



Pakistan has always strongly supported the right of self-determination of Kashmiris at all available forums and want a peaceful settlement of all Regional & International disputes, especially Kashmir & Palestine

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf

Economic stability vital to strengthen country: Solangi

LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has said no country can become powerful in the absence of economic stability.

Addressing a seminar on "Election 2024, Participation of Youth, Women, Transgenders, Minorities in politics and to Empower Them" organized by the Press Information Department here on Sunday, he said that minorities had played a significant role in the country's development and they enjoyed equal rights. He said that the country would strengthen when minorities get rights as per the vision of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said minorities had played a vital role in almost every field of life especially in health and education sectors. Murtaza Solangi said that caretaker government was a constitutional setup and it would ensure holding of free, transparent general elections on February 8. He said that it was written in the Constitution that the country would be run by elected representatives which



would come to power through elections. "Despite all presumptions, the caretaker government remained stuck to its stance of holding general elections. The country would be handed over to an elected government in a much better condition," he added. Murtaza Solangi said that after the February 8 polls the elected government would focus on strengthening the economy and solving problems facing the country. He hoped that the new government would take forward the agenda of economic reforms besides increasing the tax base and improving governance. Artificial intelligence, voice cloning and fake information are challenges of the digital age and needed to be tackled, he added. He said that collective efforts were required for promotion of unity instead of spreading unrest in the country.

Principal Information Officer Tariq Mehmood said that it was highly important to provide opportunities to representatives of minority segments and ensure equality for them. "It is the responsibility of all political parties to provide equal opportunities to all segments of society. In Europe, participation of minorities in the political process is ensured," he added. He said the seminar had been arranged to ensure the participation of women, transgenders and minorities in the general election. He thanked caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi for participating in the seminar.

Senior Journalist Salman Ghani said that Pakistan had come into being just because of democracy and the country's future was linked to strengthening of democracy. He said, "The political leadership has to show seriousness as the country has to move forward."

He further said that political parties should also highlight activities of different segments of society with regard to the general elections. APP



ISLAMABAD: NDMA coordinated and dispatched the fifth tranche of humanitarian assistance to Gaza through C-130 aircraft from NurKhan Base.

India's Aug 5, 2019 illegal, unilateral actions on IIOJK violate int'l laws, UN charter: PM



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international law including the UN Charter, 4th Geneva Convention and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

"India has since been engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through a series of steps aimed at altering the demographic structure and political landscape of IIOJK," the prime minister said in a message on the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5.

He said that the 'Kashmir Solidarity Day' was annually observed on the 5th February to express Pakistan's unwavering support to the

Pakistan had consistently maintained that a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people

Kashmiri people's just struggle for realization of their right to self-determination. It was also an occasion to pay rich tribute to the sacrifices made by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters during the last seventy-six years, he added. The prime minister said that Pakistan had consistently maintained that a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people. "Pakistan will continue to extend its unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support for this just cause," Prime Minister Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying. He further said that the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions provided that the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir would be made in accordance with the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

However, the caretaker prime minister said, over the last seventy-six years, India had carried out a relentless campaign to intimidate

and suppress the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In IIOJK, the iron-fisted Indian approach frequently manifested itself in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions and custodial torture, he added. Prime Minister Kakar said India had muzzled the media and incarcerated the Kashmiri leadership and human rights defenders, adding these excesses have been well-documented by several human rights organizations and international media outlets. He said the Indian Supreme Court's judgment of 11 December 2023 on the status of IIOJK was another step towards denial of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. However, the genuine aspirations of the Kashmiri people could not be undermined through such domestic legislation or judicial verdicts, he observed. The prime minister said that India must allow unrestricted access to the UN and OIC observers, international media and human rights organizations to IIOJK to obtain first-hand information about the situation there; and investigate and report human rights violations.

Pakistan's aid to Gaza continues, meeting urgent humanitarian needs

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), following the government's directive, in coordination with Al-Khidmat Foundation dispatched fifth tranche of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

The tranche, transported by a Pakistan Airforce C-130 aircraft, marks Pakistan's ongoing commitment to supporting the people of Gaza, a news release said. The officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), NDMA, Pakistan Air Force and representatives of Al Khidmat Foundation attended the send-off ceremony at Nur Khan Airbase on Sunday.

The humanitarian assistance flight destined for Gaza will land in Al-Arish, Egypt, where the Pakistan's Ambassador will take charge of the supplies and oversee their transportation to the Palestinian people. This fifth relief consignment comprises family tents, tarpaulins, and blankets. NDMA has also coordinated a sixth flight scheduled to depart from Karachi on 06 February 2024 with 100 tons of load.

Pakistan's unwavering support continues with fifth aid delivery for Gaza, totaling 230 tons of essential supplies. More assistance is also planned, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to solidarity and seeking a peaceful resolution.

Envoys of Pakistan, Japan discuss ties

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassar Sunday held meeting in Tehran with Japanese Ambassador Tsukada Tamaki and discussed matters of mutual respect.

In a post on X, he said, "I met Japanese Ambassador HE Tsukada Tamaki today. We had excellent exchange of ideas on a range of global & regional issues with a view to promote greater understanding & explore views to help promote peace & development."

Pakistan's envoy to Kazakhstan holds Khuli Kachehri in Almaty

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Kazakhstan, Nauman Bashir Bhatti held a Khuli Kachehri in Almaty city, south-eastern Kazakhstan, 1000 km from the capital Astana.

In a statement posted on the social media website X on Sunday, the Ambassador appreciated contributions made by members of Pakistani community towards forging stronger cultural and economic ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. During the Khuli Kachehri, challenges faced by community members and measures undertaken by the embassy for their resolution came under discussion. INP

SAPM inaugurates welfare projects worth Rs 1.8 bln for Balochistan



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Jawad Sohrab Malik on Sunday inaugurated a series of welfare projects worth Rs 1.8 billion for Industrial and Mine workers in Balochistan.

He said these initiatives, funded by the Workers Welfare Fund (WWF), are poised to significantly enhance living standards and educational opportunities for mine and industrial workers across the province, said a news release issued here.

He further said the cornerstone of these projects is the establishment of a Girls High School with Staff Residences in Muslim Bagh, Balochistan, designed to provide quality education to the children of 5,605 mine and industrial workers, symbolizing a substantial leap towards gender inclusivity and educational accessibility in the area.

Constructed over 63,000 square feet and with an investment of Rs 700 Million, the school and residences represent a beacon of hope for the future generation of Balochistan, he said and stressed on ensuring that the project is completed within 24 months.

Addressing the pressing need for adequate housing, Malik also laid the foundation stone for 100 worker residence quarters in Muslim Bagh. This housing project, covering 5 acres and costing an estimated Rs 900 Million will provide secure and comfortable homes for 100 families, directly tackling the housing shortage that plagues the workers' community. The pro-

ject is set to complete with 24 months. In a gesture of continued commitment to education, SAPM celebrated the completion of an educational project in Sibi, Balochistan, initially slated for completion in 2016. This school now opens its doors to the children of approximately 4,000 mine workers, further underscoring the government's dedication to workers' welfare.

"These projects are not just buildings; they are the foundation of dreams for many families. They stand as a testament to the government's unwavering commitment to uplift the lives of our workers and their families," stated Malik during the inauguration. "We are determined to continue this journey, ensuring that every worker and their children have access to the resources they need to thrive," he added. He praised the collaborative efforts of the WWF and the Workers Welfare Board Balochistan (WWBB) in bringing these projects to fruition. He emphasized the importance of expediting project cycles and expanding initiatives to reach smaller worker communities, ensuring swift and widespread benefits.

Malik's directives to the WWF management to increase funding and extend more comprehensive relief to workers reaffirm his dedication to enhancing the welfare of workers nationwide. This initiative is a significant stride towards fulfilling the Prime Minister's vision of a prosperous and equitable future for all Pakistani workers, backed by a robust Rs 1.8 billion investment from the Workers Welfare Fund.

Pakistani soldier martyred in Sudan laid to rest with military honour

RAWALPINDI: Pakistani Soldier Muhammad Tariq Shaheed martyred in attack on Peacekeeping Mission in Sudan was laid to rest with full military honor in his native area Badin, Sindh on Sunday. According to Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR), funeral prayers of the martyred soldier was attended by a large number of senior officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army, relatives and local people.

It should be mentioned here that Muhammad Tariq was martyred after the United Nations peacekeeping mission was ambushed by terrorists in the disputed area between South Sudan. Pakistan's peacekeeping forces have always distinguished themselves for their professionalism and devotion to duty.

So far, 181 Pakistanis have sacrificed their lives for international peace. PR

Kashmir Solidarity Day about sending powerful message of support to resilient people of J&K struggle

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mulla said that Kashmir Solidarity Day serves as a reminder that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are not alone in their struggle against the Indian illegal occupation. She was addressing a press conference along with senior Hurriyat leaders Ferooz Rehmani, Gulam Muhammad Safi and Mehmood Ahmad Saghar.

The SAPM emphasized the unwavering support of the people of Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the Pakistani and Kashmiri Diaspora, and the global community for their Kashmiri brethren in their just struggle for the right of self-determination.

She described the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a barrier against Modi's attempts to create an Akhand Bharat. She characterized the Hindutva regime of India and the Zionist regime



of Israel as significant threats to world peace. She asserted that both Modi and Netanyahu were in a race, with Modi pursuing a brutal genocide in Kashmir and Netanyahu in Palestine. Expressing deep concern over the situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Mushaal said that the authentic political leadership were unjustly incarcerated under various pretexts.

2024 Elections: ECP achieves milestone with completion of ballot paper printing

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has successfully completed the printing of 260 million ballot papers for all constituencies in the country ahead of the 2024 elections.

According to ECP spokesman, "National Assembly ballots are identifiable by green paper, whereas Provincial Assembly ballots are printed on white paper. Except for 31 districts, the distribution of printed ballot papers has been finalized across the nation." Printing, which commenced on January 14, concluded by February 3. In compliance with a Supreme Court directive, ballot papers for 11 National Assembly and five Provincial Assembly constituencies



underwent reprinting, with original ones set for destruction as per the court order. ECP officials disclosed that this

time, a total of 260 million ballot papers were printed, reflecting a 54.74% rise in candidates compared to the 2018 elections. Despite a 195% surge in demand for special paper, effective management led to a reduction from 2400 tonnes to 2177 tonnes.

The distribution of printed ballot papers comprises 5% single-column, 50% double-column, 30% three-column, 11.15% four-column, and 2.4% five-column formats, gearing up for the scheduled February 8 polls.

Political parties and independent candidates are actively participating in campaigns, with the election drive slated to conclude on February 6 at 12 pm. APP

Editor-in-Chief: Amna Munawwar Awan
Editor: Muhammad Hasam
Office # 408, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust,
Agha Khan Road, F-5/1 Islamabad
Phone: + 92 51 8354964

COP28 and health

In December last year, world leaders gathered in Dubai to attend COP28. The key highlight of the conference was the leaders' commitment to finding a solution to climate change-induced health challenges across the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that around 3.5 billion people are living in highly vulnerable regions. The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that 23 per cent of premature deaths globally are linked to climate change and that by 2030, an additional death count of 250,000 will result from a surge in air pollution, food insecurity, and vector-borne diseases, all fuelled by human-induced climate change. This was the first time that the effects of climate change on health were studied and discussed. Leaders signed a health declaration titled 'COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health', which secured signatures from over 123 countries. This document talks about climate action, adaptation measures, and climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems. It also suggests integrating climate change and health curricula into education and degree programmes. The document also emphasizes the inclusion of climate change and health to nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national communications (NCs), and climate policies. The upcoming NDCs, due in 2025, provide a clear timeline for countries to implement health commitments made at COP28. The declaration also focuses on early warning and response systems along with climate-ready health workforce and infrastructure. Countries have pledged \$1.777 billion so far to meet these targets. Around 81 countries have also joined the WHO's Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATAH), which is committed to achieving the goals set at COP26. The collective efforts of WHO stakeholders and member states aim to foster sustainable and climate-resilient health systems, with a specific emphasis on determining financing needs. During the World Climate Action Summit at COP28, a joint initiative, led by the WHO, Green Climate Fund (GCF), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), announced to provide support to developing nations in addressing climate change and health. Focused on 14 countries across Asia, southeastern Europe and Africa, this initiative signifies a powerful commitment to addressing the nexus of climate change and health. COP28 concluded by signalling the 'beginning of the end' of the era of fossil fuels, a message reiterated throughout the conference. The key outcome of COP28 centred around the first global stocktake, and despite the ambitious language backed up by 100 countries, a complete phase-out of fossil fuels did not occur leading to only a phase-down of unabated coal power. Nonetheless, even a gradual phase-down of coal holds significant health co-benefits which can protect lives affected by pollution and extreme heat. In a conversation with us, WHO adviser Mazen Malkawi emphasized, "Although some regions emit fewer greenhouse gases, they experience faster changes in temperatures and other climatic hazards compared to the rest of the world. Climatic hazards are fuelling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption and conflicts. "The consequences for health are substantial and include more deadly extreme weather events, increasing cases of noncommunicable diseases and increased emergence and spread of infectious diseases." Pakistan is dealing with a plethora of health crises arising from climate change; since it is a signatory to the landmark health declaration, it can reap several benefits including capacity building and securing finance through global support. Pakistan has developed a framework of action for climate-resilient health systems. A way forward for the country is to focus on targeting and implementing the necessary measures of a climate-resilient health system to curb emissions using WHO guidelines and tools. The reduction in the impacts of climate change on health can occur through dedicated research and projects for which Pakistan needs to hunt global funds through diplomacy. Pakistan plays a responsible role in global communication in the form of NDCs and NCs with some basic discussion on climate change and health. However, despite their substantive role in international dialogue, these reports do not directly translate into executable measures. This is because of the lack of Pakistan's capacity to meet the goals and the non-disbursement of the funds committed by rich nations. Pakistan must opt for conditional steps towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon health system aligned with the principles outlined in the declaration, underscoring Pakistan's commitment. In the climate change policy, Pakistan must include practical actions and doable steps to properly address climate change and health. All stakeholders should set up a joint venture, incorporating strong coordination on the provincial and federal levels supported by the higher officials of the participating organizations. These stakeholders are the ministries of climate change, environment, and health, health organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public health universities, and public- and private-sector health entities. These entities must work together to create an environment substantiated by evidence-based actions that involve comprehensive research on climate change and health with the potential topics of health impacts due to extreme weather events, vector-borne diseases, tropical diseases, malnutrition, food insecurity, air quality issues, and waterborne diseases, all contributing to health insecurity in the region. Upon our inquiry, Director of Research at Canada's Sick-Kids Hospital Dr Zulfiqar A Bhutta said, "As a first-ever health day at COP28, the convening was key in underscoring the importance of integrating climate actions within our current population-level adaptation strategies, but clearly much more needs to be done!" While COP28's health declaration illuminates a path towards a future where health and climate action are intertwined, the realization of this vision hinges on sustained advocacy, a commitment to environmental justice, and a unified global resolve to confront the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. Dr Shaukat Ali works at the Centre for Global Child Health, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada and can be reached at pirshauki@gmail.com

Tehreem Rasheed and KM Kainat Bangash are research assistants working under the supervision of Dr Shaukat Ali.



Ammar Habib Khan

The promise of free electricity

Political manifestos are often wish lists that rarely come true. Free or cheap electricity is one such promise that may never materialize. Over the last five years, electricity tariffs for lifeline customers have increased by more than 90 per cent while the consumption of electricity per capita has largely stayed flat in the range of 650 units. A constant increase in electricity prices over the last five years has led to a scenario where electricity is unaffordable for the majority of households and industries in the country resulting in consumption per capita remaining flat. An increase in electricity consumption on a per capita basis is a leading indicator of economic growth; lack of growth due to rapid rise in electricity prices has not just dragged economic growth, but has also pushed the country, and its people into a low-growth trap. In such a scenario where the energy circular debt amounts to more than Rs4.5 trillion, and where the government relies heavily on taxes generated from electricity consumption to plug its perpetual fiscal deficit, it is difficult to even imagine electricity prices staying flat, let alone reducing. Over the next few years, capacity charges in the electricity tariff are expected to increase rapidly, eventually resulting in a higher incidence of taxation – further making it difficult for households and industries to get access to affordable electricity. The inability to access affordable electricity for industries and households alike is one of the biggest impediments to growth. In a nutshell, the economy cannot be fixed till the energy value chain is fixed – and that cannot be fixed till the circular debt overhang is fixed. In such a scenario, political slogans of free or even cheap electricity have little to no basis. The fiscal space to provide free electricity to lifeline households simply does not exist, given the perpetual fiscal deficits the government continues to run. However, it is possible to develop infrastructure and design financial incentives such that lifeline households can get access to close-to-free electricity if not completely free electricity. Before any of this can be done, the power sector needs to be completely overhauled – and more importantly, the country needs to move from the government being the only buyer of electricity in the country, to a multi-party, multi-seller model. It sounds inconceivable, but it is entirely possible, if the imagination and the will is there. It is estimated that around 55 per cent of residential consumers of electricity in the country are lifeline consumers. It is possible to partially shift the consumption of some of these households towards solar energy. It is also possible to make these households produce electricity, wherein they can consume the electricity they generate while selling surplus electricity back to the grid. This can effectively result in the creation of micro-grids, and mini-grids, wherein rooftop solar installations in an area can pool together to sell electricity to the grid, netting it off against their consumption. There can be a dozen arguments against this – but that still won't change the fact that lifeline consumers continue to face hours of loadshedding daily while continuing to pay a high price for electricity. The technology exists to create decentralized electricity generation systems – but that requires the will to fix things, rather than taking the easier way out and passing on an increase in electricity prices through

a regulatory mandate. In the case of Punjab, there are more than 10.7 million households that can be categorized as lifeline consumers, from a total of 18.6 million households, as of 2021. Assuming prevailing costs of rooftop solar systems, even if all households (which is impossible) opt for such a rooftop solar scheme, a 25 per cent down payment made by the government would still be less than the amount of energy subsidy that is allocated on an annual basis to support lifeline consumers. Effectively, it will be possible to enable a large number of lifeline households to start generating their own electricity, and substantially reduce their electricity bills, while also enabling access to affordable electricity. Moreover, this reduces the burden on the government that continues to foot the bill for inefficient subsidies, because that is the easier way out. It is estimated that a lifeline consumer can partially meet its requirements with a 1 or 2-kilowatt solar system, depending on its historic consumption. Assuming a down payment of 2.0 per cent to get access to the equipment, the government can pitch in half of the same, while half can be pitched in by the household. The remaining amount can be financed by a financial institution at a concessional rate, such that the monthly payment associated with the equipment largely aligns with the monthly electricity bill of the household. This can ensure that the monthly bill actually stays predictable, and can be adjusted as the household produces electricity, and sells to the grid. Furthermore, within a few years, the household can fully pay off the solar installation, massively benefiting through increased disposable income. Electricity distribution companies

can play a pivotal role here. Each electricity distribution company knows precisely what consumption of a particular household is, and its repayment behavior. Through the availability of consumption, and repayment metrics, it can do credit assessment of existing households. Based on credit assessment, financing can be extended to eligible households. Before such an ambitious scheme can be rolled out, it will be essential to upgrade the distribution infrastructure of the electricity distribution companies that continue to suffer due to operational inefficiencies, and heavy losses. A transfer of distribution companies to provinces can potentially trigger the development of a provincial solarization scheme. Moreover, it remains critical that the circular debt is settled before any of this can happen. Monetizing debt to take the burden off the households is one way to go about it – but that requires fiscal discipline on the part of the government. Rooftop solarization is an ambitious plan, but something that has been successfully executed in many other countries. The existing pool of subsidies can be reallocated to create a more stable, low-cost, and renewable source of energy for the most vulnerable households. This will certainly require heavy investment in grid infrastructure, but the potential economic and social divide the scheme can generate can far outweigh the financial costs that are already being incurred in the form of blanket energy subsidies. To serve the people, the government can either take an easier inefficient way out or reallocate capital that maximizes the welfare of lifeline households, while breaking the shackles of the low-growth trap.

The writer is an independent macroeconomist.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

Pakistan

The Congress Muslim League rapprochement was achieved at the Lucknow sessions of the two parties in 1916 and a joint scheme of reforms was adopted. In the Lucknow pact. As the scheme was commonly referred to, the Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates, and the Muslims, in return for 'weight age' to the Muslims of the Muslim minority provinces, agreed to surrender their thin majorities in the Punjab and Bengal. The post Lucknow Pact period witnessed Hindu Muslim amity and the two parties came to hold their annual sessions in the

same city and passed resolutions of identical contents. **KHILAFAT MOVEMENT** The Hindu Muslim unity reached its climax during the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation Movements. The Muslims, under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, launched the historic Khilafat Movement after the First World War to protect the Ottoman Empire from dismemberment. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) linked the issue of Swaraj (self-government) with the Khilafat issue to associate the Hindus with the

Movement. The ensuing Movement was the first countrywide popular movement. Although the Movement failed in achieving its objectives, it had a far-reaching impact on the Muslims of South Asia. After a long time, they took united action on a purely Islamic issue which momentarily forged solidarity among them. It also produced a class of Muslim leaders experienced in organizing and mobilizing the public. This experience was of immense value to the Muslims later during the Pakistan Movement. The collapse of the Khilafat Movement was followed by a period of bitter Hindu Muslim antagonism. The Hindus organized two highly anti-Muslim movements, the Shudhi and the Sangathan. The former movement was designed to convert Muslims to Hinduism and the latter was meant to create solidarity among the Hindus in the event of communal conflict. In retaliation, the Muslims sponsored the Tabligh and Tanzim organizations to counter the impact of the Shudhi and the Sangathan.

To be continued....

Is Jeremy Renner reprising his MCU role?

Jeremy Renner talks about 'Hawkeye's' role future

Jeremy Renner is being candid regarding his willingness to return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe as Hawkeye. More than a year after his almost deadly snowplough accident on January 1, 2023, he recently discussed his possible return to The Avengers franchise in an interview with Entertainment Tonight. "I'm always game," Renner said. "I'm gonna be strong enough, that's for sure. I'll be ready." The Mayor of Kingstown actor, who was struck by a 14,300-pound snowcat at his Reno, Nevada, home and suffered 30 broken bones, also talked about how encouraging his MCU co-stars have been. "All those guys come to my bedside and they've been with me all along through this recovery, so... if they want me, they could have me," he added. "It would be something." Renner provided an update on



his health and recuperation process at other points throughout the interview. "[I'm doing] probably 90 percent of all the things I needed to be doing... I think another six months will be hopefully running [more]... I got to set goals for myself. I'll do whatever I can... whatever it takes to get better, to get stronger," The Hurt Locker actor said. "It's a one-way street, this recovery. The rest of my life is about health and wellness. Recovery will be part of the rest of my life, so I look forward to it, man. There's always something to do to get better, be stronger, be happier, be healthier, and that's what I look forward to." He added, "It's hard for me to look back, to be honest with you. It's hard for me to look forward. I focus on now and this next step in front of me, 'cause there's always another obstacle for me right now."

Wouldn't it be amazing to have an assistant while shopping who advises you on all the latest trends? Well, now you can have your own personal shopping assistant. Amazon on Thursday announced the launch of "Rufus," an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered shopping assistant that's been trained on the e-commerce giant's product catalogue and knows information from around the web, Fox News reported. According to the company, the new tool will first be launched to a subset of US customers in beta before expanding to more users. Customers will be able to chat with Rufus inside Amazon's mobile app to get help with finding products, performing product comparisons, and getting recommendations on what to buy. In addition, the AI can assist with product comparisons and suggestions for queries

The new tool will first be launched to a subset of US customers in beta before expanding to more users

such as "What are some suitable Valentine's Day gifts?" or "What are the top dinosaur toys for a five-year-old?" Amazon Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Andy Jassy said, "We're at the start of what Rufus will do, with further personalisation and expansion coming, but we're excited about how it'll make discovery easier on Amazon." "It lets customers discover items in a very different way than they have been able to on e-commerce websites," he added. Rufus will roll out to other US customers in the coming weeks.

3 daily servings of this Korean speciality, will help you 'lose weight'

The secret to achieving a smaller waistline is hidden in this fermented Korean recipe

Kimchi might be the secret to a smaller waistline. According to a recent study published in BMJ Open, the traditional Korean cuisine composed of fermented vegetables, such as radish or cabbage, may help lower stomach fat and may also lower the risk of type 2 diabetes. Both radish and cabbage are rich in vitamins, flavonoids, lactic acid bacteria that improve the microbiome and dietary fibre. Eating up to three servings of kimchi per day can lower an individual's risk of becoming obese, the New York Post reported. Kimchi is made by salting and fermenting vegetables and adding seasonings such as garlic, onion and fish sauce. Though very few studies have looked at the con-

nection between kimchi intake and obesity, prior research has demonstrated that the bacteria from kimchi have an anti-obesity impact on animals. The Korean Health Examinees (HEXA) study included 115,726 individuals between the ages of 40 and 69. Researchers from Chung Ang University in South Korea defined abdominal obesity as a waist circumference of at least 35 inches for men and at least 33 inches for women. According to the results, eating kimchi in moderation reduced body fat in overweight individuals, while eating too much of it increased fat. When the researchers considered other variables, they found that eating up to three servings of kim-

chi per day resulted in an 11% decreased chance of becoming overweight compared to eating less than one serving. They discovered that three or more servings of cabbage kimchi per day for men were linked to a 10% lower prevalence of being overweight, and for women, two to three daily servings of cabbage kimchi were associated with an 8% lower prevalence of being overweight. In contrast to the individuals who had fewer than one serving of kimchi each day, those who consumed five or more servings of kimchi daily weighed more, had larger waist sizes, and were more likely to be overweight.



Health

Kashmir issue's resolution imperative for lasting regional peace: Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Sunday said the resolution of the Kashmir issue according to aspirations of the Kashmiri people and the United Nations Security Council's resolution is indispensable for lasting peace and stability in the region.

He said, "Freedom movement cannot be suppressed by using force on innocent Kashmiris." Expressing complete solidarity with the Kashmiri people, he reiterated Pakistan's principle stand on the Kashmir issue and expressed determination to continue diplomatic, political and moral support to the Kashmiri people. He expressed these views on the eve of 'Kashmir Solidarity Day' which is celebrated every year on 5th February, said a news release.

The speaker said that the Kashmiri people have been resisting India's usurpation of Kashmir for more than seven decades and sacrificing their lives for noble cause of freedom.

He said, "The atrocities committed by India to crush the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir shall go down in the annals of history".

Raja Pervez reiterated that Pakistan has always strongly supported the right of self-determination of Kashmiris at all available forums and want a peaceful settlement of all Regional & International disputes, especially Kashmir & Palestine.

The speaker condemned the ongoing serious violations of human rights by Indian forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and urged international community to take notice of them and play an effective role in ending them.

He reiterated, "Permanent solution to the Kashmir issue is possible only through referendum in IIOJK as per the resolution of United Nations." APP

World Cancer Day being observed today

ISLAMABAD: World cancer day is being observed today with an aim to raise awareness about the disease and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. This year theme of the day is 'close the care gap: everyone deserves access to cancer care.' it is a part of a 3-year long campaign from 2022 to 2024. This marks the second year in a three-year campaign, emphasizing the need for global efforts to address disparities in cancer detection, treatment, and support services. The theme for World Cancer Day 2024 underscores the commitment to creating a more equitable healthcare landscape. The campaign aims to address disparities in access to cancer care, emphasizing the importance of making these services universally accessible. The overarching agenda for 2024 is "Together, we challenge those in power." World Cancer Day holds immense importance as a global effort to combat cancer. DNA

Pak-China collaboration launches breakthrough Insulin Pen for Diabetes Treatment

ISLAMABAD: The launch event of Basagine Pen, a pre-filled insulin pen co-developed by Pakistan Getz Pharma and China Gan&Lee Pharmaceuticals, took place in Karachi last month. This marks a further development in the pharmaceutical collaboration between China and Pakistan.

The milestone event was attended by Khalid Mahmood, CEO and Managing Director of Getz Pharma, and Du Kai, CEO of Gan&Lee Pharmaceuticals, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro.

"Getz Pharma has been a trusted overseas partner of our company for over a decade, with previous collaborations involving raw materials of second-generation and third-generation insulin. The launch of the Basagine Pen will further enhance our product portfolio in diabetes treat-

ment, leveraging the strengths of both companies." Du Kai highlighted the long-standing partnership between the two companies.

According to data from the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), Pakistan has approximately 33 million diabetes patients aged 20 to 79, with an annual average expenditure of USD80.1 per patient.

The prevalence of diabetes among adults aged 20 to 79 in Pakistan stands at 30.8%.

Unfortunately, many diabetes patients in the country do not have access to timely and adequate medication.

"The introduction of the Basagine Pen holds the promise of improving this situation by providing higher-quality and more accessible medication options for local patients," emphasized the representative from Getz Pharma. INP



ISLAMABAD: People participating in PEDAL for Peace Kashmir solidarity cycle rally from D-Chowk to Islamabad Press Club organized by YFK-International Kashmir Lobby Group in collaboration with Islamabad Cycling Association. APP

Pakistan will continue to lend unstinted moral, diplomatic & political support to Kashmiri people: President Alvi

Says Kashmiris are living in an environment of fear & intimidation

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan will continue to lend unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people till the realisation of their right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

This was stated President Dr. Arif Alvi in his message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed today (Monday). President Dr. Arif Alvi said that the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been struggling to realise their right to self-determination for the last seventy-six years. On this Kashmir Solidarity Day, the Government and people of Pakistan renew their unflinching support for their just and legitimate struggle. The right to self-determination is a cardinal principle of international law.

President Dr. Arif Alvi said that the United Nations General Assembly annually adopts a resolution expressing unequivocal support for the realisation of the right to self-determination for people under foreign occupation. Regrettably, the Kashmiri people have



not been able to exercise this inalienable right. Today, IIOJK is one of the most militarized zones in the world. He said that the Kashmiris are living in an environment of fear and intimidation. He said that the Indian occupation forces are engaged in indiscriminate use of force against civilians. Political activists and human rights defenders face arbitrary detention and confiscation of properties, he said.

He said that the political parties, representing the genuine aspirations of the Kashmiri people, are being banned. These oppressive measures are aimed at crushing dissent in IIOJK. India is also taking steps to consolidate its occupation of IIOJK. Following its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, India's efforts have been aimed at engineering demographic and political changes so that the Kashmiris are transformed into a disempowered community in their own land.

He said that the Indian Supreme Court's judgment of 11 December 2023 is yet another manifestation of India's desire to undermine the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

India must end its gross human rights violations in IIOJK; reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019; repeal draconian laws; allow UN-mandated investigations into cases of human rights violations, and implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

"I wish to reiterate that seeking a just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute will remain a key pillar of our foreign policy" President Dr. Arif Alvi said.

CM Mohsin Naqvi inaugurates the biggest biogas plant of Pakistan in Gujjar Colony Lahore

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the biggest biogas plant of Pakistan at Gujjar Colony in Lahore. CM launched the compressed biogas plant production by pushing a button. Mohsin Naqvi after unveiling the plaque, put his signatures on the inaugural plaque and wrote down date as well. Mohsin Naqvi also planted a sapling in the biogas plant complex. 6 hundred metres gas can be produced in the biogas plant daily. 16000 kg organic fertiliser will be produced daily in the biogas plant.

PHA and the farmers can use the organic fertiliser being produced from the biogas plant. CM visited various sections of the Gujjarpura Biogas Plant. Mohsin Naqvi while talking with the media after the inauguration of the biggest biogas plant of Pakistan stated that the Gujjar Colony biogas plant project was highly important. The dung which is seen on the roads will be eliminated with the completion of this biogas plant and an organic fertiliser will be produced from this dung.

The organic fertiliser being produced from this biogas plant will also be sold to the general public and PHA will acquire a significant revenue as well. The extension project of this biogas plant should be launched and the whole area will be greatly benefited including the Gujjar Colony with the establishment of this biogas plant. CM prayed that may Allah Almighty reward the whole team who made this impossible project possible. The whole team deserves due commendation for working with a great amount of hardwork and dedication on this project. Provincial Minister Bilal Afzal, Secretary Energy, Secretary Information, Commissioner Lahore, CCPO, Deputy Commissioner and other officials were also present on the occasion. PR

Solution of public problems always remained priority of PPP: Asif Zardari

TALAGANG: Former president and co-chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Asif Zardari has said that resolving the public problems always remained top priority of PPP and it paid special heed towards highlighting the social development work.

While addressing a public gathering in Talagang on Sunday, he promised the people a chance to earn money in Pakistan instead of going abroad.

Asif Ali Zardari said we will give you the chance to earn here adding that he would give them their due agricultural earnings.

He highlighting how he served the people during his tenure said that the PPP always paid heed to the voice of the poor.

"We made a card in the name of Benazir Bhutto to help poor women," he pointed out.

The PPP co-chairman said that he was aware that the people of Talagang needed water, infrastructure, passport offices, and also a place to visit the commissioner and his deputy. "The love you showed me for two days will never be forgotten," he vowed. INP

ECP to wrap up delivery of 260M ballot papers to 859 constituencies by today

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is set to conclude the ongoing distribution of 260 million ballot papers to the Returning Officers (ROs) of 859 constituencies nationwide by Monday.

An ECP spokesperson said in a statement that the Commission has concluded the printing of ballot papers in three government printing presses for the upcoming Feb 8 elections. Reprinting of ballot papers in particular controversial constituencies has been finalized, following the directives of the superior judiciary in specific court cases. The commission's spokesperson noted that 220 million ballot papers were printed for the 2018 general elections, utilizing 800 tons of special security paper in the process.

For the upcoming 2024 general elections, he said the Election Commission has printed 260 million ballot papers, using 2,170 tons of paper—a significant increase due to the surge in the number of candidates, which is 150 times more than the 2018 elections. The commission's spokesperson said that various challenges, such as court cases and a high number of candidates, emerged during the ballot paper printing process. APP

Govt & the people of Pakistan deeply saddened at the passing of President Hage G. Geingob of Namibia: FO Spokesperson

President Alvi also expresses heartfelt condolences at the sad demise of President Hage G Geingob of Namibia

ISLAMABAD: The Government and the people of Pakistan are deeply saddened at the passing of President Hage G. Geingob of Namibia.

According to a statement issued by Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch on Sunday, President Geingob was a visionary statesman, a leading icon of the liberation struggle of Namibia and the chief architect of the Constitution of Namibia.

She said that President Geingob will always be remembered for his services to the Namibian nation and his distinguished legacy as a

leader of the Global South. "Our heartfelt condolences to President Geingob's family and the people of Namibia" she said.

Meanwhile President Dr. Arif Alvi in statement expressed heartfelt condolences at the sad demise of President Hage G. Geingob of Namibia. In a statement President Alvi said that President Geingob was a distinguished statesman and an icon of the liberation struggle of Namibia. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Namibia and the family of the Late President, he said. SABAH



RAWALPINDI: RCCI President Saqib Rafiq presenting memento to CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at the inauguration of Business Facilitation Center. DNA

Bilawal Bhutto urges people to vote for 'arrow' if they wanted to stop the lion

HYDERABAD: With the electioneering reaching its peak just days before the February 8 general elections, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday fired salvos at all the political parties.

Addressing a public rally in Hyderabad, Bilawal Bhutto urged people to vote for "arrow" — the PPP's election symbol — if they wanted to stop the lion, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) electoral symbol.

Stressing the need for hard work, the ex-foreign minister asked the participants: "You just get PPP won [elections]. I will handle this lion." Taking a dig at the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) in the city, once considered the stronghold of the party, the PPP

chairman advised the people that if you were asked to vote for "kite" then tell them: "[We] will not vote for those who raise anti-Pakistan slogans". You should say that you would rip apart the kite, he added. The PPP leader urged the people not to waste their vote by casting for any independent candidate — an apparent reference to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidates. Bilawal Bhutto also did not spare even Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), the party which was an ally of the PPP in the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement's government. He urged the participants not to vote for "book", the electoral symbol of JUI-F, asking them not to support those who divide the nation on a religious basis. SABAH

Lion will be caged on 8th February & fake arrow will also face defeat: Sirajul Haq

Says we will stop the way of land mafia, drug mafia, sugar & flour thieves to parliament

ISLAMABAD: Emir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Sirajul Haq has said that the lion will be caged on 8th February and fake arrow will also face defeat, adding that we will stop the way of land mafia, drug mafia, sugar and flour thieves to parliament.

Sirajul Haq said that people of Islamabad have announced their decision and referendum has been done. He said, "Your government would be in your hands and justice will rule." Corruption and dacoits' rule will never return, he said. PPP and PML-N failed in exam a number of times, he said and added now they are once again demanding first division. It has been over 76 years that they are damaging interests of the people. It is a fact that Supreme Court of Pakistan is here in Islamabad while children of the people are not provided with clean drinking water.

Here in the federal capital, there is no facility of medical treatment and there are no schools, he said and added it should be asked from the previous governments why they deprived people from the basic rights. Regarding the justice ranking,

Pakistan falls at 129, he noted. The court, Parliament, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and other all institutions failed in resolving the issues of the people.

They gave inflation and unemployment to the people and clean drinking water is unavailable in the aftermath of their policies, he said. They want to keep the system as it is. Now PPP and PML-N will not govern the country as their lion and arrow are spurious, he said and continued such experiments should not be repeated anymore.

On Feb 8, the lion would be caged and arrow would be redundant, he said. There is monarchy of the families instead of rule of the law, he noted. He said that Jamaat-e-Islami will stop cruel landlords, land mafia, corrupt capitalists, sugar and flour thieves to come to the Parliament. He said they don't work as per agenda of the masses but the US.

Sirajul Haq said that PIA, Railways and Steel Mills got destroyed during the tenure of both big political parties.

If Jamaat-e-Islami voted to power it would sell out assets of Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif and Zardari to pay back loans of the country, he added.

He said all the rulers sold out Toshakhana: someone took away vehicles, someone took away watches, others took away necklaces. He said all such elements would be held accountable. If Jamaat-e-Islami is voted to power it would not forgive any mafia as Pakistan is our home, he noted. Those who gave expensive electricity of IPPs they are traitors of the nation, he said. If Jamaat-e-Islami is voted to power it will say goodbye to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and country will be made corruption-free. Meanwhile Sirajul Haq has expressed the hope that general elections will usher in peace and prosperity in the country. Addressing a public rally in Rawalpindi on Sunday, he vowed to make a corruption free Pakistan and eliminate VVIP culture from the country. SABAH