

# **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 allout 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

### 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 Naeemur Rehman has announced to observe a Black Day tomorrow, protesting against the alleged rigging in the February 8 polls. Hafiz Naeemur 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

# 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



the industrialists who had restored investors' confidence in

**Continued on Page 06** 

### Briefs Haleem Adil freed after 171 days Sheikh has obtained bail in all 40 cases

### NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI:Pakistan Tehreeke-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 Sehar 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 soften- RAWALPINDI: Omar Ayub ing his stance against political rivals and has been nominated as a consenting to hold talks with the PPP and potential candidate for the the party's breakaway faction led by Parvez office of prime minister Khattak. A private news channel reported by the Pakistan Tehreekciting party sources that Khan, who remains e-Insaf (PTI) while, Mian

**Continued on Page 06** 

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

### DNA

incarcerated at Adiala jail, is "ready" to talk Aslam nominated as PTI candidate for to the PPP, which has already announced Punjab chief minister. PTI leader and forsupporting Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's mer National Assembly speaker AsadQais candidate for prime minister - Shehbaz Sha- er revealed the name of Omar Ayub as a rif. However, PTI leader Barrister Muham- candidate for the prime minister position, mad Ali Saif denied the reports of contacting 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 elec-

tions. "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

**Continued on Page 06** 

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

Israeli occupation

forces raid

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 a democratic country where people have and stormed the hospital after demolfreedom of expression. "It is the right of ishing its southern wall. They added the people of Pakistan to freely express that Israeli army turned the hospitheir opinion. The Election Commission tal into a military outpost and forced

**Continued on Page 06** 

OGRA increases gas tariff

Continued on Page 06

FIAZ CH

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.

# **FEBRUARY 2024**

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motion that ousted former prime minister Imran Khan was tabled on the directives of ex-army chief General (retired) Qamar JavedBajwa. 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

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** 

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** 







**Continued on Page 06** 

# NATIONAL

### Islamabad **POST** Friday, February 16, 2024

# **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

02

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 prosperity and development in the whole region and stressed the need for early completion of projects under CPEC. He said technology transformation is highly crucial in 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 SBBWU Peshawar.On the occasion, Fuad Ishaq also distributed certificates among students of the SBBWU 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

### CDA enhances beautification of federal Capital ISLAMABAD: The adminuted protective and safety

istration of the Capital Declothes among the sanitary velopment Authority (CDA) workers whose are working is busy around the clock in in the field. According to the details. beautifying the city of Islamabad and providing the special face masks and best facilities to the citisplash face shields to prozens. The CDA administratect the nose and mouth tion is also taking concrete from human waste and and effective measures resewage water were also disgarding the physical health tributed among the sanitary and fitness of the staff workers on the instructions working in the field. In this of Chairman CDA. Moreregard, on Thursday, on the over, in order to avoid huinstructions of the Chairman waste and other toxic man Capital Development elements in the field works, Authority (CDA), the DG special cover-like clothes civic management distrib-

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 of the CDA administration. 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 were also distributed which the city.-DNA

are light in weight and do

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

Naqvi visits OCU,

pledges to eliminate

organized crimes

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 progress-

ing swiftly, following the

removal of all obstructions

along the route. The CM

inspected the road construc-

tion and ordered the early

completion of a designated

parking area along the new

access road. Mr Naqvi appre-

ciated the efforts of the AC

(Shalimar) led team and di-

rected to provide a separate

space for burning incense.

The 20-foot wide road strip

would ensure easy access

Ahmad Jawad appointed convener

present.

ABID RAZA

Crime Unit(OCU) has

been playing a pivotal role

in eliminating gangs and

organised crimes across

the province. Chief Minis-

ter Punjab Mohsin Naqvi

stated this during a visit

to OCU headquarters at

Green Town where he

asked the staff to diligent-

ly perform their duties. The CM was briefed about

OCU's performance by the

Provincial Minister for In-

formation Amir Mir, sec-

retary home, secretary

C&W and others were also

IGP and DIG (OCU).

: Organized

LAHORE

Meanwhile,New

### **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 D.I 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 devel-

KARACHI : President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh has appointopment plan of current fiscal ed Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad year. As per details, 215 proas Convener of the FPCCI jects are being executed in Central Standing Committee the district South Waziristan, on Agriculture for the year 145 in district Tank and 2024-25.136 in DI Khan. The chief minister, on the occasion,

The appointment of Ahmed 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

of FPCCI agri committee 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 of executing AI promptly,

peace.

talize 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

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

can revolutionize and revi-

for visitors. The CM also

prayed for the country. Pro-

vincial Ministers Azfar Ali

Nasir, Mansoor Qadir, sec-

retary C&W, commissioner

Lahore, secretary augaf

and others were also pres-

ent. CM condoles death of

mother of senior journalist

Naseem Qureshi Chief Min-

ister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi

has expressed a deep sense

of sorrow and grief over

the death of the mother of

Daily Jang's senior journal-

ist 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

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

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.

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 Ad-ditional IGP Karachi, AIGP Admin, SSP Korangi, and other police officials. Upon arrival,

### 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 day. More than 65 leading IT on services and products will companies from the software

<i>LUL</i> 4	U
	Μ
ontribute 3.1 billion dollars	D
n 2024. The 13th Career	m
air was organized by Punjab	be
Iniversity Faculty of Com-	01
uting & Information Tech-	A
ology (FCIT), sponsored by	ny
Dubizzle Labs here on Thurs-	M

Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Iahmood, FCIT Dean Prof r Shahzad Sarwar, faculty embers and a large numer of students were present n the occasion. ddressing the ceremo-y, PU VC Prof Dr Khalid

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 informa-

tion technology. PU Vice

lahmood said, "We all have to play our role to get Pakistan out of the crisis.'

# **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, second meeting was held at PBS initiated engagements the Provincial Office, Punjab, Lahore under the chair of Dr. with partner organizations and provincial stakeholders Naeem uz Zafar, Chief Census namely the Board of Reve-Commissioner. Muhammad nue, Agricultural (Exten-Sarwar Gondal, Member (SS/ sion), Livestock, Provincial RM), senior officers from Bureau of Statistics, Crop PBS and senior officers from Reporting Services etc. Provincial departments also The participation of stakeattended the meeting. The holders helped in diversified Chief Census Commissioner perspectives, identifying highlighted that Pakistan is an needs, and addressing the agricultural country and agrishortcomings and potential culture has a 23% share in the GDP out of which 64% of liveissues for the provision of credible statistics as per stock shares in agriculture and requirements and avoiding provides employment to 37% any inconvenience during of the labor force. Therefore, field operation of the Agriculthe latest data on the agricultural Census. The process tural sector is required for evstarted with the meeting of idence-based policy planning all provincial focal persons and the Agricultural Census (SMBRs) at PBS HQ Islama-2024 will be a huge source in bad on 20th December 2023. this regard. He emphasized on After this series of Provincial the participation and cooperameetings started, the first tion of provincial stakeholdprovincial meeting held at Proers, for the successful comvincial Census Coordination pletion of the field operation Center (P3C), Sindh, and the 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 Digal 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

underlined 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

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

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

### GHC

### **CENTRAL POWER GENERATION COMPANY LTD. GUDDU GENCO-II TENDER NOTICE FOR INVITATION TO BID ON SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPE**

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 Hr
2.	ELIGIBILITY OF CONTRACTORS	<ol> <li>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.</li> <li>Valid FBR and SRB Registration</li> <li>Dismantling will be made as per standard Guidelines issued from CPGCL.</li> <li>Contractor with experience in the similar project will be given preference.</li> <li>Contractor will submit Work Methodology along with Tender Documents and will provide level/smooth surface to existing Ground level.</li> <li>Financial Bids of the technically responsive /qualified bidders meeting basic eligibility criteria will be opened only.</li> <li>Tender Documents guide lines to be followed strictly.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Bidder should provide affidavit that Firm is not involved in malpractice and never black listed.</li> <li>The Bidder should have an Average annual turnover of total Rs. 10+ Million during last three years certified from Bank Statement.</li> </ol>			
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	<ul> <li>Office of The Chief Executive Officer, Genco-II, Tel. (Chief Engineer/T.D) 0722-578572, Tel. (Cl Fax: 0722-631015</li> <li>From Office of the CEO, GHCL, OPF Building G</li> </ul>	nief Executiv	e Officer) 0722	
	ESTIMATED	To be quoted by Contractor			
6.	COST	@ 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.			
6. 7.	EARNEST		Call Deposit	in favor of Chief	Executive

### 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
- 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 Dav 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

# **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 counterproduc-

SBP, 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



tive and resulted in diametrically opposite results, he lamented. Quoting the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23, he underscored that interest rates and inflation have been increasing simultaneously. Referring to the World Bank Report on the counterproductive SBP policy, he indicated that financing the fiscal deficit through bank borrowing has rapidly increased the monetary base, contributing to inflationary pressures. Speaking on the fractional reserve banking cycle, Khalil stated that the government of Pakistan has heavily relied on budgetary borrowing from the

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 Aiwan-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.

### 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 (GICC), 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: gicc.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

### Higher tax on cigarettes Hotels & Restaurants

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



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

lic health concerns and revenue burdensome, leading them to pri-years. "Despite losses on various deficits." The government finally oritize spending on essential needs fronts, including public health and

Gohar Ejaz

for effective

system to

provide

supply

meeting.

for other cities," the inte-

rior minister said adding

decisions will have to be

made today to meet the

needs of tomorrow.-APP

that

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.

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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-	
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Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480 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

DNA

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 pub-

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 surveyers that purchasing cigarettes had become financially

like food and the education of their children instead of smoking. The survey found a positive relationship between higher taxes on cigaretees 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



1 +92334 7474701 +92 51 8900 682 28, Ground Floor, Executive Complex, 2 G-8 Markaz, Islamabad

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

#### ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agits output in the country, riculture Research Counsaid Chairman PARC Dr cil (PARC) in collaboration with the Korean Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) would provide a 100-kilowatt solar system for seed potato production using aeroponics technology to boost virus-free seed production in the country. The KO-PIA-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 high-yielding certified seed potatoes to enhance seed potatos production.

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

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 bowsers 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

# **TWIN CITIES**

# Briefs

### Unpopular elections further complicated political landscape

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), 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 Rash eed 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 Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F), 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.



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 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,

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-

Galliyat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi,

Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi

Bahauddin, Mianwali, Khushab,

Sargodha, Gujrat, Gujranwala,

Hafizabad, Faisalabad, Jhang,

Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur

from February 17 night to Feb-

ruary 21while light to moderate

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 21with 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

**ANF recovers** 

122 kg drugs in nine

operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Nar-

cotics Force (ANF) while

conducting nine operations

across the country man-

aged to recover 122 kg of

drugs and arrested two ac-

cused including a woman,

said an ANF spokesman

here on Thursday. He in-

formed that 2 kg of Ice

was recovered from a Bah-

rain-bound passenger net-

ted at Lahore Airport. 660

grams of weed was recov-

ered from two parcels sent

from Thailand and the UK

at a Rawalpindi Courier Of-

fice 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 recov-

ered from a parcel sent to

Mirpur Khas from a courier

office in Karkhano Market

Peshawar. 17 kg hashish

was recovered from the

Zakhakhel Khyber area in

two different operations

and 1 kg hashish was re-

covered from Dera Ismail

Khan. Separate cases under

the Anti-Narcotics Act have

been registered against the

arrested accused and fur-

ther investigations are under

process.-APP

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

Islamabad **POST** 

Friday, February 16, 2024

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

### 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, technologi cal advancements, low-qual ity 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 Jacaran da 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.

### EU to organize familyfocused 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 Shahdadpur platform

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has almost completed the upgradation and rehabilitation work of the Shahdadpur 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 Shahdadpur Railway Station, official sources in the Ministry told APP. They said Shahdadpur 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

DNA AMABAD: Th an Textile Mil

ISLAMABAD: The All-Pacategories, presenting a rokistan Textile Mills Associbust framework for mutual ation (APTMA) has called growth and development. for greater collaboration This strategic partnership, with China to help Pakibolstered by initiatives like stan achieve its ambitious the Belt and Road Initiative export target of \$50 bil-(BRI) and the China-Pakistan lion per annum by 2029. Economic Corridor (CPEC), Representing more than has a profound impact on Pa-223 textile companies, the kistani firms gaining access association believes that to the Chinese market. Pastrengthened ties with Chikistan's export of goods and na, a leading player in the services to China witnessed global textile industry, can a 40.01 percent increase significantly boost Pakiduring the first six months stan's export earnings. In of the current fiscal year an interview with Gwadar (2023-24) compared to the Pro, APTMA Secretary exports of the corresponding General Shahid Sattar highperiod last year, announced lighted the cooperation bethe State Bank of Pakistan tween China and Pakistan (SBP).

in the textile industry to signifies a major This achievement and highlights showcase complementary advantages across various 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.

APTMA urges enhanced

collaboration with China

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 highend manufacturing and is pushing forward with innovations in synthetic fibers and green manufacturing processes.

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

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGE-HA) 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 specine fied areas. During the operation, illegal structures and encroachments in the Green Belt between Sector G-12, as well as in G-15/3, were demolisished. The FGEHA's adming, istrative body expressed a T 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 FGE-HA 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



# Western media lies about Red Sea blockade

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 eves 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. ater, 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.

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# Anti-China narrative psychological projection of US

NHE 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

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 PTI got the most seats with 92, followed by 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 is angry at the military's involvement in the National Assembly. Many expected Nawaz election process. The military, which hasn't 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 ernment or opposition, may spend much of 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. challenge for Pakistan's democracy.

voters, existing challenges could become 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 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 govtheir time questioning the legitimacy of the government and demanding new elections, making the 2024 national election another

# Testing Western capabilities in Red Sea against Yemen

### **Nasser Houssein**

regain freedom and office

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

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 Gravely (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 Gravely. 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 Gravely 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 Gravely. 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 Gravely 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 missiles 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 Gravely 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 sailors 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 Gravely, "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 was 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

# WORLD / SPORTS

Islamabad **POST** Friday, February 16, 2024

# **Briefs Steps under** SIFC yielding positive...

### FROM PAGE 01

the government polices and played their role in the development of national economy. Referring to the FBR reforms and the SIFC's establishment, PM Kakar said it was the best time to invest in diverse fields. The companies associated with the steel industry should prioritize investment for the development of new iron ore deposits in the country. In the meeting, the participants paid tribute to the caretaker government for its efforts for facilitating investment in the country, resolving the problems of industrialists, reforming the FBR and taking measures to restore the economy. The meeting was informed in detail about the large scale industry of steel and copper in Pakistan, the fourth largest export sector, of which copper exports vol-ume alone was \$1.35 billion in the last financial year.

### MQM: Targeting...

FROM PAGE 01 Expressing satisfaction over the conduct of the elections amidst challenges, Siddiqui remarked, "Many people were worried that the elections might not be held on time, but the institutions took responsibility and the elections were somewhat peaceful." He noted that many independent candidates emerged victorious during the conduct of the election which was evidence that the electoral process was somewhat free. Whileacknowledging MQM's reasons to celebrate electoral success, Siddiqui cautioned against complacency, stating, "At a time when difficult decisions need to be made. political parties must give their share of sacrifice as it was the only solution."

### Pakistan calls UNSC.

# Gaddafi Stadium set for **PSL 9 opening ceremony**

The ceremony is scheduled to precede the first match between Lahore Qalandars and Islamabad United

### **OUR CORRESPONDENTS**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced a spectacular opening ceremony to kick off the ninth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL). The ceremony is scheduled to precede the first match between Lahore Qalandars and Islamabad United and will take place at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday, February 17. As announced by PCB on their social media platform, a star-studded lineup including Ali Zafar, Aima Baig, Arif Lohar, and Noori is set to grace the stage, promising a mesmerizing performance. Alongside, attendees can expect a visual feast with fireworks and a dazzling laser show. It is worth noting that PSL 9 will span across four cities - Karachi, Lahore, Multan, and Rawalpindi, with the final to take place at Karachi's National

Bank Stadium on March 18. Earlier on, PSL's commercial budget restored The Board of Governors (BoG) of the Pakistan



the first time under newly-elected Chairman Mohsin Naqvi at the Chief Minister's House Wednesday restored the Pakistan Super League's (PSL) commercial expenses that were earlier slashed

mittee, hoping to generate a profit of around Rs1,945 million from the season nine that springs into action from February 17. The meeting that was attended by almost half of the BoG members in person and rest through the video-link, has restored the previous commercial budget from Rs459,500,000 to Rs544,5000,000.

It means that Rs85 million cut that was imposed on the com-

### contract terminated LAHORE: Fast bowler Haris Rauf's central contract was terminated by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday.

invaluable contributions," of immense importance. in New Zealand.

lion around to Rs725 million with an adjustment of Rs50 million. Haris Rauf's central

The decision comes following a probe into the pacer's re-

fusal to join Pakistan's Test squad for the tour of Australia

2023-24. Rauf's central contract has been terminated from

December 1, 2023. The right-armer will also not get No Ob-

jection Certificate (NOC) to play any foreign league up to

June 30, 2024. "The PCB management provided a chance for

a personal hearing to Haris in compliance with the principles

of natural justice on 30 January 2024 and his response was

"The PCB states that playing for Pakistan is the ultimate

honour and privilege for any sportsperson. Refusal to be

part of Pakistan's Test squad in the absence of any med-

ical report or justifiable reason is a material violation of

the central contract." It must be noted that Rauf had re-

fused to play Australia Tests citing injury concerns and

workload management. Rauf has only played a solitary

Test match for Pakistan over the course of his career

after making his debut against England in 2022 in Rawal-

pindi. The 30-year-old has 69 wickets in 37 ODIs, while

also bagging 90 wickets in 66 T20Is. - Agencies

found unsatisfactory," the PCB said in a press release.

mercial expenditures by the

Zaka Ashraf's regime has been

restored. Besides the commercial

expenditure, the cut imposed on

logistic, administrative and elec-

trical expenditures have also been

restored. The security budget has

also been revised, introducing a

The actual budget meant for se-

curity was around Rs286 million

which has been readjusted at

Rs230 million and around.HR ex-

penditures have also been raised

from Rs25 million to Rs38 mil-

lion and around. Expenditures on

media sees no change as these

stay at around Rs6.5 million for

the current season. Logistics ex-

penses for the season have been

restored to Rs380 million, re-

storing the cut of Rs130 million

introduced by the Management

Committee headed by Zaka. 'The

News' has learnt that in another

major development, the PCB's

share from the PSL income has

been increased from Rs675 mil-

cut of Rs56 million.

PTI announces protests...

FROM PAGE 01 PPP for government formation. Speaking to journalists, the lawyer said that the PTI founder had "strictly" advised against holding talks with PPP and PML-N. "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," he added. Later, while talking to journalists after meeting with Khan in Rawalpindi, Barrister Gohar Khan and Sher Afzal Marwat also ruled out a coalition with the Bilawal-led party. "We informed Khan sahib about PPP's messages. In response, Khan sahib flatly rejected the idea of power-sharing with either the PPP or the PML-N," Marwat told journalists.

### PTI nominates Omar Ayub..

FROM PAGE 01

the office of speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. Speaking to media outside Adiala jail, Asad-Qaiser announced plans to engage in discussions with all political parties, including the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), the Awami National Party (ANP), and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. He also hinted at protesting against the Feb 8 polls results, stating that PTI's mandate was stolen. The former speaker pledged to sit in the National Assembly and conduct a parliamentary session in a day or two. Asad Qaiser shared the statements of the PTI founder after meeting him in Adiala jail with the approval of the Islamabad High Court. He said the PTI founder discussed matters related to political alliances, the new government, and the political situation in the meeting.

### Imran was ousted...

FROM PAGE 01 16 months before handing over the reins to the caretaker set-up. At first, Khan

# PCB parts ways with Mohammad Hafeez

the PCB said, wishing him good luck and success in his future endeavours. The development comes as the newly-appointed PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi refused to entertain Ha-

feez who had intended to meet the new board chief to submit his report about the tour of Australia and New Zealand. Hafeez had replaced Mickey Arthur as director of cricket in November 2023 amid a major shakeup within the team's management following the Green Shirts' dismal performance in Asia Cup 2023 and the World Cup 2023. Sources say that the PCB and Hafeez have decided to

ment. "Hafeez's passion for the game has inspired players and his mentorship during the tour of Australia and New Zealand have been The PCB wishes Hafeez good luck and success in his future endeavours," it added. Hafeez has featured for Pakistan in 55 Tests, 218 ODIs and 119 T20Is and has scored 12,780 runs while also bagging 253 wickets. Under Hafeez's tenure as director, Pakistan suffered a 3-0 defeat in the recent Test tour to Australia, and additionally, they faced a 4-1 loss in the five-match T20 series

Earlier, it was also reported that the relationship between

FROM PAGE 01 was monitoring the entire election process. The Commonwealth delegation spoke about the transparencv of the electoral process in Pakistan, she added. On invitation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the swearing-in ceremony of the newly-elected government, Ms Baloch said that the new government would take a decision in this regard. Regarding India's involvement in targeted killings, she said that Pakistan was in touch with the country in which the attack was planned. The spokesperson said investigations are going on about the cases of extrajudicial killings of Pakistanis by India. In the past too, India has been involved in extrajudicial killings in Pakistan, she stated.

### Israeli occupation..

FROM PAGE 01 the remaining displaced civilians, several medical crews and patients to evacuate the facility at gunpoint. Spokesman for the health ministry Ashraf al-Qudra said that the Israeli army attacked the hospital and its grounds, including its orthopedic department, the ambulance building and the tents in its courtyards, and bulldozed the mass graves in the medical compound. Spokesman Qudra added that the patients in the intensive care department are threatened with death after Israeli sol diers deliberately damaged the oxygen cylinder.

### JI to observe Black Day...

### FROM PAGE 01

the public against their will, and deemed the obervance of Black Day as a stand against this anti-democratic trend. In an interesting turn of events, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman relinquished the National Assembly seat to a PTI-backed independent candidate on February 12. He highlighted that the independent candidate rightfully deserved the PS-129 seat as per Form-45. Rehman emphasized the rejection of illicit behavior, stating that the public had forcefully rejected rulers imposed on them undemocratically.

DNA ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Hafeez has stepped down

as Director Pakistan men's cricket team following an administrative change within Pakistan Cricket Board

Nadal updates on

FO, Paris Olympics

PARIS: Spanish tennis star Rafael Nadal is hopeful of fea-

turing at this year's French Open and the Olympics, the

former world number one said in a statement. The 37-year-

old has bagged 22 Grand Slam singles titles, including a

record 14 French Open crowns. "I don't know which events

I have left to play but between you and me, it's not going

to be many," Nadal said in an interview. "(Roland Garros)

will be one of my goals", he added when asked whether he

would play in his favourite Grand Slam tournament in May.

"I'd like to play at the Olympics as well. It's not something

I can confirm right now, but I hope I will ... I think I will.'

Nadal, who spent 2023 on the sidelines due to injury, with-

drew from next week's Qatar Open on Wednesday, post-

poning his comeback to competitive tennis as he has not

recovered from a torn muscle he sustained in Brisbane last

month. Nadal also shed light on his ties with Saudi Arabia

after being appointed ambassador of the Kingdom's Tennis

Federation last month. "They pay me, yes, do I need the

money? Not at all, it will not change my life. I have not

signed a super contract, like other fellow athletes who are

there and I totally respect them," he said. Nadal penned an

agreement with the Middle East country for a long-term

deal to help grow the sport. He also plans on creating a

Rafael Nadal Academy in the country. - Agencies

part ways as the board isn't interested in working with (PCB).The PCB confirmed the former cricketer. the development in a post

on X, thanking Hafeez for 'The Pakistan Cricket his "invaluable contribu-Board extends heartfelt gratitude to Mohammad tions". "The Pakistan Crick-Hafeez, Director Pakistan et Board extends heartfelt men's cricket team, for his gratitude to Mohammad Hafeez, Director Pakistan invaluable contributions," the PCB said in a statemen's cricket team, for his

Sinner knows

he has a target

on his back

champion Jannik Sinner is

aware of the fact that his op-

ponents will be keen on get-

ting a win over the ATP Tour's

newest Grand Slam winner

but the Italian displayed in

his opening round victory

at the Rotterdam Open on

Wednesday that he will not

shy away from the challenge.

In his first match since mak-

ing a comeback from two sets

down to defeat Daniil Medve-

dev and clinch his first major

last month. Sinner eased to a

6-3 6-3 win over Botic van de

Zandschulp, who he also beat

in the first round in Australia.

"I've been working a lot in

Monaco but I wanted to come

here and feel the court," the

world number four told re-

porters. - Agencies

Australian Open

PARIS:

Hafeez and senior players was less than ideal during the tour of New Zealand. According to sources, the players were unhappy with the long meetings conducted by Hafeez as well as the latter's stern approach with regard to the management of the team.



### **Ubaid Shah eyes Babar** Azam's wicket in PSL 9

LAHORE: Emerging pacer Ubaid Shah, who is part of Islamabad United in Pakistan Super League's (PSL) season nine, is eyeing to dismiss top batter Babar Azam during the competition. While talking to the media after his first practice session with the United, the 18-year-old said that he is excited about this new challenge. Shah brothers - Naseem Shah, Hunain Shah, and Ubaid - are all part of the Islamabad United. Ubaid stressed that he is excited about the prospect of bowling with Naseem, who is also his favourite bowler. "I enjoyed bowling with Naseem today where he told me about bowling in T20 as per the conditions," he said. "It has benefited me and I will try to perform well for United as much as possible," he added. Ubaid has a goal to accomplish - to dismiss Babar in the tournament. "The batting quality in PSL is great and I will strive to dismiss top batters, including Babar Azam," he said. Ubaid appreciated the environment of the side under new head coach Mike Hesson and captain Shadab Khan. "The team environment is such that no one is taking any pressure. There is no pressure on me as coaches and Naseem have given me a lot of confidence," he maintained. Meanwhile, Ubaid revealed that all three brothers are aiming to represent the country together. "We [brothers] contribute to the bowling and the desire is that all three brothers represent the country. I am working hard and am ready for any opportunity to play for Pakistan in any format," he added. On the other hand, Ubaid is pleased with his U19 World Cup performance recently where he finished as the leading wicket-taker for Pakistan (18 wickets) in South Africa. Remember, PSL 9 will be held in four cities - Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi with the final of the event taking place at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi on March 18. Like the previous edition, the PSL 9 will take place in two legs with Multan Cricket Stadium and Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium hosting 14 matches between them from February 17 to 27. The action then moves to Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium and Karachi's National Bank Stadium, where 16 matches will be held from February 28 to March 12. - DNA

insisted that the US had him removed – a claim that the Joe Biden administration vehemently rejected. However, the ex-prime minister later shifted the blame to Gen Bajwa. In an interview in February last vear, Khan, citing an apparent conversation of the retired general with a journalist, said General Bajwa had "accepted and clarified that he was behind our government's ouster". After he became the first prime minister to be ousted via a no-trust motion, Khan continued a tirade against the establishment; however, politicians also said that the ex-army chief was involved in the PTI's ouster.

### Arrest warrants...

### FROM PAGE 01

nominee for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister's slot - has been despatched by the electoral body to the Dera Ismail Khan deputy commissioner. In the letter. the PTI leader, who was a federal minister then, has been directed to appear before the AJK Election Commission on February 28. The petition against Gandapur was filed by lawyer Raja Zulqarnain during the 2021 election. The firebrand PTI leader was banned from participating and addressing rallies in election-related events in AJK.

### Ch Shujaat meets...

#### FROM PAGE 01

vie for coalition partners to secure a majority in the wake of the recent elections. A private newspaper reported that Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, along with other PML-Q leaders including Chaudhry Wajahat, Chaudhry Salik, Chaudhry Shafi, and Mantaha Ashraf, convened at Adiala Jail for discussions with Elahi. The meeting, held in the conference room of Adiala Jail, covered a range of topics, including the overall political situation in the country and family matters. Sources indicate that discussions also touched upon Chaudhry Pervez Elahi's health and the facilities available to him in prison.

# **Mbappe, Barcola lead PSG champions victory** PSG secure win over Real Sociedad in Champions League last-16 tie with goals from Kylian Mbappe and Bradley Barcola

### **SPORTS DESK**

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain emerged victorious in a hardfought battle against Real Sociedad, securing a 2-0 win in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie. Kylian Mbappe and Bradley Barcola were the heroes for PSG, each contributing cru-

cial goals in the second half. Real Sociedad, unbeaten in this year's competition, initially posed a challenge, with PSG struggling in the first half. However, Kylian Mbappe's brilliance came to the forefront in the 58th minute when he volleyed home from Marquinhos' corner, breaking the deadlock and shifting the momentum in PSG's favor. Captain Marquinhos acknowledged the team's halftime discussions and the impactful guidance from coach Luis Enrique. "Our attitude was much better in the second half. He (Luis Enrique) always tells us the truth, and that's

very important for the team," said Marquinhos. The captain emphasised the importance of securing a win at home in the Champions League. The second goal for PSG came from the talented Bradley Barcola in the 70th minute, sealing the

victory with a skillful individual

display. Barcola's ability to navigate through Real Sociedad's defense and slot the ball past the goalkeeper showcased PSG's attacking prowess. Despite Real Sociedad's resilience, PSG's defense held firm, and the visitors now face a daunting task of overcoming a two-goal deficit in the

return leg on March 5 in Spain. Notably, PSG's triumph comes at a crucial juncture, alleviating the pressure on the team that had faced early exits in previous Champions League campaigns. Real Sociedad, in their first knockout tie in two decades, struggled to make an impact, fur-



the return leg, supporters remain cautiously optimistic, considering PSG's history of challenging collapses in the competition's later stages. The journey continues for PSG, and the Champions League quest remains alive and well. Mbappé really should have

ther compounded by the absence

of their injured captain and top

scorer, Mikel Oyarzabal. As Ky-

lian Mbappe's side looks ahead to

scored with five minutes gone after a straight thrust through the middle, out there gliding away into his own private patch of green and shooting too close to Alex Remiro. Takefusa Kubo and Mikel Merino combined to set up André Silva for a header that looped just past the post. Kubo was a threat throughout the half, a lovely, easy, mischievous dribbler, and another footballer who appears to have decided this high-tension theatre of pain is actually, in the end, a bit of a lark. Are you really allowed to enjoy playing these games?

# **BUSINESS / WORLD**

# Briefs

# Philippine landslide death toll rises to 92

MANILA : The death toll from the Feb. 6 landslide that hit a mining town in Davao de Oro province in the southern Philippines has risen to 92, local authorities said Thursday.

Provincial government of Davao de Oro said on social media that rescuers are still looking for 36 missing people. Leah Anora of the Department of Interior and Local government told a press conference at Maco, the municipality where the tragedy occurred, that 32 people were injured but survived the tragedy. The dead and missing people include workers of a mining company trapped inside two buses buried by the rocks. mud, and trees that rampaged from the mountainside. The buses ferry workers to and from the mining site. The World Risk Index 2022 put the Philippines at the number one spot for the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the archipelago is frequently battered by powerful typhoons, triggering flash floods and landslides, and rocked by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.-APP

### Thailand to offer medical coverage for tourists

BANGKOK: Thailand has launched a scheme to offer visitors up to \$14,000 in medical coverage in the event of an accident, the tourism minister said Thursday, as the kingdom seeks to lure travellers back after the pandemic. The government will cover expenses up to 500,000 baht (\$14,000) and pay compensation of up to one million baht in case of death under the new scheme. Travel restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic hammered the kingdom's vital tourism sector and arrivals have not bounced back as quickly as officials hoped. Tourism Sudawan Wang minister suphakijkosol told AFP the new Thailand Traveller Safety scheme began on January 1 and will run until August 31. "The campaign aims to assure foreign tourists that Thailand is safe and everyone will be under good care," she said. Thailand records 2.74mn foreign tourist arrivals so far in 2024 The kingdom has long been popular with young backpackers from around the world seeking sun, sand and adrenalin. But accidents are not uncommon and there have been numerous reports in recent months of young Europeans finding themselves facing big medical bills with inade-

# Governor Punjab optimistic about economic turn around

President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari thanked the Governor Punjab for his support of the new industrial estate project of ICCI

### ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a business role model award ceremony to give awards to business leaders for achieving great success in their respective business fields. Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman was the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Governor Punjab said that the business community is making a great contribution to the socio-economic development of the country and taking an active part in philanthropic activities, which is laudable. He said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council has brought all stakeholders on the same page and hoped that the incoming government would turn around Pakistan's economy towards better growth and development. He said that Pakistan needs to highlight positivity and discourage negativity to move forward. He



highlighted the achievements of Edhi and Akhuwat as the outcomes of positive efforts. He acknowledged the need to bring out-of-school children to schools to educate them. He threw light on the achievements of the Punjab Skills Development Fund from 2013 to 2018 which were made case studies by Harward and the London School of Economics. He said that the business community needs ease of doing business to improve the

economy. He assured that he would support the representation of the business community in the syndicates of universities to promote academia-industry linkages to address issues of industry and improve economic growth. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry thanked the Governor Punjab for his support of the new industrial estate project of ICCI. He said that the

land for the said project has been identified in the district Chakwal and stressed that the work on this important project should be expedited to complete it to promote industrialization and exports. He said that all parties should accept the election results to move forward as Pakistan needs political stability to achieve economic stability. He said that Pakistan needs foreign investment, industrialization, and an increase in exports to revive the economy

for which stability is the key requirement. He said that ICCI wants an IT Park in the Capital as this region has a lot of educated IT talent and hoped that Governor Punjab would cooperate with this project. He said that the government has further increased the gas tariffs while the industry needs a competitive energy tariff to compete effectively for exports in the international market. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI emphasized for the enrolment of 26 million out-of-school children in the schools as no nation can develop without education. He said that by providing good education to youth, it can be transformed into a great dividend for the country. He stressed that all loss-making commercial entities should be privatized to save about Rs.1000 billion in annual losses to bail out them. Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan urged that the business leaders should be promoted as role models for youth that would put Pakistan on the path of sustainable economic growth.

# UK to supply thousands of drones to Ukraine

Islamabad **POST** 

Friday, February 16, 2024

LONDON: The UK will supply thousands of drones to Ukraine as the Ministry of Defence pledged to stand with Kyiv "for as long as it takes". Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said the UK will jointly lead a major drone capability coalition with Latvia that will include the provision of first-person view (FPV) and sea drones. The UK's latest support for Ukraine comes as Kyiv moved to a defensive posture amid critical shortages on the battlefield. Sea drones are small. unmanned vessels that can be used for clearing mines, carrying out surveillance or detonating enemy ships. Ukraine's military released footage on Wednesday which appeared to show a Ukrainian sea drone destroying a Russian landing ship in the Black Sea. FPV drones are used to locate enemy positions, armoured vehicles, and ships using low-quality cameras before targeting them with explosive ordnance. The Ministry of Defence said these drones have "proven highly effective". Mr Shapps said: "Together, we will give Ukraine the capabilities it needs to defend itself and win this war, to ensure that Putin fails in his illegal and barbaric ambitions."

This is the first project that will be launched from the £200 million drone package announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in January and will increase the UK's military aid to Ukraine to £2.5 billion this year. The statement from the Ministry of Defence said: "The UK is committed to standing with Ukraine for as long as it takes." – APP

### Microsoft invests $\in 3.2$ billion in German AI

BERLIN : Microsoft said Thursday it would invest 3.2 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) in Germany through 2025, with the bulk going to expand the tech giant's efforts in artificial intelligence. The investment will go towards doubling the capacity of Microsoft's

# **US** Defense Secretary affirms 'full support' for NATO

### While there, he will also hold meetings with the leaders of the Czech Republic, Denmark, and the Netherlands

### WEB DESK

WASHINGTON : The US reiterated its full support to NATO as Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin spoke to the alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg ahead of Thursday's NATO Defense Ministers' Meeting in Brussels. "They discussed the positive outcomes related to today's virtual Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG) meeting, the critical role NATO plays in ensuring Transatlantic security, and reviewed priorities for the Ministerial and upcoming NATO Summit in Washington," the Pentagon said in a statement. The 19th UDCG meeting was held virtually. The press release said Austin restated the complete backing of the US for the NATO Alliance, and highlighted the significance of enhancing its health reasons, and US Ambassador to NATO Julianne "collective deterrence and defense" which includes Smith will represent the demaking investments in the fense secretary.

Russia's war on Ukraine, defense industrial bases of the allies. "Secretary Aus-NATO spending, progress tin reiterated the United in meeting the goals of the States' full support for the Vilnius summit and prepa-NATO Alliance and noted rations for the Washingthe importance of strengthton summit this summer ening our collective deterare on the agenda for the rence and defense, includmeeting. ing through investments

Meanwhile, delay in US aid hurting Ukraine, to Allied defense industrial aid hurting NATO chief They underscored NATO's NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said a delay in passimportance on the global stage, saying allies "have ing new US aid for Ukraine always been able to unite was already hurting Kiev's around our core task: to forces on the battlefield defend each other and keep against Russia. We see the impact already of the fact

berg told journalists. Zelenskyy plans meetings with Scholz and Macron in critical talks Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will travel to Germany and France on Friday for meetings with leaders Olaf Scholz and Emmanuel Macron, his office announced. The visits to Ukraine's key European backers come at a critical time. With the war approaching the two-year mark, Kiev is seeking to unlock billions of dollars in Western aid to help its troops on the battlefield. Zelenskyy will also ad-

dress the Munich Security Conference on Saturday,

Canada, Aust, NZ call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza "Palestinian civilians cannot be made to pay the price of defeating Hamas

SYDNEY: The leaders of Canada, Australia and New Zealand on Thursday called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, according to a joint statement released in response to reports about Israel's planned military operation in Rafah. "We are gravely concerned by indications that Israel is planning a ground offensive into Rafah. A military operation into Rafah would be catastrophic," the statement by the prime ministers of the three countries said. "An immediate humanitarian ceasefire is urgently needed." Israel will press ahead with an offensive against Hamas in Rafah, the last refuge for displaced Palestinians in southern Gaza, after allowing civilians to vacate the area, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday. The statement urged Israel not to conduct the offensive, however it said any ceasefire could not be "one sided," and would require Hamas to disarm and immediately release all remaining hostages. The leaders also said the International Court of Justice's January ruling in a genocide case brought by South Africa obligated Israel to protect civilians and deliver basic services and essential humanitarian assistance. "The protection of civilians is paramount and a requirement under international humanitarian law," the statement said. "Palestinian civilians cannot be made to pay the price of defeating Hamas."-DNA

### quate insurance.-APP Brazil quake victims pursue justice in Dutch court

ROTTERDAM : Residents from a Brazilian city devastated by earthquakes caused by salt mining went to a Dutch court Thursday, seeking justice and compensation they say is impossible in Brazil. Families from Maceio flew to the Netherlands to hear the case against Brazilian petrochemical giant Braskem, whose European operations are based in Rotterdam. Once a city of one million people, life in Maceio has been upended by earthquakes in 2018 attributed to salt mining and subsequent cracks in streets and buildings. The guakes forced tens of thou sands to flee their homes. "What we are living now is hell," community leader Alex Da Silva, 42, told AFP. "The ones who are left in our community are still suffering sinking (of the earth) and shakes today. We are hoping today for justice, to finally get justice," he said. Braskem says it has offered financial compensation and psychological support to those affected, as well as help moving house. The firm says it has paid out 3.93 billion reais (\$790 million) in compensation and financial aid to more than 18,000 people. Lawyers for Braskem argued in court that as the settlement had already been agreed in Brazil, the case in the Netherlands was superfluous.-APP

"Both agreed that America's Allies are a powerful force multiplier and when NATO speaks as one, our adversaries listen." the press release said.

our people safe."

bases.'

16 lack any form of social protection, leaving them vulner-

able to disease, poor nutrition and poverty, according to

data released Wednesday by two UN agencies and the Brit-

ish charity Save the Children. The data was compiled by

the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Na-

tions Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Save the Children. In

low-income countries, fewer than one in 10 children have

access to child benefits, highlighting a significant disparity

compared to coverage enjoyed by children in high-income

countries. "Globally, there are 333 million children living

in extreme poverty, struggling to survive on less than

\$2.15 per day, and nearly one billion children living in mul-

tidimensional poverty," said Natalia Winder Rossi, Global

Director of Social Policy and Social Protection at UNICEF.

"At the current rate of progress, achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals' poverty targets are out of reach. This

is unacceptable," she said. Rossi said ending child poverty

is a policy choice made by governments. Expanding social

protection coverage of children in the fight against poverty

is critical, including the progressive realisation of univer-

sal child benefits, she said. The groups said child benefits

are a vital social protection intended to promote children's

long-term well-being. Cash or tax credits They are deliv-

ered as cash or tax credits, and child benefits are essential

for reducing poverty as well as accessing health care, nutri-

tion, a quality education, water and sanitation. The bene-

fits also support socio-economic development, particularly

Austin is not attending the NATO meeting due to

that the US has not been able to make a decision, but I expect the US to be able to make a decision, that the Congress and the House of Representatives will agree continued support to Ukraine," Stolten-

where he will hold talks with US Vice President Kamala Harris, Kiev said. While there, he will also hold meetings with the leaders of the Czech Republic, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

### 1.4B children missing Putin regrets delaying 'special out on basic social operation' in Ukraine protection WASHINGTON: Worldwide, 1.4 billion children aged under

### DNA

**MOSCOW: Russian Pres**ident Vladimir Putin said that the only thing he regrets is that the "special military operation" in Ukraine had not started earlier. Commenting on reactions in the West to his interview with US journalist Tucker Carlson in a televised show, Putin said it is good that Western politicians watched the interview but unfortunate that his words are being twisted. Where did I say that the beginning of the special operation is connected to the threat of NATO's aggression against Russia? I said that we were constantly deceived about the non-expansion of NATO to the East.

(There have been) five expansions, (which is) a complete deception," he emphasized. Putin reiterated Russia's concern over the possibility of Ukraine being admitted into NATO, noting that the trigger for the beginning of the combat activities in Ukraine was Kyiv's refusal to implement the Minsk Agreements, a set of accords signed in Belarus's capital Minsk in 2014 to mend differences between the divided Ukrainian society. "The trigger was the complete refusal of the current Ukrainian authorities to implement the Minsk Agreements and the incessant attacks with numerous human casualties on the republics of Donbass, which we had not recognized for

eight years, who asked us to recognize them in view of the futility of resolving the issue within the Minsk Agreements. "We recognized them, then concluded a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance with them and, in accordance with the UN Charter, fulfilled our obligations under this treaty. We did not start the war, but we are only trying to stop it," he said. The Russian leader pointed out that for eight years, from 2014-2022, which he described as "the first stage," Russia tried to settle the conflict via political and diplomatic means, but then German chancellor and French president admitted that the purpose of the Minsk Agreements was "to prepare Ukraine

for the war with Russia." "The only thing we can regret is that we did not take action earlier, believing that we were dealing with decent people," he said. Asked about his impressions about Tucker Carlson, Putin said he expected him to be aggressive, but the journalist turned out to be patient and did not give him a reason to answer "sharply." Commenting on threats against Carlson, Putin said "everything is possible in today's America," reminding about the fate of another journalist, Julian Assange, who is currently in jail. If Tucker is "punished" in any way, then "the liberal-democratic dictatorship will show its true face," he stressed.-Agencies

"AI and data centre infrastructure", vice chair Brad Smith said in Berlin at an event with Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Germany is "constantly at the forefront" of technological change, Smith said, with the country second in Europe in terms of the number of AI-based applications being created. But Germany suffers from a relative shortage of AI skills, according to Smith, a problem seen across different sectors. Microsoft wants to "help build out infrastructure to help the Germany economy continue its use of AI and build out the skill base to fill the jobs required", Smith said. Microsoft is among the large tech companies to have moved fastest and furthest into the sector, investing in ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and pushing AI across products.-APP

Bangkok says work from home as pollution blankets city

BANGKOK : Bangkok city employees have been told to work from home to avoid harmful air pollution, as a layer of noxious haze blanketed the Thai capital on Thursday. City authorities asked for cooperation from employers to help workers in the city of about 11 million people avoid the pollution, which is expected to last into Friday. The air monitoring website IQAir ranked Bangkok among the 10 most polluted cities in the world on Thursday morning. Levels of the most dangerous PM2.5 particles -- so tiny they can enter the bloodstream were more than 15 times the World Health Organization's annual guideline, according to IQAir. Bangkok governor Chadchart Sittipunt said late Wednesday that all city employees would work from home on Thursday and Friday. 'I would like to ask for cooperation from the BMA network of about 151 companies and organisations, both government offices and the private sector," he said in a statement, adding that more than 60,000 peo-

ple were affected. -APP

# Türkiye urges Israel to heed global warnings on Rafah

### Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan addresses news conference with Georgian counterpart Ilia Darchiashvili in Ankara

### FOREIGN DESK

in crisis times. -APP

ISTANBUL: Türkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Thursday that Ankara expects Israel to consider the warnings by the global community against any attack on the city of Rafah, southern Gaza Strip. "The international community has come together, issuing warnings to Israel, particularly urging against any attack on Rafah. There are very serious warnings, and we expect Israel to take these warnings into consideration," Fidan told a news conference with his Georgian counterpart Ilia Darchiashvili in Ankara. Fidan said Türkiye is exerting significant efforts, particularly in the realm of aid for Gazans, and is closely cooperating with Egypt on the issue. The Turkish Red Crescent, disaster agency

AFAD, and NGOs are engaged in humanitarian aid effort under the coordination of the Foreign Ministry, he said, but lamented limitations on the daily amount of aid that can enter the blockaded enclave. "We are working with the international community to explore ways to increase this allowance," Fidan said. Since a cross-border incursion by the Palestinian group Hamas on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, the Israeli offensive into Gaza has killed more than 28,000 people and caused mass destruction and shortages of necessities. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which in an interim ruling this January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza. Israel has now announced plans for a ground

invasion in Rafah, where more than 1 million people are sheltering, with world leaders ratcheting up pressure to abandon the offensive. The South African government, meanwhile, has requested the ICJ to consider an intervention in Israel's planned military operations in the Palestinian city



Turkish Meskhetians, Azerbaijan-Armenia relations, diplomacy. The Turkish foreign minister, speaking of the forced deportation of Meskhetian Turks from Georgia in 1944, reiterated the expectation of support from Tblisi for their return. "I once again emphasized the support we expect from them for the return of our Turkish Meskhetians compatriots to their homelands in Georgia," Fidan said, adding that Darchiashvili shared with him Georgia's legal framework and constructive attitudes as a government in this regard. He said they evaluated developments in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and expressed Türkiye's stance in favor of resolving the matters within the framework of Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and internationally recognized

borders. According to Fidan, they also discussed the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and reiterated their mutual desire for the Caucasus region to achieve stability at the earliest. "We mutually underlined our support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine once again. We engaged in an exchange of ideas on what can be done to bring an end to this war with a fair peace based on international law," Fidan added. He shared that Ankara would participate in the three-day Munich Security Conference starting on Friday, and later in the G-20 foreign ministers meeting in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. He also reminded about the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, which is scheduled from March 1-3. "In the next two weeks, Türkiye will continue to engage intensively in diplomatic activities," he said.







### **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

# 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).

for National Heritage & Culture, and H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, together with the 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 vakishime 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

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 DrArifAlvi, 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



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.

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 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

### 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

# 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 ie 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 Pa-

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.

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