamal Shah, Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and Ambassador of Kazakhstan and others attended the event. In the picture guests are taking interest in paintings displayed on the occasion. – DNA

No celebration over Imran's jail sentence: Bilawal

PPP chairman accuses Nawaz Sharif of resorting to revenge politics

SHAMIM SHAHID

MALAKAND: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari disapproved on Wednesday the celebration over former premier Imran Khan's jail sentence in cipher and Toshakhana cases. Addressing a gathering in Malakand, Bilawal Bhutto expressed his disapproval of celebrating the punishment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, highlighting the importance of democratic values over personal vendettas. During the address, Bilawal Bhutto drew attention to the irony of political opponents celebrating the absence of a former prime minister from electoral contests. He warned against engaging in revenge politics, citing concerns that if Imran Khan were to secure a fourth term, similar tactics might be employed. Bilawal Bhutto accused Nawaz Sharif of resorting to revenge politics, alleging that the former prime minister fabricated cases against Bhutto's daughter. He cautioned against the potential continuation of such practices and urged the public to consider

Bilawal Bhutto accused Nawaz Snarii of resorting to revenge politics, alleging that the former prime minister fabricated cases against Bhutto's daughter. He cautioned against the potential continuation of such practices and urged the public to consider the consequences of electing leaders who prioritize personal vendettas. The PPP chairman expressed disappointment over what he called Imran Khan's shift from being a beacon of hope for the youth to engaging in what he termed "U-turn politics." Bilawal Bhutto took a swipe at Khan's actions, particularly regarding the incarceration of political opponents and their family members. Bilawal Bhutto appealed to the electorate to vote thoughtfully in the upcoming elections on February 8. He urged voters to consider the track record of political parties and emphasized the need for a responsible and constructive political landscape.

responsible and constructive political landscape. The former foreign minister asserted that the PPP is the only party capable of halting the political aspirations of Mian Sahib, presumably referring to Nawaz Sharif. Bhutto accused the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of making decisions that contributed to the rise of terrorism in the country. In a bid to distinguish the PPP's approach, Bilawal Bhutto pledged that on the first day of coming to power, he would release political prisoners. He vowed to address the grievances of the people by reducing the number of ministries and focusing on providing relief to the masses. Bilawal Bhutto concluded his address with an appeal to the people of Pakistan to embrace a new way of thinking. He urged ideological workers of other political parties, particularly the PML-G, to reconsider their allegiances, alleging that the party was not honoring the vote but disrespecting it.

People to decide their future, says Shehbaz Sharif

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The people of Pakistan would decide about their future on Feb 8, said PML-N president on Wednesday, adding that their voting trend was going to show their priorities, with the country facing challenges on political, economic, social and foreign fronts. He told the digital media representatives at his party's Model Town headquarters that Pakistan was left in the race towards economic development. "The February 8 elections are the most important in the country's history," the former prime minister said and added that one had to understand why other nations marched forward. Pakistan's history poses some very serious questions and one needs to analyse the history to find the answers, Shehbaz stressed, adding that the lesson learned would help in the future. The PML-N president said they won the 2018 elections, but the party's polling agents were removed and ballot papers stamped as the polling closed amid the shutdown of RTS (result transmission system) under an organised plan - a move that delayed the announcement of results. Replying to various questions, Shehbaz listed the achievements of the PML-N governments in the past and rejected the impression of being close to the establishment. He spent in prison and faced excesses which wouldn't have happened if he was shared the establishment's thinking, Shehbaz explained. Answering a question about the level-playing field and alleged victimisation of the former ruling party, he remarked that holding intraparty polls was PTI's responsibility, "not us". Nawaz Sharif went through different phases during his 40-year long political career, Shehbaz said about elder Sharif who is eyeing a fourth term in office amid the claims that his politics has come to an end, and noted that the whole family faced all kinds of pressure and injustices, but remained steadfast and didn't surrender.

of Pakistan to embrace a new way of thinking. He urged ideological workers of other political parties, particularly the PML-G, to reconsider their allegiances, alleging that the party was not honoring the vote but disrespecting it. WINTER HOCKEY LEAGUE WINTER HOCKEY LEAGUE 1 PM ONWARDS SATURDAY, FEBRURARY 3, 2024 /NASEER BUNDHA GROUND

US F-16 fighter crashes off South Korea

DNA

SEOUL: A United States Air Force F-16 fighter jet crashed after suffering an in-flight emergency off the coast of South Korea Wednesday, in the third crash of one of the US military's Korea-based warplanes in less than a year. The incident occurred during a training mission over the waters west of the Korean Peninsula around 8:41 a.m. local time, according to a statement from Kunsan Air Base, about 110 miles (180 kilometers) south of the capital Seoul.

The pilot, assigned to the 8th Fighter Wing, ejected safely and was recovered about 50 minutes after the crash, the Air Force statement said. The pilot was conscious and taken to a medical facility for assessment, the base said.

"We are very thankful to the Republic of Korea rescue forces and all of our teammates who made the swift recovery of our pilot possible," said Col. Matthew Gaetke, 8th Fighter Wing commander, in a statement. "Now we will shift our focus to search and recovery of the aircraft." The cause of the inflight emergency is under investigation, base said.

PTI decides to hold

intra-party polls

'within 15 days'

PTI leader Raoof Hasan

unanimously appointed party's

chief election commissioner

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is set to stage

intra-party polls afresh within the next 15 days, sources said

on Wednesday, after a Supreme Court ruling discarded the

party's previous internal polls. The decision to hold the in-

tra-party polls again was made during PTI's general body

meeting, with several senior leaders including former PTI

chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and information Sec

retary General Umar Ayub and information secretary Rauf

Hassan in attendance. The meeting took place virtually due

to the blockade of roads leading to the PTI secretariat in

Islamabad. Sources said that a resolution on the party's in-

ternal polls has to be presented in the meeting, which was

attended by leaders and members from Quetta, Peshawar

Islamabad and other leaders. Another major decision tak-

en during the meeting was the appointment of Hassan as

the chief election commissioner of the party. Earlier, Geo

News reported that the ways leading to the central media

secretariat of PTIwas blocked by the federal capital police.

The police were reportedly present on all routes leading to

the party's media secretariat ahead of PTI's general body

meeting. The increased police presence near the secretariat

came in the wake of the party's founder, Imran Khan and his

wife Bushra Bibi's conviction in the Toshakhana reference

filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The two

were sentenced to 14 years with rigorous punishment by an

accountability court in Islamabad earlier in the day. Earlier

this month, the apex court deprived PTI of its election symbol

- 'bat' - by upholding ECP order barring the party from keep

ing its iconic symbol for the upcoming February 8 elections.

LHC orders equal media coverage to PTI

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday ordered the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) to give equal coverage to the PTI founder and all other candidates. Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza issued a 10-page verdict on PTI founder's petition.

The court, in its written order, said Article 17 of the Constitution gives equal rights including freedom of speech and expression to all citizens. The LHC further ruled that election campaign and propagation of manifesto was a basic right of every party.

right of every party.
The LHC ruled that freedom of speech and expression through a freemedia was a perquisite of transparent and fair polls. Without freedom of expression no election could be called fair and transparent, court said.

