



# Islamabad POST

Friday, February 16, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

**Japan, Pakistan have many cultural similarities: envoy**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Türkiye urges Israel to heed global warnings**

Detailed News On Page-07



**Haris Rauf's central contract terminated**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Economic revival

# Steps under SIFC yielding positive results

In a move that has stirred public outcry, the caretaker government has greenlit a 67% increase in gas prices, effectively burdening consumers with higher costs of living

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said the measures taken under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIF) were yielding the positive results as the caretaker government made all-out efforts to revive the national economy. "The caretaker government took steps to create a conducive environment for business, facilitate the role of the private sector in the country's development and increase tax revenue," he said while talking to a delegation of Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP) and industrialists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by Senator Nauman Wazir, at the Prime Minister Office. State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed, Federal Bureau of Revenue Chairman and secretaries of the ministries concerned were also present in the meeting, a PM Office news release said. Through its policies, the PM said, the government was facilitating the private sector to increase exports and employment opportunities. He hoped that the next elected government would continue the journey of providing employment opportunities to the people, and overall economic progress by further increasing industrial development and investment in the country with the continuation of policies. PM Kakar commended the efforts of the caretaker finance minister, FBR chairman and all the concerned for reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for the prudent economic policies. He also appreciated the business community and investors for extending support in difficult times, saying it were the industrialists who had restored investors' confidence in

Continued on Page 06

## MQM: Targeting establishment won't serve country

MQM-P convener urges all political forces to give their share of sacrifice for Pakistan's stability

DNA

KARACHI: Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, the Convener of MuttahidaQaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), has urged all political parties to express a spirit of sacrifice and unity to steer Pakistan out of its current crisis, cautioning against targeting the military establishment as detrimental to the nation's well-being and democratic stability. Speaking at a press conference held in Karachi, Siddiqui underscored the challenges Pakistan faces, including economic woes and the persistent threat of terrorism, against the backdrop of recent elections. "This is the time to sacrifice one's part to get the country out of the worst crisis," he emphasised, stressing the need for political parties to prioritise the national interest over partisan agendas.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of federal cabinet. – DNA

## Ji to observe Black Day to protest rigging

Hafiz Naeem criticized his political rival MQM-P

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi emir Hafiz Naeem Rehman has announced to observe a Black Day tomorrow, protesting against the alleged rigging in the February 8 polls. Hafiz Naeem Rehman asserted that the election results were marred by rigging, forgery, and denounced the outcome as a conspiracy against Pakistan. Refusing to accept the poll results, he criticized his political rival, MuttahidaQaumi Movement - Pakistan (MQM-P), accusing them of securing victory through illegitimate means. He specifically questioned the display of 'Thank You' banners by MQM-P, insinuating support from undemocratic elements. Hafiz Naeem argued that MQM-P garnered votes through illicit practices, imposing rulers on

Continued on Page 06

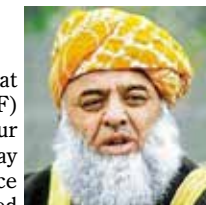
## JUI chief spills the beans

# Imran was ousted on Gen. Bajwa's directives: Fazl

Says he was against the no-confidence move; welcomes PTI delegation

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Emir Maulana Fazlur Rehman said Thursday that the no-confidence motion that ousted former prime minister Imran Khan was tabled on the directives of ex-army chief General (retired) Qamar Javed Bajwa. In an interview on a private news channel, Fazl, who was the chief of the multi-party alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) responsible for removing Khan, said: "I was personally against the no-confidence move [...] but if I had said no despite insistence of other parties, then an impression would've been given that I 'saved' the PTI founder." The PDM removed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in April 2022 and led by Shehbaz Sharif, the multi-party alliance ruled the country for



Continued on Page 06

## Arrest warrants of PTI's KP CM nominee issued

PTI's CM nominee has been instructed to appear before the AJK Election Commission on February 28

STAFF REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Election Commission has issued an arrest warrant for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Amin Gandapur for his alleged violation of the code of conduct during the 2021 elections. A letter regarding the arrest of Gandapur – Imran Khan's

Continued on Page 06

## OGRA increases gas tariff

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD. In response to OGRA's determination of SNGPL & SSGC for Review of Estimated Revenue Requirement for FY 2023-24 dated February 02, 2024, the Federal Government, under Section 8(3) of the OGRA Ordinance, 2002, has revised category-wise natural gas sale prices effective February 01, 2024. The same has been notified by OGRA in the Official Gazette.

Continued on Page 06

# Ch Shujaat meets Pervez Elahi in Jail

Meeting covered a range of topics, including the overall political situation; Shujaat tried to convince Elahi to join the system

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: In a significant development, leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), led by Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, engaged in an almost three-hour-long meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhry Pervez Elahi at Adiala Jail on Thursday. The meeting comes at a crucial juncture in the country's political landscape, as both major parties, PML-N and PTI,



Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Haleem Adil freed after 171 days

Sheikh has obtained bail in all 40 cases

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh has been released from Central Jail Karachi after spending over five months behind bars in cases pertaining to May 9 riots and land grabbing. As per details, the PTI Sindh chief's release order was issued after he obtained bail in dozens of cases from different courts. Haleem Adil Sheikh was arrested on 30th August 2023 from outside SHC after he arrived at the court, seeking bail to prevent the arrest aftermath of the 9th May riots. On the occasion of his release, PTI workers were also present outside the Central Jail Karachi. PTI Sindh Spokesman said that Haleem Adil Sheikh has obtained bail in all 40 cases registered in different police stations on charges of land grabbing and May 9 riots.

### Bilawal briefed about talks with PML N

All committee members were present in meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was briefed by members of the PPP's Contact and Coordination Committee about the multilateral contact among political parties at Zardari House, Islamabad. Qamar Zaman Kaira, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, Shuja Khan, Saeed Ghani, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Bahadur Khan Sehwar were present in the meeting.

## No alliance with PPP

# PTI announces protests on Feb 17

"Reports of [PTI] forming government with PPP are misleading. The PTI founder said to sit in opposition but not to forge alliance with PPP and PML-N," Gohar said

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Thursday announced staging "peaceful protests" across the country after rebutting reports of forming an alliance with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the Centre and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The announcements came after sources-based reports of PTI founder Imran Khan softening his stance against political rivals and consenting to hold talks with the PPP and the party's breakaway faction led by Parvez Khattak. A private news channel reported citing party sources that Khan, who remains incarcerated at Adiala jail, is "ready" to talk to the PPP, which has already announced supporting Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's candidate for prime minister – Shehbaz Sharif. However, PTI leader Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif denied the reports of contacting

Continued on Page 06

## PTI nominates Omar Ayub for PM, Aslam Iqbal for CM Punjab

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Omar Ayub has been nominated as a potential candidate for the office of prime minister by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) while, Mian Aslam Iqbal nominated as PTI candidate for Punjab chief minister. PTI leader and former National Assembly speaker AsadQaiser revealed the name of Omar Ayub as a candidate for the prime minister position, while Aqib Khan has been nominated for



Continued on Page 06

# Pakistan calls UNSC to impose Gaza ceasefire

'Need no advice,' Pakistan rebuffs international claims on general elections

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday strongly rejected criticism from some states about the Feb 8 parliamentary elections. "Pakistan does not need any advice from any country on elections," said Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in a weekly press briefing here, adding that "we take our constitutional obligations seriously." When asked to comment on concerns raised by some countries, including the United States, who asked Pakistan to conduct investigations into complaints over results, she said electoral process in Pakistan is an internal matter. She said that Pakistan is a democratic country where people have freedom of expression. "It is the right of the people of Pakistan to freely express their opinion. The Election Commission

Continued on Page 06

## Israeli occupation forces raid Nasser Hospital

Hamas calls for int'l action to prevent Israeli massacre at Nasser Hospital

FOREIGN DESK

GAZA: The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) bombed on Thursday morning the Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, killing at least one wounded patient and injuring others, some seriously. Other media sources reported several casualties as the Israeli army bombed and stormed the hospital after demolishing its southern wall. They added that Israeli army turned the hospital into a military outpost and forced

Continued on Page 06

## FEBRUARY 2024

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk  
www.dnanews.com.pl  
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@Postislamabad/ @Editordnews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,  
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan  
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



# Pak-China ties strengthening over time: SCCI

The SCCI chief praised artwork and paintings of the students displayed during the exhibition and said citizens of Peshawar will get aware about Chinese culture through this event

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq said there is no doubt that Pak-China friendship is unmatched which is further strengthening with the passage of time and its example is that events are being held on eve of new Chinese year across the Pakistan. Fuad Ishaq was speaking at an event at China Window Peshawar and inauguration of a culture exhibition, arranged by students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar (SBBWUP), held in connection with China New Year here on Thursday. The SCCI chief praised artwork and paintings of the students displayed during the exhibition and

said citizens of Peshawar will get aware about Chinese culture through this event.

He said Pakistan and China are tied with strong trade, cultural and tourism relationships, and its example wasn't found anywhere in the world. China and its people have always extended support to Pakistan in their difficult situation, he added. Fuad Ishaq noted Pakistan and China relationship has touched new heights owing to unflinching leadership of the two countries and vigorous efforts initiated by government from both sides, particularly CPEC had further strengthened bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. The chamber president opined that CPEC is a game changer, which would bring economic prosper-

ity and development in the whole region and stressed the need for early completion of projects under CPEC. The SCCI chief hoped both countries would take every possible measure to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations. Fuad Ishaq appreciated the China Window for arranging events on eve of China New Year and said the Chinese Culture Centre in Peshawar will prove a milestone in strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. Later, the SCCI chief visited the culture exhibition and lauded artwork and paintings of students of SBBWUP Peshawar. On the occasion, Fuad Ishaq also distributed certificates among students of the SBBWUP Peshawar.

## LESCO collects over Rs 105m from 2,070 defaulters

LAHORE : The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered more than Rs 105 million from 2,070 chronic defaulters in its five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 151st day of its recovery campaign.

A LESCO spokesman told the media here on Thursday that on the 151st day, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 21.40 million from 241 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 21.07 million from 126 defaulters in Eastern Circle respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Arsal and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi recovered Rs 16.30 million from 259 defaulters in Central Circle, and Rs 7.54 million from 151 defaulters in South Circle; while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 0.35 million from 13 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 3.75 million from 63 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle. He added that LESCO Manager E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig recovered outstanding dues of Rs 15.97 million from 523 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 19.18 million from 694 defaulters in Kasur Circle. Up till now during the recovery campaign, the LESCO with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery) recovered more than Rs 2.44 billion from 81,437 dead defaulters in its all circles of operation.—APP

## CDA enhances beautification of federal Capital

ISLAMABAD: The administration of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is busy around the clock in beautifying the city of Islamabad and providing the best facilities to the citizens. The CDA administration is also taking concrete and effective measures regarding the physical health and fitness of the staff working in the field. In this regard, on Thursday, on the instructions of the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), the DG civic management distrib-

uted protective and safety clothes among the sanitary workers whose are working in the field.

According to the details, special face masks and splash face shields to protect the nose and mouth from human waste and sewage water were also distributed among the sanitary workers on the instructions of Chairman CDA. Moreover, in order to avoid human waste and other toxic elements in the field works, special cover-like clothes were also distributed which

are light in weight and do not have any harmful effects on the human body. Similarly, protective gloves and shoes were also distributed among the sanitary workers to protect their hands and feet from toxic elements. Special thanks were also given by the field works of the Capital Development Authority for these good initiatives for On this occasion, Capital Development Authority (CDA) management said that every employee working in the field is a valuable asset for the organization and their physical health and fitness is very important for us because due to those employees it helps to maintaining high standards of sanitation in the city.—DNA

## Sindh Police chief visits KATI

KARACHI : Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja on Thursday paid a visit to the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), accompanied by Additional IGP Karachi, AIGP Admin, SSP Korangi, and other police officials. Upon arrival, Deputy Pattern-in-Chief of KATI, Zubair Chhaya, along with President Syed Johar Ali and other office bearers, warmly welcomed the IGP Sindh, said a news release. During the visit, KATI office bearers provided a comprehensive briefing on neighbourhood care/ community policing and security measures in place at KATI. The IGP Sindh examined proposals to establish Korangi Industrial Area as a model zone for community policing and issued further directives accordingly. He announced the allocation of an additional 200 police personnel to enhance security at KATI, underscoring the importance of leveraging technology for robust security measures. Highlighting the significance of technology in modern security frameworks, he advocated for the establishment of a digital data center for Korangi industries to manage employee records securely. Moreover, the IGP pledged to facilitate the sharing of facial recognition technology with KATI to deter criminal infiltration and ensure industry security. Addressing societal attitudes towards law enforcement, he stressed the importance of regular awareness campaigns to foster respect and compliance with the law. Riffat Mukhtar Raja affirmed the commitment of Sindh Police to bolster community policing efforts, emphasizing the importance of addressing the needs of the business community as a top priority. Furthermore, he underscored the potential of transforming Korangi Industrial Area into a model zone to stimulate industrial and commercial growth, commending the collaborative efforts between KATI representatives and senior police officials in this endeavor.

## Pak IT companies to contribute 3.1b USD in 2024

DNA

LAHORE : Experts at the Information Technology Career Fair have said that Pakistan's IT companies based on services and products will

contribute 3.1 billion dollars in 2024. The 13th Career Fair was organized by Punjab University Faculty of Computing & Information Technology (FCIT), sponsored by Dubizzle Labs here on Thursday. More than 65 leading IT companies from the software

industry set up their stalls to hire the graduates of FCIT from a batch of around 500 coming from domains of computer science, software engineering and information technology. PU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood, FCIT Dean Prof Dr Shahzad Sarwar, faculty members and a large number of students were present on the occasion. Addressing the ceremony, PU VC Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood said, "We all have to play our role to get Pakistan out of the crisis."



ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz chairing a meeting on integrated sanitation and water supply system for Islamabad and Rawalpindi.—DNA

## KP CM visits D.I.Khan to review law, order situation

PESHAWAR : Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, during his visit to D.I. Khan the other day, presided over an important meeting at the Commissioner's office to review the law and order situation. The CM also reviews progress on development projects and public welfare initiatives under Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program with special focus on the development activities being carried out in the remote areas of the division and newly merged tribal districts. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Engineer Ahmed Jan, Incharge Chief Minister's Complaint Cell Jamil Swati, Commissioner DI Khan Zafar-ul-Islam, Regional Police Officer DI Khan Nasir Mehmood Satti, Deputy Commissioner DI Khan Mansoor Arshad Khattak and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The participants, on the occasion, were briefed in details about the development projects in DI Khan division and told that a total of 496 development projects were being implemented across the division under the development plan of current fiscal year. As per details, 215 projects are being executed in the district South Waziristan, 145 in district Tank and 136 in DI Khan. The chief minister, on the occasion, underscored the need to speed up work on all the ongoing projects of public welfare and directed the authorities concerned that all those projects be completed within the stipulated timelines but without compromising on their quality. He directed them to have special attention on the projects which are due for completion adding that the matter regarding release of funds for these projects should be taken up with the Finance and P&D departments.—W

## Naqvi visits OCU, pledges to eliminate organized crimes

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : Organized Crime Unit (OCU) has been playing a pivotal role in eliminating gangs and organised crimes across the province. Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi stated this during a visit to OCU headquarters at Green Town where he asked the staff to diligently perform their duties. The CM was briefed about OCU's performance by the IGP and DIG (OCU). Provincial Minister for Information Amir Mir, secretary home, secretary C&W and others were also

present. Meanwhile, New access road for Bibi Pak daman shrine On the order of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, construction of a new access road to the Bibi Pak Daman Shrine via Empress Road is progressing swiftly, following the removal of all obstructions along the route. The CM inspected the road construction and ordered the early completion of a designated parking area along the new access road. Mr Naqvi appreciated the efforts of the AC (Shalimar) led team and directed to provide a separate space for burning incense. The 20-foot wide road strip would ensure easy access

for visitors. The CM also prayed for the country. Provincial Ministers Azfar Ali Nasir, Mansoor Qadir, secretary C&W, commissioner Lahore, secretary auqaf and others were also present. CM condoles death of mother of senior journalist Naseem Qureshi Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the death of the mother of Daily Jang's senior journalist and columnist Naseem Qureshi. The CM extended a heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family and prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace.

## Ahmad Jawad appointed convener of FPCCI agri committee

KARACHI : President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh has appointed Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad as Convener of the FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Agriculture for the year 2024-25. The appointment of Ahmad Jawad was made in view of his vast experience in the field and he will succeed Chaudhry Muhammad Zaka Ashraf in the slot, a notification in this regard issued on Thursday. The FPCCI president hoped that under the leadership of Ahmad Jawad, prompt recommendations will help FPCCI to address agriculture sector problems before the government. Ahmad Jawad said to feed the ever-growing population, Pakistan needs around five percent consistent annual growth in the agriculture

sector and the FPCCI hopes the incoming government will address agriculture issues in the federal budget. He said that to meet challenge of achieving national food security and economic prosperity, a two-prong approach is required, i.e. vertical growth by increasing per acre yield of crops and horizontal growth by bringing more area under cultivation through corporate farming. He noted that Pakistan has the potential to bring around 22 million acres under cultivation by combining both vertical and horizontal approaches. He said that currently country's per acre yield was far less than the global average due to limited access of farmers to modern machinery and digital support services as

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can revolutionize and revitalize the local agriculture sector, especially horticulture, while addressing the challenges of climate change, adapting to crop patterns, attracting talent and envisioning a positive impact on the sector. Emphasizing the urgency of executing AI promptly, he termed it as the most significant step in the agriculture sector which needs to be inserted in Green Pakistan Initiative. Both developed and developing countries have recognized the worthiness of data and are moving towards the digital revolution, Jawad noted and added "AI can help analyzing historical data, weather trends, and storage conditions to predict optimal harvest times and storage period for agriculture products.—APP

## PBS to conduct 7th agricultural census this year

The census consumed around Rs 650 million while the field operation will be conducted in September-October this year

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has devised a plan to conduct the 7th Agricultural Census in 2024, across the country to undertake an integrated digital count of agriculture, livestock and machinery as per international best practices under United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) guidelines. According to the news release, effective and efficient management of human and financial resources is crucial in the 7th Agricultural Census to ensure the provision of credible statistics. The census consumed around Rs 650 million while the field operation will be conducted in September-October this year. For broader involvement

and wider acceptability, PBS initiated engagements with partner organizations and provincial stakeholders namely the Board of Revenue, Agricultural (Extension), Livestock, Provincial Bureau of Statistics, Crop Reporting Services etc. The participation of stakeholders helped in diversified perspectives, identifying needs, and addressing the shortcomings and potential issues for the provision of credible statistics as per requirements and avoiding any inconvenience during field operation of the Agricultural Census. The process started with the meeting of all provincial focal persons (SMBRs) at PBS HQ Islamabad on 20th December 2023. After this series of Provincial meetings started, the first provincial meeting held at Provincial Census Coordination Center (P3C), Sindh, and the

second meeting was held at the Provincial Office, Punjab, Lahore under the chair of Dr. Naeem uz Zafar, Chief Census Commissioner. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Member (SS/RM), senior officers from PBS and senior officers from Provincial departments also attended the meeting. The Chief Census Commissioner highlighted that Pakistan is an agricultural country and agriculture has a 23% share in the GDP out of which 64% of livestock shares in agriculture and provides employment to 37% of the labor force. Therefore, the latest data on the agricultural sector is required for evidence-based policy planning and the Agricultural Census 2024 will be a huge source in this regard. He emphasized on the participation and cooperation of provincial stakeholders, for the successful completion of the field operation for the 7th Agricultural Cen-

sus. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Member (Support Services/IT), apprised in detail regarding the methodology, field operation plan, Media Strategy, and Budget requirements. He informed that PBS using meticulous sampling design which is also vetted by FAO selected 11054 Mouzas/Blocks all over the country, out of which 4501 mouzas/blocks pertain to Punjab. It will be the First Integrated Digital exercise in the field of agriculture for data collection in Pakistan. The Digital aspects like Tablet-based data collection, use of digitized maps of Mouzas/Blocks, SMS Gateway, Call Center, were elaborated in detail. It was informed that for smooth and efficient field operations, various working groups for complaint management and provision of information have been constituted.

CENTRAL POWER GENERATION COMPANY LTD. GUDDU GENCO-II TENDER NOTICE FOR INVITATION TO BID ON SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPE Tender No. CEO/CPGCL/Civil/MMM/DT-87					
Sr. No	Tender No.	Name of Work / Description	Last Date/ Time of Issue Tender	Last Date & Time of Receiving Bid	Date & Time of Opening of Bid
1.	DT-87	DISMANTLING/DEMOLISHING/DISPOSAL OF OLD A TYPE, B-TYPE, G-TYPE, F & FF TYPE RESIDENTIAL HOUSES IN P & Q BLOCK AT CPGCL COLONY TPS GUDDU	06-03-24	07-03-24 @14:30 Hrs	07-03-24 @15:00 Hrs
2.	ELIGIBILITY OF CONTRACTORS	1. Valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council for the period 2023-24 having valid proof of Renewal under Specialized code of PEC i.e (CE-10) along with necessary requirements as per PEC Rule. 2. Valid FBR and SRB Registration 3. Dismantling will be made as per standard Guidelines issued from CPGCL. 4. Contractor with experience in the similar project will be given preference. 5. Contractor will submit Work Methodology along with Tender Documents and will provide level/smooth surface to existing Ground level. 6. Financial Bids of the technically responsive /qualified bidders meeting basic eligibility criteria will be opened only. 7. Tender Documents guide lines to be followed strictly. 8. It is responsibility of contractor to look for site of dismantling and give offer in bid submitted to CPGCL after site clarification of the list of Houses mentioned in Tender Documents. 9. Bidder should provide affidavit that Firm is not involved in malpractice and never black listed. 10. The Bidder should have an Average annual turnover of total Rs. 10+ Million during last three years certified from Bank Statement.			
3.	Tender cost / fee	Rs. 3000/- & by post Rs 3500/- for each tender (Non Refundable)			
4.	Time period for performance of Contract	180 (06 Months)			
5.	BIDDING DOCUMENTS CAN BE PURCHASED FROM	• Office of The Chief Executive Officer, Genco-II, TPS, Guddu-Pakistan Tel. (Chief Engineer/T.D) 0722-578572, Tel. (Chief Executive Officer) 0722-579088, Fax: 0722-631015 • From Office of the CEO, GHCL, OPF Building G-5/2 Islamabad. (Tel. # 051-9217601 )			
6.	ESTIMATED COST	To be quoted by Contractor			
7.	EARNEST MONEY	@ 05% of total value of the estimated cost in the form of Call Deposit in favor of Chief Executive Officer, CPGCL (GENCO-II) TPS Guddu.			
8.	PLACE OF OPENING	Office of the Chief Executive Officer, CPGCL Genco-II TPS Guddu.			

Note:

- The Bid shall comprise of single stage TWO envelope.
- In case the government announces any public holiday or due to unavoidable circumstances the tender will be opened on next working day.
- This can be downloaded from PPRA Website: [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)
- CPGCL, Genco-II TPS Guddu may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal as per PPRA rule No. 33 (1)\*.

Chief Executive officer  
CPGCL GENCO-II, Guddu

## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### FEBRUARY

Feb 04/Sri Lanka	National Day
Feb 06/N. Zealand	National Day
Feb 06/Uganda	Army Day
Feb 11/Iran	Revolution day
Feb 16/DPR Korea	National Day
Feb 16/Lithuania	National Day
Feb 18/Gambia	National Day
Feb 19/Nepal	Democracy Day
Feb 23/Uzbekistan	National Day
Feb 23/Brunei	National Day
Feb 23/Guyana	National Day
Feb 23/Russia	National Army Day
Feb 23/Tajikistan	Armed Forces Day
Feb 25/Kuwait	National Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133  
Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



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

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489  
CAA.....9281092



## Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



## Departments

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Full reserve banking proposed to resolve Pak huge debt servicing problem

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's huge debt servicing problem can be resolved through full reserve banking, which will eliminate high inflation, government debt, and interest costs. Full reserve banking represents a transformative shift toward financial stability, economic growth, and inclusive prosperity; it has a clear overlap with the principles of Islamic economics and the true foundations of Islamic banking. This was proposed by Qanit Khalil, chartered accountant and economic analyst, during a roundtable titled "A Solution for Tackling Huge Government Debt, Interest Costs, and Inflation in Pakistan: Full Reserve Banking Model" held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The session was also addressed by Khalid Rahman, chairman, IPS, Tahir Hijazi, former member Planning Commission, and economists and financial experts. In his proposal to address Pakistan's economic challenges, Qanit Khalil advocated adopting full reserve banking as a transformative solution with far-reaching implications. He said that a staggering 60 percent of government revenue is currently allocated to interest payments, fueled by increased expenditure on debt servicing from less than Rs200 billion in 2003-04 to a staggering Rs7,300 billion in 2023-24. Out of this, 90 percent of interest costs are for servicing domestic loans and not foreign loans. The speaker highlighted that with continuously increasing domestic debt, the Government of Pakistan had to take large loans from banks to pay for the huge interest costs due to the State Bank of Pakistan's high-interest rate policy. The rupee

has also fallen to a record low because of the increased money supply and a massive deficit in the external trading account. SBP's high-interest policy implemented to curb inflation has proven counterproductive, leading to an unsustainable monetary expansion as a 5 percent reserve ratio has a 20x multiplier effect. He proposed that an innovative economic solution to these problems is full reserve



banking to tackle high government debt and interest rates. In this model, the State Bank would maintain 100 percent reserves against deposits, ensuring centralized and controlled money creation. Moreover, payment and credit extension processes, or deposit and investment banking, would be completely separated; deposits could not be used for financing loans. Instead, loans would be financed by the investment accounts of savers in investment banks. This approach seeks to eliminate the colossal government debt burden, with interest rates reduced

through a more streamlined financial system. Khalil stated that the fractional reserve system, responsible for money supply fluctuations, can be efficiently replaced with a full reserve system, creating a stable economic environment. He further said that a deeper examination of the concept of full reserve banking reveals a clear overlap with the principles of Islamic economics and the true foundations of Islamic banking. Tahir Hijazi mentioned that according to recent data, only a small number of Pakistanis have bank accounts, highlighting the need to increase financial accessibility. The proposed banking model is not without difficulties and risks; for instance, various lobbies could create hurdles in its implementation. He recommended that deeper research and discussions should be conducted to cover more topics like integrating profit-sharing into interest rates. In his concluding remarks, Khalid Rahman highlighted that implementation issues of the full reserve banking model must be addressed, and experts should develop and discuss alternative options to tackle prevalent challenges. He emphasized developing a legal framework more conducive to a banking system that facilitates businesses, enables progress, and offers solutions to individual needs through real utilization of resources. He added that the proposed full reserve banking model has the potential to provide a comprehensive plan to address Pakistan's financial inclusion problems by taking small, incremental measures. Rahman further said that the IPS will facilitate the discussions and research into this idea for its refinement and viability for the good of all stakeholders.

## President for enabling environment to nurture youth abilities

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi has called for providing an enabling environment for youth to nurture their intellectual abilities and benefit from their innovative ideas for the country's prosperity. He said that Pakistani youth were blessed with enormous potential, brilliant minds, and bright ideas, however, they needed an appropriate platform to transform their ideas into competitive and quality products to increase the country's exports and reduce imports. The President gave these remarks while addressing the season finale of the National Idea Bank (NIB) Third Edition, organized by the National University of Technology (NUTECH) in collaboration with ASPIRE Pakistan, at Awan-e-Sadr, today. The event was attended by members of the academia and business community. Highlighting the importance of innovative and emerging technologies, the President said that he was a staunch supporter of promoting a knowledge-based economy and stressed the need for talent hunting through forums like the NIB for socio-economic development. He appreciated the role being played by NIB as a repository of innovative ideas that would serve as a catalyst for the country's transformation to a brighter and prosperous future.

## Higher tax on cigarettes results in lower consumption

A study by the Capital Calling, a think tank, has revealed that one in every 94 smokers has quit smoking after prices of cigarettes went up

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Consumption of cigarettes in Pakistan has come down as the government has taken a bold decision to increase taxes to address challenges of public health and revenue generation.

A study by the Capital Calling, a think tank, has revealed that one in every 94 smokers has quit smoking after prices of cigarettes went up. Endorsing the think tank's findings, Dr Aman Khan, director of Islamabad based "Waseela Foundation", said, "The government's decision to increase taxes emerged as a strategy to address both public

health concerns and revenue deficits." The government finally agreed to increase taxes following persistent lobbying by numerous anti-tobacco and health activists. In a groundbreaking move, the FBR elevated duty on tier-1 cigarettes from 130 rupees to 330 rupees, resulting in a significant net increase of 154 percent in cigarette prices. The decision was aimed at increasing the revenue to Rs200 billion from Rs148 billion in the current fiscal year. According to details, Capital Calling conducted the survey in major cities including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Peshawar. Smokers told the surveyors that purchasing cigarettes had become financially

burdensome, leading them to prioritize spending on essential needs like food and the education of their children instead of smoking. The survey found a positive relationship between higher taxes on cigarettes and its lower consumption. Needless to say that cigarette industry was causing a staggering loss of approximately Rs620 billion annually in terms of diseases including cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular disease, besides 337,500 deaths each year. Pakistan lost a staggering Rs567 billion in potential revenue due to the influence of two multinational cigarette companies (PTC & PMI) lobbying for low taxes in past seven

years. "Despite losses on various fronts, including public health and revenue, pervasive propaganda has been a hindrance to implementing higher taxes," Dr. Aman said. It has also been reported that actual share of illicit and illegal cigarettes in the market is not more than 18 percent, contradicting the inflated claim of 40 percent by multinational cigarette companies. This 18 percent share included smuggled brands from the very multinational companies who make inflated claims. The evidence suggests the sales of cigarettes would further decrease in the coming months across Pakistan if the government maintains the taxes.

## PARC to install solar system for aeroponics seed potatoes production

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) in collaboration with the Korean Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) will provide a 100-kilowatt solar system for seed potato production using aeroponics technology to boost virus-free seed production in the country. The KOPIA-Pakistan Center also intended to provide about 160,000 tons of certified seed potatoes during the next five years under its Technical Cooperation Project, which will further strengthen the government's efforts to produce certified high-yielding seed potatoes to enhance

its output in the country, said Chairman PARC Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali. Talking to APP here on Thursday, he said that the other objectives of the project are cutting potato production costs, boosting yields with quality seed potatoes and achieving self-sufficiency by establishing a sustainable system with aeroponic technology and trained staff. He further said that during the period under review, 04 aeroponics greenhouses and 32 screen-houses would also be constructed, which would enable self-sufficiency in the production of virus-free seed potatoes production.

Currently, only 2% of Pakistan's potato seed requirement is being fulfilled locally and we depend on importing 98% of its seed demand, he said adding that implementation of this facility, Pakistan is poised to achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production. Chairman PARC said that aeroponic technology will yield 50 to 60 potato seeds per plant compared to just five from conventional methods. Pakistan currently imports 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes of potato seeds yearly due to low-quality local seeds, straining farmers who can't afford better options and resulting in lower yields, he added.

## Citizens requested to use water carefully

RAWALPINDI: The citizens have been requested to use water carefully as the supply of water from Khanpur dam to Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas has been reduced due to the de-silting project which started on Feb 12 and may lead to a shortage of water in many localities. According to the Managing Director, of the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Muhammad Saleem Ashraf, the Khanpur dam canal de-silting project would be completed till Feb 21. He urged the residents to use water judiciously in their daily routine to avoid shortage as water supply to city areas from the Khanpur dam had decreased due to the de-silting project. He informed that the water supply had decreased to 6 million gallons from 8 million gallons per day, adding that WASA was trying to meet water demand through tube wells. The agency was also taking all possible measures to ensure supply from bowzers and tube wells to fulfil the needs of the locals while the citizens could use the toll-free number 1334 or register their complaints at the nearest complaint centre, he added. The project was being completed jointly by the Capital Development Authority, WASA and the Cantonment Board. Water supply to the residents would normalize after completion of the de-silting project, he added. He informed that during the de-silting project, water supply would be affected in different city areas including Pirwadhai, Dhok Mingtal, Dhok Hassu, Khayaban Sir Syed, Shamsabad, Double Road and other areas. Meanwhile, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board spokesman also urged the Cantt residents to avoid washing floors and cars, watering their lawns every day, and storing water to avoid facing difficulties.—APP

## Gohar Ejaz for effective system to provide quality water supply

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Dr Gohar Ejaz said on Thursday that water supply and sanitation were basic needs and an integrated, comprehensive and effective system must be devised so that quality facilities could be provided to the people of twin cities. He said this while presiding over a meeting held regarding water supply and sanitation in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi also participated in the meeting. Representatives of Chief Commissioner Islamabad, the Local Government Department, Rawalpindi Development Authority and the Cantonment Board also attended the meeting. The existing system of water supply, sanitation and waste disposal in the twin cities was reviewed in the meeting. The meeting was informed that 8,000 sanitation workers disposed of 2,300 tons of waste daily with an annual budget of Rs 7 billion but still, the sanitation situation in both cities could not be described as satisfactory. The meeting was informed that currently, the twin cities were facing 47 per cent water scarcity. "We want the capital to be an example for other cities," the interior minister said adding decisions will have to be made today to meet the needs of tomorrow.—APP

## NUST announces article writing competition

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) has called on all voices of Pakistan to become part of its efforts to amplify the importance of Women in Climate Action by participating in an 'Article Writing Competition'. According to an official of NUST, the article writing competition, being arranged in collaboration with the Gender Intersectionality and Climate Change (GIACC), is aimed at stimulating thoughtful discourse on the intersectionality of gender and climate resilience. The last date for submission of the articles is February 29. The details of the event can be accessed through the website: giacc.nust.edu.pk. The article writing competition is part of the "Women in Climate Action - Celebrating Resilience" event being arranged by the NUST and GIZ Pakistan on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8) in Islamabad. This empowering event aims to recognize and applaud the significant contributions of women in climate action, emphasizing their leadership, innovation, and impact on creating sustainable and climate-resilient communities. The researchers, climate heroes, academia, and individuals from the development sector have been called to participate in the event featuring panel discussions, success stories, stalls showcasing women-led initiatives and art and photo exhibitions.—DNA

### General Practice

HEALTHCARE CENTRE

General Physician Services	General Surgery	Neurology	Plastic Surgery	Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation
Medicine	Pediatrics & Child Health	Orthopedics & Sports Medicine	Ear, Nose & Throat	Laboratory Services
Gynecology & Women's Health	Cardiology	Urology	Psychology & Mental Health	Nursing Services
Dermatology & Aesthetics	Pediatrics	Pulmonology	Ophthalmology	Diagnostic Radiology
Nutrition, Dietetics & Lifestyle	Dental & Maxillofacial Surgery	Genitourinary & Hepatology	Hepatology	Preventive Health Screening

*Keeping you Healthy!*

Welcome to Islamabad's finest private medical centre, where your complete wellbeing is our top priority. Keeping you healthy and in good physical condition is at the heart of everything we do. Our aim is to establish long-term trusting relationships with our patients and their families, offering them easy accessibility to health and continuity of care.

+92334 7474701 | +92 51 8900 682  
 28, Ground Floor, Executive Complex, G-8 Markaz, Islamabad  
 /generalpracticeislamabad  
[www.generalpractice.com.pk](http://www.generalpractice.com.pk)

## Briefs

## Unpopular elections further complicated political landscape

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Thursday that investing billions of rupees in conducting controversial elections did not help anyone in the country. He said more instability and nationwide protests since the polls will cost the government billions of dollars. He also said that the economy would be destroyed and the country would be chaotic if the voters' choice wasn't honored and justice wasn't done. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement released today that there is more political instability and doubt now than there was before the election. After the elections, protests occurred all over the country. If something isn't done immediately to improve things, the economy will fail, and the government will descend into chaos. According to the business leader, it is getting clearer when the new government will be formed, and foreign exchange reserves can only cover six weeks of imports. On the other hand, Pakistan has to pay back \$45 billion in loans over two years, which is a very tough task. He said that during the recent election, it was not difficult to guess that internet and mobile services outage was intended to suppress public opinion. Moreover, the 72-hour delay in the election results was another proof of rigging, which has stoked unrest. He said the elections could not be called transparent from any angle, so most parties and candidates protest against them. After the PTI and other parties, the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUIF), which was considered an ally of PNL-N and PP, rejected the election results and announced launched countrywide protests against the alleged rigging in the February 8 polls.

## Cinemas struggle for survival in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: Once bustling with families seeking weekend movie treats, the cinema business in Rawalpindi and Islamabad now stands on the brink of collapse as a once-thriving industry is grappling with a decline in viewership, closure of cinemas, technological advancements, low-quality films, and the rise of home entertainment options are cited as major contributors to this downfall. In the past, cinema-goers eagerly awaited the cinematic experience on big screens, but today, the landscape has changed. The cinema owners, facing financial challenges, are converting their theatres into commercial plazas to stay afloat. While this may provide a business solution, provincial laws mandate the establishment of mini-cinemas alongside commercial spaces converted from cinemas. A senior official at the Censor Board highlighted the diminishing appeal of cinema due to low-quality films and outdated infrastructure. The families no longer find cinemas fit for entertainment, further exacerbating the industry's decline. In the capital city almost three or four years back Nafdac 1 and Nafdac 2 at Blue Area were two good cinema houses and later a modern cinema had also been established in Centaurus Mall, Cinepax World Trade Centre, Raiha CineGold Plex and Jacaranda Family Club Cineplex that offered high-quality entertainment to families in the twin cities. Meanwhile, in Rawalpindi, the number of cinema houses has come down drastically over the last decade. The shopping malls have come up in place of the cinema houses. The masses rush to the cinema when they have the facility to watch quality movies, as people like films that are close to their real life and happiness, if they have a facility of good quality movie then they would go to watch movies said an office worker while talking to APP on Thursday.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Rawat chowk, which is always flooded with traffic causing long delays. The locals have demanded of the authorities to build an over-head bridge in order to ease out traffic flow. —Photo Mudassar Raja

## Moderate rain, hail storm expected from Feb 17-21

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, (PMD), the westerly wave was likely to approach western parts on February 17 (night) and may grip upper/central parts of the country on February 18

ISLAMABAD: A strong westerly wave entering Pakistan on Saturday will bring moderate to heavy rain-wind/thunderstorm with isolated hail storms and snowfall over the hills in central and upper parts of the country from February 17 (night) to February 21. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, (PMD), the westerly wave was likely to approach western parts on February 17 (night) and may grip upper/central parts of the country on February 18. Under the influence of this weather system, moderate to heavy rain-wind/thunderstorm with snowfall over the hills is expected Islamabad and Punjab including Murree,

Galiyat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Mianwali, Khushab, Sargodha, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Faisalabad, Jhang, Sialkot, Narawal, Lahore, Kasur from February 17 night to February 21 while light to moderate rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Multan, Bhakkar, Kot Addu, Layyah, Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan on February 18 and February 19. Isolated hailstorms may also occur during this period. In Gilgit-Baltistan, moderate to heavy rain-wind/thunderstorms with snowfall over the hills is expected in Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar. In Kashmir, heavy rain-

wind/thunderstorm with snowfall over the hills is likely in Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber and Mirpur from February 17(night) to February 21 with occasional gaps. Isolated hailstorm may also occur during this period. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, moderate to heavy rain-wind/thunderstorm with snowfall over the hills is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Karak, Khyber, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Buner, Bajaur, Kurram, Waziristan, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan from February 17 (night) to February

20 with occasional gaps. Isolated hailstorms may also occur during the period. In Balochistan, rain-wind/thunderstorm with snowfall over the hills is expected in Quetta, Ziarat, Chaman, Pishin, Qila Abdullah, Qila Saifullah, Zhob, Sherani, Barkhan, Musakhel and Kohlu on February 18(evening/night) and February 19. In Sindh, dry weather with strong gusty winds is expected in southern parts of the province from February 18-20. About the possible impacts of the rain, the PMD said that heavy rain and snowfall may disrupt and cause closure of roads in Murree, Galiyat, Naran, Kaghan, Dir, Swat, Kohistan,

Mansehra, Abbottabad, Shangla, Astore, Hunza, Skardu, Neelum valley, Bagh, Poonch and Haveli from February 18-20. The possibility of landslides in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galiyat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan cannot be ruled out during the forecast period. Wind thunderstorms/hailstorms may damage loose structures like electric poles, vehicles and solar panels etc. The farmers and tourists have been advised to remain extra cautious during the spell while all concerned authorities must remain alert and take necessary measures to avoid any untoward situation during the forecast period.

## Westridge Police seize huge cache of arms

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police have foiled a bid to smuggle a huge quantity of weapons and arrested a culprit during an operation here on Thursday. According to a police spokesman, Westridge police managed to recover a huge cache of arms being smuggled in a private vehicle by a smuggler. He informed that the Westridge police party set up a special picket and stopped a suspected vehicle. He said that a suspect identified as Waqar Younas was apprehended whereas more than 12 pistols and 600 bullets were recovered from the possession of the arms smuggler. A case has been registered against the suspect while further investigation is underway, he added.—APP

## EU to organize family-focused festival 'EuroVillage'

ISLAMABAD: The European Union and its Member States will organize the popular, family-focused festival 'EuroVillage' on February 17 at Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad. "The doors of the family event will open at 2 pm to welcome the Pakistani public to get a taste of European food, culture, music, and sustainable actions," said a news release issued here on Thursday. The EU and Member States are centering this year's celebration around the theme of co-creating a sustainable future. Titled "Stronger Together - Sustainable Forever," the event aims to showcase the 60+ years of a strong connection between the EU and Pakistan. This celebration underscores the collaborative partnership in development, eco-

nomics, culture, research and education, and political engagement, demonstrating how the EU and Pakistan are stronger together. EuroVillage is co-organized by the diplomatic missions of the European Union and of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and Spain. It will include information and activity booths for both adults and children with interactive games, selfie corners, food, and an opportunity to meet the diplomatic teams and learn about areas of our evolving partnership. The event will feature live performances by European performers and Pakistani artists including Farhan Saeed and Qurat-ul-ain Baloch.—DNA

## Railways set to open Shahdampur platform

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has almost completed the upgradation and rehabilitation work of the Shahdampur Railway Station platform and set to open it for the passengers of the area very soon. "The government has already allocated around Rs 2 million more funds for completing the renovation of the platform of Shahdampur Railway Station, official sources in the Ministry told APP. They said Shahdampur Railway Station, operating with three platforms, is one of the important stations situated on the mainline where most of the mail and express trains have their stoppages. The sources said the contractor had stopped the construction work due to non-payment of bills and funds but now the funds have been arranged for the remaining rehabilitation work. They said the platform condition on the downside was dilapidated and therefore it was decided to carry out its repair under the head of improvement and welfare expenditure. To a question, the official said Pakistan Railways was a big organization comprising around 63,000 employees and its network stretched across the country. They said the employees are well-cared under the welfare activities like health facilities through a wide network of hospitals, dispensaries and child healthcare units. Elaborating, the sources said the provision of government accommodation according to entitlement and priority list, staff benevolent funds, benefits and incentives were provided through the Prime Minister's Family Assistance Package policy for families of deceased employees.—APP

## APTMA urges enhanced collaboration with China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All-Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) has called for greater collaboration with China to help Pakistan achieve its ambitious export target of \$50 billion per annum by 2029. Representing more than 223 textile companies, the association believes that strengthened ties with China, a leading player in the global textile industry, can significantly boost Pakistan's export earnings. In an interview with Gwadar Pro, APTMA Secretary General Shahid Sattar highlighted the cooperation between China and Pakistan

in the textile industry to showcase complementary advantages across various categories, presenting a robust framework for mutual growth and development. This strategic partnership, bolstered by initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has a profound impact on Pakistani firms gaining access to the Chinese market. Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed a 40.01 percent increase during the first six months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) compared to the exports of the corresponding period last year, announced the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This signifies a major achievement and highlights the growing economic ties between the two nations. To seize export opportunities for Pakistan's textile and apparel industry, APTMA recently published a comprehensive report covering the entire value chain. The report presents a 41-point policy roadmap designed to meet ambitious targets, such as increasing sector exports to more than \$50 billion annually by 2029. Emphasizing diversification, expansion, and competition, the roadmap proposes to incentivize product diversification, invest in manufacturing capacity upgrading, and foster a conducive business environment.

The report advocates for green manufacturing practices, including water recycling, wastewater treatment, transitioning to renewable energy, and avoiding harmful chemicals. It also calls for guidance and support in establishing the 'Sustainable Textiles Credible Platform,' a certification system for the lifecycle traceability of green fiber products. Additionally, Sattar noted that China's textile industry remains at the forefront of technological and sustainable advancements. China is making strides in high-end manufacturing and is pushing forward with innovations in synthetic fibers and green manufacturing processes.

## ANF recovers 122 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 122 kg of drugs and arrested two accused including a woman, said an ANF spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 2 kg of Ice was recovered from a Bahrain-bound passenger netted at Lahore Airport. 660 grams of weed was recovered from two parcels sent from Thailand and the UK at a Rawalpindi Courier Office while 99 kg of hashish was recovered from the Pasni Road Turbat area. 1 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of a woman arrested near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. 800 grams of Ice was recovered from a parcel sent to Mirpur Khas from a courier office in Karkhano Market Peshawar. 17 kg hashish was recovered from the Zakhakel Khyber area in two different operations and 1 kg hashish was recovered from Dera Ismail Khan. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

## FGEHA launches anti-encroachment operation in G-12, G-15

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) carried out a targeted operation against illegal encroachments in the Green Belt and Mauve area of Sector G-12, as well as in G-15/3 in Islamabad. Collaborating with the Deputy Commissioner, Encroachment Wing, Islamabad Police, and ICT

Administration, the operation aimed to address unauthorized constructions and encroachments in the specified areas. During the operation, illegal structures and encroachments in the Green Belt between Sector G-12, as well as in G-15/3, were demolished. The FGEHA's administrative body expressed a firm commitment to continue

such operations in the future to curb illegal encroachments and maintain the sanctity of designated zones. The authority issued a stern warning to land grabbers, cautioning them to refrain from engaging in illegal activities. It was emphasized that the FGEHA possesses the authority to take strict action against those involved in encroachments. The crackdown on encroachments is part of the authority's ongoing efforts to ensure planned urban development and uphold the legality of residential and green spaces.—DNA

**MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN**

**WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED**

JUDO KARATE KUNG-FU JU-JUTSU TAEKWONDO UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD  
127 C, Industrial Estate  
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan  
Phone: +92-62-3259000 / 3259788  
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

**Ashraf**

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 121

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

## Western media lies about Red Sea blockade

**A**TREND that began with Israeli officials and has now taken hold across Western corporate media, attempting to separate Yemen's blockade of the Red Sea from the Genocide in Gaza, is an admission of guilt. It proves that costly and ineffective US-UK aggression against Yemen is unpopular and that action in the area cannot be justified in defense of the Zionist aggression against Gaza. "Israel" has become a pariah regime in the eyes of the vast majority of the global public, with it also losing significant support across Western nations. Knowing this, US-led military activity across West Asia, designed to protect the interests of the Zionist entity have become predictably unpopular. If one is to pay attention to the language used to describe US airstrikes across Iraq, Syria and Yemen, it is therefore apparent that a desperate attempt is being made to distance those escalatory measures from the conflict between Gaza and the Zionists. In the case of all regional players, as part of what is known as the Axis of Resistance, each has categorically stated that their armed actions, that have been taken against American and Israeli targets, have been carried out with the specific goal of supporting the Palestinian people in Gaza. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has explicitly stated, in each communique it releases, that its attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria have been for the sake of supporting Gaza. When it comes to Hezbollah, not only has it said the same, but it has also given the title of each of its killed fighters in the ongoing battles along the northern border of occupied Palestine: "Martyr on the road to al-Quds". Now we come to Yemen, where the Ansarallah government based in Sana'a has consistently stated its aim is supporting the people and resistance in Gaza. Mass rallies in support of Palestine, consisting of hundreds of thousands, sometimes upwards of a million Yemenis, take place on a near weekly basis in Sana'a. It was in response to such an overwhelming demand from the people of Yemen, that Ansarallah announced its first actions against the Israeli regime. On October 19 the Yemeni armed forces conducted a series of drone and missile strikes towards the Israeli-occupied port, known as "Eilat Port". Around a month later, in mid-November, Ansarallah's naval forces then boarded and seized a shipping vessel off the coast of Yemen that was heading toward occupied Palestine. The seizure of the vessel was even carried out with a helicopter which was draped in the Palestinian flag and it was announced, shortly after the operation was successfully conducted, that no Israeli-linked ship would pass through the Red Sea. After, Yemen's armed forces announced that this ban on shipping would extend to all vessels attempting to reach Eilat Port, effectively imposing a complete blockade on the Zionist entity from the South. The Ansarallah movement made it abundantly clear at that time that it would end the blockade only when the people of Gaza are freed from the conditions of starvation imposed upon them by the blocking of aid and siege imposed by the Zionist entity. Instead of reacting to this decision, which was tantamount to a humanitarian intervention in order to prevent the Zionist entity from carrying out genocide against the people of Gaza, the US decided to continue to allow the Israelis to block aid into besieged Gaza.



## Anti-China narrative psychological projection of US

**T**HE US has struggled with a congenital defect - its addiction to wars. President John Quincy Adams famously said, "America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy." However, history tells a very different story, with the US having spent about 94 percent of the time in wars since 1776. The American Empire now has 800 military bases in 140 countries, and keeps doubling down on perpetual wars. Not satisfied with the current proxy and real wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria - and possibly Iran soon - the cackle of American think tanks and corporate media is clamoring for a delusional hot war against China. The narrative against China can only be described as psychological projection. Using twisted logic and fallacies, the China hawks scream that China is a threat to the US and the world. But they forget to mention that the US has been waging non-stop economic war and propaganda war against China for years. Also, it is the US that surrounds China with hostile military bases - building new ones in the Philippines. Yet, in the world of inversion, China is the bad guy. The US tries to hobble China's economy in countless ways, and then claims that China's slower GDP growth - relative to China's past performance, but still much better than the G7 nations - is an indication of China's intent to "invade Taiwan." From Monday through Wednesday, US media gloats that China is collapsing. And Thursday through Sunday, the same media cries that China is on the cusp of taking over the world. Which one is it - China is weak or omnipotent? Another popular talking point among anti-China hardliners is the rapid growth in China's defense investment. China's military strategy is mostly defensive like the Great Wall. China is a "threat" only to rapacious invaders. As for Taiwan, here is the bitter pill for imperialists: there will be reunification. When China was weak in the 19th century, it was attacked by vultures who plucked off strategic regions. However, as China regained its rightful position in the world, former colonialists retreated, giving back the stolen lands. Remember how Portugal returned Macau and the UK returned Hong Kong? Similarly, the US will one day let go of Taiwan. The sooner the Americans accept this inevitability, the better the world will be. There was a time when one could tell the difference between a sensational tabloid and serious journalism in the US, but not anymore. Now, the once respectable media outlets such as the New York Times and Wall Street Journal are filled with fake news, disinformation and war propaganda. A recent article by Hal Brands in Foreign Policy is an exemplary case for this decline in American intellectualism. By the way, Mr. Brands has stellar credentials - educated at Stanford and Yale, author of numerous books, and a regular columnist. However, his article is filled with misinformation and sensationalism. Lacking any real evidence of "China threat," he quotes the CIA, the organization that lies, cheats and steals - to paraphrase Mike Pompeo, former CIA director.

## A Paradigm Shift in Pakistani Politics

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The military seems to be the biggest loser in the election. The results show that the public is angry at the military's involvement in the election process. The military, which hasn't faced such criticism since 1970, is now on the defensive. Despite strong arguments between PTI's leader and the military, some repairing of relations might be needed for PTI's leader to regain freedom and office

**L**AST week in Pakistan, something surprising happened in the big national election. Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), won more votes than anyone expected. This unexpected win has made many people worried about what might happen next in the country. People are concerned that this could lead to more confusion and problems in the government. Imran Khan has been a well-known figure in Pakistani politics for a long time. He leads PTI and has promised to bring in a new and better way of running the country, with transparency, accountability, and economic growth. However, the election results have made people doubtful and anxious. Many are questioning whether the election process itself can be trusted. The national election had been delayed for a long time, creating uncertainty and suspicion among the people. Delays in elections often make people not trust the process, and the long wait had made many wonder why it was postponed in the first place. The sudden turn of events in favor of PTI has only added to these doubts, creating an atmosphere of political uncertainty that might harm the stability of the nation. One major worry about PTI's unexpected win is that it might lead to more political problems. A sudden change in who holds power can make the country's political institutions shaky, which could affect how the government works and puts policies into

action. Without a clear decision from the voters, existing challenges could become even more difficult to handle, leaving the country in a state of political uncertainty. The surprising outcome has also raised questions about the health of Pakistan's democracy. Democracy relies on openness, fair play, and accepting the results of elections. PTI's unexpected victory has led to claims of irregularities and manipulation from other parties, making people doubt if the results are legitimate. Such accusations can make people lose trust in the democratic process, making them doubt the power of their vote to bring about real change. Before the election, people thought that no party would get the most seats in the National Assembly. Many expected Nawaz Sharif's party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), to get the most seats and easily make a government with the help of other parties. On the other hand, Imran Khan's PTI faced challenges from the military, which affected its chances. Surprisingly, independent candidates linked to PTI won the most seats, giving them the chance to create a new government. This unexpected result has created uncertainty and might cause more political issues in Pakistan. The voter turnout was about 47%, which is higher than usual for Pakistan but lower than the previous election in 2018. The National Assembly has 336 seats, and the election was for 266 seats.

PTI got the most seats with 92, followed by PML-N with 77, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) with 54, and MuttahidaQomi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) with 17. PTI, officially banned, is expected to join forces with an approved party to combine their votes. The election results have divided political forces into two camps. PTI, claiming election manipulation, plans to appeal to the courts and protest peacefully. PML-N, the other camp, is negotiating with other parties to create a coalition government. PML-N seems to have a clearer path to getting the majority needed to govern. The military seems to be the biggest loser in the election. The results show that the public is angry at the military's involvement in the election process. The military, which hasn't faced such criticism since 1970, is now on the defensive. Despite strong arguments between PTI's leader and the military, some repairing of relations might be needed for PTI's leader to regain freedom and office. However, it is likely that Pakistan will end up with a weak and unstable coalition government. This government may struggle to address the significant economic, social, and environmental issues facing the country. Both PTI and PML-N, whether in government or opposition, may spend much of their time questioning the legitimacy of the government and demanding new elections, making the 2024 national election another challenge for Pakistan's democracy.

## Testing Western capabilities in Red Sea against Yemen

Nasser Houssein

American analysts who worked for several years in several US naval intelligence services put possibilities for what happened with the Gravelly. Konstantin Toropin, a press correspondent at the Pentagon, says, "Most of the defensive shots made..."

**T**HE official page of the US Central Command, CENTCOM, reported in a statement on platform X on January 30, 2024, that at 11:30 pm (Sanaa time), Destroyer USS Gravelly (DDG 107) shot down an anti-ship cruise missile launched by the Ansar Allah from the areas they control in Yemen toward the Red Sea. No injuries were reported. Later, information emerged that the destroyer in question, and other US and Western vessels, failed to intercept the missile in the early stages of launch. It had to use an advanced weapons system called the Phalanx, a Close-In Weapon System (CIWS), known as the "last line of defense", "against what US officials said was a cruise missile that got as close as 1 mile to the ship and therefore seconds from impact." So, what is this weapon and why was it used then? Although there are advanced missile systems carried by American destroyers to protect naval vessels in case of exposure to winged missiles, similar to cruise missiles and Tomahawks, at long distances from the target estimated at more than seven miles (a nautical mile is 1852 meters). Is the assumption that US systems failed to intercept the missile the result of advanced technology possessed by the Yemeni Armed Forces, or is it just a coincidence? This raises a question about the feasibility of the American approach in its entirety in confronting the military operations carried out by the Ansar Allah movement in support of Gaza and in defense of the Palestinian people. What about the repercussions of the potential success of the Yemeni Armed Forces in striking an American military target such as the Gravelly. Is this Western presence in the Red Sea really a force majeure that cannot be tackled, or is it encountering difficulties, problems and gaps that could be fatal if they can be exploited appropriately? It seems that the Yemeni forces and the Yemeni Army have been able to significantly improve their capabilities since the Ansar Allah

movement took power in Sanaa, where it worked in all military, and civilian, fields on upgrading and implementing programs to acquire military capabilities, especially naval ones, as "the Houthis now have a large military arsenal of three of the most powerful anti-ship ballistic missiles in the world." **What is the Phalanx System?** The automated Phalanx system is equipped with computer-controlled gatling guns that can fire up to 4,500 rounds of 20mm cartridges per minute (in its latest and most powerful type) and engage projectiles or other targets at extremely close range. It is also equipped with an electro-optical system and infrared cameras. The Phalanx is a radar-guided gun that can defeat anti-ship missiles and other close-range threats on land and at sea. Since 1980, it has been installed on all US Navy ships. It is also used by at least 24 US-allied countries, according to Raytheon, the American company that manufactured it. **Incident analysis:** Since October 19, 2024, American destroyers with Arleigh Burke-class defense systems, like the Aegis Combat System that intercepts guided missiles, have managed to destroy 68 cruise missiles and 19 anti-ship missiles (a mixture of ballistic and cruise) launched by Yemeni forces in the Red Sea, and the destroyer USS Carny is alone responsible for shooting down 38 projectiles. The USS Gravelly destroyer, in addition to its Aegis system, is also equipped with the Phalanx system, which dealt with the threat and shot the projectiles down. But with all the advanced Aegis radars that are qualified to deal with 100 targets launched in parallel from different sides of the destroyer, which is equipped with ray sensors, Standard SM-2, Standard SM-6 missiles and Evolved Sea Sparrow, "While there is no damage or loss of life and the missile was intercepted, the engagement was not ideal." This was a serious development. "Given the character of this incident, it is probable that tactics such as decoys and countermeasures, encompassing both physical and electronic warfare strategies, were utilized. But it ultimately came down to the last line of defense. Evidently, the anti-air missile system and electronic countermeasures proved ineffective, leading to the deployment of the Phalanx system as a final recourse." American analysts who worked for several years in several US naval intelligence services put possibilities for what happened with the Gravelly. Konstantin Toropin, a press correspondent at the Pentagon, says, "Most of the defensive shots made by naval ships were made using missiles such as the SM-2 naval missiles, which have a range of about 90 miles. It is not clear whether the Gravelly was forced to engage the missile at a significantly closer range because it was not detected in time, the missiles were launched but failed to shoot down the threat, or the Houthis are using a new capability." According to Business Insider, "the air defense radars and missile defense systems on the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer did not detect the Houthi missile," noting that the SM-2 and SM-3 interceptor mis-

siles are considered among the most modern interceptor missiles in the world, which have a speed of about Mach 3 and can hit targets at a distance of 166.7 kilometers and at an altitude ranging from 150 meters to 15 kilometers. While the news confirmed that the Gravelly destroyed was targeted by a Yemeni ballistic missile and that the Phalanx system's response to the threat was the first of its kind in the ongoing conflict in the Red Sea, according to CNN, what was also revealed was that a British battleship was also forced to use its "last line of defense" system (CIWS) when it dealt with a massive attack carried out by Yemeni forces on January 9, 2024, in which "the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Diamond shot down seven drones in a day, including one with its 30 mm gun. It was the Royal Navy's first confirmed aerial kill with anti-aircraft guns since the Korean War. It is also the second time that a Houthi munition has come close enough to a coalition warship to be targeted with the ship's guns." **Failure to confront:** The other matter that we can monitor is the context of what could be considered a weakness in the American and Western military approach to confronting attacks by Yemeni forces, and the possibility of them being subjected to severe strikes as a result of technological or human failure. Naturally, this adds to the decline in military reputation and ability to deter, such as what American and Western military equipment has incurred, especially tanks in the Russian-Ukrainian war. There are also other similar incidents and operations, such as targeting the British warship destroyer HMS Diamond, and its replacement under the pretext of maintenance and supplying equipment. Also, the failure of the American base, known as Tower 22 in north Jordan, to protect its soldiers, led to the killing of three members of the American military service by a drone, which the advanced protection systems installed at American bases in Syria and Iraq failed to detect and deal with, as "the periodic success achieved by militants in attacks may be unavoidable, given the sheer number of drones, missiles and projectiles fired at American forces and the fact that defenses cannot realistically be completely 100% effective," said current and former US officials. The leadership of the British Royal Navy revealed that the frigate HMS Richmond will replace its counterpart, HMS Diamond, whose commander, Peter Evans, said: "The situation in the region is fraught, and ships in the force are firing on a daily basis - we hand over the baton with our best wishes to the fantastic team in Richmond, who we know will do a great job." He further added, "Having deployed at just five days' notice, we're used to quickly switching aim, and now our focus is on a short maintenance and ammunition resupply period before we get back to our mission in the Red Sea." The replaced destroyer successfully dealt with three separate attacks carried out by Yemeni forces. Royal Navy sail-

ors shot nine drones out of the sky using the Sea Viper missile system. It is possible that the reason for its actual withdrawal was to resupply it with ammunition and to undergo maintenance, as stated by its commander, as a result of the possibility of it being hit by the remnants of the missile that threatened its safety, and from which the 30 mm "last line of defense" (CIWS) system saved it. According to analyst Carl Schuster, a former US Navy captain, destroying a missile coming at a distance of one mile does not necessarily prevent warships from being hit with debris, and in the case of the destroyer Gravelly, "the Houthi missile, traveling at about 600 miles per hour (965 kilometers per hour), was most likely about 4 seconds away from hitting the US warship when it was destroyed by what was likely 2 to 3 seconds." He added: "Missiles do not evaporate when destroyed; they send out thousands of fragments and missile frame parts. The lighter parts decelerate quickly, but large chunks can fly up to 500 meters." Schuster explained, "The closer the incoming missile is to the ship when destroyed, the more danger to the ship, with larger chunks able to penetrate unarmored parts of the hull and superstructure from about 200 meters." Schuster was talking about a subsonic cruise missile which was not intercepted by the destroyer's super-fast defenses, and "this did not happen for reasons that have not been revealed." The same thing happened to the British destroyer due to its failure to intercept the Yemeni missile, when it used systems similar to Phalanx. It is worth noting that the British Navy has plans entitled Sea Viper Evolution (SV-E) to modernize six Type 45 ships to complete the replacement and modernization of defense and missile systems by 2032, enabling them to confront the most advanced Yemeni ballistic missiles, "especially since the Royal Navy must currently rely on US Navy escorts to counter the increasing ballistic missile threat to its carrier strike group," and "until the Sea Viper Evolution (SV-E) project is complete, Type 45 destroyers officially do not yet have Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (TBMD) capability to counter this type of weapon employed by the Houthis." **Conclusion:** While there was a measure of reliance on the continued strong Western military presence in the Red Sea to confront Yemen's siege of Zionist navigation there, the rotation of naval vessels, destroyers, and aircraft carriers for a continuous and effective presence near Bab al-Mandab, the British government's aspiration "to plug a gap in US deployments" in the Middle East, and the possibility of replacing the USS Dwight Eisenhower destroyer, which is scheduled to return to the United States soon, by its British counterpart, HMS Queen Elizabeth, technical and logistical problems have appeared in the British Royal Navy, as the latter canceled the Queen Elizabeth's participation in a NATO exercise, which was considered crucial to readiness for any escalation of unrest in the Red Sea.

- Source: Al Mayadeen





## Briefs

### India's SC scraps anonymous election funding

NEW DELHI: India's top court has struck down a scheme that allowed people to make anonymous donations to political parties, calling it unconstitutional. Electoral bonds were launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in 2018 to make political funding more transparent. But critics say it's done the opposite and made the process more opaque. Mr Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has received most of the funds through the bonds. The scheme was challenged in the Supreme Court as a "distortion of democracy". On Thursday, a five-judge constitution bench ruled that electoral bonds violate citizens' right to access information held by the government. Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said the Right to Information (RTI) law is "not confined to state affairs but also includes information necessary for participatory democracy". - Agencies

### Australia calls for release of Assange

CANBERRA: Australia's parliament has passed a motion calling on the US and UK to release Julian Assange, ahead of a crucial legal hearing. Mr Assange will appear in front of the UK's High Court next week for his final appeal against US extradition. The Australian citizen, currently in London's Belmarsh Prison, is wanted in the US on espionage charges and faces up to 175 years in prison. Australian MPs voted 86-42 that Mr Assange should be allowed to come home. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who supported the motion, has called for the Assange case to come to a "conclusion" since taking office in 2022. He raised the matter directly with US President Joe Biden during a state visit in October. It followed a cross-party delegation of Australian MPs travelling to Washington to lobby US lawmakers for Mr Assange's freedom. The WikiLeaks founder is wanted for publishing thousands of classified documents in 2010 and 2011, which American authorities say broke the law and endangered lives. He has long argued that the case against him is politically motivated. His legal team say he is at risk of taking his own life if he is sent to the US. - Agencies

### Japan unexpectedly slips into a recession

TOKYO: Japan has unexpectedly fallen into a recession after its economy shrank for two quarters in a row. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by a worse-than-expected 0.4% in the last three months of 2023, compared to a year earlier. It came after the economy shrank by 3.3% in the previous quarter. The figures from Japan's Cabinet Office also indicate that the country has lost its position as the world's third-largest economy to Germany. Economists had expected the new data to show that Japan's GDP grew by more than 1% in the fourth quarter of last year. The latest figures were the first reading of Japan's economic growth for the period and could still be revised. Two quarters in a row of economic contraction are typically considered the definition of a technical recession.

In October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that Germany was likely to overtake Japan as the world's third-largest economy when measured in US dollars. The IMF will only declare a change in its rankings once both countries have published the final versions of their economic growth figures. It began publishing data comparing economies in 1980. - Agencies

# Japan, Pakistan have many cultural similarities: envoy

## Exhibition "Yakishime: Earth Metamorphosis" held at PNCA



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: To showcase the depth of traditional Japanese cultural heritage from its earliest origins to contemporary works, a Japan Foundation's travelling pottery exhibition "Yakishime: Earth Metamorphosis", one of the most basic or primitive means of producing ceramics, opened up at the National Art Gallery of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) for visitors to get familiar with this unique and centuries old cultural facet of Japan. The exhibition, which runs until February 29, is jointly organized by the Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA).

Jamal Shah, the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture, and H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, together with other distinguished guests inaugurated the exhibition on Thursday February 15 at the National Art Gallery to provide an opportunity to the visitors to witness the evolution of yakishime from its ancient roots to contemporary expressions. This captivating showcase focuses on a traditional Japanese ceramics technique yakishime (firing unglazed wares at extremely high temperatures) and introduces its history and evolution that has developed in distinctive directions in Japan from 4th and 5th centuries through present day. It features over 80 exquisite pieces from the earliest examples to the present through yakishime wares, tea vessels, food vessels,



jars, containers and more that have become an essential part of everyday life in Japan. It also presents a wide range of non-utilitarian objects created by the contemporary ceramic artists working in yakishime styles aiming to provide an opportunity to communicate this distinctively Japanese sensibility and aesthetic to the people abroad. Ambassador WADA, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony, expressed his deep admiration for this time-honored traditional Japanese art of producing ceramic art and crafts, and said that "one of the unique characteristics of Japanese culture is the fusion and coexistence of tradition and innovation. We are good at adding new interpretation to tradition, while respecting old methods and tastes." Ambassador WADA mentioned that Pakistan is also known as

a production center of traditional potteries with Blue Pottery from Multan which has common attractions with Yakishime. "I feel a sense of warmth and simplicity from both of them", he further added. The Ambassador said both Japan and Pakistan have rich and diverse cultural heritage and the cultural linkages between the two friendly nations, and it can be traced back in history such as the Gandhara civilization. "In terms of the fusion of tradition and innovation, I am looking forward to see the new phase of Pakistan's traditional arts in next generation as well", the Ambassador further added. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation for Pakistan National Council of the Arts for extending their collaboration in arranging this exhibition at the National Art Gallery.

### IHC annuls Aun's victory notification

The IHC also directed the returning officer (RO) to submit his report in three days

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pronouncing a reserved verdict on the petition filed by PTI-backed independent candidate Barrister Salman Akram Raja, the IHC on Thursday declared the notification of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) candidate Aun Chaudhry's victory from the National Assembly constituency, NA-128, Lahore null and void. The IHC also directed the returning officer (RO) to submit his report in three days. Challenging Chaudhry's election win in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday, Barrister Raja had prayed to the court to suspend the notification of his rival candidate's victory. Earlier, the Lahore High Court (LHC), on Barrister Raja's plea, had barred the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from issuing the results of the election in NA-128. It is pertinent to mention here that according to the ECP results, Chaudhry emerged victorious from the constituency by securing 172,576 votes followed by Barrister Raja who got 159,024 votes.

### 'If EVMs were installed, elections wouldn't be doubted'

President suggests leadership forget about past conflicts, forge unity

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi, in an informal conversation with journalists in Islamabad, expressed his views on various pressing issues, stating that this might be one of his final speeches as president. Addressing concerns about the electoral process, President Alvi emphasized the importance of overseas Pakistanis' voting rights, highlighting their struggle to secure this fundamental right. Drawing attention to the prevailing doubts surrounding recent election results, President Alvi lamented the absence of election voting machines, suggesting that their presence could have mitigated current challenges. Expressing disillusionment with the accountability process, he indicated a loss of faith and hope in its effectiveness. "Today, the entire country is raising questions over the elections. Had the EVMs been installed, these problems wouldn't have risen," he remarked. President Alvi underscored his commitment to electoral reform, particularly advocating for the introduction of EVMs and computerized vote counting. He revealed that despite efforts by his party's government to implement EVMs, the proposal faced rejection. Reflecting on the broader leadership deficit in addressing national issues, President Alvi invoked the story of Socrates, highlighting the need for principled decision-making. Drawing parallels to Socrates' sacrifice for his beliefs, President Alvi underscored the importance of integrity and conviction in leadership. He also suggested that the leadership of all political parties to forget about the past conflicts and think about the future, adding that nothing was possible without unity. He also linked political alliances to foreign investment. The president's remarks shed light on critical issues facing Pakistan's electoral system and governance landscape, emphasizing the need for reform and principled leadership to address these challenges effectively. - Agencies

### Pervaiz Elahi accuses Shehbaz of cruelty

Anti-terrorism court extends PTI leader's judicial remand for 14 days in judicial complex vandalism case

COURT REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chaudhry Pervez Elahi, a prominent leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, launched a scathing attack on Shehbaz Sharif, the prime ministerial candidate for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), accusing him of cruelty and harbouring resentment even within his own family. Elahi's remarks came a day after Shehbaz Sharif's elder brother, Nawaz Sharif, nominated him for the post of prime minister, signaling a significant shift in the power dynamics within the PML-N. Nawaz Sharif himself decided to step back, taking a backseat in the political arena. Speaking to the media after appearing in the anti-terrorism court in Islamabad on Thursday, Elahi asserted that the Sharif brothers had returned to the country with the aim of becoming the "darlings of the establishment", a term suggesting close ties with influential authorities, particularly the military. Elahi's comments implied that the defeat of PML-N by PTI in the February 8 elections had compelled the Sharif brothers to seek support from powerful entities. "Shehbaz Sharif is a very cruel person... he did not even forgive his brother," Elahi remarked, without providing further details on the alleged discord within the Sharif family. Elahi went on to declare that his party, PTI, would not engage in any dialogue until what they claim to be stolen seats are returned.

### Mahmoud Abbas reaffirms commitment to governing Gaza after war ends

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas reaffirmed his commitment to running the Gaza Strip once the current conflict ends, but warned that there could be no peace with Israel's current government. He told media that the Palestinian Authority lacks an "Israeli partner for achieving lasting peace," describing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as "clearly a stumbling block to a political solution based on international legitimacy and law." Abbas said Netanyahu's "rejection of the two-state solution and his announcement of continuing the war on Gaza are clear evidence of his public refusal of the peace process and achieving security and stability. He believes only in the logic of occupation, power, and settlement." Abbas said the PA is collaborating with Arab, regional and international partners, praising Saudi Arabia for "historic, honorable, authentic, steadfast" support in the search for peace. "Immediately upon cessation of aggression against our people," the PA would be ready to

fulfill its governing duties in Gaza, he added. Peace remains dependent upon recognition of Palestinian statehood secured through full UN membership, Abbas said, adding that an international peace conference providing guarantees and a timeline detailing the cessation of Israel's occupation would be necessary. While Arab and regional support has been forthcoming, Abbas said despite positive noise coming from the US in support of a two-state solution, words and actions have yet to meet as he called for "genuine American will" to see its realization. "We've had several meetings with top US officials ... and they've assured us of their commitment to the two-state solution," he added. "However, despite these talks, there hasn't been any tangible progress on the ground. Israel continues to undermine the political process, rejecting international resolutions and escalating violence against Palestinian. What matters most is action on the ground." Amid the violence in Gaza, Abbas pointed to growing tensions in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, accusing Israel of killing Palestinians while protecting extremist settlers.

### CNS visits naval ships to oversee conduct of Exercise Seaspark



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited Naval Ships at sea, creeks areas on the coastal belt of Sindh and coastal areas of Baluchistan to oversee the conduct of Exercise Seaspark 2024 and meet the deployed troops in the exercise. Exercise Seaspark 2024 is a major maritime exercise of Pakistan Navy which is regularly conducted after every two years on two force concept i.e Blue Force (own force) and Orange Force (enemy force). Purpose of the exercise is to plan and conduct naval operations as per wartime procedures to check operational readiness, major mobilisation of personnel and practice coordination between various elements of PN to undertake complex operations. During operations at sea PN warships and aircraft also detected Indian Navy ships, submarines and aircraft, attempting to covertly observe the exercise and interpret PN war

plans. Accordingly necessary safeguards were taken by PN. During visit of Maritime Headquarters at Karachi, Chief of the Naval Staff was given a briefing by the Orange and Blue Naval Force Commanders on the conduct of operations by respective forces. Thereafter, Naval Chief visited Keti Bandar Post and Battalion Headquarters of Pak Marines at Shah Bandar where he was briefed on combat readiness for defence of Creeks areas which constitutes the South Eastern maritime boundary with India. During the visit, Naval Chief interacted with troops deployed in difficult marshy areas and appreciated their devotion and high morale. Later on Naval Chief also visited Jinnah Naval Base at Ormara and Naval Ships operating at sea. During these visits CNS expressed his satisfaction on the professional excellence, high morale and perpetual readiness of Pakistan Navy to ensure impregnable maritime defence of motherland and reaffirmed the resolve of Pakistan Navy to safeguard national maritime interest.

## NOW IN PAKISTAN

Invisible Braces  
Dental Implants

**Dr. Abrar & Associates**  
DENTAL SURGEONS

House # 6-A, Ismail Zabeeh Road, (Service Road Parallel to Faisal Avenue) F-8/3, Islamabad.  
e-mail: abrar\_associates@yahoo.com | www.drabrarassociates.com  
Ph: +92 51 228 7691 | +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693