



Pakistan wants peace, stability in region: Asif
Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has once again reiterated that Pakistan was committed to stability and peace in the region with particular focus on its relations with Afghanistan and India. The minister said a peaceful Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan and of the whole region.



Solution to Islamophobia lies in knowledge, wisdom: Ahsan Iqbal
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says that today Muslims are undoubtedly facing a prejudice in the form of Islamophobia, the real cause of extremism is prejudice because it is a virus that destroys human rationale.
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Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

PML-N, ECP behind audio leaks scandal: Imran

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Thursday accused the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of being behind the audio leaks scandal.

During his meeting with journalists, the PTI Chairman once again demanded ECP CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja should tender his resignation, while Imran also challenged the open hearing on the Toshakhana case and said that the long march is not far away from here. Claiming that the people would head to the long march in large numbers, the former premier [Imran] challenged that no one could stop them [PTI] from staging a long march.

Claiming that due to the PTI, overseas Pakistanis are facing a ban on joining the political party, Imran said that if the overseas Pakistanis are not 'acceptable', then there is no need to take remittances from them. Imran asked the ECP to tell what happened with the funding cases of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The PTI supremo [Imran] reiterated that if fair and free elections will not be held, then the country would not bear the consequences. The former prime minister also added that the process of the appointments of the CEC and its members, as well as the NAB Chairman should have to be changed.

"With the Daska election, I came to know that the entire game has been changed. I fully believe that the plan to disqualify me has already been made", claimed Imran.

Joint session

Islamabad: President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi is addressing the Joint sitting of Parliament while Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf presiding the Session in Parliament House on Thursday.

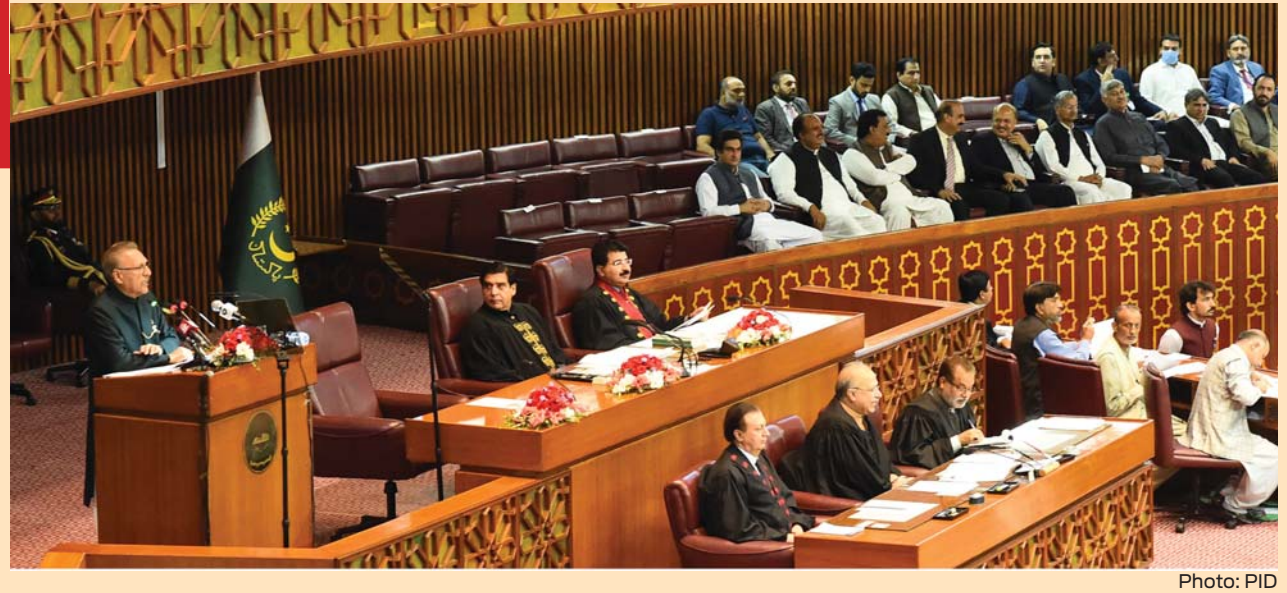


Photo: PID

Joint NA session

President urges MPs to 'end polarisation'

Dr Alvi urges lawmakers to pursue broad economic, social agenda to change people's lives

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi has urged the political leadership to do away with political polarisation and promote unity as espoused by founding fathers to exploit the true potential of this great nation.

Addressing the joint sitting of Parliament in Islamabad on Thursday, he said this is the election year but a decision regarding the election date has to be decided by the political parties through dialogue.

Regarding freedom of expression, he said an independent and free media is utmost necessary for a vibrant democracy. The President also appreciated the government decision to investigate the recent leaked audios of various leaders.

Arif Alvi stressed need for construction of dams to avert

devastating floods in the country saying this will also help store water for use in difficult times. He appreciated federal and provincial governments, NDMA, PDMAs and the armed forces for their timely response to the flood relief activities.

President Alvi lauds efforts made by govt to improve ties with Washington

He expressed satisfaction over the international focus on the floods in Pakistan, saying the UN Secretary General visited Pakistan to see the ground situation. Referring to the losses inflicted by floods on the agriculture sector, the Pres-

ident suggested a crop insurance scheme for the farmers to compensate for their losses.

The President said special focus should be given to bring improvement in the health and education sectors. Referring to the impor-

tant role of the media, he said that we need to improve our policies in this regard to ensure cyber security of important institutions. The President was appreciative of the initiative taken by BISP to deal with the issue of malnutrition.

Touching upon the foreign relations, the President said Pakistan and China enjoy all weather strategic partnership. He said the CPEC is a clear manifestation of the strong bond that exists between both the countries. The President said our relations with the United States are also heading in the right direction. He said Pakistan wants relations with the US on the basis of mutual respect and dignity. He appreciated the efforts made by the government to improve relations with Washington.

Arif Alvi said Saudi Arabia has always stood by Pakistan in difficult times. He said every Pakistani is also ready for the protection of Haramain Sharifain. He also highlighted Pakistan's strong bonds with United Arab Emirates and Turkey.

Ayaz lauds 'long-term' Pak-US bilateral ties

Blome says Pakistan has huge potential which needs to be explored

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday appreciated the 'long-term' friendly and cordial relationship between the United States and Pakistan.

"We consider the United States as our long-term partner. The Government of Pakistan is focused on openly boosting our relationship with the USA," said the Minister Economic Affairs.

The above mentioned statement by the minister was expressed when the US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on the former, here, as matters of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting, said a press release.

The minister expressed his gratitude for the flood relief assistance provided through the USAID. The ambassador appreciated and stated that the cordial bilateral relationship between



both the nations was important for the US administration. "We are more focused on extending cooperation over areas including trade, investment, energy, education and economy. Pakistan has huge potential which needs to be explored," the ambassador stated.

He further extended his deepest condolences over the loss of lives and large-scale destruction caused due to the devastating floods in Pakistan.

He apprised the minister about the flood relief assistance provided by the USAID and shared the US administration's plan to extend its aid in strengthening Pakistan by building a climate resilient infrastructure for the host country.

CJ IHC again advises PTI to return to parliament

Court can't give orders to NA speaker, says Justice Athar Minallah

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Athar Minallah on Thursday asked PTI to inform the court about its intention of returning to Parliament in five days but stopped short of issuing an order on a petition filed by the lawmakers whose resignations have been accepted.

IHC CJ Athar Minallah remarked that the court cannot issue orders to the speaker and advised the PTI to return to the Parliament as it was the forum to resolve political matters.

The IHC CJ made the

observations while hearing the petition of the PTI MNAs whose resignations were accepted by NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and subsequently denotified by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

At the outset of the hearing, Justice Minallah stated that the court respects the Parliament, adding that a similar petition was also filed before as well on this matter.

"Is this the political party's policy," wondered the judge, while acknowledging that rest of the PTI MNAs' resignations are yet to be accepted. APP

Dar pledges to bring dollar below Rs200

Govt announces provision of electricity to exporters on subsidized rate

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar on Thursday announced providing subsidized electricity to Pakistan's export industries with per unit electricity cost set at Rs19.99.

Addressing the media after negotiations with the representatives of business community in Islamabad, the finance minister said that all distribution companies will provide electricity to country's export industry at Rs19.99, adding that government would bear the difference between the new fixed price and the actual per unit production cost.

Dar went on to say that the "all-inclusive" package was announced for the five major exporting sectors, and not just the textile sector. He urged the business community to enhance Pakistan's exports for the country's betterment. "I expect the industries to now increase Pakistan's exports," he said, adding that Pakistan's external



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting with a delegation of exporters on regionally competitive energy tariff 2022-23 at Finance Division on Thursday. Photo: PID

account problems can only be resolved through improving export sector.

He further said that the coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was making all-out efforts for assisting the business community and farmers to put country's economy on the right track.

Ishaq Dar vowed to bring back rupee at its original value which is less than 200 against US dollar. "I can genuinely prove that its (dollar) actual value is below Rs200," he added.

It is pertinent to mention here that the rupee, which had fallen close to an all-time low of Rs239.71 on Sept 22, has been recovering since Dar replaced Miftah Ismail as finance minister. It has gained Rs17.77 or 7.41pc in the last nine sessions.

KP Police 'assault' on teachers 'condemnable': Marriyum

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said the assault and pelting of stones on the teachers by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police in Peshawar was "condemnable and shameful". "Imran Khan, who seeks Haqqeeqi Azadi under the guise of so-called conspiracy, is stoning the teachers in KP on demanding salaries," she said in a news statement.

The teachers were bemoaning Imran Khan's economic revolution, which had been imposed on the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for last eight years, she added. Marriyum said the teachers held the Haqqeeqi Azadi (real freedom) march at the Peshawar Assembly Chowk to get rid of Imran Khan's "fascism and tyranny". The payment of salaries and pension to the working and retired government employees in KP had been stopped on the orders of Imran Khan, she claimed.

World Bank: Pakistan's economy slows down

While inflation rises amid catastrophic floods

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economy is expected to grow by only 2 percent in the current fiscal year ending June 2023. According to the World Bank's October 2022 Pakistan Development Update: Inflation and the Poor, the slower growth will reflect damages and disruptions caused by catastrophic floods, a tight monetary stance, high inflation, and a less conducive global environment. Recovery will be gradual, with real GDP growth projected to reach 3.2 percent in fiscal year 2024.

Poverty in the hardest-hit regions will likely worsen in the context of the recent flooding. Preliminary estimates suggest that - without decisive relief and recovery efforts to help the poor - the national poverty rate may increase by 2.5 to 4 percentage points, pushing between 5.8 and 9 million people into poverty. Macroeconomic risks also remain high as Pakistan faces challenges associated with a large current account deficit, high public debt, and lower demand from its traditional export markets amid subdued global growth.

"The recent floods are expected to have a substantial negative impact on Pakistan's economy and on the poor, mostly through the disruption of agricultural production," said Najy Benhassine, the World Bank's Country Director for Pakistan. "The Government must strike a balance in meet-

ing extensive relief and recovery needs, while staying on track with overdue macroeconomic reforms. It will be more important than ever to carefully target relief to the poor, constrain the fiscal deficit within sustainable limits, maintain a tight monetary policy stance, ensure continued exchange rate flexibility, and make progress on critical structural reforms, especially those in the energy sector."

This Update also outlines potential strategies to manage the impacts of high inflation. Inflation in Pakistan is

WB cuts Pakistan's GDP growth forecast to 2pc

expected to reach around 23 percent in FY23, reflecting flood-related disruptions to the supply of food and other goods, higher energy prices, and difficult external conditions, including tighter global monetary conditions. The Update shows that the high inflation will disproportionately impact the poor.

"While relief measures are needed to cushion the impacts of flooding, it will be critical to ensure that these are targeted towards those most in need," said Derek H. C. Chen, author

of the report. "Pakistan has previously resorted to energy subsidies, but our analysis shows that such measures disproportionately benefit better-off households, while imposing unsustainable fiscal costs. Going forward, the priority should be to tame inflation through sound macroeconomic policies. These should be accompanied by measures to provide targeted relief to those hit hardest by rising prices, including through expanded social protection programs, and to address the distortions that discourage trade and productivity."

The Pakistan Development Update is a companion piece to the South Asia Economic Focus, a twice-a-year World Bank report that examines economic developments and prospects in the South Asia region and analyzes policy challenges faced by countries. The Fall 2022 edition titled Coping with Shocks: Migration and the Road to Resilience, launched on October 6, 2022, shows that growth in South Asia is dampening due to recent major global and regional shocks including rising inflation; the impacts of the global food, fertilizer and fuel shortages; the economic crisis in Sri Lanka; and the catastrophic floods in Pakistan. It also analyzes the impacts of COVID-19 on migration and the role labor mobility and migration can play in facilitating economic development. APP

Promoting inter-faith harmony

Secretary General Muslim World League, H.E Dr. Mohammad Abdul Karim Allisa calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Fawad Ch. faces criticism over racist comment



LAHORE: PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry landed in hot waters after he passed a racist remark against Pathans during an interview with a private television channel.

On Wednesday night, Fawad was asked by a host of a private news channel programme about former FIA director general Bashir Memon's claim that he was locked in a bathroom on Imran Khan's order when he was the prime minister.

When the host pressed the former information minister on Memon's statement that Khan had abused.

Fawad responded jokingly and said: "He also took a big risk by agreeing to go to the washroom with a Pathan."

PTI MPA asks Fawad to seek 'Haqiqi Azadi' for his thinking

Reacting to Fawad's remarks, PTI MPA Dr Hisham Inam Ullah Khan said that he thinks that the former federal minister disrespected the Pathans with the comments he made in jest.

"How did he become part of the PTI if he holds such a thinking," asked Dr Hisham, adding that the party's founder is also a Pathan.

"Pathans are behind the success of this movement," said the PTI MPA from Lakki Marwat. Pathans, Punjabis, Sindhis, and Baloch worked together to build Pakistan, he added.

"Fawad Chaudhry should apologise to the Pathan nation," he said, adding that the former information minister should seek "Haqiqi Azadi" for this kind of thinking. Agencies

Govt is not involved in audio leaks: PM

Shehbaz Sharif says Imran Khan committed treason; inflicted "irreparable damage" to country's reputation

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that by building a deceitful narrative of conspiracy against his government, Imran Khan committed a treason against Pakistan and its people and inflicted an irreparable damage to the country's reputation.

The prime minister, while referring to an audio leak revealing a conversation between the then prime minister Imran Khan and ex-principal secretary Azam Khan about using the classified diplomatic cable for political purposes, said the episode had badly damaged Pakistan's relations with the friendly countries.

He said sans the audio leak, the ambiguity could prevail for years but Allah blessed the nation by exposing Imran Khan's "fraud, deceit and worst conspiracy" against Pakistan.

Govt completing CPEC projects on priority: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government was completing the projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor on priority which were deliberately delayed by the previous government during the last four years. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the China Road and Bridge Corporation, headed by President Ye Chengyin, said the government was answerable to the masses for the protection of public money. Mentioning the deliberate delay in development projects by the previous government, the prime minister said the nation had identified its foes. He said the government was also ensuring transparency in the development projects besides prioritizing the public interest projects. Staff Reporter

"The audio tells all. Is there any doubt yet as to who hatched conspiracy? Who are the real conspirators? It was Imran Khan and his cronies," the prime minister told a press conference here at the PM House.

He said the coalition government was trying to revive bit-by-bit the ties with other countries damaged by Imran Khan.

"It was the worst dishonesty, a game played with the nation's confidence that hurt the nation's integrity. This is unprec-

edented in country's history," he remarked rubbing Imran Khan's allegation of his role behind the audio leak. He said if he had been behind this, his own audio leak would not have surfaced.

Recalling the process of the vote of no-confidence against Imran Khan and the rejection of the motion by that time deputy speaker, the prime minister said Imran Khan and his party had wasted the nation's time.

No meeting with Nawaz Sharif: Pervaiz Elahi

"I am in London for around a week on break," says Punjab CM

LONDON: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi said he is not in London to meet anyone from the Sharif family and doesn't entertain a desire to do so.

According to media reports, the Punjab Chief minister said his visit to London was private and there will be no political meetings. "I am in London for around a week on break. I am not meeting Nawaz Sharif or anyone else. I have come here to meet the family of Moonis Elahi," he said.

Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi said he had known Sharifs for too long and "after spending a lot of time one should learn and I know a lot about them. I don't want to meet them". He complained that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had not given a penny to the Punjab government for floods in Rajasthan. "Thankfully Imran Khan did a telethon and we raised money for the flood victims which we are distributing through the Ehsaas programme. Now many donors are in touch with us directly."

Reacting to Punjab Interior Minister Hashim Dogar's statement that the Punjab government will not support Khan's long-march call on Islamabad, Elahi said that he will see

how the situation evolves and a decision will be made accordingly.

Elahi said that Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah will not have anywhere to hide if former prime minister Imran Khan gives a long march call.

He said that there is a PTI government in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir and Sanaullah would not be able to find a place to hide in Islamabad if Imran Khan's supporters would converge on the federal capital as part of his Haqiqi Azadi movement.

Elahi said that a high-level team is working on the Model Town case while Sanaullah's confessional statement on the floor of the Punjab Assembly will also be provided to the court as evidence. He said a high-profile team has been formed to pursue the Model Town case against Sanaullah.

The CM Punjab further added that he had introduced a new Narcotics Law to prevent the use of drugs among youngsters. He said the Punjab govt is preparing a special force for this purpose. "We will hold owners of colleges and universities responsible if strict action is not taken. Agencies

Relief, rehab of flood victims top priority: FM

KARACHI: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said all available resources are being utilized for relief and rehabilitation of the flood-hit people of the country.

Addressing a news conference in Karachi on Thursday, he said that the government, administration, and civil societies have been engaged in relief work in the flood-affected areas since June. He said fifty percent of the water has been drained from the flood-affected areas of Sindh.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif felt the pain of flood victims and he is continuously engaged in helping the flood victims.

He said that it is not a time for politics but to give priority to humanity. He appealed to philanthropists to come forward to help the flood victims.

The Foreign Minister expressed his commitment that the flood victims will not be left alone in this difficult time. He said that the Sindh government has decided to provide all possible facilities to the farmers for sowing the next crop. Agencies

Senate body for fixing wheat support price

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Senate's Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research on Thursday directed the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to expedite the process of fixing uniform support price for wheat for current season as sowing in Sindh had already started.

The committee met here, with Senator Syed Muzafar Hussain Shah in the chair, and discussed issues faced by agriculture sector.

About the matter regarding fixing a uniform minimum support price of wheat, the ministry apprised the meeting that the summary had been floated to Economic Coordination Committee of Cabinet and it was expected that it would be taken up in the next meeting.

The meeting also discussed the issues relating to the employees of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) and directed the ministry to take appropriate measures for ensuring that funds for research in cotton seed were disbursed and payment of salaries to be made on a priority basis.

FDI up by 88% in August

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country increased by 87.94 percent on month-on-month basis during August 2022 against the inflows of July 2022, according to report by finance ministry.

The FDI inflows were recorded at \$ 110.7 million in August 2022 as against an inflow of \$ 58.9 million in July 2022, says 'Economic Update and Outlook for September 2022'.

During the first two months of current fiscal year the inflows however witnessed declined of 26.1 percent when compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The FDI reached \$ 169.5 million during July-August 2022-23 against \$ 229.5 million during July-August (2021-22).

According to the beak up figures, FDI received from China stood at \$ 32.7 million (21.5 percent of total FDI), U.A.E

\$ 25.5 million (19.6 percent), Switzerland \$ 23.3 million (11.0 percent), and the Netherland \$ 16.8 million (10.6 percent).

the sector-wise beak up shows that the power sector attracted the highest FDI of \$ 80.4 million (47.4 percent of total FDI), Financial Business \$ 50.7 million (29.9 percent), and Communication \$ 25.0 million (14.7 percent).

Meanwhile, the Foreign Private Portfolio Investment has registered a net outflow of \$ 6.7 million during July-August FY2023.

Foreign Public Portfolio Investment recorded a net outflow of \$ 18.4 million while the total foreign portfolio investment recorded an outflow of \$ 25.1 million during July-August FY2023 as against an inflow of \$ 961.6 million in the corresponding period last year.

The total foreign investment during July-August FY2023 reached \$ 144.4 million against \$ 1191.1 million last year.

EU Parliament holds debate on Pakistan's catastrophic floods

BRUSSELS: A debate was held in European Parliament's plenary sessions in Strasbourg last evening, regarding the humanitarian situation following the climate induced devastating floods in Pakistan.

The debate was aimed at discussing the EU response to the situation in Pakistan and how to mitigate the extreme weather consequences of the climate induced crisis.

The Ambassador of Pakistan to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg Dr Asad Majeed Khan attended the special debate.

The debate was opened by the Minister of European Affairs of the Czech Republic, Honorable Mikulas Bek, followed by Europe-



an Commissioner of Agriculture Mr Janusz Wojciechowski.

Several Members of the European parliament (MEPs) belonging to different political groups participated in the debate. Expressing solidarity with the people of Pakistan, the MEPs underscored the need for scaling up assistance and support for Pakistan in view of the unprecedented scale of the disaster. The Climate change dimension of the disaster also came under focus in the debate.

It is pertinent to indicate that Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan briefed the influential DEVE Committee of the European Parliament on the flood situation in Pakistan during the last week of September 2022. Agencies

UK firmly stands with Pakistan in flood relief efforts: Angela Rayner

ISLAMABAD: British Deputy Opposition Leader of the Lower House and Deputy Leader of Labour Party Ms Angela Rayner on Thursday said that the United Kingdom firmly stood with the flood-hit Pakistan and supported its relief efforts for the affected people.

"The world needs to find a sustainable way of ensuring that people are not as devastated by the lives lost here in Pakistan and the disruption that has happened to the people here," she said in an interview.

Ms Angela Rayner, who along with Member of House of Lords Wajid Khan visited the flood affected areas, said efforts should be made to prevent such a catastrophe going forward into the future.

The climate change was rapidly affecting the world and Pakistan had become its first victim, and it required extraordinary efforts and collaboration to tackle the issue, she

added.

The United Kingdom, she said, would raise the issue and ask for a sustainable solution to combat it in the upcoming COP27 meeting in Egypt next month.

"I hope that the bilateral talks will mean that more support will come to Pakistan and other areas of the globe that have faced the devastation of climate change but in a more sustainable and structured way."

She further stated that the world had to protect the people's future from the climate change effect as it was devastatingly affecting the humanity.

Speaking about her visit to the flood-affected areas of Pakistan, Angela Rayner said it was devastating to see how the people have to endure the crisis.

Hundreds of thousands of people had been affected by the flash floods, besides losses of life and property, and standing crops, which



was devastating, she added.

Angela Rayner She said the British Government had already donated 16.5 million pounds to the flood-affected people of Pakistan.

Moreover, she added, the British Pakistani diaspora had immediately been incredible regarding the relief effort. "Many fundraisers and support have been offered, the Pakistani diaspora in the UK has been incredibly generous, and part of the reason why I'm here is that I wanted to, as a UK politician is that Pakistan hasn't been forgotten, even in my own constituency Ashton-under-Lyne underlying they've been from raising and doing so much to help the flood relief efforts."

To a question, she explained the bilateral trade and said Pakistan had a very challenging economic time. However, the British industry was supporting Pakistan's Industry. The longer-term goal for both Pakistan and the UK was to build that trading partnership. APP

Solution to Islamophobia lies in knowledge, wisdom: Ahsan Iqbal

Says secret of success lies in collectivity because a divided society can never progress

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says that today Muslims are undoubtedly facing a prejudice in the form of Islamophobia, the real cause of extremism is prejudice because it is a virus that destroys human rationale.

He was speaking at the two-day international conference on the topic of "Islamophobia & its impact on relations between Islamic & Western civilizations" held at the International Islamic University. The conference is organized by Islamic Research Institute (IRI) in collaborations with Muslim World League, Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Faculty of Shariah and Law and Faculty of Usuluddin of IIUI.

Ahsan Iqbal said that Islamophobia is related to bigotry, which should be countered strategically instead



of a conspiracy theory. He said that knowledge and wisdom are the only ways that provide complete solutions to problems. Referring to the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH), he said that the principles of Holy Quran and teachings we learn from the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) are a permanent and complete guarantee of peace.

Ahsan Iqbal said that the answer to hatred is not hatred because it is against Islamic teachings and wherever it is practiced in the world, it will lead to

destruction. He said that peaceful co-existence is missing nowadays, the root of extremism and religious hatred is prejudice because it is a negative attitude that prevents speaking the truth. Making social development a topic, he said that the secret of success lies in collectivity because a divided society can never progress, there is a need to adopt an attitude of tolerance towards each other, we need to live peacefully together and learn the manners of disagreement.

International Islamic University Rector Dr. Masoom Yasinzai thanked Ahsan Iqbal for his special interest in the development of the university and hailed his important role in the completion of PC One of IIUI. He expressed hope that this conference will be a platform for important proposals in solving the biggest problem of our time, Islamophobia.

IIUI President Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi said that more than 100 articles will be presented in this conference, which will be proven as important milestone in bringing forth important proposals regarding the remedy of Islamophobia. He said that prevailing misunderstandings against Islam and Muslims must be addressed through research and a coordinated plan of action. President IIUI said that Islam and its teachings of peaceful co-existence are the solution to instability across the world.

All Pakistan Naat Competition held at Radio Pakistan, Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Annual All Pakistan Naat competition jointly organized by Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW) was held at the National Broadcasting House in Islamabad on Thursday.

In the boys' category below 15 years of age, Raja Ahkam-Mushtaq from Azad Jammu and Kashmir took the first position, Faizan Ahmad from Balochistan came second and Awais Karni from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa secured the third position in the competition. In the girls' category below 15 years of age, Ayesha Noor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa bagged the first position, Aliya Akbar from Punjab second and Iman Fatima from AJK



secured the third position.

In the category of boys in the age bracket of 15-25 years, Muhammad Ali from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa got the first position; Ali Nawaz from Punjab took the second position whereas Syed Saadat Ali Qadri from AJK secured the third position.

In the category of girls in the age group of 15-25 years, Sumaiya Noor from Sindh got the first position, Javeria Muhammad Shoukat from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa took the second position and Zohra Aziz from Balochistan got the third position. First position holders were

awarded cash prize of 100,000 rupees, second position holders 75,000 rupees and third position holders 50,000 rupees. Other participants who reached the final were also given a cash prize of twenty-five thousand rupees.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor congratulated Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television for organizing the Naat competition.

He said humanity can solve its problems by following the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAWW). He said the manifesto presented by the Hazrat Muhammad Rasool Allah KhatimunNabiyeenSallallahuAlaiheWaAlayheeWaAshabihiWassalam is recognized by all the jurists of the world.

Calligraphy workshop starts at Alhamra Hall



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: A calligraphy workshop has started under the auspices of Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab and Lahore Arts Council (LAC) in connection with the celebrations of Ashra Shan-e-Rehmatulil Alameen (PBUH) in Alhamra Hall on Thursday.

Renowned teachers Irfan Ahmad Khan, Jamshed Qaiser and Zulfiqar Ali Zulfu are imparting training to young artists in the workshop. Executive Director Alhamra Zulfiqar Ali Zulfu also inspected the work of budding artists at the workshop. A large number of female students of different colleges are taking part in the calligraphy workshop.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, in a statement on Thursday said that the calligraphy workshop has been organised to celebrate Ashra Shan-e-Rehmatulil Alameen (PBUH) in an appropriate way. "A large number of young artists are demonstrating their artistic abilities in this workshop. Pakistan has a respectable status in the field of calligraphy. The calligraphic skills of Pakistan's Sadequain have been recognised all over the world," he added.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi urged the young artists to polish their calligraphic skills by learning from expert teachers.

Earlier, a Mehfil Milad-e-Mustafa (PBUH) was also organized at Alhamra hall in connection with the celebrations of Ashra Shan-e-Rehmatulil Alameen (PBUH) under the auspices of Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab and Lahore Arts Council (LAC). Member Provincial Assembly Sadia Sohail Rana also participated in Mehfil-e-Milad.

NdcTech, Temenos to co-host 11th edition of Bank of the Future Forum

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: NdcTech, a leading IT & consulting firm providing transformational services for the banking sector globally and Temenos, the world's leading banking software company are pleased to co-host the 11th edition of Bank of the Future Forum, happening on 12th October 2022 at a local hotel in Karachi. With over 20 Global Speakers initiating insightful conversations, this

event welcomes more than 500 banking professionals, influencers, decision makers, regulators, fintechs, analysts, and media.

This will be the first onsite event after a break of 3 years due to the pandemic and the entire banking community of Pakistan is looking forward to connecting once again in person through this forum. The theme of the event revolves around trending topics in the banking industry, such as composable banking, digital banking, cloud banking, payments, etc. It will also include

insightful panel discussions featuring thought leaders from the Pakistani banking industry who will shed light on the Pivotal trends in Banking. Exciting product demonstrations will also be presented at the conference such as buy now pay later, core banking upgrade, & loan origination.

As the main organizers and hosts: Ammara Masood, CEO of NdcTech, Asif Peer, CEO and Managing Director of Systems Limited, and John Schlesinger, Chief Enterprise Architect, Temenos will be sharing

their insights on the future of banking in Pakistan.

Various Fintech companies such as HID Global, Huawei, Validata, Abris Consulting, & ACI Worldwide will be showcasing their innovative products and offerings to the attendees.

With the emergence of new banking models, rapid digitization as well as the constant redefinition of the banking landscape, this conference will be the ideal platform to discuss these recent developments with the decision makers of the industry.

Ministry of Climate Change in collaboration with KOICA organizes workshop

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Workshop on 'Enhancing SDG6 Water Quality Monitoring in Pakistan' was held at the Serena Hotel Islamabad at 6th, in the presence of Ambassador Suh Sangpyo of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, the Minister of Climate Change of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Senator Sherry Rehman and Country Director Je Ho Yeon from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

This workshop consisted of 4 sessions; involving Introduction of Enhancing SDG 6 Water Quality Monitoring in Pakistan led by KOMIR, Perspective of Water Quality Monitoring in development agenda of Pakistan by MoCC, Water Policy in Korea led by K-Water and Climate Change and Water Resource Management in Pakistan led by MoCC. The Q&A and Discussion sessions were held after each session.

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is a government aid agency of the Republic of Korea (ROK), founded in 1991. KOICA implements Korea's grant and technical cooperation of the ROK, supporting the socio-economic development of many developing countries. In 2010, KOICA opened its regional office in Islamabad, Pakistan. The office implements various projects in Transport, Energy, Water Manage-



ment and Health, Rural Development.

Similarly, "Capacity Building on Water Quality Monitoring and SDG 6 (6.1) Reporting" Project was signed as agreement to extend cooperation on enhancing water quality monitoring and to improve capacity of the Government of Pakistan to achieve SDG 6 between Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) with a cost of 7.42 million dollar from 2019 to 2024. Under this project KOICA will provide water quality testing equipment and training to PHED (Public Health Engineering Department) laboratories and enhance MIS (Management Information System) in Punjab and KP provinces.

In addition, consultation and technical suggestions on water related poli-

cy and legislative reform will be also supported through this project. KOICA works with 3 professional PMCs (Project Management Consultant; Korea Mine Rehabilitation and Mineral Resources Corporation, K-Water and GDC Consulting) from Korea and UNOPS for laboratory equipment procurement for Enhancing SDG6 Water Quality Monitoring in Pakistan. Further along this project KOICA conducted the Working level invitational training in Korea by K-Water last Aug 18th to Sep 6th for 9 officers from MoCC, Punjab PHED, KP PHED and PCRWR. And KOICA will conduct the High-level invitational training and Master trainer invitational training next year.

The concept of the workshop was to build practical strategies to improve water quality and SDG 6 challenges to

effectively monitor water quality and SDG-6 along with surveillance and management systems. Speakers and participants at a workshop developed an understanding about the importance of water quality monitoring as fundamental for sustainable water management along with significance of water quality data as a crucial element for the assessment of water quality trends and changes in freshwater resources with the identification of emerging water quality issues.

In the end participants were able to find local solutions to the challenges of water quality monitoring and management, while exploring how the system transformation for water security and management can be achieved. Participants of the workshop including KOICA, K-Water Korea, and other provincial and federal relevant stakeholders along with Ministry of Climate Change

Present workshop will be the baseline for future policy reforms, technical support and to strengthen the coordination mechanism between KOICA, federal and provinces stakeholders of Pakistan on the most pressing issue of water quality. Equally as the recent flood disaster in the country has further aggravated the situation which calls for a rigorous mechanism for water quality monitoring, evaluation, and management in future.



ISLAMABAD: Delegation from Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry led by M. Khurshid Barlas, Founder Chairman, alongwith Amin-ur-Rehman EC, Fahad Barlas Convenor Foreign Affairs and Shamraiz Iqbal EC member had meeting with honourable H.E. Mr. Ulanbek Totuaev Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic on Thursday.

Government is providing 20% costly electricity: Dr Khurram

M.A Rashid

FAISALABAD: Government is providing 20% costly electricity while industries, particularly the textile sector, was not receiving any subsidy instead it is providing cross-subsidy to the government, claimed Dr Khurram Tariq, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

He said that the export sector must get electricity at regionally competitive tariff for its sustained presence in the global markets. He said that the government is presenting circular debt, wrong decisions of previous governments, payment to costly thermal power houses on capacity basis, power pilferage, high line losses and poor recoveries as justification to increase the electricity rates. He asked, if exporters could export circular debt or line losses? "If it is not possible, then why are industrialists being punished for the wrongdoings of the others", he quipped.

He categorically refuted the notion that the government was providing subsidies to the five major export sectors. He said that factual position is contrary to it, as industrialists are providing cross subsidy to the government for its wrong decisions in the past. He said that the government must seriously take the issue of costly electricity to save the export sector from total annihilation.

Dr Khurram Tariq President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) departed for the Holy Lands to perform Umrah. During his stay in Makkah and Medina, he will visit holy sites and pray for the progress, prosperity and solidarity of Pakistan. He is expected to return back on Sunday after completing this religious journey.

Xiaomi Pakistan launches latest tablet, Redmi Pad

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Xiaomi Pakistan has launched its latest tablet, the Redmi Pad, a device that utilizes state-of-the-art technologies, providing consumers with an immersive high-quality audiovisual experience.

The Redmi Pad comes equipped with quad speakers which are compatible with Dolby Atmos® providing you unparalleled sound. It also boasts a 10.6" display with a 90Hz refresh rate with lower visual latency giving you a viewing experience like never before.

The Redmi Pad is also the first tablet in the world to have received the SGS low visual fatigue certification, making any viewing relaxing and easy on the eyes. The Redmi Pad is also certified by TÜV Rheinland for low light, which protects your eyes from screen fatigue and makes binge-watching a relaxing pastime. These features alone make the Redmi Pad a must-have.

Devcom donates plants to school, students

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) distributed 200 plants among the students of the Islamabad Model School Chak Shahzad on Thursday in connection with its ongoing campaign "grow a plant, own a tree". The National Centre of Cleaner Production (NCCP) supported the event. Students and teachers of the school also planted some saplings of fruit trees on the campus.

Speaking to the students, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said the young members of the Islamabad Devcom Centennial Leo Club (IDCLC) belonging to different schools and colleges of twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have contributed significantly in the "grow a plant, own a tree" and the "green neighborhood" campaigns.

40th Anniversary

Al-Ghazi Tractors launches 2023 Models



Bureau Report

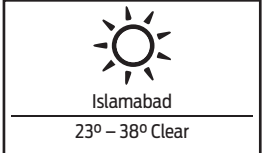
LAHORE: To commemorate 40 successful years of its existence, Al-Ghazi Tractors Limited (AGTL) has introduced new 2023 models with high gloss paint features for all New Holland tractor variants.

The new 2023 models will be offered for the following models: 480s, 480 Power Plus, Ghazi, 640, 70-56, and Dabang. In addition, AGTL is going to take the market by storm with a special batch of New Holland's Trademark Blue-colored Tractors for the first time in Pakistan.

The brand-new models will enable farmers to have higher yields, thanks to AGTL's cutting-edge technology for planting, cultivating, fertilising,

and harvesting crops. The upgraded variants are highly durable, fuel and cost-efficient. The models will also feature 2023 engraved Chassis Plates.

Speaking at the 40th anniversary of the company, Malik Ehtisham, Chief Executive Officer, AGTL, stated: "AGTL lauds all of its devoted customers and partners who have stood by it through thick and thin over the years. We are working towards making AGTL the industry leader in the agriculture equipment industry. AGTL is also making significant investments in technology to uphold the highest standards in agriculture by providing our farmers access to state-of-the-art tools and modern methodologies with the help of our recently set up R&D Department."



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:43 am
Zohr 11:56 am
Asr 4:05 pm
Maghrib 5:46 pm
Isha 7:09 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cant Hospital 9270907-11
DHO 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6

Pakistan is an extremely exciting opportunity for us: Liezl Gericke

Says we're investing in our network and our operations in Pakistan are integral to this journey

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Virgin Atlantic the Head of the Middle East, Africa and India Liezl Gericke says 'we are currently flying with strong load factors on Pakistan routes. In September we flew with a 98% load factor Ex-Pakistan collectively across all routes and the outlook for the rest of the year is promising' she addressed a press conference at the Islamabad Serena Hotel.

Alex McEwan, Country manager South Asia and Hanif Zikrai, Senior Vice President of Gerry's International also present at the press conference.

Liezl said, 2022 is the start of a new phase for Virgin Atlantic, as we recover from the Covid pandemic and deliver our best for our customers and our people. Our vision is clear: to become the most loved travel company and sustainably profitable. 'We're investing in our network and our operations in Pakistan are integral to this journey. We are back strong, offering new routes, with more flights and brand new next generation aircraft, with the youngest fleet on the transatlantic, now just under 7 years on average.

She thanked all the trade partners for supporting Virgin Atlantic from the day it launched flights in Pakistan. This journey would have not been possible without their support, she said.

To a question about floods in Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Virgin Atlantic head of Middle East, Africa & South Asia Liezl Gericke addressing a press conference. Mr. Alex McEwan, Country Manager of South Asia and Mr. Hanif Zikrai, Senior Vice President of Gerry's International were also present. **Spokesman Photo by: Ghulam Farid**

and global warming, she said the climate crisis is the single greatest challenge of our lifetime. The climate crisis will not be solved by one industry, like aviation, or by one player within that industry, like airlines. It requires coordinated and consistent progress to be made against ambitious climate goals by individuals, industries and governments.

'Fleet transformation, aircraft technology, and SAF supply are crucial to the

aviation industry decarbonising, but of equal importance is the need for the global industry to continue working together as a coalition of the willing. Realising the devastating impact of carbon emission on the environment, Virgin Atlantic has been striving to do better for our planet and we're taking action. We're investing in research, new technologies and innovation to reduce our impact in the air and on the ground', she added.

Sharing Virgin Atlantic actions towards this end Ms Liezl said the time for action against climate change is now. We've announced a set of ambitious interim milestones to take Virgin Atlantic to net zero by 2050. We were the first airline to fly a commercial aircraft using sustainable aviation fuel back in 2008 and by 2019 we had already achieved 18% reduction in CO2 emission through this initiative.

Ms Liezl said, Pakistan is an extremely exciting opportunity for us as the UK is home to the largest Pakistani Diaspora community outside of Pakistan with over 1.5 million people. The UK-Pakistan market has always displayed strong underlying growth annually, with a strong combination of business and leisure passengers, which gives us confidence about the long-term potential.

While commenting on the suspension of operations between Manchester and Islamabad she said, as international travel rebounds, we're continually reviewing our network, taking into account aircraft availability and the services which support the greatest customer demand. We've taken the decision not to operate Manchester - Islamabad services this winter but will evaluate opportunities to resume this route in future seasons, and in the meantime, the service continues twice-weekly until the end of October from our home in the North

'We look forward to meeting continued demand for leisure and business travel with direct scheduled services to Pakistan, with our Heathrow-Islamabad and Heathrow-Lahore services now on sale for the Winter 2022 season'.

While talking about the business prospects in Pakistan she said Pakistan has been one of the quickest markets to recover following Covid. VFR traffic was resilient throughout Covid, and as travel restrictions were unlocked earlier this year, we saw a surge of pent-up demand from all segments. 'We are currently flying with strong load factors on Pakistan routes. In September we flew with a 98% load factor Ex-Pakistan collectively across all routes and the outlook for the rest of the year is promising'.

She added, a significant number of passengers connect onto our extensive US network from Pakistan via London Heathrow. Islamabad/Lahore to New-York is our largest connecting traffic flow currently.

Virgin Atlantic carried over 120k passengers between the UK and Pakistan in 2021 and was the number one carrier for the year and in 2022 again, we are leading the market for point-to-point travel to the UK. Recently held Skytrax Awards, Virgin Atlantic also took home the award for best business class lounge as well as world's best premium economy offering.

Govt can earn over Rs55b by passing Health Contribution Bill: PANAH

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Tax on petroleum products and agricultural commodities will affect the common man while tax on sugary drinks will not only generate revenue for the government but will also help in reducing diseases.

The Health Contribution Bill has been stalled in the Cabinet since April 2022 and its passage could support Pakistan's economy, reduce the burden of disease and help fund health and nutrition programs. This was said while talking to senior journalists by Pakistan National Heart Association in a local hotel in Islamabad. Senior journalists from electronic and print media participated in the program. The workshop was hosted by PANAH General Secretary Sanaullah Ghuman. Mr. Munawar Hussain, Consultant Food Policy Program of Global



Health Advocacy Incubator was also present among the guests.

Speaking with journalists, Mr. Sanaullah Ghuman said that the beverage industry is misleading the policy makers at every step and creating hurdles in the policy process. It is unfortunate that the Health Contribution Bill presented by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination is pending in the Cab-

net. Earlier the bill was stalled in the FBR and PANAH petitioned the Ombudsman in 2020 to revive the bill and was successful. However, the beverage and tobacco industries are trying to block this bill at every step because of their corporate interests and have no interest in public health.

Mr. Munawar Hussain, Consultant Food Policy Program of the Global Health Advocacy Incubator, said that

the passage of the Health Contribution Bill is a great opportunity for the Government of Pakistan to generate revenue to fund health and nutrition programs. This bill could generate revenue of over 55 billion annually and will also help reduce the burden of disease. He said that excessive consumption of sugary drinks is a growing threat to the country's economy. In 2015, the cost of treating obesity was estimated at 428 billion rupees.

Similarly, according to the International Diabetes Federation, the annual cost of diabetes management in Pakistan has increased to 2640 million US dollars in 2021. He requested the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Health Minister of Pakistan to intervene. Build consensus for the speedy passage of this life-saving health contribution bill.

Traditional and pictorial calligraphy competitions at PAC

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Traditional and pictorial calligraphy competitions were organized in Punjab Arts Council in connection with Ashra Shan-e-Rehmatulil Alameen. Member of National Assembly Kanwal Shuzab and Member of Punjab Assembly Farah Aang were the chief guests of the competitions. Special guest Kanwal Shuzab said in his speech at the ceremony that we believe that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is the reason for the creation of this universe.

We need to tell the world how much we love Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W). Our faith is incomplete without selfless love for Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W). Member Punjab Assembly Farah Agha said that the art



of calligraphy should become popular in Pakistan. The children have painted the verses of the Holy Quran in a very beautiful way on the canvas with the help of colors. Naheed Manzoor said that the art of calligraphy is the heritage of Muslims and this art is centuries old.

Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Ahli has proved his great love for Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) through the decision

of Ashra Shan-e-Rehmatulil Alameen. The calligraphy competition has given young calligraphers a platform to improve their art.

Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said that Islamic calligraphy is the pride of Muslims. Competitions should be held regularly to keep alive the dying art of Islamic calligraphy. Children have expressed their deep love for Allah and Prophet Muhammad through Islamic

calligraphy. He congratulated all the children for creating wonderful works of art and said that our aim is to provide a platform to the youth.

Khawaja Muhammad Hussain, Muhammad Azeem Iqbal and Muhammad Younis served as the judges in the competitions. In the traditional Islamic calligraphy competition, Muhammad Khanzla won the first position, Shaista Khan won the second position and Nasir Khan won the third position.

Afshin, Shamayla and Omara Afshin came first, second and third respectively in the pictorial calligraphy competition. Dozens of candidates from Rawalpindi, Islamabad participated in the competitions. Shields and recognition certificates were also distributed among the children who got positions.

Pakistan, Indonesia enjoy strong bilateral ties: Makhdoom Murtaza

Indonesia's 77th Independence Day celebrated in Islamabad

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Division Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmood congratulated the Indonesian Ambassador on their Independence Day and underlined the strong bilateral and economic ties between both countries.

He addressed the gathering as a chief guest on the occasion of the 77th Anniversary of its Independence Day of Indonesia hosted by The Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad.

Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Vietnam and Chairman ASEAN Committee Islamabad (ACI) Nam Nguyen Tien Phong and A large number of foreign diplomats, Pakistani officials, dignitaries, parliamentarians, journalists, and senior military officials were in attendance.

Makhdoom Syed Murtaza also thanked the Indonesian government for providing relief assistance to flood victims of Pakistan. He also acknowledged the Indonesian government's help in handling the palm oil crisis.

Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed also congratulates to government and people of Indonesia and highlights the Pak Indonesia bilateral relations.

The Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Adam Mulawarman Tugio said the 77th Anniversary of Independence is another milestone for Indonesia marked with significant political and economic achievements. Now, Indonesia is the world's third largest democracy and a country where Islam and modernity coexist and deliver to bring economic progress, he expressed.

He added that the voices of developing countries and ensuring their participation in the development process were



important parameters of Indonesia's inclusive approach to the Indonesia's Presidency in G-20.

The Ambassador also expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the victims of recent unprecedented flash floods in Pakistan. He added, 'We believe that no nation alone can handle such a large-scale natural disaster, and it's a shared responsibility of all to support people in distress. Indone-

sia stands with Pakistani brothers and sisters in this difficult time'.

He further stated that as a mark of solidarity, the Indonesian government dispatched humanitarian aid in-kind by two special aircrafts last month and a medical team with a US\$1 million grant to support ongoing relief operation in Pakistan.

Regarding bilateral relations, the Ambassador said since the establish-



Photos by Ghulam Farid

ment of diplomatic ties in 1947, Indonesia-Pakistan bilateral relations have continued to become stronger and more comprehensive.

Pakistan strategically holds great importance for Indonesia as a trusted friend and partner in South Asia. With the rapidly expanding national economy and the growing importance of ASEAN as a trade hub, Indonesia offers wonderful investment opportunities and collaboration to our friends from the business community in Pakistan.

Both sides are fully aware of the potential and benefits of cooperation and moving ahead by initiating various mechanisms, bilateral consultation forums, policy dialogue, trade promotion, and strengthening of people-to-people contacts to reap more fruits from



productive engagement, the Ambassador concluded.

At the end of the event, the female

troupe performed traditional dance and visitors also enjoyed the Indonesian and Pakistani cuisines.

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The dangers of Europe's extreme political polarization

Khaled Abou Zahr

In today's political landscape, the best way I have found to describe the far right and its leftist equivalent is the following: The supporters of a far-right agenda have nostalgia for a time they have never lived through or known, while the far left have rage and indignation against an oppression they have never suffered from. The far right is dreaming of an old world where family, work and nation were the cornerstones of society — a vision that no longer exists in the West. The far left is rebelling and bringing down old statues and yelling with rage against oppressions that ended centuries ago, such as slavery, and using it to justify the breaking down of current systems and institutions. It is quite a strange situation that resembles the creation of a new virtual reality in politics.

We can clearly notice throughout the West that the divide between the left and the right is becoming wider. Lately, Europe has seen a clear movement toward a bigger representation of right-wing movements and positive elec-

tion results for right-wing candidates. It is what can be best described as a rise of popular sentiment against "wokeness" and the left's progressive agenda. This is showing all over Europe. It might have started in Central Europe with Hungary and some neighboring countries, but this shift is now happening almost everywhere. Even France, despite this year's election results, is witnessing this change. The same applies to the election results in Sweden and finally Italy.

The change in Italy has been marked by a full union or alliance of right-wing parties. There is a clear union with a refusal to be described as extremist groups, and the ballots have been favorable to this change. This might be the biggest difference with France and other countries in Europe, where the right is still fragmented. Until this day, we have been used to an alliance of leftist and green movements that has been able to reap positive results. In France, through the New Ecological and Social People's Union, the left was able to challenge President Emmanuel Macron's movement and defeat the right in the last legislative elections without achieving a full majority.

This change has brought, throughout Europe and the West in general, greater violence in the political confrontation between left and right. On both sides, the voices we hear are the extremes, while the voices of reason are being silenced. There is populism on both sides and common sense is being destroyed. The far left and far right both present dangerous

If politics should be the art of the possible, it has now become the art of ping pong.

choices. When analyzing the situation, we notice both sides are completely disconnected, they create their own realities (through social media) and both promise the unachievable. They share conspiracy theories and create their own stories that their audiences eat up.

If politics should be the art of the possible, it has now become the art of ping pong. There is no real debate or reason. It is about taking the opposite view and, in this game, the left always serves

first. "If they are with Ukraine, then we should be with Russia." "If they are for the vaccines, then we should be against them." And it goes on and on. One must nevertheless admit that the far-left extremists, who are just as dangerous as those on the right, usually get much better press. Politics boosted by social media has become a mob's business. More and more, very active small groups are capable of steering the majority to their own will.

And thus, the far left has, in a sense, taken over the agenda of the traditional left. In fact, the right's political forces are reacting to the left's actions. The agenda of the far left in the West is — by its own admission — to break and destroy all institutions and the established order and values. This has created fear, especially in a difficult economic and social environment. With a change in the global order, the far right is positioning itself as the last line of defense against this chaos and unknown in an attempt to reestablish order domestically and internationally.

This current situation reminds me of a French political analyst commenting on the election of the first socialist presi-

dent of the Fifth Republic, Francois Mitterrand, in 1981. He said that this was the end of France as they knew it. He continued by saying that the best way to run a government is to have a right-wing administration with a strong and active counterpower from the left. In this manner, you keep order while also advancing toward a better society.

Thankfully, there are voices of reason on both sides. Unfortunately, they are too decent to be heard or respected. The voices that now lead the debate on both sides are the ones that are the most ferocious. This is in line with the uncertainties the world is going through. Who do you want to defend your interests when things go bad? The nice guy or the ruthless one? This puts Europe in a dangerous and difficult situation, especially with a volatile global geopolitical environment and precarious economic conditions. A full-on confrontation can go beyond virtual reality politics and into the streets.

Khaled Abou Zahr is CEO of Eurabia, a media and tech company. He is also the editor of Al-Watan Al-Arabi. Courtesy: Arab News

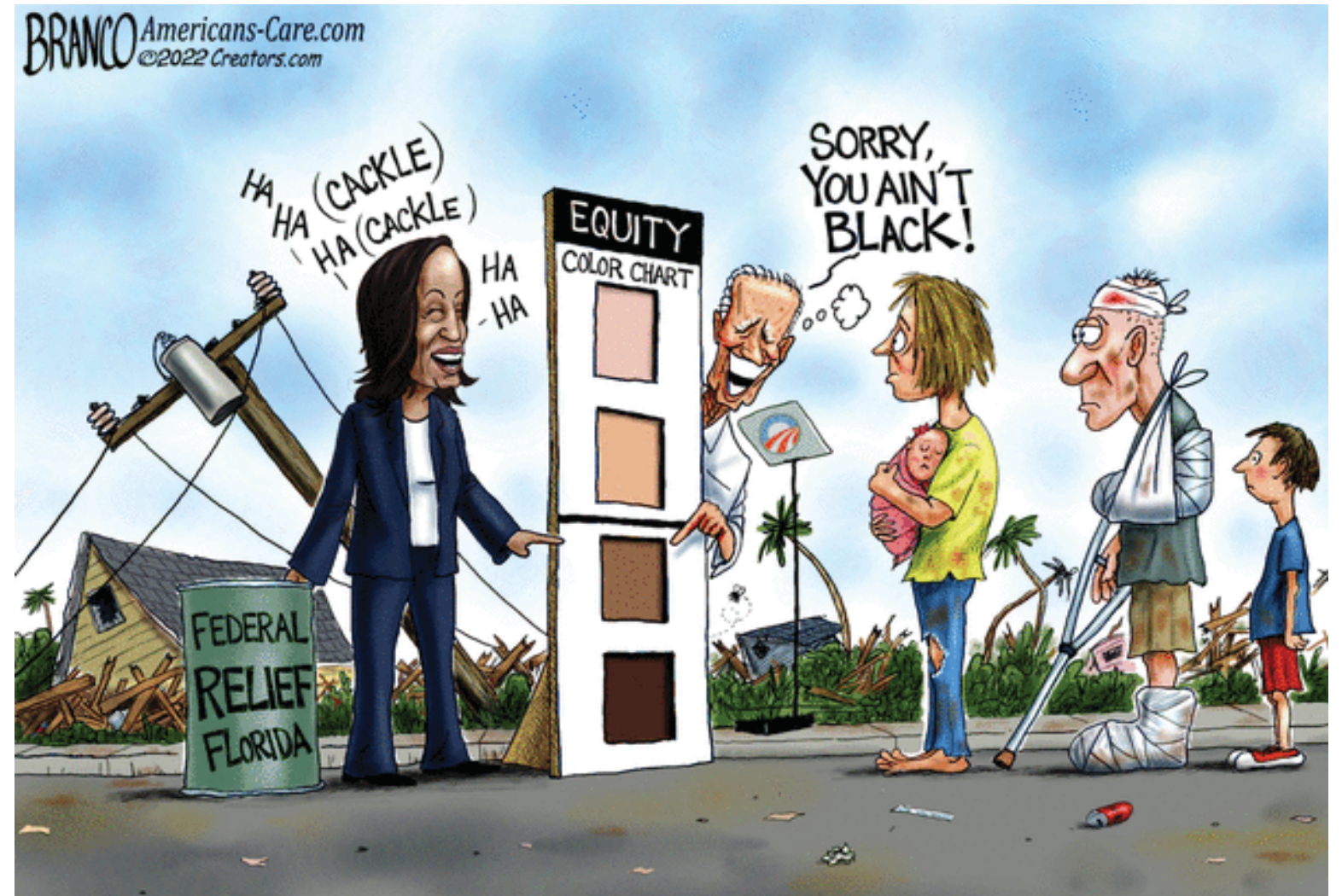
Pakistan, China ties further improving

Pakistan has close, friendly and decades old ties with China. China was the only country that invested heavily in different sectors of Pakistan when the other countries were hesitant due the threat of terrorism in the country. The President of Pakistan has rightly said that the partnership between Pakistan and China will continue to flourish in every sector for the mutual benefit. With the support of China and through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor project, Pakistan has managed to improve its infrastructure, overcome energy crisis and completed various development projects. Despite the conspiracies against this mega project by different countries, the CPEC is going on with good momentum. Pakistan will be connected with the international markets through CPEC and our trade relations will improve.

The crux of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor project will be the establishment of nine special economic zones in all the provinces of the country. These economic zones will provide job opportunities to our youth and there will be economic development as well. In the first phase of the project, 10,000MW electricity was added to the national grid that reduced the problem of load-shedding. In the second phase, the focus was on infrastructure and development of Gwadar Port. We hope that the present government, with its determination and good understanding with the Chinese officials, will manage to complete the CPEC within specified time. The President while addressing a Roundtable Conference on CPEC has said that Pakistan will soon emerge as a strong country in the comity of nations. Many countries including Turkey, Russia and others are willing to become part of this game changing project.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor project is a joint venture of China and Pakistan and it was initiated at the time when Pakistan was virtually isolated and no country was interested to invest in Pakistan due to the terrorism. In the first phase of the project, the focus was on the power related projects and in the second phase, the government is focusing on the establishment of special economic zones which is a great development. Certain employment opportunities are being generated through this mega project. The need of the hour is to ensure the timely completion of all the development projects under CPEC within specified time. China is a time-tested friend of Pakistan and both the countries are determined to defend any conspiracy against the CPEC.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor project is a signature project of Pak-China friendship with over 60 billion dollars investment. It is a project of regional connectivity and will be helpful in connectivity of Pakistani products to the international markets. This game changer project has the ability to bring an economic revolution in the country. The outsourcing will be done by China in the special economic zones. This is a fact that CPEC added a new dimension to Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, which was based on mutual understanding and respect.



New European Political Community could be a key forum

Andrew Hammond

The new European Political Community met for the first time on Thursday amid massive shared challenges. Despite the high hopes for its future against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis, it is unclear whether the formation of this new "club of nations" will be a significant moment in the story of Europe's long integration project or little more than a footnote in its history.

The formation of the forum, which has been heavily promoted by French President Emmanuel Macron, highlights the critical policy debates taking place over the role of the EU in a more complex, multipolar Europe and world. This issue has become especially important given Russia's hostility in recent years, culminating in the invasion of Ukraine in February.

It is in this context that EU decision-makers are thinking about whether and how European and Eurasian states that are not members of the 27-strong EU club can best develop their political and economic ties with Brussels. A total of 44 states were invited to Thursday's big meeting, including 17 non-EU powers like the UK, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, Iceland, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

With so many disparate states at the table, the European Political Community has generated high hopes, but its purpose is far from clear and some doubt that it will last. While the new body's mission is not obvious, the expectation is that it might convene once or twice a year and aim to address issues that preoccupy all the states in question, including pressing energy, security and immigration challenges.

A key aim for the big EU players is to embrace

accession countries, some of which are losing patience waiting for membership of the bloc. In doing so, they seek to counter attempts by Russia and China to gain influence in the continent, especially on its southern and eastern fringes.

One of the other drivers of the new group is Brexit, given that this development created a new non-EU power in Western Europe. This is already changing the EU's relationship with other non-EU European countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Liechtenstein and those in the Balkans.

Each of these states has developed relations with the EU that — most obviously in the case of Norway and Switzerland, but also to a lesser extent others like Turkey — were intended as a means to the end of eventual EU membership, or at least closer relations with the bloc. Brexit has not (yet) thrown these processes into reverse, with eventual accession remaining an option, but it does open up new possibilities for future relationships centered on continued non-membership.

Decision-makers in these states have used the Brexit vote as an opportunity to raise questions about the future of their relations with the EU. There has been some limited discussion as to whether Brexit might open up opportunities for a radical overhaul of Europe's institutional architecture. Such ambitious plans have faded, but they do point to opportunities for change, potentially via the new community.

For advocates such as Macron, this forum could serve as a bridge to a larger EU and a framework for more permanent continental integration. It could start this process by building a consensus between participating states and the EU.

Take the example of energy, on which cooperative frameworks could be developed where

there is, for instance, a possibility of connecting Ukraine to the European electricity grid, signing more natural gas agreements with Norway, and building green hydrogen infrastructure across the region. Another example is security and defense partnerships, as the war in Ukraine has exposed the weakness of Europe's existing architecture and highlighted the need for European countries to cooperate more, including in areas like counterterrorism and cybersecurity.

Such reforms may also be needed to deal with wider global trends impacting the region. Europe already feels the pull of different world powers, especially the US and China, and it struggles locally with the geopolitical disruptions of Russia. This global multipolarity has brought greater uncertainty to Europe, with the geopolitical terrain becoming all the more complex.

Going forward, at least three states in particular will be crucial to shaping how Europe's changing geopolitical landscape and the fast-changing multipolar world play out for the EU: Germany, the US and Russia. Other powers such as France, the UK and China will have influence, but it will probably be the choices of the first three — whether to engage, exploit or ignore — that will shape the context of European and international politics in the short and medium term.

What these debates showcase is that the EU, and the wider community of European nations, face several first-order challenges that include the ongoing pressures facing relations with Russia. How Brussels, in particular, now responds will not just frame its future relationship with key non-EU states, including the UK, but also determine its wider place in the world.

Andrew Hammond is an Associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics. Courtesy: Arab News

US 'commitment' to Asia is self-interested

Tom Fowdy

Since 2018, the foreign policy of the U.S. has shifted to try and contain the rise of China. In doing so, the U.S. has pursued measures across various fronts, including increasing economic protectionism at home and launching a technology war against China's key industries. In doing so, the U.S. aims to build multiple interlocking coalitions to isolate Beijing.

To achieve its goals, the Biden administration is seeking to avoid the commitment and compromise of multilateralism by building small coalitions of countries to fortify U.S. interests on given issues. For example, one such coalition is the AUKUS military partnership (between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States). Another is the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework" (IPEF), which the U.S. established earlier this year to counter China's economic influence in East Asia. Its purpose is to allow Washington to "shape the rules" and isolate Beijing from supply chains in areas of American preference.

There is, of course, an obvious flaw in IPEF: The U.S. is using it to impose its vision and demands on participating countries but fails to provide any real incentives or substantial benefits. It does not offer any form of market access whatsoever, let alone pledge any investment. This is because American domestic politics are centered around a new consensus of protectionism, formulated by the Trump administration under the slogan of "America First."

The logic of America First is unilateral, and American jobs and industries are the priority. The formulation of the IPEF is motivated by the strategic need to contain China, but

otherwise restrained by the reality that the U.S. cannot cede its protectionist outlook. The structural reasons behind this uncertain outlook are solely hegemonic and not for the benefit of American allies. It is a massive contradiction in the IPEF.

U.S. protectionist policies are undermining the exports of allies, which has been one growing point of tension between the U.S. and South Korea.

For example, the Inflation Reduction Act — the Congressional bill addressing climate change — discriminates against all overseas manufacturers of electric vehicles, even those in South Korea, one of its closest allies.

This has led to denunciation of U.S. policies in several South Korean newspapers, with the Hankyoreh stating that the U.S. "is morphing from a guardian of free trade into a disrupter of international trade norms." The Joon-gang Ilbo noted that U.S. President Joe Biden's "Build Back Better" is no different from former U.S. President Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again."

The IPEF demands its participants follow American strategic and economic preferences but offers nothing in return. Meanwhile, U.S. domestic protectionist policies also negatively impact its members.

This means that the so-called U.S. "commitment" to Asia is superficial, self-interested and short-sighted. The IPEF risks imposing costs on its members but offers no benefits. It is neither a trading bloc nor an investment treaty. It even does not have any funding. Despite U.S. efforts to roll back globalization, other countries won't be easy to convince.

Tom Fowdy is a British political and international relations analyst and a graduate of Durham and Oxford universities. Courtesy: China.org.cn

ADIB Amwali sees rapid growth in first year of its operation

Completed one year milestone with over 8,000 active accounts

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB), a leading Islamic financial institution, reported significant growth achieved by 'Amwali' in the first year of its operation. The world's first Islamic digital bank account gained high traction with 27 per cent month-over-month growth over 12 months.

With over 8,000 total accounts opened since August 2021, ADIB's Amwali aims to address the gap in a demographic that has been largely underserved in the region. Currently, 74 per cent of customers are Emiratis with a ratio of 61 per cent male, 39 per cent female. In addition, 54 per cent of accounts are in the age group between 15 - 18 years.

When Amwali was first introduced in August 2021, it was intended to empower youth to develop financial management skills early in life. Over the past year, ADIB witnessed that youth are inclined towards acquiring the knowledge and skills to build responsible financial behaviour and make informed financial decisions. Amwali enables them to practice sound money management at a young age while building their financial literacy in the process.

Amwali provides tailored banking experience for target customers' segments with a plethora of niche features including receiving money from parents and family, tracking balance and spending, creating saving goals, paying friends, and more. Customers of Amwali receive a debit



card to use for day-to-day shopping, online payments, cash withdrawals, and can even add it to Apple Pay and enjoy exclusive offers on fashion, electronics, gaming, entertainment, online shopping and more to help them grow into financially smart and successful adults.

In line with its digital transformation strategy, ADIB has constantly been

enhancing the digital banking experience for the new generation of customers and introduced an AI chat bot for "Amwali" last year. It provides users with services such as balance inquiries, fund transfers, and transaction history via automated responses.

Since its launch, Amwali has been getting a lot of traction among young

people and is adding more customers, while maintaining a high retention rate of Amwali users. ADIB recently received the "Outstanding Innovation in Mobile Banking" award from Global Finance for Amwali and its mobile banking app. The digital bank account recorded approximately 800,000 transactions as of August 2022.

ADIB Egypt's OGM greenlights \$52m capital increase



CAIRO: The ordinary general meeting (OGM) of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank-Egypt (ADIB Egypt) approved increasing the bank's issued and paid-up capital by EGP 1 billion to EGP 5 billion from EGP 4 billion.

The capital hike will be distributed over 100 million shares at a nominal value of EGP 10 a share, according to a stock exchange statement on Wednesday.

The capital raise procedures cannot be completed before endorsing the previous EGP 2 billion capital hike in the commercial register.

Last month, the lender received the Financial Regulatory Authority's (FRA) approval to proceed with the capital raise procedures.

In the first half (H1) of 2022, the consolidated net profits of ADIB Egypt climbed by 48.4%, reaching EGP 1.01 billion, compared to a net profit of EGP 680.15 million in H1 of last year, including minority shareholders' rights.

SABB Takaful pens \$4.53m deal with Al Olayan Group

RIYADH: SABB Takaful Company inked a SAR 17.31 million contract with Al Olayan Group on 30 September 2022 for general insurance programmes.

The value of the contract represents more than 1% of the Saudi listed firm's revenues in 2021, according to a recent bourse filing.

SABB Takaful noted that the deal will reflect on its 2022 income statements. Last September, the shareholders of Wala Cooperative Insurance Company agreed to raise its capital for a merger with SABB Takaful, after which the latter will be delisted from the Saudi Exchange (Tadawul).



During the first half (H1) of 2022, SABB Takaful reported net profits before Zakat worth SAR 5.56 million, an annual growth of 14.50% from SAR

4.86 million. The earnings per share (EPS) rose to SAR 0.06 in H1-22 from SAR 0.05 in H1-21.

Meanwhile, the accu-

mulated losses amounted to SAR 60.79 million as of 30 June 2022, accounting for 17.88% of the SAR 340 million capital.

Saudi Riyad Bank places \$1bn worth of riyal-denominated sukuk at 5.25%

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Riyad Bank has privately placed riyal-denominated additional Tier 1 sukuk for a value of SAR3.75 billion at 5.25% yield.

In a statement to the Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul) on Wednesday, the bank said the perpetual sukuk will be utilised to strengthen its capital base in accordance with Basel III framework.

The bank sold 15,000 bonds for a par value of SAR250,000.

Fintech developments could spur growth in zakat

DUBAI: Developments in fintech can significantly contribute to growth in the annual financial value of zakat, in addition to voluntary giving such as sadaqah donations and waqf endowments, according to a survey from IslamicMarkets.com.

The research conducted among Islamic fintech professionals revealed that 84% of respondents believe that the annual financial value of zakat, as well as voluntary giving such as sadaqah donations and waqf endowments will increase over the next five years, with 33% expecting a dramatic increase.

IslamicMarkets.com provides access to expert knowledge and financial opportunities, to support the Global Islamic Finance Forum 2022 (GIFF2022), 5-6 October in Kuala Lumpur.

The survey identified growth of fintech



firms and digitalisation of financial services as the key contributor to expansion of voluntary giving

ahead of improved transparency around zakat, sadaqah and waqf.

"Digitalisation and the rise of fintechs are central to the expansion of Islamic finance, but as the research shows, it can also benefit zakat and voluntary giving in general," GIFF2022 Chairman Arsalan Ahmed said.

"Technology is transforming all our lives and will have a major impact on Islamic finance over the next five years by increasing transparency and making voluntary giving easier," he added.

Turkey hires banks for 3-year dollar sukuk sale Derayah REIT's unitholders to receive over \$4.53m dividends for Q3-22

DUBAI: Turkey has hired banks to arrange the sale of three-year U.S. dollar-denominated Islamic bonds, a bank

document showed on Wednesday. Citi, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD and HSBC are joint lead managers

and bookrunners for the sale, which will follow the announcement, subject to market conditions, the document said.

JEDDAH: Derayah Financial announced cash dividends distribution of SAR 17.20 million to the unitholders of Derayah REIT for the third quarter (Q3) of 2022.

The firm will pay out SAR 0.16 per unit, representing 1.91% of the net assets value as of 30 June 2022, for 107.50 million units, according to a bourse disclosure.

Additionally, the entitlement date of the dividend distribution will be at the closing of 16 October trading session, whereas the payment date will be on 13

November. Last August, Derayah Financial disbursed a total of SAR 19.35 million as dividends for Q2-22.

IsDB Group provides \$165.63b to finance development projects

JEDDAH: Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, has said that his group has provided US\$165.630.5 billion to finance development projects in various economic sectors, since its launch and up to 30th June, 2022.

In an interview with the Emirates News Agency (WAM), Dr. Al Jasser said that food security is a major issue facing the member states of the IsDB, which is promoting smart agriculture and the need to increase strategic food reserves in these countries.

By 2025, the bank hopes to make at least 35 percent of its new operations environmentally friendly, and it is cooperating with the UAE by offering technical support to ensure the success of the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28), which it is also currently doing with Egypt for COP27, to be held in Sharm El Sheikh.

This cooperation will enable the bank to help transfer the UAE's pioneering and advanced digitisation expertise to its other member states through its "Reverse Linkage" mechanism, which aims to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

He thanked WAM for giving him this opportunity to speak about IsDB's activities and development-related issues and challenges. He talked about the close relationship between the IsDB and the UAE, which is one of the bank's founding countries and a major stakeholder.

What are your support mechanisms for member states that enable them to

address current economic challenges?

The bank's main goal is to support the social and economic development of its member countries, and its strategic objectives revolve around this mission and are reflected by its financing of many major projects in various sectors, such as agriculture, healthcare, education, transportation, energy, industry, mining, urban development, water and sanitation, information and communication technology, digitalisation and finance.

The bank has also financed various projects over the past years, including those empowering women and the youth, countering climate change, supporting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise and regional cooperation, and encouraging economic integration among member countries.

The need to maintain food security was made more urgent by the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Eastern Europe. What related measures has the IsDB implemented as a response to the urgent needs of its member states?

Maintaining food security is a key challenge facing most IsDB's member states, especially low-income countries suffering from food shortages and weak supply chains, while simultaneously depending on imports. The conflict in Eastern European and the drought that hit Eastern Africa are also causes of recent food price hikes.

In response to these challenges, in July 2022, the IsDB adopted a comprehensive food security response programme worth US\$10.54 billion to

support member states in addressing the food crisis. The bank is also assisting the efforts to increase the resilience of its member states against future food crises.

Therefore, the bank will focus on supporting eco-friendly smart agriculture that will increase productivity, ensure food security and maintain the strategic food reserves of its member states, as well as enable small farmers to access markets and attract agricultural investment.

In November 2023, the UAE will host COP28. Can you tell us about the details of your cooperation with the UAE and what are your target sectors?

The bank is proactively adopting green economy and sustainability standards in its financial operations, so it set a target of having least 35 percent of its new operations as climate-sensitive by 2025, meaning that it will concurrently assess the need to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Under its plan to address climate change and its repercussions, the bank launched a leading Shariah-compliant financing programme, titled, "Green Sukuk", with the aim of encouraging the adoption of green projects and reducing the negative effects of other developmental projects on the climate.

Digitisation is crucial to a variety of sectors. What is the bank's strategy for supporting member states in this area?

The IsDB is currently updating its strategy to ensure that its activities are in line with the ever-changing requirements of its member countries, by prioritising their efforts to achieve



recovery and build resilience.

The bank is also helping its member countries make their healthcare systems more inclusive and sustainable, as well as bridge the digital divide, preventing some half a billion children from continuing their education during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also supporting the digitisation of various economic and governmental sectors in its member countries.

Through its Reverse Linkage mechanism, the bank can help spread the UAE's advanced expertise in this area to other member states. What are the effects of the digital economy and virtual economy on the real economy?

The technological advancements of recent decades led to the Fourth Industrial Revolution based on digitalisation and AI. The major effects on the real economy can be summarised in two words, acceleration and temporary confusion.

Innovation accelerates growth and creates major opportunities, especial-

ly in the services sector and with high added value. On the other hand, the rapid adoption of new innovations has led to the restructuring of the labour market and changed priorities, due to the urgent need to train and qualify human capital and re-organise to keep pace with these new innovations.

During its previous meeting, the IsDB's Board of Executive Directors agreed to provide funds worth US\$1.12 billion for development projects in its member states. What are the features of these projects?

The IsDB's Board of Executive Directors approved funds to finance development projects valued at US\$1.12 billion, which will cover many key sectors and infrastructure projects, include those in the areas of food security, health, transportation, energy, urban development, education, and water and sanitation.

These projects will improve the living standards of target categories in member countries, as well as support their economic growth. The board also approved an aid package worth US\$1.79 million to finance other projects, including facilitating market access in Yemen, as well as special aid for Muslim communities in three non-member countries earmarked for upgrading school facilities and offering quality education and skills training to young people to encourage their economic and social participation.

What is the total value of financing provided by the IsDB to member states up to the end of the first quarter of 2022? Since its launch and up to 30th June, 2022, the IsDB has provided

US\$165.630.5 billion to finance development projects in various economic sectors.

The Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit, the insurance arm of the IsDB Group, has insured trade and investment operations in its 48 member countries for US\$83.3 billion.

To mitigate the risks facing these operations, the corporation offers insurance solutions and services that comply with the Islamic Sharia.

How many regional offices does the bank have? And what are their roles? In order to provide fast and flexible solutions to assist the development of member countries, the IsDB has been keen to decentralise.

To create opportunities for communication and coordination and facilitate the implementation of the IsDB Group's projects, it responded to the request of some member countries for local representation.

It established 10 regional centres in some member states, in addition to the Centre of Excellence in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, while a new regional centre is being constructed in the UAE. The bank's regional centres enable it to better meet the needs of member states while improving performance and increasing efficiency.

Decentralisation will accelerate the implementation of the group's projects and reduce costs, as well as enable its regional offices to promote communication among the general public, provide news to the media and coordinate with them, and cooperate with the business sector.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
42,160.57	41,611.42
Day's High	Day's Low:
42,201.55	41,611.42
Index Value	Change
11,147,436,012	+549.15
Percentage	Time
+1.32%	6 Oct, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
6,995.37	-57.25
Percentage	Time
-0.81%	6 Oct, 3:55 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
30,143.09	-130.78
Percentage	Time
-0.43%	6 Oct, 10:56 am GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
27,311.30	+190.77
Percentage	Time
+0.70%	6 Oct, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	144.27	145.52
Bahrain Dinar	595.75	600.25
Canadian Dollar	163.37	164.72
China Yuan	31.37	31.62
Danish Krone	29.61	29.96
Euro	221	223.2
Hong Kong Dollar	28.44	28.79
Indian Rupee	2.73	2.81
Japanese Yen	1.25	1.3
Kuwaiti Dinar	722.94	727.94
Malaysian Ringgit	48.21	48.66
New Zealand \$	127.26	128.46
Norwegians Krone	21.06	21.36
Omani Riyal	581.84	586.34
Qatari Riyal	61.33	61.83
Saudi Riyal	59	59.6
Singapore Dollar	156.38	157.68
Swedish Korona	20.31	20.61
Swiss Franc	226.83	228.58
Thai Bhat	6.2	6.3
U.A.E Dirham	61.4	62
UK Pound Sterling	255	257.5
US Dollar	223	225.5

Minister for pushing national productivity to ensure export-led growth

Ahsan says country had been facing sheer foreign exchange reserves and balance of payment crisis for long time

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said that Pakistan desperately needed measures to bring the country's economy out of crisis through sustainable export led economic growth. "The sustainable economic growth is possible only through increasing productivity that leads to more exports and higher economic growth", the minister said while addressing the closing ceremony of a two-day international conference on Productivity Accreditation and Certification, organized by National Productivity Organization (NPO) on the occasion of APO's Diamond Jubilee.

Ahsan Iqbal said the country had been facing sheer foreign exchange reserves and balance of payment crisis for long time due to slow growth in exports. "Whenever we cross 6 percent of GDP growth, the government faces dollar shortage issue due to which we have to put emergency brake on the economic growth to resolve the balance of payment crisis," he added.



Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives in his closing speech appreciated APO's role in the development of Asia-Pacific region. He further delib-

erated that it is time to renew and revitalize our commitment, resolve and will to strive further and achieve APO's vision of "Inclusive, innovation-led productivity growth in the Asia-Pacific".

Together with this vigor and energy our goals as APO member countries of "Sustainable productivity growth", "Robust innovation ecosystem" and "Inclusive engagement and shared prosperity" seem not too distant.

He conveyed his gratitude to APO Secretary General on APO's Diamond Jubilee. He further added that working in tandem with similar organizations, the APO and NPOs will be able to find solutions to long-standing problems of the region.

He expressed these views while addressing closing ceremony of International Conference on Productivity Accreditation and Certification for Pakistan on Tuesday. This International Conference on Productivity Accreditation and Certification held in Pakistan was the continuation of the commemoration of the APO's Diamond Jubilee.

He highlighted that the Ministry of planning development and special initiatives, own's a mission to "manage Pakistan's socio-economic development in a strategic and sustainable manner".

IT, textiles can bridge trade deficit with Australia: FPCCI

Australian HC expresses his willingness to facilitate promotion of business-to-business linkages

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: In a statement, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his concerns that the bilateral trade with a large economy like Australia - having a GDP of approximately \$1.4 trillion - remains far below its potential as total trade with Australia is under one billion dollars; and, on top of that, trade deficit with Australia is approximately \$400 million. For any head of FPCCI, it must be a cause of deep consternations and IT & textiles are the two industries which have the potential to exponentially enhance Pakistani exports to Australia, he added.

Mian Anjum Nisar, former President FPCCI, emphasized that managing national food security and efficient agricultural yield per acre are the areas where Pakistan needs to learn and adapt from Australian experiences: their agricultural technologies; protecting crops from natural hazards; their water management practices; crop-mapping; fields-to-market roads & networks; export marketing of agricultural products and state-of-the-art food processing facilities.

Neil Hawkins, Australian High Commissioner in Pakistan, expressed his willing-



KARACHI: Suleman Chawla, SVP FPCCI & Mian Anjum Nisar, former President, are presenting official crest to Neil Dawkins, High Commissioner of Australia in Pakistan, at his visit to Federation House.

ness to facilitate the promotion of people-to-people, business-to-business and chamber-to-chamber engagements and linkages between the two countries. He specifically expressed his desire to help the country with its flood relief & rehabilitation needs - which is on a never-seen-before scale and requires enormous efforts on a global scale.

Hawkins apprised that 40,000 Pakistani students are studying in Australia and Pakistani diaspora in Australia is increasing in numbers as more and more Pakistanis are opting for immigration to his country. He also highlighted that Australia is accepting as many as 195,000 skilled immigrants every year from world over.



ISLAMABAD: Rabia Butt, Sr. Manager International Trade, Hamdard Pakistan receiving FPCCI Export Award 2022-23 for Rooh Afza from the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi on the 45th FPCCI's Export Award ceremony held at the President's House Islamabad. FPCCI President Mian Nasir Hyatt Maggo, Senior Vice President Khawaja Shah, Zaib Akram, former President FPCCI Mian Anjum Nisar were also seen the picture.

To boost exports

New Industrial Zone demanded in Capital



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA) led by its President Zikria A. Zia visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and stressed that ICCI should step up its efforts with the relevant government authorities for a new industrial zone in the capital to boost industrialization and exports. The delegation also congratulated the new Office Bearers of ICCI and hoped that they would play an effective role in resolving the key issues of local industry.

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Islamabad was experiencing rapid urbanization and population growth, but unemployed young talent was being wasted due to lack of jobs. He said that industrialization was the best option to absorb youth in jobs. He said that many investors were keen to set up industries in the Islamabad region but due to absence of a new industrial zone, they were unable to make new investments. He emphasized that the government should cooperate with ICCI in early materialization of this important project that would yield multiple benefits for the economy. He assured the delegation that ICCI would make all possible efforts to address their highlighted issues.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI and Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader said that the economy of Pakistan was facing multiple challenges and the government should focus on promoting investment and industrialization that would help revive the economy and overcome economic problems of the country.

FTO appoints President KCCI as Honorary Advisor

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Federal Tax Ombudsman Asif Mahmood Jha has announced to appoint President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) Muhammad Tariq Yousuf as Honorary Advisor FTO so that the members of business community could comfortably bring issues to KCCI's notice and the same can be taken up personally by President KCCI with FTO for timely resolution.

Speaking at a ceremony held at KCCI to distribute cheques to refund excess amount of sales tax paid against purchase of Suzuki vehicles to complainants, Asif Mahmood Jha said that as FTO was a public and business friendly institution, it has appointed Advisors from various Chambers of Commerce as well with a view to bridge gap between FTO and the business



community. "Relevant notification about the appointment of President KCCI as Advisor FTO will be issued from FTO Lahore Office soon", he added. Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala, President KCCI Muhammad Tariq Yousuf, Senior Vice President Touseef Ahmed, Vice President Muhammad Haris Agar, Advisor Legal FTO Almas Ali Jovindah, Advisors (Customs) FTO Manzoor Hussain Memon and

Syed Tahir Raza Zaidi along with Senior Customs Officials and KCCI Managing Committee Members were also present on the occasion.

Asif Mahmood Jha, while highlighting FTO's improved performance since he took oath on September 29, 2021, stated, "After taking oath, I intended to make FTO a public relief-oriented organization which could easily be accessed and is able to promptly resolve issues. Hence,

to achieve the desired objective of promptly resolving issues at the complainant's doorstep, we've established several FTO offices in small cities as well so that the number of complaints could be enhanced which were too low as the institution hardly receives 3,000 complaints out of 3 million taxpayers."

He said that FTO emphasizes on enhancing its outreach so that maximum people could be acquainted about FTO's functioning and relief could also be provided at the earliest. "All Advisors and FTO staff have been strictly instructed that they are the advocates of taxpayers who deserve to be fully facilitated and appreciated as it is these taxpayers who play the role of country's backbone and it is because of their contribution that the wheels of economy keep on spinning", he said.

Huawei MEA Innovation Day focused on collaboration, women empowerment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, today announced the return of the second annual Huawei Innovation Day, covering the entire Middle East and Africa. Taking place in parallel with GITEX Global on October 11th in Al Multaqa Ballroom at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), the Huawei MEA Innovation Day will be held in collaboration with the Arab ICT Organization (AICTO) under the theme of "Collaboration to

Unleash Innovation for Sustainable Digital Future".

The annual event will gather the region's government leaders from different sectors, industry analysts, ICT ecosystem partners from MEA Region, as well as Huawei's senior leadership team.

Jeff Wang, Global President of Public Affairs and Communications, Huawei, will deliver the opening keynote speech to highlight Huawei's commitment to supporting the MEA digital transformation and ICT sustainability future. H.E. Eng. Mohamed Ben Amor, Secretary General of the Arab ICT



Organization (AICTO), the event partner, will deliver the keynote speech at the conference, highlighting the importance of collaboration between various regional stakeholders and global partners to build an

integrated ICT ecosystem for a sustainable digital economy. This will follow by addresses from ministerial and senior leaders from the UAE government, as well as regional and international industry organizations and high-level ICT stakeholders from different verticals and industries.

"I am pleased that this year's 2nd Huawei Innovation Day will include even wider areas, bringing industry leaders together to share insights on how ICT as an enabler will help realize digitalization of the Middle East and Africa," Wang said, "We look forward

to building a digital sustainable future in Middle East and Africa through open collaboration with public and private entities."

This year's Huawei MEA Innovation Day covers themes such as green ICT for the sustainable future of sectors and industries, the ICT talent ecosystem, and empowering women in ICT in the MEA region. Huawei will also delve into emerging technologies in the Middle East and Africa, highlighting the importance of cybersecurity and discussing the benefits of integrating technologies like 5G, Cloud, and AI in supporting verticals,

key industries, businesses, and public services.

Steven Yi, President of Huawei Middle East & Africa, added: "At Huawei, we want to create digital technologies that make lives better, businesses more intelligent, and society more inclusive. During this year's Huawei Innovation Day, we will continue to provide insights into the digital technologies that are transforming organizations across the region as well as discuss some of the pressing issues in the ICT industry, opening the way for a more collaborative approach to drive the ICT ecosystem in the MEA region."

UBL, SAUT collaborate towards agri development



Our Correspondent

KARACHI: United Bank Limited (UBL) and Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam (SAUT) recently entered into an agreement to initiate a research project for the development of improved cotton and wheat seed varieties. This research will develop climate resilient wheat and cotton seeds with better germination rates, significantly improving crop yields and income for the agriculture sector of Pakistan.

The agreement signing ceremony was held at UBL Head office Karachi and was attended by Shazad G. Dada, President & CEO UBL and Dr. Fateh Muhammad Mari, Vice Chancellor of SAUT along with senior executives from both institutions.

During the session, Shazad G. Dada said, "As Pakistan's most progressive and innovative bank, UBL's vision is to support the agricultural sector of Pakistan through research, development and use of technology. We feel the need for this is now, more than ever, as we start the re-building process following the devastating floods earlier in the year. As the State Bank of Pakistan's nominated champion Bank for the province of Sindh we are proud to collaborate with SAUT and will continue to work towards finding innovative solutions to support the agriculture sector of Pakistan."

Dr. Fateh Mohammad Mari, Vice Chancellor of SAUT said, "SAUT is one of the premium agriculture institutes of the country. It has been actively exploring all the avenues of improving quality agriculture graduates who are contributing towards the adoption and extension of best agricultural technologies." Mari thanked UBL for their support in meeting this shared objective and agreed with the points highlighted by Shazad G. Dada.

Pakistan, Bangladesh and New Zealand all set to clash in triangular series

Pakistan take on Bangladesh in the opening match of the triangular series

CHRISTCHURCH: The triangular cricket series comprising Pakistan, Bangladesh and host New Zealand will start in New Zealand from today.

Pakistan will take on Bangladesh in the opening match of the triangular series, which will be played at Christchurch. The list of commentators has been confirmed, with no Bangladesh commentator on the list. Former captain Waqar Younis is the only one from Pakistan, while Stephen Fleming, Mark Richardson, Craig McMillan, Grant Elliott, Frankie Mackay, Rebecca Roleb, and Shane Bond from New Zealand.

The trophy for the triangular series featuring Pakistan, Bangladesh, and New Zealand had been unveiled two days ahead of the first match. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday released pictures from the trophy reveal event in a Twitter post.



The pictures featured the skippers of three teams participating in the event. The Men in Green will face tough conditions during the matches as chilly weather welcomed them in Christchurch. The

temperature in New Zealand city sometimes drops to 2 degrees celsius and intermittent rains have made things a bit more difficult for the Pakistan players. All the matches of the tri-series will

be played in Christchurch, with the first fixture between Pakistan and Bangladesh due on October 7, and the series decider on October 14. Following the tri-series, Pakistan will participate in the highly-anticipated T20 World Cup event and will travel back to Australia on October 15.

The team will partake in a practice session on October 17 and 19, ahead of their games in the World Cup. The T20 World Cup begins on October 16 with the inaugural matches of the qualifiers to be played between Group A teams Sri Lanka and Namibia, as well as United Arab Emirates and Netherlands.

7 October – Pakistan v Bangladesh, 8 October – Pakistan v New Zealand, 9 October – New Zealand v Bangladesh, 11 October – New Zealand v Pakistan, 12 October – Bangladesh v New Zealand, 13 October – Pakistan v Bangladesh, 14 October – Final.

Thailand beat Pakistan by four wickets

Spokesman Report



SYLHET: Thailand beat Pakistan by four wickets to hand Pakistan their first loss in the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium (SICS) on Thursday morning.

Chasing a modest 117-run target, Pakistan bowlers kept Thailand batters in check as Thailand chased down the target on the penultimate ball of the match. Requiring 16 runs from two overs, the 19th over went for only six runs bowled by Nida Dar and she picked the prized scalp of Natthakan Chantham who top-scored with a 51-ball 61, which included five fours and two sixes.

With 10 runs required of the last over, Rosenan Kanoh struck Diana for a four on the second ball to help her side achieved the target with four wickets in hand.

Nida and Tuba Hasan bagged two wickets apiece, while Nashra Sandhu and Kainat Imtiaz took a wicket each.

Earlier, after opting to bat first, Sidra Amin continued her fine form in the tournament, she top-scored with a 64-ball 56, smashing six boundaries. Pakistan scored 116 for five in their 20 overs at a slow and low track.

This was Pakistan's first loss in the tournament. In three outings in the tournament, Pakistan have won last two matches played against Malaysia and defending champions Bangladesh. The team will now take on arch-rivals India tomorrow at the SICS. The match will be broadcast live on PTV Sports, with toss taking place at 12 and first ball to be bowled at 12:30pm PKT.

More sports academies being established: DG SBP

Our correspondent

LAHORE: Commissioner Lahore Amir Jan and DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi visited SBP's Table Tennis Academy at Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) Gymnasium Hall on Tuesday evening.

DG Punjab Food Authority (PEA) Mudassar Riaz Malik, Director Admin Syed Umair Hassan, former Test cricketer Aaqib Javed, CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana and Deputy Director Admin Tariq Wattoo were also present on this occasion.

DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi also met with table tennis players and enquired about the facilities being provided at the academy. Commissioner Lahore and DG Sports Punjab distributed prizes among the table tennis players.

Talking to media on this occasion, DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi said that Sports Board Punjab is establishing more academies of different games to engage the youth of the province in healthy activities and keep them away from drugs and other negative practices. "Hundreds of talented youth are getting top class training under the supervision of qualified coaches in SBP's sports academies. SBP will continue to attract young male and female athletes towards sports activities to trace fresh talent particularly from remote and distant areas," he added.

Minhaj Varsity hosts Lahore Open Blitz Chess C'ship

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Lahore Open Blitz Chess Championship 2022 will be organized under the auspices of Chess Association of Punjab (CAP) at Minhaj University, Lahore today.

Chess Association of Punjab General Secretary Raja Gauhar, while talking to media on Thursday, informed that a maximum number of 50 players would compete in Open Category while around 30 will be in action in U-14 Category chess competitions. "The FIDE Rated Tournament would be conducted as per Swiss System Format while a total cash prize of Rs 30,000 would be distributed among the top position holders," he revealed.

Raja Gauhar further disclosed that all the participants of Lahore Open Blitz Chess Championship would be eligible to get free membership of Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP). "This championship is definitely a very suitable platform for emerging chess players to prove their mind sports abilities. Certainly, there will be several opportunities for the top performers of this championship to grow not only at national level but also at international level," he elaborated.

CAP General Secretary Raja Gauhar further said that chess is one of the most popular mind sports in the world and Pakistani youth is also taking keen interest in this exciting game. "Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) under the leadership of its President Hanif Qureshi is utilizing all resources and energies for promotion and revival of this game across the country."

Four teams, 13 matches; PCB announces women's league details

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board on Thursday announced details of the inaugural women's league, which will run alongside the Pakistan Super League 8 at the Pindi Cricket Stadium in March 2023.

Four city-based sides, each comprising 12 local and six foreign players, will compete for the biggest prize in Pakistan's women's domestic calendar on a double-league format.

The final will be a standalone fixture between the top-two sides following 12 league matches and will take place a day before the HBL PSL 8 final. The HBL PSL 8 is scheduled from 9 February to 19 March 2023.

PCB Chairman Ramiz Raja: "I am delighted to announce the women's league. This league will attract young women cricketers to this great sport and help our current players further enhance their skills when they will get to share



dug-outs with the overseas players. The league will feature present and past trailblazers in women's cricket in what promises to be an exciting 13-match event. "To amplify the coverage and promotion of this initiative, some of the matches will precede the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 matches.

"This event is aligned to our strategy of making Pakistan a stronger cricket playing nation across all formats and genders. We are not only creating attractive brands to strengthen our cricket economy, but through this tournament are also providing career opportunities to our women cricketers. The more our women cricketers

will participate in high-pressure events, the more they will learn.

"The PCB is a strong proponent of empowering women to shine brighter. By engaging our women, which form 49 per cent of the country's population, we will enhance the economic and social prosperity of our country."

Nomura Cup to be held from Nov 16

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: This Nomura Cup, also known as the Asia-Pacific Amateur Golf Team Championship is organized by the Asia Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC). It is a biennial amateur team golf championship for men.

The inaugural event was held in 1963 as a tri-nation tournament in the Philippines when the host nation took on Japan and China. Over the years editions have attracted more than 20 nations, featuring teams of four players. The tournament is held over four days with 18 holes of stroke play on each day, the best three daily rounds counting for the team score.

The tournament has been dominated by Australia, who have won the Cup 10 times and Japan, who are seven-time winners. The winning team receives the



Nomura Cup, which was named after Shun Nomura, the former Vice-President of the Japan Golf Association who donated the Cup. This event also has an individual champion.

Pakistan has the honor of being invited to this acclaimed international golf event and to select a team for national representation. Four days golf trials will be held at the Nick Faldo designed Rumanza Golf Course in Multan. Format of the trials will be stroke play

over 72 holes (18 holes each day for four days) and handicap eligibility is 4 and below which means only the top tier golf playing amateurs can participate.

Trials agenda is rather strenuous as concurrently trials are also being conducted to select a senior amateur golf team for participation in APGC Seniors Championship which is likely to take place in Malaysia from 21st to 24 November 2022. Eligibility for participation in these trials is that senior

amateurs should have a handicap of 12 and below and trials will be conducted over 54 holes (three rounds of 18 holes) from 7th to 10th October 2022. The Committee to conduct the trials comprises of Brig Ajaz Ahad Khan (Retd), Zahid Iqbal, Salman Sabir Abbasi and Malik Kamran Awan.

Prominent amateurs like Qasim Ali Khan, Salman Jehangir, Saim Shazli, Hussain Hamid, Damil Ataullah, Nouman Ilyas and quite a few masterly ones acquainted themselves with the formidable challenges that designer golf courses like Rumanza propound and set forth to those who set heart and mind on meritorious achievements. Hopefully the practice round on Thursday was a fortifier and confidence booster and those seeking heights in the golfing world will come out thriving and buoyant.

Australia name squad to face England

SYDNEY: Australia will continue to rotate their players as they search for the best combination to defend their ICC Men's T20 World Cup title on home soil.

A host of experienced players will skip the first match of Australia's vital three-game series against England in Perth on Sunday and re-join the squad for the second clash against their old rival in Canberra on October 12.

Adam Zampa, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Glenn Maxwell will miss the series opener against England and will instead stay on the east coast of Australia following the second game of their ongoing series against the West Indies, before joining up with the remainder of the squad in Canberra.

It means Marcus Stoinis, Kane



Richardson, Ashton Agar, Mitchell Swebson and Nathan Ellis are all recalled for the series against England and are likely to feature in Perth, while emerging all-rounder Cameron Green will once again get the chance to further push his T20 World Cup credentials after he was also named to take on the Ashes rival.

Green is not currently in Australia's 15-player squad for the T20 World Cup, but teams have until October 9 to make changes to their squad without requiring a medical reason.

The 23-year-old could also still feature given Stoinis has been battling a side injury and will need to prove his fitness against England, while Marsh only just returned to Australia's side despite not being able to bowl.

It leaves Australia with plenty of options ahead of their T20 World Cup defence and chair of selectors George Bailey said it was vital for his team to be fresh heading into the four-week event that starts later this month.

"The high-performance team and selectors have planned these matches to ensure our squad get to the World Cup fresh and ready to perform," Bailey said.

South Africa all-rounder ruled out of T20 World Cup



ISLAMABAD: South Africa all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius has been ruled out of the ODIs against India and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia.

A fracture on his left thumb has ruled Pretorius out of the ODIs against India and the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022. Pretorius, who was the joint-highest wicket-taker for South Africa in the T20 World Cup last year, has been an integral part of their plans in this format.

Pretorius has featured in eight T20Is so far in 2022, taking 12 wickets at an average of 20.66 and most importantly, scoring quick runs with the bat down the order.

"The nature of the injury requires surgical intervention and Dwaine will consult the Cricket South Africa designated hand surgeon on arrival in South Africa," CSA chief medical officer Dr Shuaib Manjra said. "Normal rehabilitation procedures will follow to ensure he speedily returns to playing cricket."

Pretorius copped the injury during the third T20I against India on Tuesday in Indore. Marco Jansen and Andile Phehlukwayo are the all-rounders named in the reserves for the T20 World Cup, and one of them will likely replace Pretorius in the squad for Australia.

Pretorius is the second key player from South Africa to miss the T20 World Cup, middle-order batter Rassie van der Dussen was ruled out with a finger injury last month.

Alonso named new Bayer Leverkusen coach

BERLIN: Former Liverpool and Real Madrid midfielder Xabi Alonso has been named as Bayer Leverkusen's new coach, replacing Gerardo Seoane after he was dismissed by the Bundesliga club on Wednesday.

Alonso, 40, has signed a deal until June 2024. In his first coaching job at the top level he takes over a team second from bottom after eight matches of the German season. "I know Leverkusen as an excellent club from my time in Germany," said Alonso, who spent the final three years of his playing career with Bayern Munich. "Bayer has always had great players. I also see a lot of quality in the current squad. This task excites me a lot."

As a player, Alonso won the 2010 World Cup and two European Championships with Spain. He also lifted the Champions League trophy with both Liverpool and Madrid.

Alonso scored the equaliser in the 2005 Champions League final for Liverpool to take the game to extra time, with the Reds eventually beat-



ing AC Milan on penalties.

He managed Real Sociedad's reserve team in his home Basque region for three years until May, seeing them promoted to Spain's second tier for the first time in 60 years, before they were relegated at the end of last season. "With Xabi Alonso, we have signed a coach who was an absolute world-class professional as a player, an intelligent strategist and extremely successful in no less than three of the most demanding European leagues," said Leverkusen sporting director Simon Rolfes.

Leverkusen confirmed the departure of Seoane in the wake of Tuesday's 2-0 loss at Porto in the Champi-

ons League. Despite guiding the side to Champions League football with a third-placed finish last season, Leverkusen had struggled badly under the Swiss coach this campaign.

They were eliminated by third-tier SV Elversberg in the first round of the German Cup and have won just once in the Bundesliga. Leverkusen chief executive Fernando Carro said on Sunday he wanted "quick results" from Seoane, whose side were thrashed 4-0 by Bayern Munich on Friday.

Former Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel, along with Adi Huetter and Domenico Tedesco had been rumoured as possible replacements for Seoane. Alonso finished his career at Bayern in 2017, having won the Bundesliga in each of his three seasons there. He had previously been heavily linked with the coaching position at Borussia Moenchengladbach in March of 2021, but signed a one-year extension in Spain. Alonso's first match in charge of Leverkusen will be against Schalke in the Bundesliga on Saturday.