



# Islamabad POST

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**Spain will not stop funding UNRWA, says FM José Albares**

Detailed News On Page-07

**Mengal gets SC's nod to contest polls**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Joseph joins Peshawar Zalmi for PSL 9**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Easing of tensions

# Pak-Iran stress joint efforts to fight terrorism

Iranian FM says 'terrorists' in Pak-Iran border areas supported by 'third countries'

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have stressed joint efforts to fight terrorism. This resolve was made during the meeting between the Foreign Minister of Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and the Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. Underscoring the close relations between Pakistan and Iran, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further consolidate bilateral ties. The Prime Minister also emphasized the need to address common challenges through collaborative and cooperative approaches, rooted in the respect for international law and the principles of the UN Charter, in particular, territorial integrity and sovereignty of both Pakistan and Iran. The Prime Minister conveyed his warm sentiments for President Ebrahim Raisi and extended an invitation to President Raisi to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani today met with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, in Islamabad. Senior Officials from both sides were present in the meeting. Foreign Minister Abdollahian is on an official visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Foreign Minister Jilani. Underscoring the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran, Foreign Minister Jilani reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepen and broaden the existing wide-ranging cooperation with Iran. The Foreign Minister underlined the imperative for collective and collaborative approaches to confront terrorism that posed a common challenge to both Pakistan and Iran. He stressed that robust institutional mechanisms between the two countries on security cooperation should be fully leveraged. The two Foreign Ministers agreed to

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## COAS stresses sustained ties with Iran

The two sides observed that terrorism was common threat that needed to be tackled through collaborative efforts, better coordination and intelligence sharing

STAFF REPORT

Rawalpindi: Foreign Minister of Iran, HE Amir Abdollahian called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) COAS, at GHQ today. Realizing the historical, religious and cultural ties that bind Pakistan and Iran, both sides emphasized on strengthening bilateral ties and fostering greater understanding of each other's concerns. COAS underscored the centrality of respecting the other state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling it sacrosanct, inviolable and the most important cardinal of state-to-state relationship. The two sides observed that terrorism

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ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of Islamic Republic of Iran, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, calls on Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. - DNA

## Ministers, officials barred from foreign visits

Decision made to ensure smooth election process

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Monday withdrew permissions for foreign visits by federal ministers, advisers, and relevant officials until the completion of the election process. In a notification, the Cabinet Division said: "No leave for any foreign visit shall be granted till the completion of the election process and the assumption of office by the new government".

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## Slams judges who 'ousted' him

# Nawaz Sharif vows to bring back prosperity

Maintaining his innocence, Sharif openly criticized his conviction, portraying it as a deliberate punishment

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: In a speech to party workers in NA-130, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif thanked them for their support and promised to bring back a time of peace and prosperity he claimed existed during his previous leadership. He pledged to bring back a time of peace and prosperity that, according to him, defined his previous leadership. Maintaining his innocence, Sharif openly criticized his conviction, portraying it as a deliberate punishment. He pointed out the departure of a judge, who was supposed to become the Chief Justice, as evidence of foul play in his cases. Recalling the past, Sharif painted a vivid picture of a time when everyday essentials like petrol,

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## Bilawal vows to end subsidies given to elite

"powerful lobbies" strongly react to any move for abolishment of 17 ministries

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Terming his party's manifesto remedy for all the crises ahead of the nationwide polls, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has blamed 'powerful lobbies and bureaucracy' for the

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## Briefs

### Shehbaz vows to develop South Punjab

Says 'khadim' has once again come to you in Rajanpur

STAFF REPORT

RAJANPUR: PML-N president and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif said that if his government continued, the destiny of South Punjab would have been different. Shehbaz Sharif said that he had come to serve the people of Rajanpur during the floods. He has never seen such a flood and destruction in his life. Thousands of people were lost in the flood, he said adding he was very happy to visit you today. The PML-N president said that 'khadim' has once again come to you in Rajanpur. The PML-N leader said that Rajanpur District Hospital was equipped with modern facilities, and twenty Danish schools were built, 16 of which are in South Punjab.

### Terrorist killed in encounter

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists as a result of which Terrorist Naikman Ullah was sent to hell. The killed terrorist remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities including target killing of innocent civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorist. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

## Army deployment mullied ECP declares 50% PS sensitive or highly sensitive

In Punjab, around 6,040 highly sensitive, 12,580 polling stations are declared sensitive while 6,524 polling stations in Sindh are highly sensitive and 6545 are declared sensitive

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has declared as many as 50 percent of the polling stations across the country for general elections which will be held on February 8 as sensitive or highly sensitive. The ECP had established as around 90,675 polling stations across the country out of which 46,065 polling stations have been declared as 'sensitive' or 'most sensitive' while 27,628 polling stations as sensitive

and 18,437 as most sensitive," sources in the ECP told APP. In Punjab, around 6,040 highly sensitive, 12,580 polling stations are declared sensitive while 6,524 polling stations in Sindh are highly sensitive and 6545 are declared sensitive. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 4,143 polling stations were declared as highly sensitive and 6,166 polling stations were declared as sensitive. Likewise, in Balochistan, out of 5,028 polling stations, only 961 were declared normal as 1,730 polling stations were highly sensitive, and 2,337 polling stations were declared sensitive.

## SBP maintains interest rate at 22%

Pakistan to introduce new currency designs with advanced security features

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Monetary Policy Committee Monday announced maintaining the status quo, leaving the key policy rate unchanged at 22%. The MPC's decision to maintain the key policy rate unchanged - for the fifth time in a row -

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## Pakistan to secure €100m from EU to enhance post-flood resilience

EU Ambassador, Dr. Riina Kionka said Pak was not alone in overcoming its challenging phase of economic crisis and flood recovery



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Riina Kionka European Union Ambassador to Pakistan and Dr. Kazim Niaz Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs signed five new additional EUR 100 million grant agreements. - DNA

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The European Union (EU) would provide an additional €100 million to reinforce Pakistan's resilience in the aftermath of the devastating 2022 floods that severely impacted the nation. According to press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division, EU Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms Riina Kionka and Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr Kazim Niaz signed five new EU grant agreements in this regard. "These agreements, under Team Europe's response to the 2022 post-flood Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework, signify a substantial commitment of nearly EUR 100 million (equivalent to over PKR 30 billion)," the statement added. The new EU support package aims to fortify Pakistan's resilience

in the aftermath of the floods, bringing the total Team Europe response to the 2022 floods to over EUR 930 million. The specific focus areas include revitalising the rural economy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and restoring the disrupted livestock value chains in flood-affected Balochistan. Notably, these activities align with the expansive EU Global Gateway initiative,

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# Austrian ambassador explores investment in Pakistan

Austrian Ambassador Wicke shared her insights on how Pakistan is perceived globally in terms of investment, emphasizing a focus on regional trade

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan and Afghanistan Andrea Wicke, joined by Hussain Islam, chairman of the Prime Minister's Task Force in the Strategic Reforms Unit, and Johannes Brunner, commercial counsellor of the Austrian Embassy Commercial Section, visited the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) to engage with the Chamber's leadership and gain insights into Pakistan's economic landscape. During the meeting, OICCI CE/Secretary General M Abdul Aleem provided

a comprehensive briefing to the Austrian delegation on Pakistan's business prospects, with a focus on attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), ideally reaching three percent of its GDP. Notably, the total capital investment by OICCI members from FY 2013 to FY 2022 amounted to \$22.0 billion, while Pakistan's net FDI stands at \$19.9 billion. In the past year (Jan-Dec), Pakistan attracted \$1,771 million in FDI, marking a 25% increase from 2022. Austrian Ambassador Wicke shared her insights on how Pakistan is perceived globally in terms of investment, emphasizing a focus on regional trade, particularly the potential

within South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). She stressed the importance of building a positive perception of Pakistan through engagement with foreign media to showcase the country's overall beauty. Both Andrea Wicke and Johannes Brunner expressed optimism, highlighting that OICCI's engagement with potential Austrian foreign investment companies would play a crucial role in providing a neutral perspective on Pakistan's on-ground economic situation. The visit underscores the growing interest of foreign entities in exploring and contributing to Pakistan's economic development.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Aide on aviation Farhat Khan meeting with Ambassador of Iraq to Pakistan at his office.—DNA

## WAPDA organises Road Show in Bangkok

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on Monday organized a day-long Road Show in Bangkok for the 300 MW-Floating Solar Project - the first of its kind in Pakistan. According to a WAPDA spokesman here, the Road Show aimed at forging an enhanced competition amongst the prospective bidders for the project. As many as 58 delegates, hailing from 50 international reputed firms participated in the event. Chairman WAPDA Eng Lt Gen (R) Sajjad Ghani, Pakistan's Charge d' Affairs in Thailand Yasir Hussain, World Bank's representatives, WAPDA high-ups and the project's Consultants also attended the event.

Thanking the delegates for their active participation, the Chairman said that WAPDA floating solar project has excellent business opportunities for contracting firms through a transparent international competitive bidding. WAPDA has a strong asset base worth billion of dollars and decades-long professional expertise for implementing mega projects in water and power sectors. We are keen to work with the renowned firms to execute the maiden floating solar project in Pakistan to make it yet another success story in the country, he said. The Chairman expressed the hope that contracting firms from across the world, would bid for the project in a large number, as the project site is highly secured and easily accessible. Later, WAPDA Member Finance, Member Power, GM (Coordination and Monitoring) and the Consultants briefed the participants about WAPDA, its revenue streams, collaboration with international financial institutes and development portfolio as well as financial, technical.—APP

## Mosques vital for education, disease prevention

DNA

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said the mosques might play a vital role in the provision of education to out-of-school children along with imparting religious ethos for bringing about socio-economic development of the country. He said the mosques had a central place in Muslim society and could be utilized to educate people about important social issues. The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting about the vital role of Masaajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating

awareness about health issues. The meeting was attended by the Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Dr Aneeq Ahmed, and religious scholars from various schools of thought. Addressing the meeting, the President said that educating 26 million out-of-school children was an uphill task in the wake of inadequate educational infrastructure. Building new schools would require tremendous resources as well as time, he added. He said that utilizing almost 2.5 lacs mosques across the country could be a unique and cost-effective

avenue to bring these children back to education. The President said that mosques could be used as centres of education by incorporating the Government's Accelerated Learning Programme. "Pakistan should have mosques at the centre of society, simultaneously imparting worldly and religious education to fight the challenges of society," he added. The Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony apprised the meeting that Mosques could be used at the optimum level by enhancing the role of "Pesh Imam" who would ultimately supervise educational activities.

## Skin disfiguring neglected disease surging in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is concerned by an increase in the number of cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) cases registered at its facilities across Pakistan. Balochistan and Kyber Pakhtunkhwa are the worst affected provinces, but this treatable neglected tropical disease, that is endemic in Pakistan, is also found in Sindh, Kashmir, and central and southern areas of Punjab. "The number of patients visiting MSF clinics across

Pakistan has steadily increased over the years," said Suzette Kämink, MSF cutaneous leishmaniasis expert. "However, the increase in incidence in 2022 to 2023 has been exceptional with twice as many patients registered in our Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) facilities: while a 95.0% increase was recorded in Bannu and a 75.5% rise in Peshawar. A similar trend is seen in Balochistan, for example in Kuchlak, one of three CL clinics that MSF is supporting, we registered

69.9% more cases than the previous year, as well as CL being reported in areas where the disease was not normally present," she added. The skin disease is caused by a parasite, transmitted by the bite of phlebotomine sandfly. Although it is not life-threatening it causes ulcers on the face and open areas of the body, which can evolve into severe scarring and disfigurement, often leading to social stigmatization, discrimination, and emotional distress. Major

factors in the spread of the disease are poor living conditions; poor hygiene and housing, no proper waste management, and a general lack of awareness about the disease, combined with population movement, and changes in the climate. "The increase in cases highlights the lack of knowledge about the disease and its prevention such as proper environmental waste disposal, reducing potential sandfly breeding and resting places, and the correct use of long-lasting impregnated nets (LLINs)," said Suzette Kämink. "Early diagnosis and access to effective treatment is another way to control this neglected disease. CL is curable with the mainstay treatment of pentavalent antimonial drugs: meglumine antimoniate or sodium stibogluconate. Treatment is painful.—DNA

## ANF commander visits RCCI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Regional Directorate Commander of Anti-Narcotics Force Brigadier Hasan Abbas visited Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and participated in the businessmen's meeting, Acting President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh along with Group Leader Sohail Altaf welcomed the ANF Commander in the Chamber. On this occasion, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, former President Kashif Shabbir, EC members Muhammad Ikram, Deputy Director Aamir Khurshid, Project Officer and honorable members of RCCI were also present. Acting President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh informed about the current activities and upcoming programs of Rawalpindi Chamber. They discussed the exemption of chemicals used for pharmaceutical QC testing with the permission of ANF for checking consignments for export and special facilities at the airport for passengers. Expressing concern over the trends, he said that as a society we cannot turn a blind eye to this problem. He requested to take effective action on this matter. Brigadier Hasan Abbas appreciated the initiatives of RCCI and assured full cooperation and cooperation with RCCI.

## KP Governor inaugurates Governor's Secretariat website

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Haji Ghulam Ali formally inaugurated the website of the Governor's Secretariat here Monday. The website was inaugurated during a ceremony held here in the Governor's House. Besides, Caretaker KP Minister for Education, Dr. Qasim Jan; Secretary IT Board, Mohammad Ali Shah; Vice Chancellors of the University of Peshawar, Khyber Medical University,

and Agricultural University Peshawar; Director of IMSciences, Dr. Usman Ghani; and officers of the Governor's Secretariat and IT Board were also present on the occasion. With the launch of the website <http://governorkp.gov.pk>, the people will have easy access to the Governor's Office and the day-to-day affairs of the Governor's Secretariat. All affairs of the Governor's Secretariat will now be available online. Through the website, the employees of the universities could file applications against the admin-

istrative decisions of their respective universities, and any order on their online appeal would also be available on it. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Haji Ghulam Ali said, "Today is the era of information technology, so the public should also be provided information on the basis of the requirements of the modern era." "The website is created for the access of the people to the affairs of the Governor's Secretariat and is the beginning of a journey towards the modern era," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Director General International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik.—DNA

## PHS call for ban on e-cigarettes, vapes in KP

DC to enforce a complete ban on the sale of e-cigarettes and vapes to individuals below 21 years old in KP

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Public Health Stakeholders of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday called for unanimous and aggressive efforts to permanently ban the use and sale of e-cigarettes and vapes in the province for the best interest of public health and sustainable tobacco control. Blue Veins, a civil society organization, conducted a public health stakeholder consultation to deliberate on the interim ban by the KP government on vapes and e-cigarettes. The consultation aimed to discuss future strategies and the way forward following the KP government's decision, as outlined in a notification issued by the Home and Tribal Affairs Department. The notification mandates all Deputy

Commissioners to enforce a complete ban on the sale of e-cigarettes and vapes to individuals below 21 years old in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and prohibits their sale and storage within a 50-meter radius of educational institutions for 60 days. The consultation, chaired by Haroon Saleem, Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Peshawar, had active participation from officials of the health department, tobacco control cell, government functionaries, health experts, CSOs, media, and other stakeholders. The participants unanimously endorsed the need for comprehensive provincial-level legislation to ban the sale and storage of electronic cigarettes and vapes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The participants lauded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's proactive approach in imposing an

interim ban on vapes and e-cigarettes. They commended the government's swift and decisive action, emphasizing its commitment to public health and the well-being of its citizens, especially the youth. Assistant Commissioner Haroon Saleem expressed his views, stating, "The district administration and the provincial government are strongly committed to safeguarding our citizens from the harmful effects of tobacco and nicotine. We will take every necessary action to enforce this ban and protect public health." Despite being promoted as a safer alternative to traditional cigarettes and a tool for cessation, it was emphasized that there is no scientific evidence to support these claims. E-cigarettes and vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive, chal-

lenging the harm reduction narrative used by the tobacco industry. Sana Ahmad, Program Coordinator at Blue Veins, emphasized the importance of comprehensive legislation. "It's crucial to have legislation that encompasses the inputs of all stakeholders. This will ensure that the laws we implement are effective, inclusive, and geared towards the well-being of our community." Mian Ateeq, a public health expert representing the Prevention Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco and Nicotine Control, added, "The ban on e-cigarettes and vapes is a significant step towards public health safety. It's important to continue this momentum and create a robust legislative framework that addresses all aspects of tobacco and nicotine control."

## 13 police stations to be modernized in 30 days: Dr Gohar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ijaz on Monday said that the beautification of 13 police stations of the federal capital would be completed in 30 days. Speaking at the foundation stone ceremony of Golra police station, the caretaker minister said that the government is focusing on modernizing police stations besides improving law and order situation in the federal capital.

Islamabad hospitals would also be made exemplary, he said adding that people of the federal capital would be provided all necessary facilities. IG Islamabad Police Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, DIG, SSPs and other top police officers, representatives of the trade association and local dignitaries were also present on this occasion. Caretaker Federal Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz said that caretaker Prime Minister has entrusted him with the Ministry of Interior, therefore, on the first day, he met with the IG Police and Commissioner Islamabad and asked them about the problems. On the occasion, IG Islamabad said that out of 26 police stations in the federal capital, the condition of 13 police stations is vulnerable. The interior secretary and other authorities were instructed to immediately decorate these police stations of Islamabad, after which, the work of beautification and decoration was started in 13 police stations situated in the federal capital.

| IESCO TENDER NOTICE   |                                  |      |          |  |
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| IESCO seeks to invite sealed tenders from the firms / manufacturers who are pre-qualified / registered with the Chief Engineer (Purchase & Disposal) / Standard & Specification, NTDC Lahore or with WAPDA/PPM/any DISCO for the year 2023-24 for supply of following material on free delivery basis to IESCO Regional Stores Rawalpindi / Islamabad / Rajjar / Wah: |                                  |      |          |  |
| Tender No.  | Item Description                 | Unit | Quantity |  |
| 233   | LT SID Cable 4C,120mm2 (37/08.3) | Km   | 40       |  |
| 235   | HT Tape                          | No.  | 5,000    |  |
| 236   | Transformer Oil (Class-I)        | Ltr  | 120,000  |  |
| Date of opening :- Tender will be received on 15.02.2024 up to 10:30 am and will be opened at 11:00 am on the same date.  |                                  |      |          |  |
| The tenders will be opened in the presence of participants or their authorized representatives (bearing authority letters) who attend O/O Chief Engineer (Material Management) IESCO Head Office G-7/4 Street No. 40, Islamabad.  |                                  |      |          |  |
| <b>Terms &amp; Conditions</b>   |                                  |      |          |  |
| 1. Tenders will be opened on "Single Stage One Envelope basis".   |                                  |      |          |  |
| 2. The price should be firm and final on FCS basis and without involving any foreign exchange.  |                                  |      |          |  |
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| 7. Written application on company's letter head duly stamped along with copies of registration with sales tax department (STRN), NTN # etc should be produced at the time of issuance of tender documents.  |                                  |      |          |  |
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# Wafaqi Mohtasib assures to address business men issues

Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Maqsood Tabish, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, and others were included in the delegation

**MEHTAB PIRZADA**

ISLAMABAD: Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) said that the business community plays an important role in economic development and assured of his cooperation in addressing their grievances. He said this while talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that visited his office led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that a separate portal for ICCI will be created to solve the grievances of the business community, and if the complaints are not resolved within thirty days, they will be automatically transferred to the Wafaqi Ombudsman for redress. He said that ICCI should form a committee to liaise with his organization for redress of complaints. He further said that about 200 institutions and departments of the federal government come under their jurisdiction and his organization dealt with 194,000 complaints last year. More than 85% of the decisions were implemented. Every complaint in the Federal Ombudsman is decided within sixty days due to



which there are no pending complaints. He said that 22 regional offices and complaint centers are already available for immediate redressal. Soon regional offices in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir will be opened. These far-flung offices would benefit the common people a lot. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce said that ICCI has more than 8000 members who play an important role in the development of the economy by promoting industrial and commercial activities. He said that ICCI members have to face issues with FBR and other institutions and stressed that a focal person of the Federal Ombudsman should be appointed for ICCI to help solve the issues of the business community. He said that if the problems of the business community are solved soon, the economy will develop better. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Vice President ICCI lauded the efforts of the Federal Ombudsman to resolve the complaints of the people quickly against the mismanagement of the public institutions under the federal government and assured the full cooperation of the Chamber in this regard. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that the efforts be-

ing made by the Federal Ombudsman to resolve the complaints of the people need to be better highlighted in the public so that the maximum people can benefit from its services. He said that the ICCI is ready to organize awareness programs about its services in collaboration with the Federal Ombudsman. Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Maqsood Tabish, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, and others were included in the delegation.

## FIA busts fake veterinary medicine racket

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) conducted on Monday sealed a factory allegedly involved in the production of counterfeit veterinary medicine in Lahore. The operation was conducted in the Iqbal Town area, leading to confiscated evidence including crucial records and bogus documents, according to an FIA spokesperson. He said the agency acted swiftly on information provided by a key suspect apprehended earlier associated with the factory leading them to the main office in Iqbal Town, a private news channel reported.—APP

## 'A new IMF agreement required to save country'

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Monday that getting the final instalment from the IMF will be the new government's first test. He said the new government would have to work hard to meet the IMF's strict criteria, as all political parties offer great relief to the masses. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the new government will need a new three-year IMF agreement to run the country, which will be an uphill task. The IMF programme is very important for a country's survival because it prevents politicians from irresponsible spending that damages the economy. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the last tranche of the existing standby agreement with the IMF would be possible after raising electricity and gas prices. It will be mandatory as the circular debt is constantly increasing despite the record increase in the price of these items. If the IMF offered any relaxation during the final review, it would demand an upward revision of electricity and gas prices before the next agreement. The political parties promise up to 300 units of free electricity for the masses, which is impossible due to a lack of resources and the lender's supervision.—APP

## Education institutions play vital role against drug addiction

ISLAMABAD: Consultant, Anti Drugs & Narcotics Campaign Syed Zulfiqar Hussain Monday expressed his serious fear over the rising number of drug addiction among students and called for taking up necessary steps for prevention of drug use as it has emerged as a serious threat in the present digital lives of society. Talking to the PTV news channel, he said that earlier the problem used to prevail among males, but now it has spread among females and children in our country in an alarming proportion, adding, that there is a dire need to urgently combat the situation with the coordination efforts of academic institutions.

He said that it is not just self-interest habit but motivation by their near one and friends' company which was the most important factor, which led to the drug use. He said addiction to narcotics must be eradicated from its roots to safeguard the youth and prosperity of the country, adding, that drug use can be reduced through public awareness seminars and campaigns. Experts recommended there should be awareness of the dangerous effects of narcotics in the youth of Pakistan. He said that appropriate treatment facilities should also be established for children and female drug users. The problem of drug abuse is likely to explode in the next

decade, particularly affecting children under age 14, adding, that the impact of the increasing drug abuse will be seen in both urban and rural areas of the country due to the busy schedules of parents and excessive use of digital gadgets. He said the adverse effects of drug abuse are immense and it not only harms the brain but other organs of the body which soon loses immunity to fight disease. The individual cannot lead a productive life for himself, his family or society and hence one should guard oneself against drugs, he added. "Education is only best weapon against drugs", he added. "Children need to be taught about the dangers of consuming drugs",

he mentioned. He said that the government is collaborating with non-government organizations, including educational institutes, to raise awareness among people, especially youngsters, about the harmful effects of drugs on society. Replying to a question, he explained that there is a problem in the family's communication with the children, adding, all busy with other things such as chatting through their mobile phones. We believe that the modern communication systems have created a sort of isolation with the family," he said. "There is a need for strong communication between the parents and the children", he advised.—APP

## NCGSA, IST to hold First National CanSat Competition

Each team may consist of 2-4 students along with one Team Lead as a faculty member, the official informed

ISLAMABAD: National Center of GIS and Space Applications (NCGSA), Institute of Space Technology (IST) Islamabad, Pakistan is organizing the First National CanSat Competition to design, develop and launch the student satellite (CanSat) model. An official of IST informed that high school, college and university students will participate in the competition that would be held between February-April. The competition is a part of the efforts towards Space Technology Education and Popularization (STEP) through STEM education. The competition will be held in multiple phases (online/onsite), while the final phase will be held at IST, Islamabad by the end of April. The competition has been designed for teams from Abecedarian (Grade 9 - 12 / O / A levels) and Virtuoso (Undergraduate BS) groups. Each team may consist of 2-4 students along with one Team Lead as a faculty member, the official informed. The STEM investment is PKR 5000 per team. The winners will be awarded cash awards of PKR 100,000 and PKR 50,000 for each group (Abecedarian and Virtuoso) along with winning and participation certificates. The interested teams may register online (//bit.ly/NCC2024) through their Team Leads (Focal Person/Faculty Member) by Feb 23, 2024.—APP

## Pak-China leather industry partnerships flourish

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The 9th Pakistan Mega Leather Show took place in Lahore from January 26th to 28th, achieved remarkable success promoting leather industry partnership, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The event witnessed a significant presence of Chinese companies, who not only attended the exhibition but also forged valuable cooperation agreements, solidifying the potential for collaboration between the Chinese and Pakistani footwear industries. Given China's position as the top producer of footwear and leather goods, coupled with Pakistan's ability to supply high-quality leather to major brands at competitive labor costs, the potential for a win-win cooperation between the two countries is substantial," said Agha Saiddain, former chairman of Pakistan Tanners Association. Understanding the potential of Pak-China leather industry cooperation,

the Guangdong Shoes Materials Association organized a delegation of Chinese companies to participate in this influential exhibition. "The products primarily produced in Pakistan are mainly made of real leather, but there is a significant scarcity of footwear and bag products made from other materials such as synthetic leather. The local population also exhibits a strong desire for fashionable footwear and bags. Pakistan also have implemented favorable import policies for these products, creating a conducive environment for collaboration between Chinese exhibitors and the Pakistani market," said one Chinese exhibitor. During the three-day exhibition, Chinese companies experienced a continuous influx of interested visitors, rivaling the popularity of even the renowned Canton Fair. Several Chinese enterprises also signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with local industry partners during the expo. "We are eager

to find Chinese partners at this exhibition. China, with its large population and high consumption capacity, plays a significant role as an importer of finished leather from Pakistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) provides Pakistan with a strategic advantage, greatly benefiting the leather export industry. Additionally, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and China further amplifies these advantages," expressed a Pakistani participant. In addition to their active participation in the exhibition, the Chinese delegation also conducted insightful field visits to local leather factories, gaining in-depth knowledge about the production conditions, technological capabilities and market prospects of Pakistani manufacturers. This tour has paved the way for an enhanced partnership between the Chinese and Pakistani leather industries, ultimately benefiting consumers in both markets.

## Passenger train derailed in Attock

ATTOCK: The railway traffic between the Attock-Mianwali section was halted for around three hours as four bogies of a passenger train derailed near Jhamat railway station in the Jand town of Attock in the early hours of Monday, railway authorities confirmed. Controller, rail traffic, Divisional Headquarters Peshawar, when contacted, confirmed that the Attock bound passenger train 201 UP coming from Mari Indus derailed near Jhamat railway station in the Jand town of Attock as the wheel of the bogie has developed some problems which resulted in derailment and no loss or injury was reported. Sources said that four bogies of the train left the site and passengers were accommodated in three other bogies which left for Attock. After the incident, railway authorities dispatched a relief train from the Kundian railway station of Mianwali to the site.—APP

## Extra tax on the electricity bills rejected

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD (Staff Reporter) Senior Vice President of All Pakistan Hotels Association and Chairman Central of Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) Mian Akram Farid while addressing the meeting said that the government is sympathetic to meet the legitimate demands of the hotel industry. Consider that due to the absence of a national tourism policy and a consistent policy framework for the hotel industry, no new major hotel chain has opened in Pakistan since 1990. did not come He said that the government can get a lot of revenue by creating favorable conditions for this industry and solving its major problems. Mian Akram

Farid, Senior Vice Chairman of Pakistan Hotels Association, demanded that the government abolish the import duties and regulatory duties imposed on the import of machinery and other goods for the hotel industry as these duties have increased the cost of doing business and cost of goods. There is a delay in clearance. He said that according to the current market rate, land prices have increased many times while there are many difficulties in promoting this industry due to the presence of various taxes and levies on the hotel industry. Capital investors invest all capital in purchasing land for hotels so that land is provided to this industry at government rates. He further said that in order to reduce the 22% high interest rate,

## CDNS attains Rs 1000 billion targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has realized a target of Rs 1000 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to January 20th, 2023-24. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday. The senior official said this was a Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial

year 2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine

(ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS had collected an investment of Rs 55 billion by January 9, 2023-24, through Islamic investment bonds. The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds. Replying to a question; he said the CDNS aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector.—APP

| 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         |
| Jan 06 / Iraq                       | Armed Forces Day         |
| Jan 12 / Tanzania                   | Armed Forces Day         |
| Jan 14 / Uzbekistan                 | 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             |

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Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

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A sister concern of  
**Islamabad POST**  
11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,  
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan  
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

## Tel Aviv's UNRWA charges spark hasty reactions

ISRAEL'S intention in alleging that 12 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East were involved in Hamas' Oct 7 attacks is open to question. The head of Israel's Military Intelligence Directorate, Aharon Haliva, met with senior United States officials on Friday, and gave them "specific names and which organizations they are affiliated with, whether Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad or others, and what exactly they did on Oct 7", and showed them that "we had solid intelligence from different sources", Israeli officials familiar with the matter told the media. The US State Department said it had "temporarily paused additional funding" to the agency in the wake of the allegations. And Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, the Netherlands and Japan soon followed suit. This means the UNRWA, which is in charge of providing subsistence for millions of refugees in Gaza, who are already struggling with hunger, will soon be put out of operation if no new sources of funding are forthcoming in a short time. It is no secret that Tel Aviv wants to paralyze the agency, if not totally uproot it from the Palestinian enclave. It has viewed the agency as a protective umbrella for anti-Israel forces in Gaza since its founding in the late 1940s, and its disabling has been a key part of Tel Aviv's long-term plan to "neutralize" the Gaza Strip. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz suggested on Friday that Israel will seek to stop the UNRWA from operating in postwar Gaza. But despite Israel's allegations, the international community, including the US and its allies, has regarded the UNRWA as an indispensable player in Gaza and beyond over the past more than seven decades, during which it has taken care of about 5.9 million Palestinian refugees that have been displaced from their homes since the war in 1948. The existence of the agency is a testimony to Israel's continuous expansion and the grave impacts it has had on Palestinians. With about 13,000 employees, the UNRWA represents one of the few channels that still enable humanitarian assistance to trickle into the besieged Gaza Strip. Over the past more than three months, about 152 employees of the agency have died in Israel's "self-defense" offensive. That's why not all the US' allies, including Norway and Ireland, are following its lead and they insist they will continue to give funding to the agency. That the agency has sacked the suspected members of staff before the UN launches its investigation into the charges conveys the urgency with which the UNRWA is acting in an effort to persuade all funding parties to continue their support. The move should by no means be taken as evidence that the UNRWA admits Tel Aviv's allegations are true. It is notable that the Israeli allegations against the UNRWA on Friday came almost at the same time the International Court of Justice issued orders that Israel must act immediately to prevent genocide in Gaza. The timing effectively diverted the world's attention from the ICJ's condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza. Even if Israel's allegations are substantiated, as long as the agency takes all necessary measures to solve the problem and plug its loopholes, Israel has no reason to deny the legitimacy of it.



## Solar protective measures to hurt Sino-EU ties

THE European Union is reportedly planning emergency support measures, including an antidumping probe, for Europe's solar panel manufacturing industry to counter what it considers a flood of cheap Chinese imports. Four European factories have shut down or announced plans to do so in recent weeks mainly due to increasing Chinese competition, prompting calls from the sector to "deal with the Chinese threat". The European Solar Manufacturing Council warned that the bulk of Europe's manufacturers – which were already "on the brink" – could be shut within three months if no emergency actions are taken. It is not uncommon for some European policymakers to blame China for the industrial woes that Europe faces during the energy transition process. Should any safeguard measures be put into place against Chinese solar power companies, it would be the second time that Europe resorted to trade protectionism after the EU initiated an anti-subsidy investigation last October into imports of Chinese electric vehicles. The latest move bodes ill not only for smooth development of Sino-EU economic and trade relations, but also for Europe's ambitious goal of having 45 percent of energy generated by renewables by 2030. History shows that trade barriers would create a "lose-lose situation" and they would leave the realization of the bloc's climate goals in question. China now holds a pivotal position in the global solar energy supply chain, producing more than 90 percent of the silicon wafers that go into solar panels and more than three-quarters of the world's solar panels, mainly thanks to innovative efforts by Chinese high-tech enterprises and economies of scale. In comparison, Europe produces fewer than 3 percent of the solar panels needed to meet the bloc's 2030 solar power targets. Implementing any trade protectionist measures targeting Chinese producers would surely disrupt the market. "Today the Chinese are not only the most competitive on price, but also on quality", as Henning Rath, chief supply chain officer at German solar installer Enpal, which sources solar panels from China, said. Actually, the EU initiated antidumping measures against Chinese solar cells, wafers and panels in 2013, only to lift them five years later to increase the supply and boost renewable energy installation. China and the EU, as the world's two major markets, should conduct negotiations to try to resolve their solar panel dispute in the spirit of maintaining an open, fair, just and nondiscriminatory business environment in compliance with the World Trade Organization rules. Any move aimed at erecting trade barriers goes against the trend of the times and risks hampering their joint efforts to address climate change, which is at the core of China-EU strategic partnership.

## Political parties' manifestos: A promise needs to be fulfilled

Waheed Hussain



No doubt PML (N) manifesto is the most attractive and comprehensive in comparison to other political parties. It gives the touch of two professors, Former Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal and Former Federal Minister and Senator Irfan Saddiqi, both worked very hard in compiling the document. Ahsan has been associated with the Planning Commission, knows the economic challenges being faced by the country, while, Irfan Saddiqi a senior columnist, has been very close to the public issues...

IN the present controversial and cloudy political environment, three main political parties PPP, PML (N) and PTI announced their election manifestos. A manifesto is a sacred document of any political party, informing the public, how it will perform once elected to the government. It's a road map of the party for development and prosperity of the people and country. Practically speaking, it's to allure the voters. It's future promises, rarely fulfilled. The problem with our party parties' manifesto is, that they are too wishful and unrealistic to be achieved in the five-year term of a government. No doubt PML (N) manifesto is the most attractive and comprehensive in comparison to other political parties. It gives the touch of two professors, Former Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal and Former Federal Minister and Senator Irfan Saddiqi, both worked very hard in compiling the document. Ahsan has been associated with the Planning Commission, knows the economic challenges being faced by the country, while, Irfan Saddiqi a senior columnist, has been very close to the public issues, aspirations and demands. The PML (N) manifesto reads: 1. All government offices will be made environment-friendly. 2. Supremacy of the Parliament will be ensured. 3. Article 62 and 63 will be restored to their original form. 4. Introduction of Panchayat system for alternative dispute resolution. 5. Judicial, legal and justice system will be reformed. 6. Timely and efficient judicial system will be implemented. 7. Limit adjudication time to one year, especially for cases affecting life of a common citizen. 8. Minor cases will be decided in two months. 9. NAB will be abolished. 10. Strengthen existing anti-corruption institutions and agencies. 11. Comprehensive amendments in Civil Procedure Code, 1908 and Criminal Procedure Code, 1898 to standardise the procedural laws. 12. Effective, fair and timely prosecution. 13. Court proceedings will be telecast live. 14. Commercial courts will be established. 15. Courts of overseas Pakistanis will be made better and stronger. 16. Digital system will be established in judiciary. 17. Inflation will be reduced by 10% by fiscal year 2025. 18. Inflation will be brought down to 4 to 6% in next 4 years. 19. Over 10 million jobs to be offered in 5 years. 20. Maintain a low CAD for next 5 years by keeping it in range of around 1.5%

of GDP. 21. To achieve exports of goods & services of more than \$58 billion by the end of 2029. Attractive! Will it be achieved? How the judiciary will be reformed? How NAB will be abolished until entire parliament agrees or at least the government has clear majority in the two houses. The country's the most important issue is price hike of the daily used items. The electricity and gas bills. The exchange rate of the country (rupee against the dollar). The petroleum products' prices which determine rates of all other products used by the public. Until our governments permanently say good bye to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the prices of different products will remain high creating a persistent mental torture for masses. Is there any solution to mounting debts? Can we run the economy without IMF loans? No answer to these and many other perplex queries? Last but not the least, will the coming elections bring political certainty and stability? When we debate about the manifesto of a party. Does it mean an individual or the entire party? Because we have been listening to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif detaching himself from the decisions and performance of two PML (N) governments. One that of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and other of his own brother Shahbaz Sharif. When Nawaz Sharif says his government ended in 2017, and country was sent back to the dark ages, he does not own (N) government under Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, the man, who was selected by him. Similarly, Nawaz does not own 16 months of Shahbaz Sharif's coalition (PDM) government as well, again his nominee and the real brother. What does it mean? Just to get away with the decisions of two PML (N) governments on serious and sensitive issues including the finance and economy. No doubt, removal of Nawaz in 2017 destabilized the country, however, his party completed the government term from 2013-2018. Similarly, the economic mess created by the successive governments including PTI could not be cleared only in 16 months of Shahbaz's tenure. Here, again, responsibility of all decisions by a government at that time must be shouldered by the Shahbaz's PDM government. So, the point needs to be noted that in such circumstances the manifestos of the parties disappear in the political mess and power game.

Bilawal is very active in Punjab to challenge Nawaz League and at the same time attract the PTI voters. Will PPP fill the vacuum created by the PTI? In middle the election campaign, PPP has also presented 10 points manifestos. They include: A) Double real income for wage earners – 8% increase every year. B) Free solar energy of 300 units for the poor; every district to have green energy parks. C) Education for all – rolling out projects for better education. D) Free health for all across Pakistan. E) Three million houses for flood affectees and the poor. F) Ghurbat Mitao: Expand BISP's scope; introduce more welfare schemes. G) Khushhaal Kisaan: BISP-like programme for farmers and 'Hari Card'. H) Enhanced support for labourers through Benazir Mazdoor Card. I) 'Youth Card' for unemployed youth and 'Youth Markaz.' J) 'Bhook Mitao Programme.' Unfortunately, no industrial plan. No economic road map. The PPP needs to develop an economic team to address the serious economic and financial challenges being faced by Pakistan. How to resolve problems of national debt, PSE loans, Privatization, Energy sector circular debts, price hike, security and national cohesion? Where is the plan? PTI also presented over 150 pages document for the next month general elections. If we see its previous performance, like other political parties, it had failed to implement its 2018 manifesto during approximately four years tenure in power. It promised to provide 10 million jobs and five million houses. The result was otherwise. The country faced worst inflation and debts. The IMF supervised economic and financial policies disappointed the public. Whatever, the politicians say in the public meetings "Jalsas" are just the election campaign strategy and slogans. All the three main political parties PTI, PML (N) and PPP ruled the country both at the federal as well as provincial levels. Fact of the matter is they could not pull the country out of economic and financial troubles. It is the time that all of them should bring a drastic change in their attitude, thinking, policy making and implementation process. They should learn from the past. Give up personal likes and dislikes, revenge and just focus on the development and progress of the country. The present vibrant media has changed thinking of the people, so, these political parties may not be able to befool the masses any more. The choice is there?

## 'Made in China 2025' : blueprint for future industries

Air Commodore Raza Haider (R)

The MIC 2025, which was initiated in 2015, is planned in three phases. During the first phase (till 2025), indigenisation and upgrade of industries with a focus on smart manufacturing technologies is planned. During the second phase (till 2035), the focus would be on improving global innovations and ownership of intellectual property. In the third and final phase, China aims to establish itself as a global leader in high-tech manufacturing by 2049. This aligns with the broader objective of its Centennial 2049 plan, which aims to create a modern...

THE foundation of a nation's progress lies in its robust industrial sector, shaping its economic vitality and strategic influence. China, having a formidable industrial base, has secured a prominent global standing across diverse sectors. Its 'Made in China' (MIC) 2025 project marks a paradigm shift with a primary focus on becoming a global leader in high-tech industries through a dual-pronged approach. First, to indigenise strategic technologies for self-reliance and second, to upgrade China's high-tech industrial capabilities through innovations. With government support and synergizing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) throughout the development and production life cycle - from raw materials to end product - the plan aims to ultimately position China as a 'manufacturing superpower'. The MIC 2025, which was initiated in 2015, is planned in three phases. During the first phase (till 2025), indigenisation and upgrade of industries with a focus on smart manufacturing technologies is planned. During the second phase (till 2035), the focus would be on improving global innovations and ownership of intellectual property. In the third and final phase, China aims to establish itself as a global leader in high-tech manufacturing by 2049. This aligns with the broader objective of its Centennial 2049 plan, which aims to create a modern, prosperous, strong, and technologically advanced China. Under the MIC 2025 initiative, the emphasis is on the development of ten key industries, i.e., Electric Vehicles (EVs), Information Technology (IT), Aerospace Technologies, Ships and Maritime, Advanced Railways, Robotic Machines, Precision Agriculture, Advanced Materials, Power Equipment, and Bio-medicines. China is actively digitalising these industries, aligning them with the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4), emphasising the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, cloud computing, automation, virtual sim-

ulations, robotics, and other nascent technologies into manufacturing supply chains. One notable example in the realm of indigenous development is Electric Vehicles (EVs) technology. China has strategically invested in the Research and Development (R&D) of EV technologies, aiming to establish its dominance in the rapidly growing electric vehicle market and environmental sustainability. Chinese corporations have successfully advanced in the fields of power battery technologies, electric propulsion systems, and charging infrastructure. This concerted effort has not only propelled the domestic electric vehicle industry but, has also positioned China as a global leader in EV manufacturing and technology showcasing the country's commitment to reducing dependence on foreign technologies and fostering self-sufficiency. Another example of innovation in the existing sector is the Aerospace Industry, where cutting-edge initiatives, such as the integration of AI, robots, simulations, and new materials like lightweight composites and alloys, have been launched. These initiatives have led to the development of advanced aircraft and UAVs that are fuel-efficient and technologically advanced. Moreover, new manufacturing techniques like 3D printing is revolutionising processes by enabling the production of intricate components with reduced material waste. The integration of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies enables the real-time monitoring of systems, while the utilisation of big data analytics aids in the optimisation of flight operations and predictive maintenance. China's emphasis on space exploration and satellite technology reinforces its dedication to advancing its aeronautical capabilities. In the context of Pakistan, there is a significant need to advance the industrial sector through the adoption of digitalisation. Through the cultivation of an environment that encourages innovation, allocation of resources towards state-of-the-art technology and the

prioritisation of digital infrastructure, Pakistan can unleash its capacity for industrial development. To achieve the goal of digitalisation, two pathways are suggested. First, formulation of a comprehensive national policy framework in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is important. SDG-9 emphasises the promotion of resilient infrastructure and sustainable industrialisation through innovation, science and technology. To effectively realise these aspirations, Pakistan should strategically align its industrial upgradation with the SDGs, encouraging innovation through targeted awareness programmes, policy-level initiatives, and the incorporation of new technologies in design and production processes. Encouraging PPPs and strengthening academia-industry linkages, exemplified by the Triple Helix Model, can further catalyze innovations aligned with the nation's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Second, Pakistan has a unique opportunity to utilise the platform of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to bolster its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) related projects. Collaboration with China under CPEC can facilitate the acquisition of R&D expertise in emerging technologies along with practical integration of these technologies with the local industry for production capacity and capability enhancement. This strategic partnership has the potential to advance not only Pakistan's position in STEM fields but also to contribute significantly to the overall economic and technological progress of the nation. These measures collectively underscore a proactive approach towards achieving inclusive, sustainable, and innovation-driven industrial growth in Pakistan.

– Air Commodore Raza Haider (Retd) is currently serving as Director at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be contacted at: [cass.thinkers@casstt.com](mailto:cass.thinkers@casstt.com).

## Briefs

Pak-Iran  
stress joint  
efforts...

FROM PAGE 01 immediately appoint liaison officers in Turbat and Zaidan to further strengthen ongoing security and intelligence cooperation. Noting that security and development are intrinsically interlinked, the two Foreign Ministers agreed to expand initiatives for economic and development cooperation including through early operationalization of the joint border markets to uplift the socio-economic status of the people of both countries, especially those residing in the border regions. The two sides also decided to establish a Joint Coordination Mechanism at the level of Foreign Ministers to oversee and steer progress on common agenda for prosperity and development of the two peoples. Regular high-level engagements provide a leadership driven impetus to the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. In this backdrop, the Foreign Minister renewed invitation to honourable President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi to undertake a visit to Pakistan.

COAS  
stresses...

FROM PAGE 01 was common threat that needed to be tackled through collaborative efforts, better coordination and intelligence sharing. COAS emphasized the need for sustained engagement and utilizing available communication channels to address security concerns. Both sides agreed to operationalize the mechanism of deployment of military liaison officers in each other's country at an early date to improve coordination and efficiency of response against common threats. Both sides reaffirmed the resolve to remain closely engaged and not allow any spoilers to drive a wedge between the brotherly nations. Pakistan and Iran are fraternal neighbours and the destiny of both nations are intertwined. Both sides reiterated their commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in the border region which was identified as an indispensable requirement for the well-being of people living on both sides.

Pakistan  
to secure...

FROM PAGE 01 the largest EU investment program designed to propel the global green transition. Moreover, the package extends its impact by fortifying Pakistan's long-term resilience through targeted investments in human rights, gender equality, and civil society. On the occasion, Dr Kazim Niaz thanked the EU for their support and further emphasised that there were unmet needs in the flood affected areas that require assistance of development partners. Speaking on the occasion, European Union Ambassador, Dr. Riina Kionka said Pakistan was not alone in overcoming its challenging phase of economic crisis and flood recovery. "The EU and Team Europe partners are committed to building back better, sustainably improving lives in the most affected communities in KP and Balochistan," she added.

Nawaz  
Sharif...

FROM PAGE 01 flour, and ghee were affordable for the common citizen. He couldn't help but express his dismay at the current economic challenges and emphasized the urgent need to restore the prosperity the nation once enjoyed. PML-N chief saluted the passion and dedication of his supporters and assured them of his unwavering commitment to the cause, despite the challenges. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Monday people know that Nawaz Sharif would reduce the inflation after coming to power. Addressing a rally in Lahore she said, "This constituency is not new to me as you love Nawaz Sharif. You have supported Nawaz him before and again, he will come to power with your help."



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott hosted tea party for the photo journalists of Islamabad. Mudassar Raja of Daily Islamabad POST / DNA NEWS AGENCY also attended. - DNA

PFF, Denmark envoy discuss  
overseas player involvement

PFF is looking forward to strengthening the ties between the two nations on field

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Haroon Malik, the chairman of the Pakistan Football Federation's Normalisation Committee, held a meeting with the Denmark Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Jakob Linulf on Monday. During the meeting, the involvement of overseas players in Pakistan's team and the possibility of future football exchanges were discussed. The PFF is looking forward to strengthening the ties between the two nations on the field. It must be noted that football enthusiasts in Pakistan may miss the opportunity to witness Pakistan's FIFA World Cup qualifier against Jordan on home turf, as the PFF has confirmed that Islamabad's Jinnah Stadium falls short of FIFA standards. In a statement released last week, the PFF conveyed that it is actively exploring alternative venues to ensure the game takes



place at a neutral location. "In collaboration with the Pakistan Sports Board, the Pakistan Football Federation has been dedicatedly working on preparing Jinnah Stadium for the upcoming March match against Jordan, following the successful," PFF stated. "Regrettably, despite our best efforts, the current standard of Jinnah Stadium does not meet FIFA requirements," it added. The PFF highlighted a significant challenge related to lighting conditions, stating, "as the March game is scheduled to be held under lights and coincides with Ramazan, meeting FIFA's lighting standards with the current setup has posed difficulties". Citing the January 21 deadline for venue submission and a commitment to upholding the game's integrity, the PFF affirmed its decision to explore alternative options. "We will be in contact with the Jordan Football Association to discuss arrangements for a neutral venue for the home leg," the statement added.

Pak Hockey5s  
WC journey  
ends with loss

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan's hopes to secure a quarterfinal spot at the FIH Hockey5s World Cup 2024 were shattered as they conceded a 7-8 defeat to Poland in their last pool A match in Muscat, Oman on Monday. Poland scored three consecutive goals in the first quarter with Holosyniuk Jakub, Rutkowski Wojciech and Bembek Tomasz, netting on goal apiece in the 8th, 9th and 10th minutes respectively to put Pakistan under immense pressure, according to information made available here by Pakistan Hockey Federation. Pakistan bounced back shortly with captain Rana Waheed Ashraf and Ali Ghazanfar scoring two back-to-back goals in the 13th and 14 minutes to help their side go into the break 2-3. In the second half both the teams scored 5-5 goals. For Poland, Jarzembowski Damian struck twice in the 18th and 21st minutes and Rutkowski, who had scored a goal in the first quarter netted another in the 22nd minute. Two stunning goals were scored by Glowacki Mikolaj and Nowakowski Mateusz in the 28th minute of the match. Liaqat Arshad scored fourth goal of the match for Pakistan in the 20th minute. Rana Waheed exhibited great resilience and fighting spirit as he scored three more goals in the 23rd, 26th and 30th minutes, but his efforts were not enough to get Pakistan over the line as they lost the important pool match to Poland 7-8 after a thrilling contest. Poland became the second side from pool A to advance to the top-eight place playoffs in the competition. The Netherlands was the first team to book their place in the quarterfinals at the back of a strong start in the event. They beat Poland 6-3 in their opening match and followed it up with a 5-3 victory against Pakistan. Pakistan launched their campaign in the event on a winning note, thrashing Nigeria 11-5 in their inaugural match on Sunday but could not continue the momentum as they fell down 3-5 fighting hard against the Netherlands in their second match of the day. - DNA

Joseph joins  
Peshawar  
Zalmi for PSL 9

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Young West Indies pace sensation Shamar Joseph has joined Peshawar Zalmi as the partial replacement of England's Gus Atkinson for the upcoming PSL season nine. The announcement was made by the PSL on their social platforms. Earlier, Zalmi owner Javed Afridi posted a franchise shirt with Joseph's Test wickets (13), from his debut series in Australia, printed on the back of a Zalmi jersey. The 24-year-old bowled an epic spell to hand his side a win in a Test in Australia since 1997. It was also their first win over Aussies since 2023. Remember, Shamar Joseph wasn't scheduled to be at the Gabba on Sunday morning, but he delivered an exceptional seven-wicket performance, securing a significant victory for West Indies in the second Test against Australia. Despite being in just his second Test and dealing with a toe injury, the 24-year-old defied nearly three decades of history to etch his name into the cricketing record books. The pacer will now be in action for Dubai Capitals in the ongoing UAE's ICL20.

Davis Cup: Indian team  
arrives in Pak after 60 years

ISLAMABAD: The Indian tennis team arrived in Pakistan on Sunday for the first time in 60 years. After months of uncertainty and reluctance, the Indian team touched down in Islamabad to play the important Davis Cup Group I tie against Pakistan at the Sports Complex Grass Court on February 3-4, reported The News on Monday. India have a 7-0 lead in the head-to-head record against Pakistan and only twice - in 1973 and 2019 - have they played at a neutral venue. The last time the Indian team played in Pakistan was in 1964. As per the publication, the All-Indian Tennis Association (AITA) tried using all options to deprive Pakistan of the hosting rights. It had first approached the Davis Cup Committee and then to the Chair of the Independent Tribunal to shift the tie to a neutral venue. However, their efforts went in vain and had only two options before them either to travel to Pakistan to play the tie or face the ire of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) by forfeiting the tie and facing a fine. Fearing the fine and possible relegation, the Indian team finally decided to travel to Pakistan and arrived in the federal capital late Sunday evening. According to The News, this is the first time that Pakistan has defeated India's point of view on an international forum twice in a matter of months. It was the DCC that rejected India's concern, allotting the tie to Pakistan, and then came the turn of the Chair of Independent Tribunal which upheld the DCC/PTF stance, rejecting AITA concerns altogether. The visiting squad includes five players, two physios, a coach, a manager, and a coordinator. Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Secretary Col (ret'd) Gul Rehman and other federation officials welcomed the Indian team on their arrival to Pakistan. - Agencies

Atletico Madrid  
jump to third  
spot in La Liga

BARCELONA: Atletico Madrid replaced holders Barcelona at the third position in La Liga standings after registering a 2-0 victory over Valencia at Civitas Metropolitan Stadium on Sunday. Barcelona succumbed to a 5-3 loss at the hands of Villarreal on Saturday at home after having a 3-2 lead in the 80 minutes, leaving them at same number of wins with Atletico Madrid. Atletico entered their home ground on Sunday with three points shy of Barcelona, however, the victory over Valencia placed them in the third position with more wins.

The home team spent the first half looking for the first goal, which they earned at the stroke of half-time as Samuel Lino hit from the centre of the box to the centre after an assist by Antoine Griezmann with a through ball. Memphis Depay doubled their advantage 10 minutes into the second half with a header from very close range to the centre of the goal after finding a cross by Nahuel Molina. Valencia made desperate efforts in the second half to reduce the deficit but failed to get a breakthrough, ending the match goalless. Meanwhile, Girona once again claimed the top spot in the La Liga points table, sliding Real Madrid to second after a 1-0 away victory over Celta Vigo at Estadio de Balaídos. Porto scored the match-winner for the visitors as he found Miguel Gutiérrez's cross in the 20th minute and rocketed it from the centre of the box to the bottom left corner. - Agencies

PCB reveals supplementary players for HBL PSL 9  
Lahore Qalandars reserved their picks for Rashid Khan, fully unavailable  
and Dan Lawrence, partially unavailable to the franchise

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) revealed the supplementary and replacement players that have been added to the six HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) squads, for the ninth edition of the marquee league during the Replacement Draft that took place over a conference call on Monday. Peshawar Zalmi, announcing their replacements, drafted Waqar Salamkheil in the silver category for Lungi Ngidi, who was not available for the whole season after being picked in the HBL PSL draft in December. Fast bowler, Khuram Shahzad will be

partially available, with pacer Arshad Iqbal named as his replacement, in the silver category. Gus Atkinson is set to replace Noor Ahmed who is not available to Peshawar Zalmi due to international commitments, meanwhile, they have reserved their pick for the replacement of partially available Naveen ul Haq. Lahore Qalandars reserved their picks for Rashid Khan, fully unavailable and Dan Lawrence, partially unavailable to the franchise. Islamabad United, too, reserved their pick for Tom Curran, who will not be part of the side for the HBL PSL 9. Karachi Kings have called in Zahid Mehmood as a partial replacement for Kieron Pollard while they



have reserved their pick for Tim Seifert, who will be available after the conclusion of the New Zealand T20Is. Quetta Gladiators' Bismillah Khan will replace Wanindu Hasaranga after Sri Lanka's Hasaranga will leave the squad during the tournament owing to his international commitments. In the first and second pick of the third supplementary

round, left-arm pacers Luke Wood and Obed McCoy were bagged by Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United, respectively. Karachi Kings had the third pick and they went for English middle-order batter Leus De Plooy while the fourth pick belonged to Lahore Qalandars who took on board the Sri Lankan wicketkeeper-batter Bhanu

ka Rajapaksa, who featured for Peshawar Zalmi in the last HBL PSL season. Multan Sultans had the fifth pick in the third supplementary round and they went for the experienced West Indian wicketkeeper-batter Johnson Charles, who has represented Sultans and Quetta Gladiators in previous HBL PSL seasons. Quetta Gladiators, with the last pick of the round three, drafted English batter Laurie Evans, who previously appeared in his solitary HBL PSL season for Multan Sultans in the 2019 edition. The fourth round of the Supplementary picks saw Sultans bagging the exciting 19-year-old Muhammad Shahzad, who was part of Pakistan U19 at

the ICC Men's U19 World Cup 2022. Haider Ali was drafted into the Islamabad United squad, with the batter all set to feature in his fifth HBL PSL season with Islamabad being his third franchise. Quetta Gladiators reserved their pick in the fourth round. The fourth pick of the round saw Peshawar Zalmi drafting in left-arm wrist spinner, Sufiyan Muqem, who was part of the same team in the last HBL PSL season. With the fifth pick in this round, Lahore Qalandars picked up Tayyab Abbas, a product of their player development program. Karachi Kings drafted 21-year-old Mohammad Rohid as part of their squad

Bilawal  
vows to end  
subsidies...

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country's long-standing problems. Bilawal was interacting with students of the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) Islamabad campus on Monday regarding his party's manifesto "Chuno Nai Soch Ko (Choose new thinking)". Promising strict measures to end the control of elites and powerful lobbies, the PPP chairman reiterated his vow to provide relief to the underprivileged segments after abolishing all subsidies to the superior class of society. The election campaigns of all political parties equipped with mollifying manifestos and promises are in full swing across the country ahead of the February 8 vote. PML-N and PPP are eyeing the premier's office and desperately swaying voters to elect them to power. "Inflation, poverty, unemployment and climate change are key issues being faced by the country which needed to be addressed on a priority basis," said the PPP chief, adding that the economic crisis posed a serious risk to Pakistan. He said that he and economic experts prepared the party's manifesto, promising a pro-public economic plan to cope with all crises and immediate relief to the masses.

Ministers,  
officials  
barred...

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"I am directed to convey that the prime minister has been pleased to withdraw all permissions for foreign visits, official or private, granted to the federal ministers, advisors and special assistants to the PM, and all federal officers with immediate effect," it stated. "All federal secretaries are requested to ensure compliance of the directions," the notification, issued by the cabinet senior joint secretary, added. The directive comes less than two weeks ahead of the forthcoming general elections. The incumbent interim setup is in its final days before transitioning authority to the incoming government after the Feb 8 polls. Earlier this month, the caretaker federal cabinet had approved the deployment of the Pakistan Army and civil armed forces for the peaceful holding of the elections. PM Kakar had also constituted a seven-member committee for the smooth conduct of the elections as well as overseeing their security arrangements. A day ago, the premier had said the general election on February 8 would bring political stability to the country.

SBP  
maintains  
interest...

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is in line with market expectations as high inflation persists due to the rise in energy prices. In a concerning update, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad stated during a press conference in Karachi that inflation remains elevated, necessitating an upward revision of the annual target to 23-25%. The decision to keep the rate status quo is the last under the caretaker government before the country's general election next month. It also comes in the midst of Pakistan's \$3 billion SBA with the IMF. The bank's governor said the decision was warranted due to "elevated" inflation, but that the rate in January was expected to ease from the previous month when it was 29.7%. It forecast that inflation would decline at a faster pace from March and full-year average inflation would be 23-25%. "SBP opted for a wait and see approach during this policy (meeting) and refrained from abruptly starting a monetary easing cycle," said Tahir Abbas, head of research at Arif Habib Limited.

## Lost and Found

Plot No. 65 Street No. 7 Road Precinct 32, Bahria Town Karachi whose original allotment letter, No. BKTP-QUS-1159 has been lost somewhere during the journey. If found, please contact Adil Almas Abbasi, son of Muhammad Almas, House No. D-406, Mohalla Satellite Town, Rawalpindi.



