



Rana Sana takes notice of Peshawar-Mor fire incident

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan took notice of fire eruption incident here at Sunday Bazaar (Itwar Bazaar) in H-9 Sector on Wednesday. The minister sought a report from district administration about the incident and ordered the deputy commissioner to monitor the rescue operation.



China strongly condemns attack on Pakistan's embassy in Kabul: Mao Ning

China on Wednesday strongly condemned the attack on the Pakistani embassy in Kabul last week and said it firmly opposed all forms of violence and terrorist acts. "China strongly condemns and firmly opposes all forms of violence and terrorist acts," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning said during her regular briefing in response to a question raised by APP. (Report on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Offering Fateha

KARACHI: Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir visited mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to pay homage to the Nation's founder. COAS laid floral wreath and offered Fateha.



Photo: ISPR

COAS visits Quaid's Mausoleum, lays wreath

KARACHI: Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir visited mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to pay homage to the Nation's founder. COAS laid floral wreath and offered Fateha. APP

The COAS laid a wreath on the Quaid's grave and offered Fateha, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. General Asim later visited the Corps Headquarters Karachi, where he was briefed

on operational, security and other matters of the formation, including assistance to the civil administration during the recent natural calamity in Sindh, particularly interior province. The COAS appreciated the

Army and Rangers troops for operational preparedness and reaching out to the people of Sindh during the unprecedented floods in the country. He praised the formation, allied organisations and law enforcement agencies for maintaining

a safe and secure environment in the province, particularly the megalopolis city of Karachi. Earlier, on his arrival in the megalopolis, the COAS was received by Lieutenant General Muhammad Saeed, Corps Commander Karachi. ISPR

President for improving Pakistan's IT ecosystem to facilitate growth

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday urged the need to facilitate the expansion and growth of Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) sector. He said that an informed and dynamic leadership was needed to take steps to facilitate IT businesses, improve Pakistan's IT eco-system, and provide a conducive environment to budding entrepreneurs in the field of IT and emerging technologies.

The president expressed these views while addressing the Emerging Technology conference organized by "enablers", an e-commerce network, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The president said that the global IT sector was expanding



at an exponential pace, and Pakistan needed to capitalize upon the opportunity being opened up by the IT revolution and improved global connectivity.

He said that the IT sector had the potential to help Pakistan

overcome its financial struggles within a short span of time.

The president highlighted the need to bridge the gap between academia and industry by regularly updating the higher education curriculum, utilizing hybrid

modes of imparting education and developing collaboration between universities and the private sector.

He said stressed upon universities to produce graduates as per the demands of the market,

as trained and skilled human resources were in great demand throughout the world.

In the field of cyber security alone, 80 million professionals would be required by the year 2030, he added.

CEO of enablers, Saqib Azhar, Vice-Chancellor of Government College University (GCU), Lahore, Dr Asghar Zaidi, and IT entrepreneurs attended the event.

The president highlighted that Pakistan required to enhance the number of IT graduates if it was to compete with other regional countries.

He further said that Pakistan only produced 27000 to 30000 graduates annually, which could be multiplied by employ-

As Xi arrives in Riyadh, experts hope for more investment in CPEC project

ISLAMABAD: Former ambassadors to Beijing and international experts said on Wednesday Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Saudi Arabia this week was likely to bring in more investment into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, Arab News reported.

Xi visit comes at a time when Riyadh is seeking to expand global alliances beyond its longstanding partnership with the West.

During the visit, Xi is scheduled to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other heads of states from Gulf Arab states. Saudi Arabia and China are expected to sign over 20 agreements worth more than \$29.3 billion and will discuss a plan to harmonize the implementation of Saudi's Vision 2030

and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Xi's signature infrastructure investment initiative that includes CPEC, Arab news report said.

Under the CPEC project, China has pledged over \$60 billion in energy, infrastructure, agriculture, IT and various other schemes in Pakistan. At the heart of the project is a Chinese-funded deep-water port in Pakistan's southwestern town of Gwadar in Balochistan province.

The CPEC project, Pakistani experts hope, would figure in Xi's meetings with the Saudi crown prince.

"Saudi Arabia is interested in becoming part of CPEC by investing heavily in it and is also interested in BRI," Pakistan's former ambassador to China,

Naghmana Hashmi, said in an interview with Arab News.

"This visit will improve things in this regard as China is the main initiator of both mega projects."

"The growing friendship between China and Saudi Arabia will benefit Pakistan as the country has very good relations with both, and both are pillars of strength for us," Hashmi added.

International relations expert Zafar Jaspal said the visit would have a "constructive and positive impact" on CPEC.

"[The visit] will open the way for Saudi investment in Gwadar and other parts of the [CPEC] project, especially in the petro industry as the kingdom's leadership has expressed in the past," Jaspal said.



PM invites IT sector stakeholders to tap huge potential of Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said Pakistan had enormous untapped potential in the Information Technology (IT) sector and invited foreign IT companies and experts to fully explore the indigenous talented youth bulge of the country. The prime minister was addressing the inauguration ceremony of the 21st Asia Pacific ICT Alliance (APICTA)

Awards 2022. The event was organized by the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) and the TechDestination for IT and ITES, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT).

The prime minister said no doubt, in the last decade or so, Pakistani entrepreneurs had made great strides to promote the IT sector with individual and collective efforts. The government was also playing a proactive role to support the efforts.

Given the youth potential, he said, out of the total population, 60 percent of the country's population comprised of youth.

"This is a challenge as well as an opportunity to convert this potential into opportunity," he added.

Mariyum castigates Imran for doing 'dirty politics' on Kashmir

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan who played politics on religion, ran dirty campaign against nation's martyrs and compromised on national interest when in power, was now doing 'dirty politics' on Kashmir.

In a statement in reaction to Imran Khan's remarks, she said the person who looted the Tasha Khana and sold gifted watches was now doing "dirty and shameless politics" in the name of Kashmir.

"Kashmir seller should not tell Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif what to do about Kashmir problem", she said while taking dig at Imran Khan.

She said Imran Khan who did

the antics of one hour protest on Kashmir and changed the names of road and chowks while in power, was now playing an unholy game with the national interests.

She said that the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, at the instigation of Imran Khan, indulged in a regrettable act during the Mangla Dam refurbishment project ceremony.

Imran Khan, for the sake of bolstering his sinking politics, stooped to a mean and reprehensible trick of giving a negative colour to an event of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan's progress.

Dar, Governor's SBP discuss overall country's economic situation

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Governor's State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Jameel Ahmad Wednesday discussed overall economic situation of the country.

They discussed this while in a virtual meeting. Various fiscal and monetary measures were discussed for maintaining the economic growth and stability

in the country, said a press release issued here.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Special Secretary Finance and other senior officers of Finance Division attended the meeting.

In conclusion, the Governor SBP thanked the Finance Minister for continuous support by the present government for the policy initiatives taken by the state bank.

NSP's implementation needs political consensus across parties: NA speaker

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Wednesday said the implementation of the National Security Policy (NSP) needed political consensus across all parties.

Exchanging views with Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi he said political consensus was the only way forward to achieve the goals of NSP.

He said Pakistan had been facing the global climate change challenge as recent devastating floods had caused loss of lives and properties in various areas of the country.

He said in order to grapple with socioeconomic challenges, the national consensus was crucial to implement the NSP for achieving the goals of food security, water security, and prosperity of common people.

Positive trajectory

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrehman Al-Thani, Ambassador of Qatar calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

PM appreciates positive trajectory in Pak-Qatar ties

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday appreciated the positive trajectory in the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Qatar.

He also congratulated the Qatari leadership for the successful hosting of the FIFA-2022 World Cup in

Qatar.

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of the State of Qatar in Pakistan Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister lauded the remarkable reforms

undertaken by the State of Qatar in the field of labour.

The prime minister remarked that Pakistan felt pleased and honoured to assist by providing security personnel for the FIFA World Cup 2022.

It was a matter of pride that 'Al-Rihla', the football being

used in the World Cup was 'Made in Pakistan', he added.

During the meeting, the ambassador conveyed well wishes to the leadership and people of Pakistan from the brotherly people and leadership of State of Qatar.

Pakistan and Qatar enjoy close and cordial fraternal

ties, rooted deep in shared faith, mutual trust and understanding, and close cooperation.

Qatar is home to more than 210,000 Pakistanis, who are contributing to the progress, prosperity and economic development of the two brotherly countries. News

Government will not compromise on Public Health. Dr. Nisar Cheema

Hasna Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Smoking tobacco products are just as harmful to human health as other tobacco products. The tobacco industry is once again trying to mislead policy makers to legalize a new harmful product in Pakistan which has been banned by more than 12 countries around the world, including Australia, Brazil, Norway and Singapore. Europe is going to ban it soon.

This was said in a consultative meeting organized by PANAH titled 'Tactics of tobacco mafia to mislead policy makers' which was held at a local hotel in Murree. Secretary general of PANAH Mr. Sanaullah Ghumman was host of the event. Among the guests were Members of National Assembly Dr. Nisar Cheema, Uzma Jadoon, Nizhat Pathan, Naveed Anwar Jeeva, Dr. Samina Motal, Zahra Fatemi, Ramesh Lal, Parliamentary Secretary Education Vijaya Qamar, Senator John Mehtab Hussain, Adviser to the Prime Minister, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, and Mehwish Zaheer and



Samira Khalid from Echo.

While addressing the ceremony, Dr. Nisar Cheema said that public health is top priority of government. We will not compromise on public health of people. Dr. Samina Matloob said that tobacco products are very harmful for human health. Heavy taxes shall be imposed on them.

Zahra Fatmi said that nothing is more harmful of human health than tobacco. It is the leading cause

of lungs cancer and many other diseases. Sitara Ayaz said that government has no other option than to impose heavy taxes on tobacco because they are very harmful for human health.

Iqbal Zaffar Jhagra appreciated the efforts of PANAH and said that what PANAH is doing is actually the responsibility of the government. We are with PANAH in campaign against tobacco products.

Sanaullah Ghumman said

that PANAH has been exposing these industry tactics before and will continue to do its part to save our youth and the future of Pakistan.

Due to the same tactics of the industry, 1200 new children are starting smoking in Pakistan every day, which is having terrible consequences on their health and livelihood.

Now they want to legalize the heating tobacco products as being less harmful to health and less smoke, even

though they have the same harmful effects on health as cigarettes and have some additional chemicals as well.

We have also written letters to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in this regard to immediately remove it from the agenda of the Cabinet and invite all the stakeholders.

We request our parliamentarians to listen to our proposals and implement them because it is directly related to human lives and the tobacco industry is only interested in their profits. Sophia Mansoori said that the tobacco industry is misleading the policy makers with new tactics.

Sometimes they are bringing a product called Velo and sometimes sheesha. The policy makers should understand the tactics of the industry. We strongly demand the government not to compromise the health of the people for the benefit of the industry.

The parliamentarians said they would raise their voice in parliament regarding heating products and oppose legalizing them.

China strongly condemns attack on Pakistan's embassy in Kabul: Mao Ning



BELJING :China on Wednesday strongly condemned the attack on the Pakistani embassy in Kabul last week and said it firmly opposed all forms of violence and terrorist acts.

Pakistan's embassy in Kabul came

under attack on Friday, leaving one security guard critically injured.

"We extend sympathy to those injured in the attack," the spokesperson said.

Mao Ning remarked that China had been closely following the security situation in Afghanistan and added, "China will continue to firmly support Afghanistan in combating all forms of terrorism and violence to safeguard its national security and stability." APP

Federal Ombudsman review performance with Secretary Energy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has summoned the Secretary Energy and Chief Executives of DISCOs against high number of complaints. The meeting was presided by the Federal Ombudsman which was attended by Senior Officers of WMS, Secretary Power Division Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Chief Executives of IESCO, LESCO and PESCO. The meeting was informed that during the year 2022 more than 56000 complaints were registered by the citizens against power sector companies. To review the performance of these companies and to address deficiencies therein which are causing huge hardship to people, because these consumers are already paying high charges beyond their capacity to pay.

The meeting noted that the

Wafaqi Mohtasib Office provides speedy relief to the common man within 60 days without any cost. This reduces the burden on our civil courts and NEPRA. It was informed that complaints involving big sums related to industrial and commercial consumers are referred to civil courts and NEPRA. Consequently, the poorest sector of the society has easy access to Wafaqi Mohtasib's 17 Regional Offices, spread throughout the country.

The Chair raised the issue that in some cases the Electric Supply Companies have gone to High Courts resulting in huge delays and hardship to poor consumers involving small amounts. These issues and systemic problems were discussed in the meeting requiring urgent action.

The Ministry of Energy was advised to ensure setting up of facilitation centres at major offices to help complainants.



ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday.

Ethiopian Envoy praises Pakistan for timely rolling out 'Engage Africa Policy'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Wednesday appreciated the government of Pakistan for timely rolling out its 'Engage Africa Policy' to explore areas of mutual economic interest within the African continent through robust economic development and trade.

"It is my firm belief that the current century belongs to Africa which is emerging as a major destination for all the big investors around the world due to rapid pace of development and progress there," the ambassador said while speaking at the Islamabad Conclave 2022.

"Gone are the days when Africa was portrayed by the world as a gloomy and underdeveloped

place, marred by civil wars and backwardness," he said, adding the situation had been changed in the continent altogether.

He said Africa had undergone a lot of transformation shaping its own destiny and emerging as a land of opportunities.

Since the beginning of 21st century, he said there had been a remarkable improvement in the governance style of African countries and political stability had become a hallmark of the continent with more democratic accountability and transparency within the governments.

He said by 2050, a quarter of the world's populations would be in Africa which would shape the planet earth's future. "Africa's unprecedented population growth will have impact on geopolitics, global trade, work force, and other dominant prospects," he added.

Giving some recommenda-

tions for reaping the fruits of "Engage Africa Policy", he called for establishing the institutional linkages between Pakistan and the African countries to boost bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation for strengthening political, security, economic, social, and cultural ties.

"It is also imperative for the Pakistani government to strengthen its relations with Ethiopia which is a gate way to Africa and connect the former with the latter," he remarked.

He said Ethiopia was playing a leading role in pan-Africa since the colonial period and still had a strong legacy in shaping the political, socio-economic and regional integration while striving to achieve agenda 2063 of the Africa Union.

Ethiopia, he said, was the founding member of the League of Nations, UN, OAU, African intercontinental free trade

agreement and promoting free movement of people, goods and services across the continent. He said his country also owned the largest Pan-Africa Airlines with the name of Ethiopian Airlines.

He said Ethiopia attached great importance to advancing the bilateral relationship with Pakistan, and "opening of our mission in Islamabad reflects our commitment in this regard."

He said both Ethiopia and Pakistan shared similarities in many ways as both were heirs of ancient civilizations, influential diaspora and share social, cultural and political values. It had a federal system like that of Pakistan which held elections at regular intervals.

He said Ethiopia was on upward trajectory registering a double-digit economy which had transformed the livelihood and well-being of its citizens. It had developed a home-grown econ-



omy as a result of the reforms initiated in 2018 led by Prime Minister of Ethiopia H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who envisioned to make the country a beacon of Africa's Prosperity.

"Currently, the bilateral trade

between the two countries is minimal and amounts to 78 million US dollars, however, my target is to take it to 200 million US dollars by the end of 2023," he vowed.

He said his country was power-

ing its progress through cheap, clean and environment-friendly energy which was also being exported to other countries in the continent including Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan, connecting regional integration through energy.

"My country has almost completed the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam which is being built on the Nile River and set to produce 6,500 MW of clean electricity that can be sold at cheap price to neighboring countries and other regions.

He said a one-window facility was on the cards where the investors would have all the facilities for import and export under one roof.

Ethiopia has been offering multiple incentives to the investors who would be exporting the products to other destinations after ensuring their manufacturing in the country, he added.

Largest-ever Pak-Australia parliamentary friendship group set up at Australian parliament

Spokesman Report

CANBERRA : The largest-ever Australia-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group with 38 members has been established at the 47th Parliament of Australia.

The group comprises members from both the Houses of the Australian Parliament – the Senate and the House of Representatives with representation from all the Australian States.

The Parliamentary Friendship Group is chaired by Maria Vamvakinou MP from the ruling Australian Labor Party (ALP), while Rowan Ramsey MP from the opposition

Liberal Party is the vice chair.

The other members of the group include Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles MP, President of the Senate Senator Susan Lines, Speaker of the House of Representatives Dugald Milton Dick, MP; former Foreign Minister Senator Marise Payne and former Defence Minister Senator Linda Reynolds.

High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri in a statement said the establishment of Pakistan-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Groups highlights the significance of friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries.

He said in addition to promoting

parliamentary cooperation, these groups will also help further strengthen bilateral relations and expand cooperation in multiple areas.

Pakistan and Australia have maintained friendly and cooperative relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries soon after Pakistan gained independence in 1947. The bilateral cooperation over the past 75 years has extended to the areas of politics; trade and investment, defence and security, science and technology, social and economic development, education, agriculture, sports, tourism, and the environment. The two countries have established multiple

institutional mechanisms to discuss ongoing cooperation and explore new avenues of future collaboration. The presence of over 100,000 strong Pakistani Diaspora in Australia acts as a strong bridge between the two countries and their peoples.

In Pakistan, both the Senate and the National Assembly have separate Pakistan-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Groups. Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar is the Convener of the Group in the Senate, while Speaker of the National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf, MNA is the President and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, MNA is the Convener.



Winter Festival

LAHORE: Visitors arriving to enjoy Winter Festival at Race Course Park in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Government should reduce borrowing from banks

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Wednesday said the agricultural economy has been destroyed by the floods therefore banks should help revive this sector which is a source of income for the majority of the population.

Banks continue to prioritize lending to the government and big businesses but it should also give loans to the agricultural sector and SMEs to revive the economy, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that there is a huge gap between government revenue and expenditure which is being met by borrowing from commercial banks at very high rates.

Banks are also happy because these loans carry zero risk which suits their businesses but these institutions should also consider their responsibility, he added.

The business leader said that from July 1 to November 18, the government has taken a loan of 1.238 trillion rupees, while the private sector got loans of only 42.6 billion.

The government is taking a huge amount of loans surpassing the agreed target therefore resources have to be allocated to pay the interest on them leaving little funds to cater to the social sector and development works.

He noted that ignoring the agriculture and private sector slows down the pace of economic growth which affects GDP while increasing unemployment.

During 2021, the federal government borrowed 2,959 trillion from banks while the private sector could secure loans of 766 billion rupees.

The federal government took loans of 3.44 trillion rupees in 2022, while loans of 1.61 trillion were given to the private sector, which was disappointing.

According to the World Bank, fewer loans are being given to the private sector for the past several years, which is affecting the economy.

To remedy this situation, the government will have to increase its revenue, give priority to direct taxation, reduce its expenditure and ensure better utilization of resources.

Pakistan in dire need to upgrade healthcare system: civil society

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Expressing grave concern over Pakistan's healthcare system, representatives from AwazCDS-Pakistan, Pakistan Development Alliance and Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) shared where Pakistan is standing in terms of achieving Universal Health Coverage. They said in a joint statement that Pakistan is far away in achieving universal health coverage unless GDP spending's on health sector enhanced at least up to 8.2% from 2.8% today.

Pakistan's healthcare system is extremely under served by both government and private sector as we spend only 2.8% of GDP to provide primary and tertiary level health services to 223 million people. This is pertinent to mention here that public spending of GDP is less than half (0.9%) of the private spending i.e. 1.9%. This spending is lowest if we compare with other peer countries in the region.

Chief Executive, AwazCDS – Pakistan demanded that currently number of healthcare providers are far less than needed. For example Doctors rate per 1000 population is 0.6 whereas the least requirement is 0.9. This leads to greater vulnerability of poor households to health shocks. The number of other medical professionals and personnel such as nurses and midwives should increase to almost six times.

According to the most recent Citizens Scorecard conducted by AwazCDS-Pakistan only 28.90% people are satisfied by the health services being provided both in public and private sector, Zia added. Pakistan progress on SDG 3 (good health and well-being for all) is stagnating and need immediate attention of public and private sector.

He further highlighted that there are numerous weaknesses in the health system with respect to reproductive health bill awaiting cabinet's approval, mental health policy is obsolete and was revised in 2003 last time, weak monitoring and feedback mechanism, poor inter department coordination and ineffective budget monitoring etc. are adding in the challenges.

Women entrepreneurs' delegation to visit Gurdwara Gru Nanak Sahib

Mian Abdul Rashid

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FWCCI) has special focus on improving the working relationships with Minorities and has constituted standing committee on 'Minorities Management at FWCCI, said Mrs. Rubina Amjad, President, Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FWCCI), she was talking to media after having a meeting with Mr. Ahmar Naik, the Deputy Commissioner Nankana Sahib.

She was leading a high powered women entrepreneurs delegation to visit Gurdwara Gru Nanak Sahib the other day. She told that a warm welcome



and reception was made by Mr. Ahmar Naik, the Deputy Commissioner Nankana Sahib. She appreciated for the hospitality and fool proof security cover made by him to the delegation visitors.

In the meeting, she requested Mr. Ahmar Naik, the Deputy Commissioner to arrange Sikh women delegation to visit the FWCCI on their forthcoming visit to Gurdwara Gru Nankana Sahib in order to FWCCI

promoting women empowerment. She further requested for displaying of women goods at the forthcoming Sikh Community event at Nankana Sahib to promote bilateral trade with them.

The possibility of working relationship in the hospitality and tourism development was also discussed with the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Ahmar Naik, the Deputy Commissioner Nankana Sahib that was the appreciative of a first-ever women entrepreneurs delegation visit to Gurdwara Gru Nanak Sahib. He assured of their help and assistance to arrange displaying of women goods at the forthcoming event at Nankana Sahib and cooperation in other matters of mutual interest.

Checking the security arrangements of the polio campaign

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: According to the details, DPO Dera Muhammad Shoaib visited Daraban, Darazinda and Parowa Circles near BHU in Khoi Behara in connection with checking the security arrangements of the ongoing 05-day polio campaign in Dera Ismail Khan, terrorists attacked the convoy of PO Dera Muhammad Shoaib from an unknown direction fired indiscriminately.

Due to the firing from an unknown direction, the vehicles including the DPO's vehicle were damaged.

The vehicle in which the DPO was present was also damaged in the terrorist attack.

DPO Dera remained safe from the firing while an officer in the

Aga Khan University Hospital receive College of American Pathologists Accreditation

Bureau Report

KARACHI: They say 'Quality is a journey, not a destination.' This is fully embodied in the DNA of the Aga Khan University Hospital, where Quality, as one of our four guiding principles, along with Relevance, Access and Impact, is constantly invested in and progressed upon.

The latest example of this is CAP – College of American Pathologists – Accreditations for more of AKUH's Clinical Laboratories across Pakistan. In a journey that began long before our—and Pakistan's—first CAP accreditation in February 2017, the AKUH Main Campus has been re-accredited twice since, and now our Outreach labs are also CAP accredited.

Outreach Labs are those lab facilities which are equipped to process routine clinical lab samples quickly, so patients can get rapid turnaround on their lab tests. In the AKUH Outreach Health Network, our Outreach Labs serve their home cities, as well as surrounding geographical regions. The same level of the highest quality of testing is offered across all 290+ AKUH lab facilities in Pakistan; CAP accreditations offer external endorsements of this fact.

The accreditation certifies that AKUH's clinical laboratories follow over 3,500 international standards to provide our patients with timely and accurate results every time, which is essential for timely disease diagnosis and treatment. A

team of three inspectors, Dr Aaron Han, Dr Stefan Weber and Ms Linana Seejan, who are practising professionals qualified through the CAP training programme – carried out the virtual and on-site audits of the AKUH Clinical Labs.

AKU President, Dr Sulaiman Shahbuddin, said, "Our lab network's widespread impact throughout Pakistan has contributed to AKU becoming a national institution," adding that we have excellent leaders and teams of people, who work at our labs across the country; each one of them has played an integral role in this success.

Dr Farhat Abbas, Interim CEO of AKU Health Services, Pakistan, while lauding the commitment, dedication and



hard work of all the teams involved in the accreditation process, said that it is a great moment of pride and joy.

While addressing the audience, Dr Erum Khan, Chair,

Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine AKU, highlighted how AKUH has been a trendsetter in the quality and excellence of diagnostic services in Pakistan.

At a post-audit summation ceremony held at AKU's Stadium Road campus on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, the CAP team expressed their satisfaction and delight and commended the efforts of the people who were involved in maintaining the highest quality standards across our laboratories every day. While congratulating AKUH on achieving the CAP accreditation for the Outreach Labs, Dr Aaron Han, Chief Auditor CAP, lauded the high-quality standards throughout AKUH's lab network and said, "Your quality systems are very strong, and you have competent people who manage your labs. You are the leader of lab systems throughout Pakistan."

Appreciating the dedication

of the teams involved, Dr Farooq Ghani, Director of CAP Accreditation at AKU, said, "70% of all clinical decisions regarding patient treatment and management are made based on lab results, AKUH was the first lab system in Pakistan to receive CAP accreditation in 2017."

Our mission at AKU is to make high-quality diagnostics available throughout the country, Dr Ghani went on to add. This CAP-accredited level of quality testing is available across Pakistan to people from all walks of life; patient welfare support is offered to patients at over 240 locations across Pakistan. In addition, Zakat support to eligible and willing mustahiq is also offered at over 100 locations in the country.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:30 am
Zohr 11:59 am
Asr 3:21 pm
Maghrib 4:59 pm
Isha 6:28 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
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Approval granted to establish COMSATS Quetta Campus: Science Minister

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Agha Hassan Baloch on Wednesday said that the establishment of COMSATS campus in Quetta will have far-reaching impacts and this project will prove to be as a milestone.

The minister was speaking at a high-level meeting held here with the participation of the officials of the ministry and relevant departments.

During the meeting, the approval was given to open COMSATS Quetta Campus to provide state-of-the-art education to the students in Balochistan on the instructions of Agha Hassan Baloch.

The federal minister issued instructions to all stakeholders to take necessary steps in this regard on an emergency basis.

The infrastructure for the establishment of COMSATS Quetta Campus is available with Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research at Mian Ghandi Hazarganj but the federal Minister also issued orders to release funds for its renovation. APP

12th Pakistan Mountain Festival

'Women Move Mountains' art exhibition kicks off

Tooba Khan

RAWALPINDI: As many as 57 paintings in oil on canvas by the students of twin cities were put on display at Rawalpindi Art Gallery in collaboration with the Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi on Wednesday. Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) organized the exhibition of artwork, culminated at a live painting competition on the theme "Women Move Mountains" organized at the Fine Arts Department of the Fatima Jinnah Women University.

This is the fourth event of the two-week long 12th Pakistan Mountain Festival, an annual flagship event of Devcom-Pakistan, to commemorate the UN's International Mountains Day (IMD) that falls on December 11. The artwork on display is by the students from Fatima Jinnah Women University, National



College of the Arts (NCA), Rawalpindi Women University, Westminster Academy, Foundation University Islamabad campus, SZABIST University, International Islamic University, FG College for Women Kashmir Road, Islamabad Model College for Girls and National Textile Institute.

PAC Rawalpindi Director Waqar Ahmed appreciated the students work saying the thematic work will educate them about the challenges confront-

ing mountains. Visual arts have more potential to reflect emotions and feelings to touch the hearts than words. Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi always encourages youth to explore its potential in creative arts.

Speaking on the occasion, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and founder of Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmed said: "Art plays a central role in educating people about the present day challenges confronting us. The colours

and forms touch our hearts and souls. The exhibits highlight mountain women's role in environmental protection and social and economic development in mountain areas. Both women and mountains are the neglected ones in our society. Women are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guardians of biodiversity, keepers of traditional knowledge, custodians of local culture and experts in traditional medicine. Somehow, mountain women's poten-

tial and contribution to conservation is undermined. Mountain women's climate resilience shall be the focus to empower them to face the emerging challenges."

First prize winner Muhammad Adullah of National College of Arts (NCA) Rawalpindi in his conceptual work painted in black and white acrylic on canvas a woman holding a crescent in her hands but her head is chopped off, and her blood flowing from top to bottom of mountains.

Wisal Khan won second prize

for his work in oil on canvas. The eye-catching mountains and a woman climber in shades of light with rationally reflected contours of mountains in the shimmering tones. The proportionate treatment to the surface made him successful.

Other prize winners included Amna Ayyaz from NCA Rawalpindi, Aqsa Nawaz from Fatima Jinnah Women University, and the two students of Rawalpindi Women University Zeerak Fatima and Mahzaib Gillani.

Head of Art and Design at the Westminster Academy Riffat Ara Baig said that they have been engaged with students of different age groups for the last two decades to sensitize them about the environment and conservation of natural resources. The educational institutions shall consistently engage their students and their parents to raise awareness about rational use of resources around us.

Protest

ISLAMABAD: Employees of Benazir Income Support Programme shouting slogans during protest in favor of their demands outside (BISP) office in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

wecamp Festival to Support and Celebrate Women Entrepreneurs

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The wecamp Festival March 2022, wecamp is set to kick off the wecamp Festival December 2022. The festival will take place at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad on the 10th and 11th of December 2022, from 12 pm to 10 pm.

The festival is being organized by atom camp and wecamp in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Ministry of Commerce.

The festival is open for all walks of life. Citizens of Islamabad and Rawalpindi must visit the festival to support and



celebrate home-based women entrepreneurs.

The festival will help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses and expand their market outreach. This

year, special focus has been paid to reaching marginalised communities of women. Accordingly, wecamp has partnered with The SEED Program to expand opportuni-

ties to twenty women entrepreneurs from KPK at the festival.

"I am incredibly proud of the work wecamp is doing to facilitate the financial empowerment of women in Pakistan. Our women entrepreneurs are beacons of inspiration for their resilience in business in face of all social norms and expectations. These women are immensely talented and I urge everyone to visit them at our festival; listen to their stories and share the pride they take in their work." Laiba Ahmad-CEO and Co-founder of wecamp

TDAP will display a stall for information and resources to help women to take their business to the next level.

BankIslami Sponsors Vision Her Event for Working Women

KARACHI: BankIslami, Pakistan's leading Islamic financial institution with 350+ branches in more than 123 cities became the lead sponsor for VisionHer event "Women, Wellbeing, Work" which was learning, mentoring and networking event for working women at KSBL.

VisionHer is a community for working women that facilitates ambitious, career oriented working women to thrive in their careers and lead a meaningful, balanced life. The event was divided in 3 sessions that focused on mental, physical and financial well-being.

BankIslami is introducing BankIslami Mashal - Women Banking that exclusively caters to their unique needs of women belonging to all walks of life.

A Woman's life journey leads her through various memorable life moments such as opening her first bank account at the start of her first job, or buying her first car, or building her first house or opening her own business enterprise. At all her milestones, BankIslami understand her needs. BankIslami recognize, respect and responds to her requirements by providing her with women centric products and service offerings.

BankIslami gives women customers the ability to open their bank accounts without any reliance on anyone. Women can make their own financial decisions and be in control of their money matters. To make things easier, the Bank is offering a wide range of dedicated solutions exclusively for women such as auto-financing, muskan home financing, financial education and literacy among other things.

Book fair, food festival for female students held at IIUI



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: In connection with Extravaganza 2022, a book fair and food festival organized for the female students of International Islamic University (IIU) was inaugurated here at the new campus on Wednesday by Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon and President Islamabad Bar Shoaib Shaheen.

On the occasion, IIU President Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, Vice Presidents of the university, Deans, DGs, Students Advisors, Provosts and a large number of female students were also present. The chief guest visited the book stall set up by the publishers hailing from different cities of the country.

Mr. Shoaib Shaheen said that IIUI has a legacy of providing a peaceful milieu and diverse culture. He said that on campus more than 30 thousand students are indeed ambassadors of the university who are being nurtured in an ideal learning environment. He also said that the book fair is an effort to bring youth closer to reading habits.

Int'l Conference on Cyber Warfare & Security kicks off at Air University

Amjad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security (ICCWS) started by National Centre for Cyber Security (NCCS) at Air University (AU), Islamabad. The University has unique privilege of hosting an IEEE International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security since 2020. The Chairman P@SHA attended opening ceremony as Chief Guest while Vice Chancellor Air University, Air Marshal Javaid Ahmad HI (M) (Retd), Director NCCS Prof. Dr. Kashif Kifayat, and other speakers, participants and honorary guests were present in the ceremony.

Chairman P@SHA, M. Zohaib Khan, while addressing the ceremony emphasized that Cybersecurity is a vital issue not only in Pakistan but across the globe. He appreciated Air University's various efforts and

the most recent initiative of establishment of National Cyber Security Academy. He added launching of such programmes helping in improvement of Pakistan's cyber security posture, both nationally and internationally. He said HEC should strengthen the National Centre of Cyber Security by extending its support for Indigenization and commercialization efforts to help NCCS in establishing Pakistan Cyber Security Industry.

Vice Chancellor, Air University Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed HI (M) (Retd), while addressing the audience highlighted that cyber world is complicated and constantly evolving. He said cybersecurity workforce needs to be trained in a well-defined formal way to meet and exceed the national cyber security requirements. He mentioned that Air University as one of the pioneer institutions in Pakistan to initiate numerous training

programmes in cyber security that are well recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan.

Director, National Center for Cyber Security Prof. Dr. Kashif Kifayat, in his speech added that he is proud to lead NCCS which has helped Pakistan moving up in global rankings for cyber security. This Center is a collaborative platform that welcomes adjunct faculty members and researchers from academic institutions, both locally and internationally, who specialize in industrial cyber security. He emphasized on need to make the future generations of Pakistan fully prepared than any of their predecessors to handle fast-evolving cyber threats.

Earlier, the Habib Bank Limited (HBL) Chief Information Security Officer, Asif Meenai and Air Commodore (R) Afzaal Ahmed Khan, Director ORIC has signed MOU

between Air University and HBL. The MoU demonstrates the parties' intent and willingness to work together in areas of shared interest, particularly in the fields of big data, artificial intelligence, cyber security, and machine learning.

The two-day International Conference includes a number of presentations, keynote speeches, panel discussions, technical hands-on workshops, paper presentations, technical expert talks, and illuminating statements by CEOs and CISOs of prestigious companies. The conference management committee thanked to the generous contributions of numerous national and international keynote speakers from various countries, including Estonia, Belgium, Qatar, Malaysia, and the USA, for delivering their cyber security talks at the International Conference. Through this, the



Chairman P@SHA, M. Zohaib Khan, Vice Chancellor, Air University Air Marshal Javaid Ahmad HI (M) (Retd), Director NCCS Prof. Dr. Kashif Kifayat and other dignitaries pose for a group photo at the opening ceremony of ICCWS-22.

ICCWS offered students and professionals from all over the world an extraordinary learn-

ing opportunity while practitioners from various part of globe have shared their research,

ideas, methods, and experiences connected to various aspects of cybersecurity.

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Soaring debt burden jeopardizing recovery of poor countries

Rebeca Grynspan

Amid cascading crises and inequalities, the head of UN trade agency has called for stronger multilateral solutions to tackle the debt crisis facing developing countries.

Speaking in Geneva, Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said that between 70 and 85 per cent of the debt that emerging and low-income countries are responsible for is in a foreign currency.

This has left them highly vulnerable to the kind of large currency shocks that hit public spending – precisely at a time when populations need financial support from their governments.

Ms. Grynspan – speaking at the 13th UNCTAD Debt Management Conference on Tuesday – said that so far this year, at least 88 countries have seen their currencies depreciate against the powerful US dollar, which is still the reserve currency of choice for many in times of global economic stress. And in 31 of these countries, their currencies have dropped by more than 10

per cent.

Government debt levels as a share of GDP (gross domestic product) increased in over 100 developing countries between 2019 and 2021, said UNCTAD. Excluding China, this increase is estimated at about \$2 trillion.

“This has not happened because of the bad behavior of one country. This has happened because of systemic shocks that have hit many countries at the same time,” Ms. Grynspan said.

With interest rates rising sharply, the debt crisis is putting enormous strain on public finances, especially in developing countries that need to invest in education, health care, their economies and adapting to climate change.

“Debt cannot and must not become an obstacle for achieving the 2030 Agenda – the climate transition the world desperately needs,” she argued.

UNCTAD said it advocates the creation of a multilateral legal framework for debt restructuring and relief.

Such a framework is needed to facilitate timely and orderly debt crisis resolution with the involvement of all creditors, building on the debt reduction programme established by the Group of 20 major economies (G20) known as the Common Framework.

“We must support UNCTAD’s call for a reform of international monetary and financial governance,” Bolivian President Luis Arce said in a statement delivered by the country’s finance minister, Marcelo Montenegro.

Montenegro called for re-examining key aspects of the international financial architecture, including the debt sustainability assessments that serve as a basis for negotiations between debtors and creditors in relation to debt restructuring.

As debt burdens rise, developing country governments end up in a vicious circle, unable to invest in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and grow their economies, making it even harder to pay their debts.

If a country defaults, the terms of debt restructuring are usually set by groups of creditors competing to get the best terms, rather than giving priority to economic and developmental concerns, or how sustainable it is to keep up with payments.

“To resolve these issues equitably, this needs to be done in a manner that maintains the debtor countries’ ability to grow and meet its current and future debt obligations, while also fulfilling its commitments to the SDGs,” Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe said in a statement delivered by the country’s permanent representative in Geneva, Ambassador Gothami Silva.

“I believe that the United Nations is best place to find solutions to this end,” Ms. Silva said.

UNCTAD said that if the median increase in rated sovereign debts since 2019 were fully reflected in interest payments, then governments would pay an additional \$1.1 trillion on the global debt stock in 2023, estimates show.

This amount is almost four times the estimated annual investment of \$250 billion required for climate adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, according to an UNCTAD report.

“The anachronistic global financial architecture inhibits timely access to affordable development and climate finance,” Belize’s finance minister, Christopher Coye, said ahead of the conference.

At UNCTAD’s debt management conference, Barbados’ finance minister, Ryan Staughn, said the world needed to find a solution to the debt crisis “that allows countries to be able to continue to respond to the climate crisis without getting ourselves into trouble.”

“I need not tell you the difference between borrowing to build a school or polyclinic versus borrowing to build an airport or a seaport, which have totally different objectives,” Mr. Staughn said in a statement delivered on behalf of Prime Minister Mia Amor Motley.

UNCTAD said it promotes multilateral solutions in the areas of capacity-building, debt transparency and debt crisis resolution and relief.

The organization is supporting countries through its Debt Management and Financial Analysis Programme (DMFAS), one of its most successful technical assistance initiatives.

The initiative offers countries proven solutions for managing debt and producing reliable data for policymaking, said UNCTAD. Since its establishment over four decades ago, DMFAS has supported 116 institutions – mainly finance ministries and central banks – in 75 countries.

One example is Chad, which in January 2022 became the first country to officially request debt restructuring under the G20’s Common Framework. On debt transparency, UNCTAD supports the establishment of a publicly accessible registry of debt data for developing countries.

The next World Cup will jump to 48 teams. Is bigger better?

The next World Cup will be the biggest ever after world soccer body FIFA took the leap from a 32-team field to 48 teams in 2026.

It means more of soccer’s so-called “little teams” that didn’t make it to Qatar will be given a chance of a lifetime when the tournament is hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

That could be great news for everyone who was entertained by Saudi Arabia’s stirring upset of Lionel Messi’s Argentina at this World Cup, Japan’s two wins over former champions Germany and Spain or Morocco’s humbling of star-studded Belgium and Spain on its way to an unexpected quarterfinal run. More surprises surely await in four years.

Still, it’s not clear to everyone that bigger is better. While 48 teams might increase the chances of fairytale moments such as Saudi Arabia’s 2-1 win over Argentina in the group stage, there’s also a good chance of the opposite: more one-sided games that may take some of the shine off a tournament that is meant to be the best vs. the best.

Spain 7, Costa Rica 0 also happened at this World Cup. As did England’s 6-2 rout of Iran, France’s 4-1 dismantling of Australia and Qatar becoming the first host country to lose its three group stage matches. FIFA will need to dig even deeper into the lower levels of international soccer to get from 32 to 48.

“It means that we will have to find 16 more good teams,” said Arsene Wenger, FIFA’s Chief of Global Football Development and a central figure in making a 48-team World Cup workable.

FIFA is still promoting the expansion as an upgrade and good for the global game. All continents will have more slots and FIFA says opening soccer’s marquee event to more of its 211 member countries or territories should have an impact beyond the teams, with the prospect of even more eyes on TV screens and more kids inspired to kick balls across the globe.

“I am convinced that if the teams, the countries have more opportunities to go to the world stage, it will do more for (soccer) development inside that country,” Wenger said.

Qatar’s World Cup is the first in the Middle East and the furthest FIFA has ventured from the game’s heartlands in Europe and South America. That decision has provoked its own harsh criticism but the on-field action might have been a timely advert for the 48-team plan, which FIFA announced in 2017 and has had to defend ever since over doubts about what the exact format will be.

FIFA initially indicated it would be 16 groups of three teams, but that idea was widely criticized. Another option could be 12 groups of four teams. Wenger said FIFA’s decision-making council has not decided yet.

In Qatar, Japan was one of three Asian teams to qualify for the last 16, which had never happened before. African teams collected more points in the group stage than ever. Morocco topped a group containing 2018 World Cup runner-up Croatia and semifinalist Belgium, and advanced to the quarterfinals by beating Spain on penalties on Tuesday. Cameroon signed off by beating Brazil, the first time an African team has conquered the five-time champion and soccer’s most celebrated team at a World Cup.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

From flickering fireflies to lowly dung beetles, insects are vanishing

Reuters Features

As a boy in the 1960s, David Wagner would run around his family’s Missouri farm with a glass jar clutched in his hand, scooping flickering fireflies out of the sky.

“We could fill it up and put it by our bedside at night,” says Wagner, now an entomologist.

That’s all gone, the family farm now paved over with new homes and manicured lawns. And Wagner’s beloved fireflies – like so many insects worldwide – have largely vanished in what scientists are calling the global Insect Apocalypse.

As human activities rapidly transform the planet, the global insect population is declining at an unprecedented rate of up to 2% per year. Amid deforestation, pesticide use, artificial light pollution and climate change, these critters are struggling – along with the crops, flowers and other animals that rely on them to survive.

“Insects are the food that make all the birds and make all the fish,” said Wagner, who works at the University of Connecticut. “They’re the fabric tethering together every freshwater and terrestrial ecosystem across the planet.”

TREE OF LIFE

It’s easy to think insects are doing OK. After all, they’re nearly everywhere – crawling through rainforest canopy, burrowing into soil, skimming freshwater ponds or, of course, flying through the air.

On the biological “tree of life” – which classifies organisms to describe their evolutionary and genetic relationship to one another – insects fall under the branch, or phylum, called Arthropods, one of the 40

branches of the Animal Kingdom.

In terms of diversity, insects are unrivaled, representing two-thirds of the world’s more than 1.5 million documented animal species with millions more bugs likely still undiscovered, scientists say. By comparison, there are roughly 73,000 vertebrates, or animals with a backbone from humans to birds and fish – these represent less than 5% of the known Animal Kingdom, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Their importance to the environment can’t be understated, scientists say. Insects are crucial to the food web, feeding birds, reptiles and mammals such as bats. For some animals, bugs are simply a treat. Plant-eating orangutans delight in slurping up termites from a teeming hill. Humans, too, see some 2,000 species of insects as food.

But insects are so much more than food. Farmers depend on these critters pollinating crops and churning soil to keep it healthy, among other activities.

* Insects pollinate more than 75% of global crops, a service valued at up to \$577 billion per year, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) says.

* In the United States, insects perform services valued in 2006 at an estimated \$57 billion per year, according to a study in the journal BioScience.

* Dung beetles alone are worth some \$380 million per year to the U.S. cattle industry for their work breaking down manure and churning rangeland soil, the study found.

With fewer insects, “we’d have less food,” said ecologist Dave Goulson at the University of Sussex. “We’d see yields dropping of

all of these crops.”

And in nature, about 80% of wild plants rely on insects for pollination. “If insects continue to decline,” Goulson said, “expect some pretty dire consequences for ecosystems generally – and for people.”

BUGS IN DECLINE

Describing a stroll through Costa Rica’s Area de Conservacion Guanacaste rainforest, evolutionary ecologist Daniel Janzen in 2019 wrote: “Gone are the spiderwebs that decades back entangled those leaves. Gone is the nighttime sparkle in the leaves reflected from thousands of lycosid spider eyes.”

The world has lost 5% to 10% of all insect species in the last 150 years – or between 250,000 and 500,000 species, according to a February 2020 study in the journal Biological Conservation. Those losses are continuing, though estimates vary due to patchy data as well as uncertainty over how many insects exist.

In the tropics, insects can be “extremely hard to identify, because there are vastly more species than (we) are used to,” Janzen, a University of Pennsylvania professor, told Reuters. “There are more species within 100 kilometres of my dwelling in a national park in northwestern Costa Rica than in all of Europe.”

Not knowing exactly what’s out there makes it harder to detect trouble. One April 2020 analysis in the journal Science suggested the planet is losing about 9% of its land-dwelling insect population each decade. Another January 2021 paper tried to paint a clearer picture by synthesizing more than 80 insect studies and found that insect abundance is declining around 1% to 2% per year. For comparison, the human population is growing at slightly less than 1% per year.

Vietnam shifts gears on arms trade as it loosens ties with Russia

Spokesman Research

Vietnam is eyeing a major defence shift as it seeks to reduce its reliance on Russian arms and launch a push to export locally made weapons, officials and analysts said, with possible buyers in Africa, Asia – and potentially even Moscow.

The Southeast Asian nation is one of the world’s 20 biggest buyers of weapons amid on-and-off tensions with China, with an annual budget for arms imports estimated at about \$1 billion and set to grow, according to GlobalData, a provider of military procurement intelligence.

Most of that money has historically gone to Russia, which was for decades Vietnam’s main supplier of weapons and defence systems. That made Vietnam one of the top buyers of Russian arms, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which tracks global military expenditures.

But that is changing as Vietnam strives to become more self-sufficient, obtain advanced gear that Russia can’t provide, and faces Western pressure to reduce arms purchases from Moscow amid its invasion of Ukraine, analysts said.

The Defence Ministry referred questions about the country’s defence industry to the Foreign Ministry, which did not respond to requests for comment.

Last week the defence ministry in its official newspaper said Vietnamese state-owned Z111 military firm would exhibit pistols, machine guns, assault rifles and sniper rifles at the arms fair, with the aim of exporting them.

Dozens of Vietnamese defence firms, including army-controlled Viettel, will also showcase their wares. The government and military companies do not publish data on sales.

Simon Wezeman, senior researcher at SIPRI, said Vietnam’s known production capabilities were very limited, with only small reconnaissance drones having been delivered in the last decade – although the country has increased its capabilities for assembling radars,

missiles and ships designed by foreign partners.

Possible buyers for small arms would most likely be Vietnam’s neighbour Laos and African countries, where Vietnam could offer competitive prices, said Ha Hoang Hop, a military procurement expert and visiting fellow at Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

Phuong said Latin American countries and other Southeast Asian nations are other potential customers. A half-dozen Russian defence firms are registered for the Hanoi fair, including Rosoboronexport, the state agency that imports and exports weapons.

DIVERSIFICATION

Hop said Vietnam was negotiating possible deals to import satellites and other dual-use products from partners other than Russia.

That would accelerate a downward trend in imports of Russian weapons, whose value fell to just \$72 million last year (30% of overall imports) from a 2014 peak of \$1 billion, which that year was nearly 90% of the total, according to SIPRI.

Imports from Russia have dropped every year since then, except last year, when they slightly recovered after the 2020 nadir. That year, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced Vietnam’s military imports to only \$32 million, of which \$9 million worth were Russian arms.

Vietnam has in recent years bought military gear from new suppliers, including the United States, Israel, the Netherlands and South Korea, SIPRI data show.

With the war in Ukraine, which Russia calls a “special operation”, Vietnam appears to have sped up diversification.

India, Israel and Eastern European countries are better positioned as alternative suppliers because they can provide weapons compatible with the Russian systems that still account for 80% of Vietnam’s arsenal, analysts said.

For more advanced systems, manufacturers in the West or East Asia may also be potential suppliers, said Carl Thayer, an expert in Vietnam diplomacy at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra.

President for enhancing bilateral trade with Oman

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said Pakistan and Oman needed to work closely to substantially enhance the volume of bilateral trade by further deepening the business and investment ties.

Talking to the outgoing Ambassador of Oman to Pakistan, Al-Sheikh Dr Mohammed Omar Ahmed Al-Marhoon, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, he called for establishing close linkages and enhancing the interactions among the businessmen and investors of the two brotherly countries.

The president said Pakistan and Oman, which enjoyed a brotherly strategic partnership in many areas, were bound together by common history, cultural heritage, values, faith, traditions and proximity of geography.

The volume of mutual trade between the two countries stood at \$653 million and should be further enhanced by making collective efforts, he added.

President Alvi said the possibility of starting a ferry service between Pakistan and Oman should be explored. The ferry service, he added, would facilitate the export of Pakistani fresh vegetables, fishery and other edible items to the entire Middle East through Oman, which would also help improve the trade and investment between the two countries.

During the meeting, the



president highlighted the increasing trend of persecution of minorities, especially Muslims in India, the increase in violent incidents of Islamophobia, and atrocities committed by the Indian forces against the innocent Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

Dr Alvi urged the world

community to take notice of the persecution of minorities and rising Islamophobia in India and to use its influence for the resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute in accordance with the resolutions of United Nations Security Council and the aspirations of Kashmiri people.

He said Pakistan would

appreciate the early ratification of two recently signed memoranda of understanding on Maritime Cooperation and Defence Cooperation in the year 2020.

He stated that the Pakistani diaspora in Oman, approximately 250,000, was serving both the countries in various fields and the resolution of labour issues of

Pakistanis living in Oman would further cement relations between the two countries.

The president expressed the hope that the issue of recruitment of Baloch people from Gwadar and Makran, halted since 2015 due to the economic crunch in Oman, would be addressed at the appropriate level.

UNESCO & Geological Survey of Pakistan highlighted the importance of Geosciences



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Earth Sciences provide us with invaluable knowledge about our planet, its systems and its 4.6-billion-year history. This knowledge is essential for responding to present-day challenges of human society, such as preserving our Earth's resources for future generations, mitigating the impact of global warming and risks of geological hazards. To highlight the geological heritage of Pakistan, Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP) is looking forward to collaborating with UNESCO's International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) to formulate strategies to promote geo-tourism in the country. Geo-tourism will promote important geological sites while conserving natural, cultural, and geological heritage.

In this regard, UNESCO and Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP) organized a consultation meeting on 07th December, 2022 at Islamabad. Representatives of federal and provincial government organizations as well as academia participated in the event.

Dr. Sajjad Ahmad, Director General of GSP, highlighted the importance of preserving the unique geological features of international importance and geo-heritage of the country combined with tourism as Geotourism. Geoparks are believed to represent the paleo-geological as well as paleo-environmental record of a region and provide an insight to the appropriate use of natural resources.

Dr. Youssef Filali-Meknassi, Director UNESCO Islamabad in his remarks elaborated that Geoparks and tourism together provide an important spectrum that may help in promotion of the tourism industry in Pakistan. It can help to develop policies and plans to conserve the unique geological features of international importance and geological heritage of the country. Mr. Hassan Mahmood Yousafzai, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), in his remarks extended full support for the UNESCO's International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme in Pakistan and assured that Ministry would extend its full support for the GSP planned activities. The development of geoparks will bring improvement in the economic and social sector of the country. It will boost geotourism and will provide friendly environment for the researchers, community and tourists.

Capt. Rtd. Shehbaz Tahir Nadeem, Joint Secretary Development, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), in his concluding remarks appreciated GSP for its role and interest in establishing the IGGP Programme in Pakistan.

Director General GSP Dr. Sajjad Ahmad in his concluding remarks said that two subcommittees comprised of relevant Government Organizations and researchers will be announced very soon followed by a National Committee on IGGP to launch and implement the Programme in Pakistan.

Substantive deliberations will lead in formulation of a roadmap for the geoscience research and geoparks programme in Pakistan. There was consensus on the fact that there is a lot of potential in the country to promote its geological heritage such as Salt Range, Margala Hills National Park, Triple junction of three mightiest mountain ranges at Juglot, Khunjrab National Park, Chundargup mud volcanoes in Hingol National Park and Nagarparkar area Sindh.

Indonesian suicide bomber kills one, wounds at least 10

BANDUNG: A suspected militant, angered by Indonesia's new criminal code, killed one other person and wounded at least 10 in a suicide bomb attack at a police station in the city of Bandung on Wednesday, authorities said.

The suicide bomber was believed to be affiliated with the Daesh-inspired group Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and had previously been jailed on terrorism charges, Indonesian police chief Listyo Sigit Prabowo told a news conference.

The police chief said the attacker, identified as Agus Sujatno, was released in late 2021 and investigators had found dozens of documents protesting the country's controversial new criminal code at the crime scene.

"We found dozens of papers protesting the newly ratified criminal code," he said.

West Java police chief Suntuana earlier told Metro TV that authorities had found a blue motorbike at the scene, which they believed was used by the attacker.

Attached to the bike was a note carrying a message decriing the new criminal code as "an infidel product," Suntuana said.

Todd Elliott, a senior security analyst at Concord Consulting in Jakarta, said it was likely the attack had been planned for some time and was an ideological rejection of the country's new laws.

"While all the attention is on some of these sharia-based provisions in the criminal code and how that is an indication of the spread of conservative Islam in Indonesia, there are also changes in the criminal code that [extremists] would not support," he said.

"Including outlawing any ideology that goes against the state ideology, Pancasila, and that would also include extremist ideology."

Video footage from the scene of Wednesday's attack showed smoke rising from the damaged police station, with debris on the ground.

Japanese Consul General in Karachi visits Central Depository Company

KARACHI: A delegation from the Japanese Consulate in Karachi, headed by Honourable Odagiri Toshio San, Consul General of Japan in Karachi visited the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC) today. Representatives from Pakistan Japan Business Forum and leading Pakistani corporates also attended this event.

Mr. Moin M. Fudda-Chairman CDC welcomed the delegation and spoke about the long term bilateral relations between Japan & Pakistan while stressing on the need to foster greater ties on business and trade initiatives. Mr. Badiuddin Akber-CEO-CDC presented an overview of the Pakistan Capital Market landscape and CDC's key role in its development as an integral infrastructure institution that handles the settlement and custody of securities, while highlighting the association between CDC and Japan Securities Depositories Center, Inc. (JASDEC), which is CDC's counterpart from the Japanese Capital Market.

Japanese Consul General Odagiri Toshio San lauded CDC on its achievements



in transforming the Pakistani Capital Market. He said that "It is important to work further on bringing the two sides closer together for the benefit of both countries. Japan and Pakistan should bring together expertise and technology, particularly for bigger future projects through more effective Public

Private Partnerships."

Mr. Kalim Farooqui - Chairman Pakistan Japan Business Forum (PBJF) - also applauded the efforts of CDC in the development of Pakistan's Capital Market and highlighted that CDC has been a success story for Pakistan's business landscape. He stressed on the need

to scale up the efforts to strengthen the business ties between Pakistan and Japan for mutual benefit and progress. The event was attended by prominent industry leaders, including Dr. Shamshad Akhtar-Chairperson Pakistan Stock Exchange and Mr. Irfan Siddiqui - President Meezan Bank Limited.

The Diabetes Centre announces the launch of Blue Lilies

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Diabetes Centre and Novo Nordisk Pakistan under its Memorandum of Understanding announced the launch of TDC Blue Lilies Clinic for children living with Type-1 Diabetes. The ceremony was attended by H.E. Jakob Linulf Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, Dr Asjad Hameed Chairman Board of Directors, TDC, Tahir M. Abbasi, CEO TDC, Dr Nuzhat Hameed, Board Member of TDC and Rashed Rafique Butt, VP & GM Novo Nordisk.

Tahir M. Abbasi in his opening address briefed the audience about the goal of the project which was to increase awareness and educate the children living with type 1 diabetes along with their families, capacity building of HCPs on type 1 diabetes management, and lastly improve access to better diabetes care. He further highlighted that the clinic will be set up within their facility.

Dr Asjad Hameed in his speech stressed upon the fact that diabetes is a situation that needs to be addressed urgently as it poses a great burden on the economy of Pakistan. He was proud to have his idea of Blue Lilies come to fruition where children living with Type-1 Diabetes will be provided affordable care. He also thanked Novo Nordisk Pakistan and his management as through their concerted efforts this was possible.

Negative Business Confidence in second half 2022 - OICCI Survey

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) announced the results of its comprehensive Business Confidence Index (BCI) Survey - Wave 22, conducted throughout the country during September to October 2022, which revealed that the overall Business Confidence Score (BCS) in Pakistan now stands at negative 4 percent showing a decrease by 21 percent from the previous positive 17 percent in Wave 21 Survey conducted in March to April 2022.

The highest drop in confidence was recorded in the "services sector" (24 percent), followed by "Retail & Wholesale trade" (22 percent), and Manufacturing sector (20 percent). The survey sample consisted

of 42 percent respondents from Manufacturing sector, 33 percent from the Services sector and 25 percent from the retail/ wholesale trade. Despite recording a significant drop in confidence of 20 percent, the Manufacturing sector recorded a net confidence level of positive 3 percent, whereas services and retail sector stood at negative of 8 percent and 14 percent respectively.

Commenting on the BCS, Ghias Khan, President OICCI, observed "the substantial decline in the overall Business Confidence to negative 4 percent is regrettable but not surprising considering the highly challenging political and economic situation during the past six months. Besides very high inflation and increased fuel prices, the significant currency devaluation also dampened the

economic activity. The record level of rains during August leading to severe flooding in Sindh and other parts of the country further restricted the business activities".

OICCI BCI Survey, conducted periodically face to face, across the country in nine cities, covering 80 percent of the GDP, with higher weightage given to key business centres of Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi-Islamabad, and Faisalabad. The OICCI Survey feedback covers business environment at regional, national, sectorial, and own business entity levels in the past six months, as well as the anticipated business and investment environment in the next six months.

Overall, more than half (56 percent vs 19 percent in previous wave) survey respondents were negative on the business



environment in the past six months and going forward only net 2 percent (vs 18 percent in the previous survey) were positive for the next six months. Commenting on the business situation for the next six months, the OICCI Vice President Amir Paracha observed, "these are challenging times, and the authorities are doing all they can to navigate the enormous challenges in front including managing infla-

tion, restricted availability of foreign exchange and resource constraints". Amir added, "Key stakeholders especially foreign investors will continue to support the authorities in taking long term policy measures to streamline the economic fundamentals including fair taxation for all and facilitate business and investment in the country".

The sentiments of the OICCI members, the leading foreign investors, who were randomly included in the survey, stands at positive 6 percent, substantially lower to positive 33 percent in the previous wave. Foreign investors have in the past also shown higher confidence than non-members. Commenting on OICCI members survey feedback, Ghias Khan, observed that "foreign investors feedback could have been more positive

but for serious concerns on few critical issues like the undue delay in revising the pharmaceutical and the extreme delays in overseas remittances for goods, services and dividends. Such actions are seriously counter productive for attracting FDI in the country".

The three major threats to business growth identified in the survey are Inflation (78 percent), High Taxation (71 percent), and currency devaluation (70 percent) which could potentially slow down business growth in Pakistan".

Looking ahead, only 18 percent (34 percent in Wave 21) expect expansion in business operations, 2 percent (21 percent in Wave 21) planning new capital investment and 7 percent respondents (positive 16 percent in Wave 21) expect increased employment in their

respective businesses. The OICCI is the collective voice of major foreign investors in Pakistan. The over 200 OICCI members, from 31 different countries, have a presence in 14 sectors of the economy and contribute around one-third of Pakistan's total tax revenue, besides facilitating transfer of technology and skills and providing employment to a sizeable number of people. About a third of OICCI member companies are listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange and 40 members are associates of the Global Fortune 500 companies. Besides their business operations the OICCI members realize their corporate social responsibilities and are major contributors to various CSR activities benefitting 34 million persons from underprivileged communities.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
41,819.29	41,539.94	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
41,900.81	41,539.94	
Index Value	Change	
4,520,774,240	+279.35	
Percentage	Time	
+0.67%	7 Dec, 2022 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,489.19	-32.20	
Percentage	Time	
-0.43%	7 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,637.03	+40.69	
Percentage	Time	
+0.12%	7 Dec, 12:47 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
27,686.40	-199.47	
Percentage	Time	
-0.72%	7 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	150.49	151.74
Bahrain Dinar	597.43	601.93
Canadian Dollar	164.56	165.91
China Yuan	32.11	32.36
Danish Krone	31.71	32.06
Euro	249.5	252.3
Hong Kong Dollar	28.89	29.24
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	1.96	2
Kuwaiti Dinar	731.97	736.97
Malaysian Ringgit	51.11	51.56
New Zealand \$	142.15	143.35
Norwegians Krone	22.46	22.76
Omani Riyal	583.46	587.96
Qatari Riyal	61.71	62.21
Saudi Riyal	63.35	64
Singapore Dollar	165.46	166.76
Swedish Korona	21.61	21.91
Swiss Franc	238.8	240.55
Thai Bhat	6.41	6.51
U.A.E Dirham	65.5	66.1
UK Pound Sterling	293.5	296
US Dollar	229.7	232

Decision to buy cheap petro products from Russia lauded

Pakistan lost eleven months, no further delay acceptable: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said the decision to buy cheap petroleum products from Russia is correct which will support our weak economy.

This will reduce the burden on the country's exchequer, thereby reducing the current account deficit and inflation, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the price of petroleum products will also be reduced for the consumers, electricity will also become cheaper and the people will get relief.

Talking to the business community, the



veteran business leader said that despite Russia's attack on Ukraine and US sanc-

tions, European countries, Saudi Arabia, India, and many other countries are continuing to trade with Russia, but we have waited for eleven in this regard.

Now, without wasting any more time, the import of crude oil, petrol, and diesel should be started, while the possibility of importing other essential commodities should not be delayed, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that a long-term contract to import LNG with Russia is also essential.

He said that the government has announced the import of cheap petroleum products from Russia, but the price details have not been released.

In January, the Russian minister is visiting Pakistan, during which long-term agreements should be made in the country's

interests, as demand and supply have been badly neglected in energy deals in the past.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that we should get a lesson from the ravages of the Coronavirus and the crisis arising from the war between Russia and Ukraine to develop our resources related to agriculture and energy because Pakistan's \$40 billion imports consist of the same two sectors.

Different sources should be developed for imports instead of one in order to keep the local market stable and to avoid crises.

The economy will not develop until there is cheap energy and agricultural self-sufficiency in the country.

It is impossible to increase production and exports in the present conditions and the situation can be improved by getting cheap energy.

Bank Alfalah signs an MOU with Ignite to empower startups and freelancers

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Intending to leapfrog the digital ecosystem in Pakistan, Bank Alfalah has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ignite, a public sector company with the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT). The partnership aims for financial facilitation of startups and freelancers to be a one-stop solution catering to all banking needs.

The ceremony was held in Islamabad in the presence of the senior leadership from the public and private sectors, committing to boost the startups and freelancing ecosystem in Pakistan. With this partnership, Ignite and Bank Alfalah will work closely to develop products and services that will cater to the current financial needs of these startups and freelancers.

Mohsin Mushtaq, Secretary, MoITT, commented on the occasion, said "This collaboration between Ignite and Bank Alfalah will benefit Ignite's startups and freelancers in meeting their financial needs. He further added that such a collaboration would provide opportunities for startups and freelancers to avail customized financial services offered by Bank Alfalah. He also appreciated Ignite for collaborating with financial institutions such as Bank Alfalah to empower startups and freelancers in meeting their financial needs" CEO Ignite said that this MOU will benefit both startups and freelancers by addressing their short-term financing needs. He added that Bank Alfalah would conduct information



sessions at Ignite's National Incubation Centers (NIC) to educate startups about the different financing options available to them.

Mehreen Ahmed, Group Head of Retail Banking, said: "We at Bank are proud to support projects empowering youth to explore their potential. Bank Alfalah is a one-stop solution, providing an array of products and services that contribute towards much-needed ease of business for all start-ups and freelancers. In addition to a strong nationwide branch network, we excel at digitizing our product suite for various customer segments such as bank account opening, credit cards, auto, home

financing, health insurance and corporate credit cards. With this partnership, we aim to customize these financial services for startups and freelancers."

Pakistan startup ecosystem has seen significant funding coming in over the last few years. Despite many exits and fears looming of global recession, the funds raised by Pakistan startups makes it a potentially strong market.

With the support of banks such as Bank Alfalah, startups and freelancers can scale up their businesses. This can influence an ecosystem by empowering individuals and institutions to generate snowballing positive economic and social impact.

Zong 4G Sets Up Digital Lab at Pak-China Friendship School Gwadar



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's cellular and digital services leader, Zong 4G has partnered with the China-Pakistan Gwadar Middle School, offering digital support to the school's computer labs to empower the school's female students.

Continuing its efforts to lead the digital transformation in the country, the company has extended further support to provide digital equipment to the school, including a projector and screen, printing facilities, and digital learning materials. The project is an extension of digital facility that was set up last year, to ensure that the girls studying there were provided the opportunity to learn about technology and its effective use.

The Pak-China Gwadar Middle School, also

commonly known as Faqeer Middle School, is located in Gwadar's Faqeer Colony. This school is part of a Chinese-funded initiative aimed at developing a high-quality educational system in the area.

Commenting on the partnership, The Spokesperson from Zong said, "We have a mission to ensure the complete digitalization of Pakistan. Through our inclusive approach, we are ensuring all our children – especially young girls – are provided with quality digital education to ensure their future competitiveness in an increasingly fast-paced technological world."

The management of Pak-China school appreciated this citing that only a handful of their students had used a computer before and thanked Zong for setting up a digital lab for their students.

UBL & Sindh Enterprise Development Fund sign agreement

Spokesman Report

BUREAU REPORT

United Bank Limited (UBL) and Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF) recently signed an Agreement for Institutional Collaboration to provide Subsidized Credit to Small & Medium Enterprises (SME) in Sindh.

The agreement signing ceremony, held at the UBL Head Office in Karachi, was chaired by Syed Qassim Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to CM Sindh for Investment Department and Public-Private Partnership Projects. Mr. Khizar Pervaiz, CEO-SEDF and Mr. Shazad G. Dada, President & CEO UBL signed the Agreement in the presence of officials and dignitaries from the public and private sector which also included Syed Mansoor Abbas Rizvi, Secretary to Government of Sindh-Investment Department among others.

UBL will provide much needed project financing to SMEs and the Agricultural sector and SEDF will provide mark-up subsidy on loans provided by the bank. This collaboration will create a win-win situation for the stakeholders and create an enabling environment to promote investments in the province.

Syed Qassim Naveed Qamar, SACM said that "This is a step towards financial inclusion of a neglected yet vital segment of the



United Bank Limited (UBL) and Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF) have partnered to provide subsidized credit to Small & Medium Enterprises (SME) in Sindh. Picture shows Syed Qassim Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to CM Sindh for Investment Department and Public-Private Partnership Projects (standing, 3rd from left) who chaired the signing ceremony, Mr. Khizar Pervaiz, CEO-SEDF (seated, left) and Mr. Shazad G. Dada, President & CEO UBL (seated, right) along with senior executives from both organizations.

economy with a focus towards modernization of the rural economy of Sindh, with a hope that it will pave the way for balanced growth and financial inclusion of women entrepreneurs.

"At the event, Mr. Shazad G. Dada, President & CEO UBL said "As Pakistan's most progressive and innovative bank, UBL's vision is to support Small and Medium

Enterprises (SME) and agriculture sector of Pakistan, and in particular to empower the young entrepreneurs of our country so as to unlock their full economic potential. Agriculture and SMEs are the backbone of Pakistan's economy and UBL is proud to play a pivotal role in supporting these sectors by partnering with like-minded institutions such as SEDF."

The Bank of Punjab declared 'Corporate Finance House of the Year'

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: CFA Society Pakistan hosted the 19th edition of its prestigious Annual Excellence Awards in Karachi to recognize the outstanding performances of financial institutions, corporates and professionals.

The Bank of Punjab (BOP) was declared 'Corporate Finance House of the Year' for its remarkable services extended to corporate sector of Pakistan, for bringing quality transactions to the market and for the breath of its distribution across banking sector and capital markets. The prestigious award was conferred upon BOP for the first time.

This prestigious award represents endorsement of the structuring capabilities of the Investment Banking team at The Bank of Punjab by the most credible society of capital market professionals in the country. It is also significant because the bank has structured and successfully arranged innovative and path-breaking facilities for the corporate and infrastructure finance sectors of Pakistan. BOP's investment banking is one of the most vibrant and innovative investment banking outfits in Pakistan with expertise in project financing, debt and equity capital markets and financial advisory services.

MCB Bank allies with Bookme.pk to enhance acceptance of e-booking services

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: MCB Bank Limited, one of Pakistan's leading Banks, has entered into an agreement with Bookme.pk, the leading provider of e-ticketing services in Pakistan. This partnership aims to facilitate hassle-free online ticket booking experience for the digital banking customer base of MCB Live.

Under this agreement, MCB Live users will be able to book and take advantage of opportunities for travel, leisure and entertainment available exclusively through Bookme.pk. This alliance aims to facilitate the growing demand for convenient and cost-effective e-ticketing services that can be safely and

conveniently availed on the go or from the comfort of one's home.

The agreement was signed between Mr. Jaffar Abbas Shirazi - Division Head Digital Channels & Branchless Banking MCB Bank and Mr. Faizan Aslam - CEO and Founder, Bookme.pk at MCB House, Lahore. Mr. Shahzad Ishaq - Group Head Digital Banking MCB Bank, Ms. Ambreen Latif Bawany - Head Marketing MCB Bank, Mr. Waseem Ahmed Malik - Department Head Branchless Banking MCB Bank and other representatives from MCB Bank and Bookme.pk were also present at the ceremony.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Jaffar Abbas Shirazi - Division Head Digi-

tal Channels & Branchless Banking MCB Bank, said "We are delighted to announce our partnership with Bookme.pk to facilitate MCB Bank customers with convenient access to bus, cinema and event tickets through our app, MCB Live. MCB Bank strongly believes in providing our customers access to convenient and innovative solutions to enhance their lifestyle and quality of life. This alliance is yet another step towards ensuring seamless and efficient digital payment services for our valued customers."

Mr. Faizan Aslam, CEO and Founder Bookme.pk also added, "Today is a very special day as Bookme.pk adds its services to another leading bank in



Pakistan. MCB's huge user base will get access to in-app ticketing services

within MCB Live and will get to enjoy hassle-free checkouts and greatly

discounted ticket prices. MCB and Bookme.pk have pledged to work

Chief of Naval Staff All Pakistan Squash championship Commences

KARACHI: The opening ceremony of 1st Chief of the Naval Staff All Pakistan Squash Championship was held here at Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex on Wednesday.

Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Mian Zakirullah Jan graced the occasion as Chief Guest and declared the Championship open, a press release of ISPR-Navy said here.

Earlier, during his welcome address Tournament Director Commodore Tauqeer Ahmad Khawaja said that the National Squash tournament will be organized every alternate year. The event will prove to be instrumental in promoting Squash at the National level and will also provide an opportunity for domestic players to show their professional acumen.

The tournament director also appreciated the players, officials, sponsors and Commander Karachi for their support and presence during this mega event.

The Championship will be held from 6-10 December 2022 and will comprise of 54 matches. Top national players will be seen in action during the event. Players from across the country comprising



28 Men and 28 Women are participating in this Championship. The opening ceremony was attended by a large number of civil & military dignitaries, sponsors and senior squash players.

Google announces top trending searches of Pakistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Google has released its annual Year in Search, recapping the top trends of 2022 in Pakistan. The searches revealed that over the year, Pakistanis had a diverse range of interests that pivot on politics, famous personalities, government initiatives, current events, entertainment, technology, and food.

This year, cricket continued to be the major search trend, with the T20 World Cup, Asia Cup 2022, and PSL 7 filling the top three spots in the overall list of top searches. Nationwide financial insecurity, floods, and inflation led people to search for government campaigns and financial aid schemes like the Ehsaas Program. Meanwhile, celebrities like Queen Elizabeth, Aamir Liaquat, and Arshad Sharif also took their spots on the list. Here is the complete list of all the top trending searches;

Top Trending Searches:
T20 World Cup 2022
Asia Cup 2022
PSL 7
Melbourne weather
Climate change
Ehsaas program
Arshad Sharif
Aamir Liaquat
Queen Elizabeth
Naseem Shah
In 2022, Pakistani movies

were all over the news. The Legend of Maula Jatt stayed at the top of the Movies & TV section, followed by London Nahi Jaunga and Quadi-e-Azam Zindabad. The love for Hollywood movies can also be seen in the fact that movies like Ms. Marvel, Black Adam, and Doctor Strange remained in the top five search results. The complete list is below or you can check out Fuchsia Magazine talking in depth about it on their channel too.

Top Movies & TV Shows
Maula Jatt
Ms. Marvel
Black Adam
Thor Love and Thunder
Doctor Strange
London Nahi Jaunga
The Batman
Quadi-e-Azam Zindabad
Sin'e Aahan
House of the Dragon

People in Pakistan mainly searched for politicians and athletes in the last year. Due to Naseem Shah's brilliant performances in the Asia Cup and T20 World Cup, he remained at the top of this category. People also looked for the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, due to the political situation in the country. Also, famous Pakistani cricketers such as Iftikhar Ahmed, Shadab Khan, and Muhammad Rizwan took their spots, respectively. Here is the complete list;

Top Searched Personalities
Naseem Shah
Pervez Musharraf
Salman Rushdie
Iftikhar Ahmed
Muhammad Rizwan
Shahbaz Sharif
Shadab Khan
Amber Heard
Azhar Ali
Imran Riaz Khan
In 2022, Pakistanis actively searched for smartphone brands, which include Infinix, iPhone, Samsung, and OPPO. Whereas, Vivo grabbed the majority of the attention because of the launch of its new Android mobile phones and got featured multiple times in the list. The complete list is mentioned below. Also, take a look at the analysis of VideoWaliSarkar on the top tech searches in Pakistan

Trending Tech Searches
Vivo V23
iPhone 14 Pro Max
OPPO F21 Pro
Vivo Y21
Vivo V23e
Realme c55
Infinix Note 12
Infinix Hot 12
Samsung A32
OPPO A16
With such ease under COVID-19 restrictions, people in Pakistan celebrated all major festive occasions in 2022 and turned to Google for finding modern recipes and a variety of food items. The search

categories reflected Pakistan's love for food, with desi cuisine having the upper hand in the results. Check out the full list or visit Food Fusion, where they discussed the top food searches in Pakistan over the last year.

Trending Food and Cuisine
Chicken Recipe
Pulao recipe
Shami kabab recipe
Chicken soup recipe
Nuggets recipe
Chicken pakora recipe
White chicken recipe
Imli ki chutney recipe
Brownies recipe
Hot and sour soup recipe
Pakistanis also browsed

Google for updates on local and international news, with the tragic death of Amir Liaquat Hussain topping the trending news list. News related to the Murree incident and Imran Khan also garnered a lot of interest in 2022. People were also interested in events worldwide related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Below is the full list;

Trending News
Aamir Liaquat News
Ukraine News
Imran Khan Latest News
Murree News
Fatima Tahir News
Arshad Sharif News
Pervez Musharraf News
Salman Rushdie Latest News
Iqbal ul Hassan News
Sri Lanka News

Aroob Shah will lead Pakistan in ICC U19 Women's T20 cricket world cup

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Pakistan international and Sindh's Aroob Shah will lead Pakistan in the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup which will be played from 14 to 29 January 2023 in South Africa.

Women's selector Asmavia Iqbal announced a 15-player squad and five reserves players. These players were selected after their performances in this year's Women U19 T20 Tournament held at Lahore Country Club in Muridke from 13 to 22 August.

Later, the top performers of the six-team tournament had undergone two skills and training camps staged at the Inzamam-ul-Haq High Performance Centre, Multan in September and at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre, Karachi in November.

To further assess their fitness and skills, the U19 players had also featured in the first phase of T20 Women's Cricket Tournament held at Lahore's LCCA Ground from 26 November to 2 December. The players were part of Team Conquerors, one of the three participating teams in the event.

Aroob Shah, who has featured for Pakistan in two ODIs and five T20Is, will have the services of hard hitting right-handed batters Eyman Fatima and Shawaal Zulfiqar.

Besides the duo, Aroob who herself is a leg-spinner, will have promising spinners in the likes of Rida Aslam (left-arm spinner), Quratulain Ahsen (leg-spinner), Anousha Nasir (off-spin-



ultimately help in forming a strong and more competitive squad at the senior level."

Squad (in alphabetical order):
Aroob Shah (Captain) (Sindh), Aliza Khan (Sindh), Anousha Nasir (Sindh), Areesha Noor (Central Punjab), Eyman Fatima (Central Punjab), Haleema Azeem Dar (Central Punjab), Haniah Ahmer (Sindh), Laiba Nasir (Central Punjab), Mahnoor Aftab (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Quratulain Ahsen (Central Punjab), Rida Aslam (Central Punjab), Shawaal Zulfiqar (Central Punjab), Warda Yousaf (Central Punjab), Zaiib-un-Nisa (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Zamina Tahir (Central Punjab)

Reserves: Aqsa Yousaf (Southern Punjab), Dina Razvi (Sindh), Maham Anees (Northern), Muskan Abid (Central Punjab) and Tahzeeb Shah (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

Support staff: Aisha Jalil (Manager), Mohsin Kamal (Head coach), Muhammad Kamran Hussain (Assistant coach), Saboor Ahmad (Strength and Conditioning coach), Muhammad Usman Shahid (Analyst), Rabia Siddiq (Physiotherapist) and Dr Hafiz Salman Asif (Team Doctor).

Schedule of Pakistan's matches at the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup South Africa 2023:

15 January - vs Rwanda, Potchefstroom
17 January - vs England, Potchefstroom
19 January - vs Zimbabwe, Potchefstroom

Bangladesh beat India in thriller to win ODI series



DHAKA: Bangladesh all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz scored an unbeaten 100 from 83 balls and grabbed two wickets to help his side beat India by five runs in their second one-day international in Mirpur on Wednesday, sealing a 2-0 series victory with one game left to play.

Chasing 272 to win, India got off to a disappointing start losing openers Virat Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan early before half-centuries by Shreyas Iyer (82) and Axar Patel (56) got them back on track.

But India's middle order suffered a collapse and they fell just short in their run chase, ending on 266-9.

Indian captain Rohit Sharma (51 not out) came in to bat at number nine after undergoing a scan for a left thumb injury he sustained when he dropped Anamul Haque in the second over of Bangladesh's innings, and he rode his luck to take India close.

Playing through the pain — and twice dropped — he hit huge sixes off Ebadot Hossain and Mahmudullah in his 28-ball knock to leave India needing 20 off the final over and then 12 from the last two balls, but he was unable to haul his side over the line.

Earlier, Bangladesh, who also beat India by one wicket in the first ODI, were in trouble at 69-6 having elected to bat first as Washington Sundar (3-37) and Mohammed Siraj (2-73) ripped through the top order before the hosts hit back.

Mehidy combined with Mahmudullah (77) in a 148-run stand for the seventh wicket as India stepped off the gas, and the 25-year-old reached his century with the last ball of the innings as Bangladesh put on 271-7.

The teams meet in the final game in Chattogram on Saturday before playing two Tests.

PBCC discards reports of issuance of visas to Pakistan team for T-20 WC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) has discarded a news item spread by the Indian state media that their Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued the clearance of visas to 34 players and officials of Pakistan team for T-20 World Cup Cricket of the Blind.

The PBCC said in a statement that the deceptive news spread like wildfire in the Indian media and created confusion among masses and sports journalists of

both Pakistan and India that Indian visas were issued to Pakistan Blind Cricket Team.

The PBCC made it clear on Tuesday that the Ministry of External Affairs, India (MEA) had denied visas to the Pakistani team on political grounds. Pakistan team has collected passports from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad on Tuesday, and no visa has been issued to the Green-shirts.

The misleading news which was spread late Tues-

Griezmann flourishing in new role for France at World Cup



DOHA: While Kylian Mbappe dominates the headlines for France, Antoine Griezmann's performances in a new midfield role have also been crucial for the holders on their run to Saturday's World Cup quarter-final against England.

Griezmann had a difficult start to the season at Atletico Madrid and has not scored in Qatar, leaving Mbappe and Olivier Giroud to provide the goals as France seek to become the first team in 60 years to successfully defend the World Cup.

It all seems a world away from Euro 2016, when Griezmann was the tournament top scorer with six goals as France, the hosts, reached the final only to lose in extra time to Portugal.

That was seen as just the start for an exciting team known as the "Griezmann Generation" but it was the emergence of Mbappe that helped them go one step further and win the 2018 World Cup.

Griezmann has since adapted and become more of a support player to France's biggest star. Now the clinical finisher who averages almost a goal every second game for Atletico is part of a midfield three at international level.

It is a case of needs must for coach Didier Deschamps, who lost the key midfield pair of Paul Pogba and N Golo Kante to injury prior to the tournament, before forward Karim Benzema withdrew after arriving in Qatar.

As a result, France have lined up in a 4-3-3 at this World Cup, with Ousmane Dembele and Mbappe flanking Giroud in attack, while Griezmann operates to the right of a midfield three with Aurelien Tchouameni and Adrien Rabiot.

"My role is quite free," said Griezmann, who has 42 goals for his country but none now in 13 appearances going back to November last year.

"With three players in front of me I have more possibilities and more choices. Maybe I am not as close to the opposition area. I am not going to have 50 shots on goal per game but I am not worried about scoring goals.

"I think the team needs me more at the heart of the action. We need that balance."

The 31-year-old can now show off his range of passing and his workrate from midfield, while also providing a threat with his set-piece deliveries.

"Antoine has an incredible range to his game. He has fantastic technique, subtlety with his passing, and he works hard for his teammates," said assistant coach Guy Stephan.

"The new position suits him. You just need to see the smile on his face."

Griezmann has remarkably now played 71 consecutive matches for France, beating by a distance the previous national record of 1998 World Cup winner Patrick Vieira, who played in 44 games in a row.

There was no question of Deschamps losing faith in the player even as he endured a difficult start to the season at Atletico. He had largely been reduced to substitute appearances for Diego Simeone's side as the club tried to escape paying a reported obligatory fee of 40 million euros (\$42m) to Barcelona if he played over a certain number of matches.

But Atletico bought him back permanently in October after negotiating a new deal, and he had started a total of 12 games before heading to Qatar, scoring six goals.

Now he is repaying the faith shown in him by Deschamps, who gave Griezmann his international debut as a 22-year-old in 2014.

"I owe him so much. He was the one who called me up and we have been together ever since," said the player who hails from Macon, near Lyon, but has spent his entire career in Spain.

"I give everything for this shirt, for France but also for him. I try to do everything to ensure he keeps having confidence in me.

"Every game, every action is me saying thank you to him. I want to do all I can to make him proud of his number seven."

Brazil set quarter-finals showdown with Croatia after South Korea rout

DOHA: Brazil hit top gear with Neymar back in the line-up to brush aside South Korea 4-1 on Monday and ease into the quarter-finals of the World Cup where they will face Croatia.

Neymar had been sidelined for two matches with a sprained ankle but with the world's most expensive player restored to their side, Brazil's yellow shirts poured forward at Stadium 974.

Vinicius Junior opened the scoring inside seven minutes before Neymar added another from the penalty spot to move to 76 goals for his country, leaving him just one away from equalling Pelé's all-time record tally.

The ailing Pelé watched from his hospital bed in Sao Paulo where the 82-year-old was admitted last Tuesday amid ongoing treatment for colon cancer.

He will have enjoyed Richarlison's dazzling goal to make it 3-0 before Lucas Paqueta added another before half-time, all celebrated with dance routines as Brazil's supporters roared their approval.

Paik Seung-ho pulled a goal back for the Koreans when the Brazilians took their foot off the pedal, but their thoughts had already turned to Friday's quarter-final dash with 2018 runners-up Croatia.

It was the first time that Brazil had scored four goals in a World Cup knockout game since 1998 and the performance rapped out a warning to their rivals that they have a sixth title in their sights.

and showed their disappointment on denying visas to Pakistan Blind Cricket Team to participate in the T-20 World Cup Cricket of the Blind on political ground," it said.

Pakistan Blind Cricket Team was currently ranked No.1 in T20 Blind Cricket and refusing visas for participation in the World Cup was to deprive them from winning the title, which would have deep consequences on global sports.

APP

"The basic objective of this deceptive news is to flatten the immense pressure of international communities on India, who condemned

day was nothing but adding salt to the injuries of already dejected Pakistan team.

The PBCC said the propaganda from the Indian state media was just to mislead the sports loving people, federations and states across the world that India had issued visas to the Pakistani team but they did not want to come.

The misleading news which was spread late Tues-