

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
جب عرضی اللہ کو عرض کیا تو صییب
رضی اللہ عنہ یہ کہتے ہوئے آئے ہائے
میرے بھائی! اس پر عرضی اللہ عنہ
نے فرمایا کہ کیا تجھ کو معلوم نہیں کہ نبی
کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہے کہ
مرد سے کو اس کے گھر والوں کے رونے
سے عذاب کیا جاتا ہے۔
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 1290)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



Argentina win the 2022 FIFA World Cup as Lionel Messi stars in dramatic final

Argentina have won the 2022 FIFA World Cup after winning on penalties following a 3-3 draw against France in the final. Lionel Messi scored twice to help his nation be crowned world champions. (Report on Page 7)



Gen Bajwa was Imran Khan, Pervaiz Elahi's benefactor: Salik Hussain

BoI Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain has asserted that former COAS Gen (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa was the benefactor of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi, ARY News reported on Sunday. In a statement, the PML-Q leader - while reacting to Pervaiz Elahi's recent statement - said that Gen Bajwa was the benefactor of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and the incumbent Punjab Chief Minister.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

PPP protest against Indian PM

KARACHI: Women activists of Pakistan People Party shouting slogans during a protest against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, outside press club in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Punjab MPA calls on Prime Minister



LAHORE :Khawaja Imran Nazeer, a member of Punjab provincial assembly on Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. During the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation of the country, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Imran attempted to make institutions controversial, but failed: Khawaja Asif

Correspondent
SLAKHOT: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that former prime minister Imran Khan attempted to make the national institutions controversial, but failure was his destiny. Addressing a Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) workers' convention here on Sunday, he said that Imran Khan's biggest regret is that he could not get an opportunity to select the army chief of his choice, adding that he wanted to appoint an army chief who would allow him to extend his rule for another 10 years. KhAsif said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, during his around four-year tenure in government, destroyed the national economy. He said people were suffering as a consequence of Imran Khan government's failure and wrong policies. The minister said that during the PTI four-year rule, false cases were registered against PMLN leaders and they, including he himself, were kept in prisons. But by the grace of Allah Almighty, we were cleared of all fake cases," he added. KhawajaAsif said the elections would not be on the demand of Imran Khan, but according to the country's constitution and law. He said general election could not be held under anyone's pressure and decision in that regard would be taken by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in consultation with coalition partners. He said Imran Khan used to say that he would commit suicide but not take loans. However, in the history of the country, no government took as much loan as the previous government of Imran Khan did. The federal defence minister said that the coalition government in Centre was

President, PM strongly condemn attack on Lakki police force

ISLAMABAD :PresidentDrArifAlvi and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned a terrorist attack on Baragai police station in district LakkiMarwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The president expressed the resolve of continuing efforts to completely eliminate the remnants of terrorism, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The prime minister said the entire nation saluted the huge sacrifices of police officers and jawans in their fight against terrorism. Paying tribute to the supreme sacrifices of the police personnel, the prime minister said that terrorists were the open enemies of Pakistan and the nation. "Those who have been shielding the nation against terrorists are our heroes," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as



saying. The prime minister further said that elimination of terrorists, their supporters and facilitators had been the national priority. He also urged the KP provincial government to provide Shuhada package to the families

of martyred police personnel. The president and prime minister expressed their condolences with the bereaved families and prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls and the early recovery of the injured. According to APP district correspondent in LakkiMarwat, at least four policemen were martyred and different others got injured after terrorists attacked the Baragai police station late Saturday night. The terrorists attacked the Baragai police station with hand grenades and rocket launchers at midnight. The martyred policemen included head constable Ibrahim, constable Imran, Elite Force constable KhairurRehman and constable Sabz Ali while the injured policemen included PASI Gul Sahib, constable Balqiyaz, constable Ameer Nawaz, and constable Farman Ullah. Agencies

Moonis takes Imran Khan in confidence over Elahi's statement

Monitoring Desk
LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q) leader Moonis Elahi has met Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan to take him in confidence over Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi's recent statement, ARY News reported on Sunday. Moonish Elahi visited Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence in Lahore and held a 30-minute meeting. During the meeting, Moonish took Khan in confidence over Pervaiz Elahi's statement.

Establishment wanted assemblies to complete tenure: CM Pervaiz

Monitoring Desk
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has termed the country's Establishment 'more sensible' than politicians, saying that it wants the assemblies to complete their tenure, ARY News reported on Sunday. Speaking on ARY News programme 'The Reporters', the Punjab CM revealed that the country's Establishment was against the dissolution of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies and wanted Houses to complete their tenure. During the interview, CM Pervaiz Elahi lambasted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for talking against former chief of army staff (COAS) Gen (ret'd) Qamar



Javed Bajwa, reminding him of ex-army chief's 'favours' upon the party. The provincial chief executive said the PTI should remember Gen Bajwa's favours upon the party, adding that he was not against Khan's party but its members should avoid talking about their 'benefactor'. "Bajwa elevated the party's stature from nothing and supported the

government on many international matters such as negotiating procurement of funds from Pakistan's Arab allies or the International Monetary Fund," CM Pervaiz Elahi added. The Punjab chief minister warned that he and his party will be the first ones to defend General (ret'd) Qamar Bajwa if anything further is said against the former army chief. "I told Imran Khan that Gen Bajwa is ours, yours and PTI's benefactor so fear God and don't speak against him," he said, adding that how can be so 'ungrateful' despite of many favours. "The injustice that Imran Khan did is that making us sit beside him, he criticised Bajwa sahab in front of me," he said while referring to the former premier's speech, wherein he announced to dissolve the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab assemblies. Elahi said he had "felt very bad" about the entire situation but could not raise the issue since there were too many people. "We will not tolerate this. Bajwa is our benefactor and we don't hear anything against them," he added.

Imran Khan sets horrendous record of corruption: Marriyum

News Desk
ISLAMABAD :Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan set a horrendous record of corruption during his government's three and half years tenure, but ironically failed to prove a single allegation levelled against his political opponents. "Imran Khan will come to his sense once he starts answering about his corruption," she said in a news statement. She also clarified that the country had not defaulted, but Imran Khan had in every way.

PM Shehbaz, Asif Zardari discuss 'possible' dissolution of Punjab PA

News Desk
LAHORE: Former president and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari visited Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif at his residence in Lahore and discussed country's political situation and 'possible' dissolution of Punjab Assembly, ARY News reported on Sunday. According to details, the former president called on PM Shehbaz Sharif at his residence in Lahore's Zaman Park and discussed 'possible' dissolution of Punjab Assembly. During the meeting, the prime minister apprised Asif Zardari of the former's meeting with Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain. Meanwhile, sources told ARY News that PM Shehbaz Sharif and Asif Zardari agreed to increase cooperation with Chaudhry Shujaat. Both the leaders also agreed to tasked Chaudhry Shujaat for stopping dissolution of Punjab Assembly, sources added. Sources claimed that the two leaders also decided not to approach Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi directly till a 'green signal' from PML-Q president. They also decided to keep a close eye on the current political situation, sources added. The meeting came a day after former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan announced to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 23. The former premier announced the decision while addressing the nation alongside the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief ministers (CM), Pervaiz Elahi and Mahmood Khan, respectively. Earlier in the day, PM Shehbaz Sharif called on Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence in Lahore and discussed country's 'political and economic situation'.

Christmas Bazaar

ISLAMABAD: A painter painting the face of a girl during Christmas Bazaar ahead of upcoming Christmas celebration on 25th December, at a local hotel in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

PM Shehbaz Sharif, Chaudhry Shujaat discuss 'political situation'

News Desk

LAHORE: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif called on Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence in Lahore and discussed country's 'political and economic situation', ARY News reported on Sunday.

According to a statement, PM Shehbaz Sharif - during his meeting with the PML-Q President - enquired about his health and presented him with a bouquet of flowers.

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the prevailing political and economic situation in the country. The prime minister apprised Chaudhry Shujaat of the meas-



ures taken by the government to restore economy and provide relief to the public.

The PML-Q president acknowledged the efforts of PM Shehbaz Sharif to rid the country and its people of the problems being faced. Moreover, Chaudhry Shujaat and the premier agreed to strengthen

their mutual cooperation in the future.

Both the leaders agreed that political stability and close cooperation were essential to get the country out of the problems it is facing, the press release added.

The meeting was attended by National Food Security

Minister Tariq Bashir Cheema, Board of Investment Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan.

The meeting came a day after former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan announced to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 23.

The former premier announced the decision while addressing the nation alongside the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief ministers (CM), Pervaiz Elahi and Mahmood Khan, respectively. Imran Khan thanked the two provincial chiefs for their

cooperation with his party, and said he had consulted PTI's lawyers about the move, adding that the Constitution did not allow elections to be delayed beyond 90 days of an assembly's dissolution.

Giving details of PTI's plan of action, the PTI chief said that after dissolving the assemblies, the party would prepare for elections. "We will go to National Assembly and demand with NA speaker to accept our resignations instead of picking a few," he added.

The former prime minister said that a "lesson should be taught through elections" to the government and deal it "such a defeat that the names of these thieves are wiped out forever".

Saudi govt facilitating Hajj, Umrah pilgrims to fullest extent possible: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said the Saudi government was facilitating the Hajj and Umrah pilgrims to the fullest extent possible.

In his remarks at a Hajj Conference organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony and the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) the other day, he said the Saudi government, particularly Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin

Salman, were making all-out efforts to create more facilities for pilgrims and religious tourists.

Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), said as part of the preparations for Hajj pilgrims and other religious tourists, the government of Pakistan was in constant contact with the government of Saudi Arabia.

He said the pilgrims were expected to have more facilities this year, which was a welcome development, adding that the Saudi government made the best arrangements for Hajj last year.

He said, in collaboration



with HOAP, the PUC would arrange a series of trainings for pilgrims across the country.

He said the Saudi government's recent initiatives to

facilitate the Umrah visa were appreciable and commendable. "Every Muslim values Saudi Arabia's government and public services," he maintained.

Ashrafi said the entire Islamic world was grateful to Saudi Arabia's leadership for not suspending Hajj despite the Corona pandemic as it was a tremendous accomplishment on the part of the Saudi administration.

He said the nation was thankful to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Religious Affairs Minister Mufti Abdul Shakoor for the pilgrims' arrangements made last year.

He said the government would continue to assist Hajj organizers and any such initiatives that would benefit pilgrims and religious tourists. Agencies

UN Women playing vital role to protect migrant women

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: As part of the 'Making Migration Safe for Women' programme, the UN Women has been working with local organizations to develop a set of handouts for women to inform them of their rights and ensure they understand the risks and realities of migration.

However, while all migrants may experience negative stereotypes and prejudice, women, girls, gender-diverse people and those living with disabilities too often face the brunt of discriminatory migration laws and policies, according to statement issued here on Sunday by UN Women on the occasion of International Migrants Day.

There are estimated 281 million migrants worldwide, moving for many different reasons: some to escape pover-



ty, unemployment, political instability or violence, while others leave to pursue opportunities: to study, develop their careers and to be with their families.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the positive contribution of migrants for inclu-

sive growth and sustainable development. Migration can potentially bring significant benefits to women; a demonstration of their agency and a means of empowerment whose benefits, such as remittances, radiate to their families.

It is therefore vital that we take steps to address the risks

of irregular migration, and respect, protect and fulfill the rights of all migrant women and girls, at all stages and in all types of migration. "We encourage all those working on migration issues to consult with migrant women and girls whose lived experiences can best inform the policies affecting them, so as to achieve and implement truly gender-responsive migration laws, policies and practices that enable safe, orderly and regular migration."

On the occasion of International Migrants Day, let us resolve to ensure that the rights of all migrant women and girls are fully protected and promoted and support all those who work to provide a safe, humane and orderly transition to migrants' new lives and livelihood, the statement said.

Dolphin Squad arrests 44 accused in theft, robbery cases

Monitoring Desk

LAHORE: SP Toqeer Naeem said on Sunday that the Dolphin Squad and Police Response Unit immediately responded to 1,680 calls received on the helpline during the last one week and arrested 44 people involved in theft and robbery cases.

He said that during this period, stop-and-search operations were carried out and over 275,000 people were checked and body-searched. Six motorcycles, five mobile-phones and thousands of rupees in cash were recovered from the accused.

PPP behind marginalized communities to protect their rights: Sherry



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman has said that PPP is always at the back of marginalized communities for the protection of their rights and it is making all-out efforts to protect them at all levels.

She said this while addressing a seminar titled 'Rights of Marginalized Communities- Issues and Challenges' on the occasion of Minorities Rights Day organized by Forum for Rights of Marginalized Communities at Arts Council of Pakistan here on Sunday.

She said that Non-Muslims were part of their manifesto. Sherry Rehman said that the father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah had said that non-Muslims were free to go to their worship places in Pakistan. She said that making of law was vital and those would be enacted.

The minister said that women were more marginalized within the

marginalized communities. She said that PPP did not welcome any sort of differences created on the basis of religion. Sherry Rehman said that all Pakistanis were equal and their rights were same. She said that there were gaps, which must be filled.

While stressing the need for making aware people of climate change, she said that climate change occurred for a long period of time.

She said that almost 20 million people were alive on humanitarian aid, who were affected due to recent floods.

The federal minister said that Sindh was 80 percent affected due to the floods and 0.4 million women were still living in tents. She also appreciated philanthropists in the trying times.

While speaking on extremism, she said that dark clouds of extremism and hatred were hovering over the world.

She said that they would not allow fascism in the country.

Int'l Human Solidarity Day to be marked on Dec 20

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: International Human Solidarity Day will be marked on December 20 (Tuesday) to celebrate unity in diversity. It also aims to remind people the importance of solidarity in working toward eradicating poverty.

On International Human Solidarity Day, governments are reminded of their commitments to international agreements on the need for human solidarity as an initiative to fight against poverty. People are encouraged to debate ways to promote solidarity and find innovative methods to help eradicate poverty.

Solidarity refers to a union of interests, purposes or sympathies among members of a group. In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders agreed that solidarity was a value that was important to international relations

in the 21st century. In light of globalization and growing inequality, the UN realized that strong international solidarity and cooperation were needed to achieve its Millennium Development Goals. The UN was founded on the idea of unity and harmony via the concept of collective security that relies on its members solidarity to unite for international peace and security.

On December 22, 2005, the UN General Assembly proclaimed that International Solidarity Day would take place on December 20 each year. The event aimed to raise people's awareness of the importance of advancing the international development agenda and promoting a global understanding of the value of human solidarity. The assembly felt that the promotion of a culture of solidarity and the spirit of sharing was important in combating poverty.

Senate Chairman congratulates Qatar on National Day

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Sunday extended his greetings and warm felicitations to the people and the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on behalf of the people of Pakistan on the occasion of Qatar's National Day.

In a congratulatory message to Prime Minister Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani of Qatar, Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani said it was a great pleasure to note that the long-existing friendly relations and cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar continued to thrive.

The Pakistani Government and

people highly value and express gratitude for the remarkable assistance and support rendered by the Government and the people of Qatar to Pakistan over the past years, which have continuously contributed to the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

"I am confident that such friendly relations and good cooperation will be further enhanced to new heights in further years to come."

He said Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Qatar has achieved new milestones and contributed towards the well-being of the people of Qatar under his dynamic leadership, Senate Chairman stated in his message.

ANP starts preparations for general elections

PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) has started preparations for the upcoming general elections and announced the names of the candidates in two major districts, ARY News reported on Sunday.

The Awami National Party announced names of the candidates in two major districts, Peshawar and Buner, for the upcoming general elections. The announcement was made by ANP provincial president Aimal Wali Khan.

The ANP spokesperson Haroon Bilour will contest the upcoming general polls in PK-78 Peshawar-XIII while Abdullah Yousafzai will contest the elections in PK-77 Peshawar-XII and Yaseen Khalil in PK-74 Peshawar-VI.

In October, the Awami Nation-

al Party (ANP) had threatened to leave the ruling alliance if upcoming by-elections were further postponed.

This was stated by the provincial president of the Awami National Party for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Aimal Wali Khan in a post shared on his official Twitter handle.

"ANP has officially conveyed this message to the federal government that if these by-elections are further postponed then, ANP would withdraw from the election and will be quitting the alliance," Aimal Wali said.

The statement from ANP comes hours after the interior ministry requested the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone by-polls scheduled for October 16 for 90 days.

PPP activists stage protests in Bialwal's support, against India's Modi

News Desk

LARKANA/NAUDERO : The activists of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) took to the streets in Larkana district on Sunday to express solidarity with their chairman and foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and condemn India Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The protests took place, Naudero, Ratodero, Dokri, Baqrani and Bada areas of the district. PPP MNA Naseeba Channa led the protest rally in Larkana. The protesters, who were carrying placards, chanted



slogans against Modi. A day ago, BJP activists lodged protests in India and burned effigies of Bilawal for calling Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi the "butcher of Gujarat". Bilawal also criticised the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and treatment of Muslims in the neighboring country. Bilawal remarks come after India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar accused Pakistan of supporting terror group at the United Nations Security Council meeting.

Agriculture extension department seized 1200 bag of Urea

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The Agriculture extension department seized 1200 bag of Sona and Bubber shaer Urea that was hoarded for black marketing purposes. All stock was taken in custody. The Deputy Director Agriculture Extension Ch. Khalid Mehmood while on spy information raided the khairwala khad agency near Pansra and big stock of urea was hoarded there. On the spot, dealer was punished 50000 rupees fine levy and the dealer Iftikhar Ahmed confessed his violation and agreed for supervisory sale at notified rate. Agriculture (Ext) team markaz Thikriwala was deployed for supervisory sale of urea to the farmers at this critical stage of crop wheat.

Lahore to Get 300 New Hybrid Buses



News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi on Sunday approved the procurement of 300 new hybrid buses for the provincial capital Lahore, ARY News reported. Chaiing the meeting of the Punjab Mass transit Authority at his office, the chief minister ordered to the procurement of new hybrid buses for Lahore city and establishment of more bus stations. The CM ordered the revival of the Punjab Transport Company and approved the repair and maintenance of buses of the Pakistan Metro Bus System in Rawalpindi/Islamabad along with the procurement of new buses. The meeting decided to acquire the services of NRTC for automatic fare collection.

APHC-AJK strongly condemned the confiscation of properties of freedom-loving leaders by Indian agencies

News Desk

ISLAMABAD : All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter has said that the Kashmir dispute is not a battle for power, but the issue of freeing Kashmir from the illegal occupation of India. APHC-AJK chapter Information Secretary Imtiaz Wani in a statement issued in Islamabad strongly condemned the confiscation of houses and other properties of Jamaat-e-Islami and freedom-loving leaders and activists by Indian agencies. He said that, on one hand, India is killing, arresting and disappearing innocent Kashmiri youth and, on the other, it is trying to demoralize the resistance leaders and activists by confiscating their houses. Condemning the illegal arrests, molestation of women and vandalism of houses and other properties by the Indian troops, he said the Kashmiri people are making huge sacrifices for their birthright to self-determination and will continue their struggle till complete success. Imtiaz Wani said APHC represents the freedom-loving Kashmiri people and is determined to take the Kashmir freedom movement to its logical conclusion at all costs. He also demanded the immediate release of all illegally detained Hurriyat leaders and activists, including Masarat Alam Butt, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Aasiya Andrabi, Nayem Ahmed Khan, Pir Saifullah, Raja Merajuddin Kalwal, Ayaz Muhammad Akbar, Farooq Ahmed Dar and Shahid-ul-Islam.



Making traditional baskets

Gypsy women busy in making traditional baskets with tree branches in the front of their makeshift home



'Olası Pason' announced a large gathering on January 6 in Lower Waziristan

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Political leaders of Lower Waziristan Wana at a joint press conference in front of District Press Club Wana announcing "Olası Pason" (public movement) Plan B. That on Friday, January 6, all political parties of Lower Waziristan, including PTM, will hold a large protest gathering against the deteriorating peace situation in Wana Bazar and at the end of the gathering, all entrances and exits of Wana will be closed in protest. Addressing the press conference on this occasion, prominent political leader Taj Wazir, Noor zaman from ANP, Shah Zada Wazir from PTM and District President Nadeem Wazir from JI announced this. That along with the closure of all internal and external highways of Lower Waziristan, endless sit-ins will be started on all roads and all roads will remain closed until such time. Until the government assures to



take concrete steps against kidnapping, terrorism, robberies and ongoing unrest in Wana. They said that the local representatives of all political parties will work hard to create awareness among the people to make the 6th meeting and sit-in a success. The political leaders of the press conference gave a clear message to the government and said that our campaign will continue till the restoration of peace in Lower Waziristan and will use Plan C&D after Plan B, and will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the restoration of peace. They appealed to the people of Wana to fully participate in the "Olası Pason" Plan B on the 6th January.

VC UAJK calls for effective strategies to train clinical and non-clinical workforce

Abdul Majid Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The Vice-Chancellor University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) Prof Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi has said that the demand for skilled human resources in the medical field is increasing with each passing day across the globe and we need to adopt effective strategies to train the clinical and non-clinical healthcare workforce to take advantage of it. He was addressing a reception given in honor of the Commandant Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Muzaffarabad Brigadier Zahid Hussain by UAJK Health and Medical Sciences Department the other day. Dr. Kaleem Abbasi remarked that all those institutions involved in human resource development in the highly demanding medical field deserved to be appreciated and supported by both civil society and the government. Acknowledging the quality healthcare services of the CMH Muzaffarabad along with its training program for the students of UAJK, the VC termed it the pioneer institution which first started medical services in the area for the



masses with the assistance of the Army Medical Corps (AMC). Dr. Abbasi expressed his pleasure over the availability of quality teaching hospitals like CMH, AIMS, and RIC for the UAJK students of various medical specialties where they are receiving quality medical technology training. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Brig. Zahid Hussain of the Army Medical Corps, and the Health Department of the AJK government for their consistent support in providing training opportunities to the students of the varsity. Addressing the reception as a chief guest, Commandant Brig. Zahid Hussain expressed pleasure to interact with the management, faculty, and students of the UAJK in one sitting and said that he was extremely satisfied with the collective efforts of CMH and UAJK that was not only benefit-

ing humanity but also a great service to the nation and country. Brig. Zahid Hussain stated that the health sector has now become an industry in the world and there is a great demand for medically trained manpower in the private sector as well. He urged the students to explore and get benefit from the opportunities available in the health sector worldwide. He added that equipping the hospital with adequate human resources and the latest diagnostic equipment is at the top of his priorities. "In three to four months time, a state-of-the-art MRI machine provided by Pak Army is being installed in the hospital" the commandant informed. Brig. Zahid further said that apart from this, new electro-medical equipment is being installed in the Radiology Department, and new Ultrasound Machines and Laboratory kits are also in the process of installation to provide modern diagnostic facilities to the common man at their doorsteps. "Students of the Department of Health Sciences UAJK would greatly benefit from these facilities during their training period", he added.

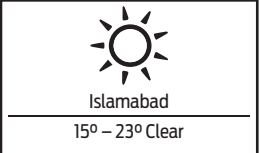
Faisalabad Dry Port will issue certificates for import shipments.

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: A Karachi-style valuation committee has been established at Faisalabad Dry Port Trust which will issue certificates for import shipments. This was stated by the Collector Customs and Appraisal Muhammad Saeed Vato during his visiting of Chairman Faisalabad Dry Port Trust Muzamil Sultan on meeting with Faisalabad Dyes and Chemicals Merchants Association. He said that immediate steps are being taken to provide maximum facilities to importers and exporters so that all types of goods can be cleared quickly. He said that the reports of Karachi laboratories will also be accepted so that there is no delay in the clearance of import consignments due to calling for reports from local laboratories. Chairman Faisalabad Dry Port Trust Muzamil Sultan said that Faisalabad Dry Port has also decided to give an immediate discount of 80% in terms of demurrage so that importers can clear their import consignments quickly by taking advantage of this facility. He said that due to shortage of dollars, free stack facility will also



be provided to imported containers at Faisalabad Dry Port while Faisalabad Dry Port has also reduced its service charges. While facility of transportation of goods will also be provided between the registered bond carriers of Faisalabad Dry Port Trust at a minimum fare. Faisalabad Dyes and Chemicals Merchants Association President Bilal Waheed Sheikh mentioned the problems faced by his members and thanked the officials of Customs and Dry Port Trust for solving them. Chairman said that, in collaboration with Custom authority, exporters as well importers shall be facilitated to accelerate the businesses to minimize the ongoing financial problems.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:37 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 3:24 pm
Maghrib 5:02 pm
Isha 6:31 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

Govt announces to disburse salaries, pensions for Christian community before X-mas

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The federal government ordered on Sunday payment of December salaries and pensions to the Christian community before Christmas.

Details indicate that on December 20 the government will pay the Christian community's salary and pensions.

In relation to this statement, the government has issued a notification.

On the other hand, like other parts of the globe, the Christian community in Pakistan also celebrates the holy festival of Christmas with religious zeal and enthusiasm.

The day starts with special prayers at Churches. People use to decorate Christmas trees with lights and colourful balls in Christian colonies, outside shopping malls and alongside the important roads.

The Christian community in the country renews their commitments to follow the teachings of their religion in letter and spirit. Special ceremonies and masses held every year in all churches across the country with prayers for peace and stability in the country.

PPP ready to contest elections in Punjab, KP if PTI dissolves assemblies: Faisal Kundi

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was ready to contest elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa if Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dissolved assemblies in the two provinces.

"PPP's leadership, workers, and candidates are ready to contest elections in Punjab and KP as per the wish of PTI chairman", he said during a news conference held here.

Faisal Kundi said he would ask all the members of his party and collation parties to fulfill Imran Khan's wish of conducting elections in the two provinces.

Criticizing the PTI chairman for delaying the dissolution of assemblies, the SAPM said yesterday Imran Khan had given another date for dissolving assemblies, which was next Friday.

"The decision of dissolving assemblies has not been implemented may be due to the unavailability of the architect and masons PTI has hired from different political parties," he remarked in a satirical way.

The SAPM said the people of Pakistan were asking questions about the utilization of Rs 15 billion collected by Imran Khan for the flood-affected people.

"Imran Khan could not get an FIR registered in his own governed province and protect the gifts of Toshakhana; how can he run a country," he questioned.

The audio leaks of Imran Khan and his wife are also an eye-opener for the masses that how dishonest he is, he added.

Robbers and thieves would be held accountable, Kundi said while indicating that more than half of the PTI candidates would contest elections from prisons whereas others might be get disqualified over corruption charges.



The SAPM said PPP has always respected the constitution and rendered sacrifices for ensuring true democracy prevails in the country.

About the Foreign Minister's response to India, he said, "The voice of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

is the voice of every Pakistani, Kashmiri, and staunch believer of democratic and human rights values."

He said the way Bilawal Bhutto to has shown a mirror to his Indian counterpart by giving befitting response to his allegations.

masses, however, PTI chairman remained silent at this time.

Faisal Kundi said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was involved in the killings of Muslims in Gujrat and is replicating the same in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

About the flood relief assistance disbursement, Faisal Kundi said that around 98 percent amount out of a total of Rs 70 billion has been disbursed among 2.8 million families while the rest of two to three percent is in process.

He said that recently, transgender have been included in the Benazir Kafalat Programme for which the transgender have to obtain CNIC from NADRA to be eligible for the said programme.

He said the team of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is working on the project of 'dynamic survey' which would be inaugurated by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto.

'Pay tribute to mountain women'

Minister Tourism Gilgit-Baltistan Raja Nasir Ali visiting the stall during Bam-e-Dunya Flim festival to pay tribute to mountain women.



RCCI inks MOU with White Ribbon Pakistan to work on gender equality at the workplace

Commerce Reporter

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the White Ribbon Pakistan. The main purpose of the MOU was to eliminate domestic violence particularly violence against women and patriarchal mindset prevailing in the society.

President RCCI Saqib Rafiq and Omer Aftab, Founder/President White Ribbon Pakistan signed and exchanged the MOU documents at a ceremony held at Chamber house.

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh



and members were also present on the occasion.

Saqib Rafiq said that there is a need to work on gender equality at the workplace and create a productive environment in business communities.

RCCI platform is available for policy advocacy and to bring more awareness about various laws and amendments to counter gender-based discrimination, violence against women, and economic and social empowerment of women.

He suggested nationwide campaign shall be initiated asking men from all occupations to pledge their allegiance to eradicate violence against women in every possible form.

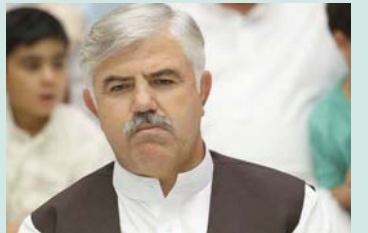
RCCI is also a supporting partner with White Ribbon Workplace Gender Inclusion Awards 2023, he added.

Omer Aftab, Founder/President White Ribbon Pakistan said that White Ribbon Campaign is a movement of men dedicated to ending violence against women and girls. By addressing society's and individuals' patriarchal mindsets, we are addressing the issue of violence, he said.

KP govt taking concrete steps to enhance quality of agricultural produce: Mahmood

Spokesman Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan said that the provincial government had taken concrete steps to enhance quality agricultural produce to ensure food security in the province.



Presiding over a meeting regarding establishing the Agricultural University Swat here Sunday, he termed the establishment of agriculture university in Swat, a flagship project of the provincial government, which will not only promote modern education and research in the agricultural sector, but will also increase the value and quality of agricultural products in the region and create employment opportunities for the people.

He added that Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal project was also an important achievement of the incumbent government, which on completion would bring hundreds of thousands acres of barren land under cultivation in the southern districts.

The chief minister directed the quarters concerned to transfer all the assets of Agriculture University Peshawar's Sub-campus Swat to the newly established University of Agriculture Swat without any delay and said that concerted efforts be made for its operationalization.

Rift found among PTI leaders on assemblies' dissolution: Jaffar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) central leader Chaudhry Jaffar Iqbal Sunday said that difference of opinion had been found among the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders over the dissolution of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies.

In a statement issued here, he said that the dissolution of two provincial assemblies would be a last blackmailing tactics of Imran Khan, assured that he would not dissolve both the assemblies and only playing a reprehensible politics on the issue for his political survival.

Terming the Imran Khan's narrative false and baseless, he said that former prime minister had faced defeat on every front and now playing a game of dissolving the two assemblies for point scoring.

He said, "Imran Niazi is doing disgraceful politics to destabilize the country as he has already hatched conspiracies to default and isolated Pakistan internationally during his previous regime."

The PML-N leader further said Imran Khan is not a well-wisher of the country and reiterated that his politics was surrounding on lies and U-turns.

To a query, he said the coalition government was committed to stabilize the national and revamping the institutions through prudent policies.

Cleft lip and palate patients go get free treatment

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Cleft Lip and Palate Association (ICLAPA) continued providing free medical treatment to the children with cleft lip and palate. An ICLAPA's team of surgeons are also available to operate affected children.



According to the Association's senior member Mrs. Farhat Akhtar Rehman, the surgery takes place at the Fuji Foundation Hospital and Heart International. "We welcome the affected patients to get the treatment on urgent basis free of charge," she added. The parents of the affected children have been asked to contact Mrs. Farhat on her cell numbers 03335157676 and 0300-5192490 to get them registered for the normal treatment or surgery.

Mrs Farhat Akhtar Rehman said his organization had been providing free medical facilities to the poor families since 2004 with the support of families, friends and philanthropists. The ICLAPA was a group of volunteers, which relied on donors to bring hope and happiness in the lives of people, for whom it was financially difficult to give treatment to their children. The noble mission was initiated by her late husband Dr Akhtar Rehman.

According to the doctors, delay in treatment of the suffering children could lead to speech, behavioural and psychological problems making them vulnerable in society.

Nearly 10,000 children with these deformities are born every year in Pakistan and alarmingly about 200,000 kids with these deformities are waiting to be operated upon. Cleft lip occurs more frequently than cleft palate.

Boys are more commonly affected by only cleft lip or cleft lip with cleft palate whereas girls suffer more from cleft palate. The causes of cleft lip and palate are still unknown; however it is believed that it is due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors or as a result of exposure to viruses and chemicals during the development of the fetus.

Trisun Energies, Growatt join hands to produce 100MWs of solar power in Pakistan in 2023

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Two leading renewable energy companies have signed a memorandum of understanding to help Pakistan increase its solar power production capacity by 100 Megawatts in the year 2023.

Trisun Energies signed the MoU with Growatt, the world's leading renewable energy inverter company, for installing new solar power systems in Pakistan of accumulative 100 MWs generation capacity at various locations in one year.

Engineer Mian Fahad, Country Head Pakistan of Shenzhen Growatt New Energy Ltd, said Growatt had emerged as a leading company of the renewable energy market, especially of the solar power sector.

He told the audience that his company had been working to introduce storage solutions for hybrid clean power



projects specially designed for the Pakistani energy market while taking into account the peculiar situation of the national grid.

Mr. Fahad said that Growatt had

a very strong R&D team, which had been working hard to introduce storage solutions for hybrid renewable energy plants in Pakistan as early as possible.

He informed the audience that

Growatt was well on track to increase its annual production capacity to 5GWs.

Qayyum Bawani, Trisun Energies CEO, told the audience at the MOU signing ceremony that his company had been working in the energy trade market of Pakistan since 2017 and worked with many prominent power projects of the country.

"Now we are entering into an agreement with a world-leading solar company to achieve 100 MWs clean power generation capacity in Pakistan in 2023. With God's help we will Inshallah achieve this target as well," said Mr Bawani.

Jimmy Xia, Senior Country Director Shenzhen Growatt New Energy Limited, expressed hope that the partnership between Growatt and Trisun would go a long way to promote clean energy generation in Pakistan instead of relying on fossil fuels for conventional electricity production.

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Transgenders' inclusion in BISP reflects commitment to equal rights

Shumaila Noreen

After a decades' long struggle for their rights, the transgender community in the country finally sees a ray of hope for their welfare with their inclusion in the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) beneficiaries list.

Although many steps were taken during last few years for ensuring social inclusion and gender equality for the vulnerable transgender community, yet the recent initiative of making them a part of the biggest social protection program is another milestone towards providing them economic relief.

The decision of including transgenders in the BISP will not only make them eligible to register for Benazir Kafalat initiative providing quarterly assistance of Rs. 7,000 but enable them to get benefit from the other schemes also.

Nayyab Ali, Human Rights Defender and Transgender Rights Activist, termed the inclusion of transgenders in Benazir Kafalat program as an excellent step towards ensuring financial independence of this marginalized community.

"Transgender community had never been included in any of the social protection program at the government level in the past," Nayyab said adding, but, this initiative will help us meet our financial needs to some extent.

She pointed out that there were number of challenges associated with this initiative including transparent registration process, to be addressed on priority basis to benefit the genuine community.

"Engaging transgender community member in the monitoring of registration process can pave way for smooth and transparent implementation of this program," Nayyab Ali stated.

"On behalf of the whole community, I must appreciate the incumbent government for taking this much-needed relief measure at the time when the Transgender Act is under threat," she said.

Nayyab Ali also described this policy initiative, a step towards ensuring gender equality and equal citizen's rights. "The time has come when the transgender community will not be considered as a marginalized section".

Most often the transgenders are seen begging at busy roads and earning living by dancing at functions.

Sometimes they are also

molested due to their economic compulsions and fall victims to exploitation and with commonly facing charges of adultery.

"We are happy with this initiative. At least, we may have some amount of money to survive," said another Transgender Activist, Nadeem Kashish. "Our inclusion in the BISP network is a positive step. It will provide transgender community social safety and economic relief."

She also emphasized to ensure transparency in adopting the procedure for selection of the beneficiaries. "The authorities must ensure that the benefits of this program should reach to the deserving and genuine transgenders".

As the society used to see them with an eye of scorn, their inclusion in the government programs and job opportunities had been a far cry. But, this recent decision has been seen as positive not only by the community but also the human rights activists in the country.

"Transgenders being a marginalized community are not integrated in the society and face lack of opportunities in getting education and learn skills for earning their livelihoods," said prominent human rights activist, Farzana Bari. "Decision to include them in the social safety

program is appreciable."

She said their inclusion in Benazir Kafalat program would ensure their financial uplift as this decision also reflects the present government's vision of providing equal opportunities to all the citizens.

Since the transgender community faces a lot of hurdles in securing jobs and other earning opportunities at homes, offices and other settlements, therefore there is dire need to provide them opportunities for dignified earnings.

"I would desire the government to move another step forward and provide them skill-based education to enhance their employability and ensure social integration," Farzana Bari emphasized. "If we ensure it, then besides providing income support, we may make them self-sufficient over the time."

Farzana Bari also termed the Transgender law passed in the recent past as a very progressive law and said, "it has improved Pakistan's image internationally."

Seeing from the perspective of human needs to survive socially and economically, this segment had often been a victim of sheer criticism instead of positive societal attitude for them helping them out to earn their bread

and butter.

"As providing congenial atmosphere to all human beings in the country is deemed responsibility of the state, therefore approval of Transgender Policy can be considered as a landmark achievement of the present government," remarked Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri.

"Transgenders are also a part of our society like us and it is our shared responsibility to take care of them" she said.

Under the policy, transgenders have been asked to register for Benazir Kafalat program by first updating their gender in the CNIC from NADRA. After updating their CNIC, they can register at BISP Tehsil Offices. On successful registration, the applicant transgender will receive a payment message from 8171 number and get Rs. 7000 per quarter.

The step is appreciable although some quarters have concerns on certain clauses of the law. Therefore, it is directly needed to address these concerns as well, to make this law acceptable to all segments of the society ensuring same time that it is not misused by anybody to harm our religious and moral norms and benefits real transgenders.

UNSC to implement resolutions on Kashmir issue

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday stressed upon the United Nations Security Council to implement its resolutions over the Kashmir issue and deliver upon its commitment to peace in the region and 'prove that multilateralism can succeed'.

Speaking on "International peace and security 'Reformed Multilateralism'" in the Security Council, the foreign minister said that there was an agenda item left unaddressed by the UNSC, the issue of Kashmir.

"We believe it a multinational agenda, an agenda of this UNSC and if you want to see the success of the multilateral institution or multilateralism and the success of this very Council, surely you can aid in this process; allow the implementation of the resolutions of the UNSC, when it comes to the question of Kashmir, prove the multilateralism can succeed, prove that the UNSC can succeed and deliver peace in the region," he added.

He said that Pakistan believed that further democratization of the UN and the UNSC and the General Assembly would empower this institution and provide it a moral authority to act. "It would serve the institution to further democratize and to allow the sovereign quality of all and not the superiority of some."

"It does not serve the purposes of the UN to add more members to its elitist club and to expand the tyrannical power of veto," he said.

The foreign minister said the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Multilateral solutions, under the umbrella of the Security Council, offered the most effective approach to promoting peace and resolving conflicts, he added.

"Parties to a dispute cannot advocate multilateral processes one day and insist on "bilateral" avenues the day after. Pakistan firmly believes that the major security problems, including those in our region, can be effectively and peacefully resolved through the active involvement of the Security Council and the Secretary-General," he added.

Pakistan's foreign minister further said that "multilateralism" must be based on universal and consistent adherence to the fundamental principles of the UN Charter – self-determination of peoples, non-use or threat of force, non-acquisition of territory by the use of force, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Strict adherence to the Charter's principles has become all the more essential in the context of recent and on-going conflicts.

The Council must seek to resolve conflicts and disputes, not merely "manage" them. It should address the underlying causes of conflict, such as foreign occupation and suppression of the recognized right of peoples of self-determination, he opined.

And, in accordance with their obligation under Article 25 of the Charter, Member States must implement the decisions of the Security Council.

The Security Council, the foreign minister said, must act, not only after a conflict has erupted. It must act pre-emptively to prevent and avert conflicts before they occur.

The Security Council should, he said, no doubt, reflect "contemporary global realities".



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

Revamping railways – a key to boost economy

Dr. Saeed Ahmad Ali

Railway transportation has a crucial role in the economic development of any nation, especially a country like Pakistan by providing a cheaper mode of traveling and boosting economic and industrial activities.

Besides promoting national integration and intra-development, cheaper railways transportation and its large-capacity haulage over long distances facilitate both routine travelers and ferrying industrial goods.

Through this medium millions of people and tones of freight can be transported from one city to another within the country and boost regional trade by extending its network to neighboring states.

Promotion of this sector also generates employment for technical hands, engineers, administrative officers, and the labor class besides providing middle and lower middle classes a cheaper source of the journey.

According to the Pakistan Railways Headquarters record, stretching from Torkham to Karachi, the state-run Pakistan Railways owns 7,791 kilometers (4,841 miles) of track across the country, offering freight and passenger services.

During the 2018-19 financial year, Pakistan Railways carried around 70 million passengers across the country. But, the coming years witnessed its continued deterioration with passengers complaining of poor services and common delays.

The PML-N government in 2014 had launched Pakistan Railways Vision-2026 for building new locomotives, restructuring and improving current rail infrastructure,

increase in average train speed, improving on-time arrival performance, and provision of best passenger services. But, the PTI government was least bothered to carry forward this policy.

However, after taking over charge this year, the present government has allocated Rs2300 million for the repair of 100 diesel-electric locomotives to improve the availability and reliability of running locomotives.

Director General Public Relations (DGPR), Pakistan Railways, Babar Ali Raza has also informed about several projects like upgrading infrastructure, retrieving railways land from encroachers, overcoming trains delay and meeting maximum punctuality, and improving revenue collection.

"Things are moving in the right direction. Pakistan Railways is doing its best with available resources and human capital," Ali Raza said. "The day is not far off when Railways will once again become an earning hand for the state."

The government in the 2022-23 budget has also allocated a sufficient amount for the execution of 36 ongoing and new projects for Railways. An official document reveals that Rs26,648.036 million have been earmarked for 32 ongoing projects, out of which Rs15974.500 million has been reserved for manufacturing and procurement of 820 High Capacity Bogie-Freight-Wagons and 230 passenger coaches.

"Revamping railway transportation can have multiplier effects on industrial activities," Senior Vice President, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Zafar Mehmood Chaudhry. "If operated systematically, Pakistan Railway can help accelerate industrialization and boost the country's economy."

He said, in several Asian countries, the emergence of rail transportation has proven concomitant to an industrial take-off and accelerating prosperity.

It is due to concerted efforts of the present government that Pakistan railways have received first batch of around 46 of the total 230 high-speed modern coaches from China with a capacity to run at 160 kilometers per hour speed against the current 120 kilometers per hour speed.

"These modern coaches would offer an improved train travel experience to passengers as they comprise AC parlor, AC standard and economy classes for passengers, including luggage and brake vans," said a Railways Ministry official.

After receiving 46 completely built units (CBUs) manufactured in China, Pakistan Railways would soon begin manufacturing 184 similar coaches at its carriage factory in Islamabad with the assistance of Chinese engineers under the technology transfer agreement.

"The passenger trains include 80 economy coaches and 80 air-conditioned standard trains, 30 lounge-type trains, and others," he said and informed, for manufacturing 184 coaches in Pakistan, the Chinese firm will provide raw materials, spare parts, and expertise to the experts working on the project at Pakistan Railways Carriage Factory.

"We have signed another similar contract with a Chinese firm to manufacture 800 freight wagons and 20 brake wagons in Pakistan," he said. "After receiving 200 modern freight wagons from China, the country would begin manufacturing 620 most modern wagons at its Mughalpur (Lahore) workshop and the carriage factory in Risalpur."

Dug out roads, rising pollution playing havoc with Faisalabadites

Spokesman Research

The dust clouds oozing out of dug-out roads with the passage of vehicles and mixing with industrial and vehicular emissions were posing serious health hazards to residents in different parts of Faisalabad city.

These suspended particulate matter not only produce smog, resulting in diminished visibility and road accidents but also expose citizens to multiple airborne diseases, especially those travelling by bikes, rickshaws, and other exposed vehicles.

Many roads dug out by departments like Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), and Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) to lay down pipelines were left unattended after their work is completed.

Consequently, the uncollected dust on the roads scatters all around with the movement of light and heavy traffic directly flowing to nearby houses and the lungs of the passersby.

The heaps of mud lying along roadsides and unfilled cavities and potholes hamper the smooth flow of traffic resulting in delays, traffic jams, and accidents as 25 to 30 main roads of the city are damaged and need immediate repair.

"Dust and air pollution due to depreciated roads create respiratory problems," he said. "Moreover, potholes on roads could also cause compression on the backbone, disc herniation, spinal fracture, and severe lower back pain."

He said roads with unusual cavities are more dangerous for aged people as they may suffer from cough, congestion, and bronchitis after inhaling polluted air. "Similarly, pregnant women have to suffer extra pain due to bumps and traffic jams when on their way to hospitals."

The vehicle owners are also victims of this phenomenon complaining of damages to their vehicles after striking into potholes.

"In many cases, the situation is too pathetic. Traffic jams on shabby roads increase fuel consumption to 20 percent besides damaging tyres, engines, and body parts," said Muhammad Asghar, spokesman of the truck drivers' association. "We have to bear extra charges and financial loss due to this phenomenon."

"All roads leading to the vegetable market were damaged and equally damaging for our vehicles and the products. It is too problematic for us," said Ejaz Ahmad, a spokesman for Farmers' Association Jhang Road.

It has been learned that in some areas, the people or departments deposit charges for the repair of dugout roads but concerned departments fail to repair it well in time.

"The Communication and Works Department (CWD) was not responsible for wear and tear of roads," said a spokesman of local administration Muhammad Owais. "It is not our fault if any department leaves a dugout road unrepaired or if any road dilapidates due to overloading by goods vehicles."

He said heavy trailers and trucks add extra load on four-wheelers just for their petty profit and damage the roads. "The CWD has not enough force to monitor and control the passage of heavy traffic with the extra load."

He said the cases of damaged roads have been put up before the government and repair work would be started as soon as the funds are available.

In this scenario, the worst exposed community to health hazards is the Traffic Wardens who had to control unruly traffic, at the same time fight out the pollution.

"Traffic goes unruly when commuters frequently change lanes to avoid the pothole, becoming a real nuisance for us," said a Traffic Warden Muhammad Shehzad. "Damaged roads add to pollution and we are the worst exposed community to airborne diseases."

The citizens have demanded from the district administration and other concerned departments immediately take notice of this dilemma that exposes millions of Faisalabadites to serious health hazards.

Kashmir is a political issue and needs to be resolved through tripartite negotiations: Ghulam Muhammad Safi

Spokesman Report

ISTANBUL: "Kashmir is a political issue and needs to be resolved through tripartite negotiations between India, Pakistan, and the leadership of All Parties Hurriyat Conference. The denial of right of self-determination that was promised to the people of Jammu & Kashmir by the United Nations Security Council can bring both India and Pakistan to the brink of nuclear catastrophe," Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Safi said at a seminar organized by Istanbul-based NGO, Yeni Dunya Vakfi (The New World Foundation) on the subject of Kashmir. Speakers included: Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference; Mr. Abdul Rashid Turabi, Parliamentarian, Azad Kashmir; Dr. Ghulam N. Mir, President World Kashmir Awareness Forum and Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman, World Forum for Peace & Justice.

"The presence of 900,000 Indian occupation forces has made Kashmir the largest army concentration anywhere in the world. Today, Kashmir has become literally the most dangerous place on earth. Indian forces have been given the totally immunity under the draconian laws, like Unlaw-



ful Activity Prevention Act (UAPA), Public Safety Act, (PSA) Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and etc. World powers need to intervene for the sake of international peace and security to resolve the Kashmir conflict once for all," Ghulam Muhammad Safi added.

Mr. Idris Ergin, Youth President of Foundation welcomed the participants to this important seminar. He said that the vision of the Foundation is that youth should be the leading voice of society. Our aim is to develop and empower them, and to work to build a multifaceted, harmonious and vibrant society. Mr. Ergin added that Education is the basic condition for success.

For this reason, our foundation aims to raise our students as highly advanced in science and technology, loyal to their national and spiritual values, hard-working, knowledgeable and at the same time possessing wisdom. Foundation will do everything in its power. Mr. Ergin said to mobilize the public opinion in Turkey to pursue the cause of our brothers and sisters in Kashmir.

Mr. Ahmed Malik of the Foundation emphasized that we want to create a model that brings young people together to network and exchange ideas, develop them to reach their full potential, and generate solutions from the language of young people to build a better society for all. In addition to

its contributions to education, the New World Foundation also protects the historical and cultural heritage and presents this precious treasure to the benefit of future generations. Mr. Malik was loud and clear when he said that the youth of Turkey should be considered as ambassadors of Kashmir.

Mr. Abdul Rashid Turabi said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been demanding the right of self-determination for the last more than seven decades. India responds with bullets, pellet guns to silence the peaceful movement of liberation.

Mr. Turabi added that abrogation of Article 370 and 35 A was designed to crush the freedom movement in Kashmir. But world powers cannot deny the fact that the Kashmir issue has an international sanctity. This was made clear by Mr. Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN when he said that Kashmir issue has to be resolved under United Nations Charter and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

"Our interaction with the leadership of Turkey as well as the civil society has always been source of inspiration. The people of Turkey have always expressed their desire to see Kashmir free from Indian occupation," Mr. Turabi said.

Qatar reiterates denial that it is involved in EU corruption case



News Desk

DUBAI : Qatar reiterated on Sunday that the country denies any involvement in a corruption case being investigated by Belgian authorities involving people linked to the European Parliament.

Belgian authorities have charged four people linked to the European Parliament over allegations World Cup host Qatar lavished them with cash and gifts to influence decision-making. Qatar has previously denied any wrongdoing.

A statement on Sunday by a diplomat from Qatar's mission to the European Union said the country had been "exclusively criticised and attacked" in the investigation and was deeply disappointed that the Belgian government "made no effort to engage with our government to establish the facts".

The statement added that "limiting dialogue and cooperation" on the issue before a legal process has ended will negatively affect security cooperation and discussions on global energy security.

UoG students visit Chinese Embassy



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A group of 12 students from the University of Gwadar visited the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad where they were apprised of the many benefits of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative for Balochistan.

According to Gwadar Pro, the visit was part of the youth engagement programme initiated by the Pakistan-China Institute in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy. The initiative aims to inform the Baloch youth about the benefits of CPEC and to counteract the negative stereotypes about China and the mega project.

Bao Zhong, Counsellor of the Political and Media Section at the Chinese Embassy, stressed the need for continued engagement with the youth to deepen understanding and increase people-to-people ties. She said that the visit will initiate a constructive dialogue aimed at benefiting from the opportunities created by CPEC. She also highlighted that CPEC was not only aimed at bilateral cooperation but also had significant importance in regional connectivity and development.

Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, Pakistan-China Institute emphasised that Baloch youth must be involved in the decision-making process related to CPEC and also be equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to benefit from the project. The students were provided with detailed reports published by the China-Pakistan Institute on how CPEC had positively impacted Balochistan's economy. On the occasion, two documentaries titled 'Dividends of CPEC for Balochistan' and 'How Shenzhen emerged as global industrial hub' were screened.

The first documentary showed how CPEC was benefiting the people of Balochistan. The second documentary showed how Shenzhen went from a small fishing village to one of the most influential economic hubs in the world. The documentary highlighted key aspects of Shenzhen's development such as its strong connection to the global economy, introduction of special economic zones, and its eagerness to embrace technological innovation.

Israel deports Palestinian lawyer to France over security, interior ministry says

JERUSALEM: Israel deported French-Palestinian human rights lawyer Salah Hamouri on Sunday, accusing him of security offences against the state of Israel, the Israeli interior ministry said in a statement.

Hamouri was escorted to the airport early on Sunday morning where he boarded a flight to France with his campaign saying there was no legal recourse for him to take.

Hamouri, 37, a Jerusalem resident without Israeli citizenship, had his residency status revoked on Dec 1 on charges that he was active in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, classified by Israel and its Western allies as a terror group.

"During his life he organized, inspired and planned to commit terror attacks on his own and for the organisation against citizens and well-known Israelis," a statement from the interior ministry said.

A statement from the Hamouri campaign called the deportation a "war crime" and said it constitutes a breach of international law.

"Wherever a Palestinian goes, he takes with him these principles and the cause of his people: his homeland carried with him to wherever he ends up," Hamouri said in a statement.

Hamouri was most recently detained by Israel under administrative detention without charge on March 7 until Dec 1 when Israel revoked his residency and stated he would be deported.

He was previously detained by Israel between 2005 and 2011 after being accused of attempting to assassinate Sephardi rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the founder of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, but has always maintained his innocence. Hamouri was released in December 2011 as part of an exchange of Palestinian prisoners for Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier released in October 2011 after five years in captivity in the Gaza Strip at the hands of Hamas.

Protest

Iranian women condemned the contradictory behavior of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on Wednesday morning in front of the United Nations mission office in Tehran, Iran.



Photo: IRNA

At least 12 killed in Afghanistan's tunnel accident

KABUL: An accident in the landmark Salang alpine tunnel that connects Afghanistan's capital to its north killed at least 12 people and injured dozens, authorities said Sunday.

Thirty-seven people were injured in the accident in Salang Tunnel, located about 90km north of Kabul, according to Qari Yusuf Ahmadi, deputy spokesperson for the Taliban-run administration.

"The Islamic Emirate expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims and ... it also calls on all relevant agencies to make more and serious efforts to prevent the recurrence of such terrible incidents," Ahmadi said.

Local broadcaster Tolo, citing the Ministry of Public Works, said a fuel truck had overturned and caught fire in the tunnel on Saturday night. The blaze had been extinguished on Sunday but the tunnel was closed to traffic and casualties could rise, according to the Ministry spokesperson.

CM Punjab hosted dinner in honour of PMAJFK, parliamentary party members

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervez Elahi hosted dinner in honor of Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan and members of the Parliamentary Party here on Saturday.

The AJK premier and his team received a rousing welcome on their arrival to CM house.

Asif Nakai, Health Minister Muhammad Akhtar Malik, Provincial Minister Muhammad Hashim Dogar, Provincial Livestock Minister Sardar Shahabuddin Khan, Minister Baitul Mal, Social Welfare Ghazafanfar Abbas and Punjab Irrigation Minister Mohsin Khan Leghari, other ministers of the Punjab government were present on the occasion.

Iran urged to free top actor who backed protests

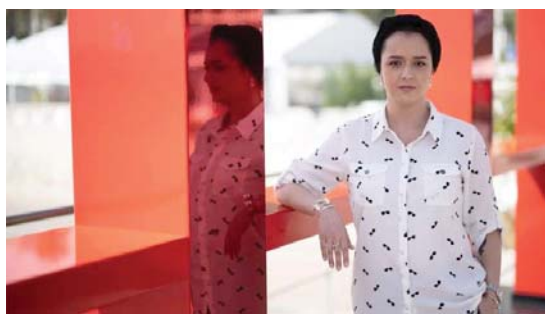
News Desk

PARIS: Iran on Sunday faced calls from celebrities and rights groups to free the actor Taraneh Alidoosti, one of the most prominent figures yet arrested in its crackdown on the three-month protest movement.

Alidoosti, 38, was arrested on Saturday, official media said, after a string of social media posts supporting the protest movement including removing her headscarf and condemning the execution of protesters.

The crackdown was sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, 22, which the morality police accused of violating the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Iran blames the United States and other "enemies" for trying to destabilise the country by fuelling the protests.



Alidoosti has considerable international renown due to her performances in award-winning films by director Asghar Farhadi, including the Oscar-winning 2016 film "The Salesman".

She attended this year's Cannes Film Festival to promote the acclaimed movie "Leila's Brothers" in which she starred.

"The brave actress of Iran got arrested," fellow actor Golshifteh Farahani wrote on Instagram.

Farahani began her career in Iran but now lives in exile

after falling out with the authorities.

"Taraneh Alidoosti is one of Iran's most talented and acclaimed actors... I hope she's free to keep representing the strength of Iranian cinema soon," Cameron Bailey, head of the Toronto International Film Festival, said on Twitter.

Prominent British actor of Iranian origin Nazanin Boniadi also took to social media in support of Alidoosti, saying she had been arrested for "posting a photo of herself without compulsory hijab in

solidarity with the protesters."

"Power of women's voices" Iran last month arrested two prominent actors, Hengameh Ghaziani and Katayoun Riahi, who expressed solidarity with the protest movement and removed their headscarves in public. Both have now been released on bail.

Authorities also arrested the actors Soheila Golestani and Hamid Pourazari in November after they featured in a video where a group of film and theatre figures stood silently without headscarves. They have also been released.

The New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran said "women are being arrested and jailed in Iran for refusing to wear forced hijabs, including prominent actress Taraneh Alidoosti. The power of women's voices terrify the Islamic Republic's rulers."

Sardar Attique Khan slams Federal govt Kashmir policy

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Former prime minister of Azad Kashmir, newly elected President of all Jammu and Kashmir Muslim conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that the presidential system in Pakistan needs time. Pakistan's political leadership shown incompetency and unawareness of its responsibilities. Azad Kashmir is the ideological basis of Pakistan it is our responsibility to keep it stable. Strong relationship with Pakistan is a guarantee of our independence. The

Muslim conference will emerge as a powerful parliamentary party.

Power is not acceptable. The ideological and intellectual relationship between Pakistan and azad Kashmir is being weakened. The country is going through a serious political and economic crisis. India's prime minister Narendra Modi's eyes are focused on Azad Kashmir. Conditions like east Pakistan are being created by promoting ideological and intellectual views in Azad Kashmir. He said that it is not a single person but a whole nation and

especially the collective responsibility of Kashmiris to work to save the country by leaving their ego.

He said that the presidency of the Muslim conference is undoubtedly a great honor, but the President can not do anything unless you do not work with me. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan expressed these views while addressing the 90th convention of the general council held at Mazar-e-Quaid in Faizabad. Earlier, he took an oath of office before the delegates at the 42nd President of the Muslim conference. Flagged on the occasion

and read of the national anthem of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Newly elected President Muslim conference.

On the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the leader of the nation, Ch Ghulam Abbas, the Kashmiri leadership has pledged that the full independence of the state of Jammu and Kashmir will work together to reach the destination of accession Pakistan, to map Kashmir's conspiracy and restore state identity. The change of presidency at the Muslim conference will be a precursor to

political change in Azad Kashmir. Conspiracies to undermine the ideology between Azad Kashmir and Pakistan will be thwarted. Freedom movement Kashmir faces serious threats. Pakistan is facing even more serious crisis than 1970. To thwart the Indian ambitions, the phrase political will have to be a lead wall. On critical and serious occasion the Kashmiri nation needs to strictly follow the views and beliefs of Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas.

The anniversary ceremony was presided over by the Presi-

dent of the Muslim conference, Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Jaral. Earlier, the Holy Quran and collective prayer were offered for the reward of the leader of the nation. Ministers of Azad Kashmir government Dewan Ali Khan Chughtai, and Majid Khan representing government of Azad Kashmir while raising flower sheets at Mazar-e-Quaid along with Quaid Muslim conference and President Muslim conference Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Jaral. Former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, the newly elected President of

the Muslim conference, former prime minister of the Muslim conference, Dewan Chughtai, ministers of Azad Kashmir, Majid Khan, senior vice President of the Muslim Conference, Sardar Altaf Hussain Khan, Secretary General Ms. Mehrulas, leader of the Muslim Conference from Occupied Kashmir, Zahid Safi, Sardar Abdul Raziq Khan Advocate, Raja Saqib Majid, Raja Zafar Maroof, Sardar Mohammad Habib Khan, Major Nasrullah Khan laid the Federal reach on the shrine of Kashmir late Ch Ghulam Abbas.

APBF for lifting undeclared ban on industrial raw material import

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Expressing grave concern over unannounced ban of the government on import of goods, non-clearance of consignments and unavailability of dollars with the banks the All Pakistan Business Forum has asked the government to ensure dollar availability for import of raw material, besides allowing unrestricted import of industrial machinery and spare parts to avert any halt in industrial operations in the country.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood also urged the government to take immediate steps to ensure availability of forex otherwise industries may close down, which will have adverse impact on the overall economy of the country, as the country's total liquid foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank have plunged by \$784 million to a nearly four-year low of \$6.72 billion. He pointed out that the strategy of curbing imports was not growth-friendly. He expressed concern about the country's ability to pay back the huge amount of foreign loans. The frequent concerns have depressed the market and the exchange rate remained unstable during the ongoing fiscal year.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the foreign exchange reserves should remain the top agenda of the government. However, SBP's reserves have dropped by more than \$4 billion from around \$11 billion at the time when this government took the helm in April 2022. He said that APBF is in favor of export expansion and this is where we should plan to focus our efforts to take this forward for sustained economic growth. He said that our tax to GDP percentage is very low at 9.2 percent. We have to do better in order to achieve economic stability but we will undertake reforms in a gradual and orderly fashion in this regard.

Quoting the figures, Ibrahim Qureshi said that net foreign reserves held by commercial banks now stand at \$5.867bn, meaning the country's total liquid foreign reserves are now \$12.58 billion. Central bank currently holds \$6.72bn, barely enough to cover over one month's worth of imports.

CBD Punjab is a flagship project for the infrastructure and economic development of Punjab.

News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBD-DA), has registered Pakistan's first business district Central business District (CBD Punjab), as a flagship project on the development landscape of Punjab. CBD Punjab is a business hub that has emerged as an economic bone for the province of Punjab.

To upgrade the infrastructure of Lahore, the authority has started construction of CBD Punjab Boulevard and Kalma Chowk Underpass remodeling for a cost of Rs 4.2 billion. In order to complete the project on time out of a total of 2000 retaining piles, 1200 retaining piles have been completed in a very short period of time which is a great milestone. CEO of CBD Punjab, Mr. Imran Amin is personally overseeing the progress of the CBD Punjab Boulevard and Kalma Chowk underpass remodeling project and is spending more time with the technical team on-site and directed the employees of the authority to complete the project by February 2023, so that the residents of Lahore, can get relief from the temporary problems they are facing due to constructions works.

China's aluminium imports decline in November amid rising domestic supply

News Desk

BELJING : China's aluminium imports in November fell 35.7% from a year earlier as a result of mounting domestic supply, also as the COVID-hit economy continued to temper demand for the light metal.

The country brought in 255,744 tonnes, including primary metal and unwrought, alloyed aluminium, last month, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

With easing power restrictions on industrial users this year, smelters in China ramped up their production. The latest November output number showed a ninth consecutive increase to 3.41 million tonnes.

For the first 11 months of the year, the world's top aluminium maker produced 36.77 million tonnes, up 3.9% from the corresponding period in 2021. Also weighing on import appetite was weak demand for the metal used in transportation, construction and packaging sectors.

FPCCI Has Made Access to 15,000 Scottish Businesses Possible: Irfan Sheikh

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that FPCCI's Pakistan-UK Business Council (PUKBC) has made it possible for Pakistani exporters to access 15,000 Scottish businesses through a landmark trade promotion & facilitation agreement with Scottish Chambers of Commerce. He was speaking at the annual meet of PUKBC.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh apprised, grounded in research, that the true potential of Pak-UK trade in the near-term of less than three years lies around £6 billion; from the current volume of £3.5 billion; whereas, the export potential is £4 billion from the current £2.1 billion. He apprised that FY22 has seen a growth of 28.3 percent in Pakistan's bilateral trade with the UK.

The annual meet was attended by the who's who of the business community active in Pak-UK business, commercial, financial, trade, JVs, investments and economic cooperation. This year various services sectors expressed their interest in the enormous potential to export services to the UK.

Mr. Imran Khalil, Chairman PUKBC, welcomed businesses to the annual gathering and encouraged them to leverage the partner-



ships established by PUKBC to increase trade and working partnerships with their UK counterparts. He added that the agreement with the Scottish Chamber will provide access to over 50% of Scottish registered businesses and around 30 regional chambers of commerce of Scotland like Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee,

etc. This will also enable both sides to access each other's expertise, products and brands, he added.

Mr. Arsalan Anwer, who led IT businesses from Pakistan to UK recently, presented the highlights of the recent trade visit to UK; which has helped in achieving expressions of interest

and orders for IT services; where Pakistan can help UK businesses reduce their costs through outsourcing of work to Pakistani entrepreneurs and IT companies.

Mr. Zohaib Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Software House Association (P@SHA), explained the true strategic potential of one of the world's major export markets for services; specifically, IT & IT-enabled services. The UK is one of the top importing destinations of IT services in varied verticals, he added.

Mr. Ahsan Jabbar, Director PUKBC, thanked the hosts Destination Hotel Manora Beach for their unique initiative which will help bring inward investments into Pakistan in the travel, tourism, hospitality and allied services sectors.

Dr. Shehzad Amin of Pakistan UK Business Council also briefed businesses on the Pakistan House Concept being explored through the Consulate of Pakistan in Manchester. This will enable Pakistani products and services to showcase their brands in the Manchester region of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ghufuran Abbas, Trade Manager at British High Commission, spoke about opportunities for Pakistani businesses to collaborate with UK businesses; especially, in the education and healthcare sectors.

Preparing 'Gur'

SARGODHA: Farmers busy in boiling sugarcane juice to preparing traditional sweet item "Gur" at Sargodha Bypass



Photo: Online

Conservation and energy efficiency is the priority on govt's agenda



Spokesman Report

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch said that energy conservation and efficiency is the need of the hour during these testing times for the national economy. The potential of energy conservation and efficiency has not been fully realized while approaching the challenges of Energy-Water-Food security in Balochistan where agriculture sector is under tremendous pressure due to high energy costs and natural calamities. He said this while chairing a seminar here on 'Promoting Conservation and Efficiency in Energy-Water Nexus of Balochistan organized by the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

launched for the agriculture and water sector of Balochistan and a donors' conference shall be launched in Balochistan to finance these development programmes especially tube-well solarization and development of water reservoirs. Further, he informed that NEECA under his guidance is working with provincial departments to establish Balochistan Energy Efficiency and Conservation Agency (BEECA) in the province.

The Federal Minister appreciated the institutionalization of energy efficiency and conservation in the country and directed that NEECA and relevant federal departments shall work hand in hand with the provincial departments of Balochistan to conduct solarization of tube-wells across the province. He also appreciated the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations for launching a five-year programme worth 40 million Euro in Balochistan on revival of water resources of Balochistan.

Managing Director NEECA, Dr. Sardar Mohazam said that the surge in energy prices, exchange rate volatility, increasing demand for energy, and depleting resources necessitates actions at both federal and provincial level to opt for higher energy efficiency and conservation (EE&C) measures. Balochistan faces a severe challenge of resource constraints especially with regards to energy and water sectors. He informed that improvement in energy efficiency and conservation is one of the easiest and least cost-effective pathways to improve the sustainability of these sectors where 10 to 15% saving can be achieved. He said that energy-water-food nexus approach shall be adopted to respond to which can conserve resources for Balochistan through more efficient technologies and bring forth policy support for institutionalization of EE&C in Balochistan.

He also directed that development programmes shall be designed and

Reduced remittances to have devastating effects on economy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday said decreased remittances from Pakistanis living abroad is disturbing and it can have disastrous effects on the country's economy.

A strategy should be made to deal with this problem as the country is already facing falling exports and declining investment, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman PVMA said that the exchequer is already empty and it cannot make up for the shortfall in remittances.

He said that the country is facing the risk of default while at such a critical juncture, remittances are continuously declining.

Remittances from overseas Pakistanis during November 2022 declined by 14.3 percent, year-on-year, while the month-on-month decline stood at 4.8 percent. Where-



as, with the cumulative inflow of \$12 billion during Jul-Nov 2022, the remittances decreased by 9.77 percent in the first five months of FY23 as compared to a similar period of last year.

The reasons behind this are said to be the

recession in the West and the re-emergence of illegal channels of hundi that attract outward flows of remittances.

During the period from 2016 to 2019, remittances hovered around \$ 20 billion. In the year 2020, remittances soared to \$ 23 billion. The years 2021 and 2022 saw a jump to \$ 29.5 billion and \$ 31.3 billion, respectively. In the five months (July to November 2022) it dipped to \$12 billion.

The remittances are also falling due to deepening political uncertainty and a weak fiscal situation leading to worries of a default. The sentiment of overseas Pakistanis appears to have turned bearish, which found its best reflection in the reduction in remittances during this period.

Many expatriates are taking a wait-and-see approach, he said, adding that the IMF tranche has been delayed, and the funding from Saudi Arabia is also late, which makes it difficult to repay the loans.

Sindh govt to fully facilitate private companies working to harness clean energy

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government is fully committed to facilitating the private sector companies that stand for exploiting the renewable energy resources abundantly available in the province so that there should be lesser reliance on imported fossil fuels for the protection of the national economy.

This was stated by the Sindh government's Energy Secretary, Abu Bakar Ahmed Madani, while speaking as the chief guest at an event "Solar Power Day" organised by GoodWe Pakistan.

The Energy Secretary said the Sindh government fully facilitated investment by the private sector in the

alternative energy sector so that Pakistan could meet its target of producing 30 per cent of electricity in the country through renewable power resources by 2030.

He said the Sindh government was also fully committed to the cause of producing solar energy for electrifying public sector buildings.

He informed the audience that solar energy systems had already been installed at 225 primary health facilities in 13 districts of the province.

The Energy Secretary said the Sindh government had proposed the inclusion of 22 IPP-based on-grid solar PV projects with a cumulative capacity of 1550 MWs in the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan-2021.



He told the audience that the Sindh government had been working with the World Bank to fully harness the solar energy potential of the province.

He said the World Bank had been assisting the Sindh government to establish solar PV grid-connected power projects of cumulative 400 MWs generation capacity.

He said that another component of the assistance programme was utilization of rooftops of government buildings for generating up to 20 MWs of distributed solar power.

The third component, which has recently been launched is the provision of 200,000 solar home systems in faraway off-grid areas of ten districts.

Madani held out the assurance that a one-window facility would be available to all the energy sector companies that wanted to become a partner in the Sindh government's drive to generate maximum electricity on the basis of wind and solar power.

Mohiuddin held out the assurance that GoodWe would fully support the drive of the federal and Sindh governments to produce maximum clean electricity in the country through alternative energy means.

Ahmad Raafay Asad, Technical Services Head of GoodWe Pakistan, said that GoodWe had unveiled its new ET and ES series of inverters for solar hybrid power systems for the maximum economic and energy benefits of the consumers in Pakistan.

The 49th Pakistan Open Golf Championship organized

Tahir Malik

LAHORE: The 49th Pakistan Open Golf Championship organized and fully supported by the new team at Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) came to a fantasy fulfilled and prestige loaded conclusion for twenty four years old Ahmed Baig of PAF Skyview Golf Club at the Lahore Garrison Greens Golf Course after four rounds (72 holes) of skillful golfing encounter. During the course of these four rounds, aspirants seeking the Pakistan Open Golf Title for 2022-23 were several giants of the game, yet it was the young Ahmed Baig who showed ample intensity and sparkle in this title bearing premier event of the National Golf Calendar to surface as the Pakistan Open Champion for 2022-23. And as Ahmed Baig emerged triumphant, to applaud and pat him on the back was Brig Sajid Akram (Retd) Honorary Secretary of PGF who complimented him for an excellent performance and committed to make all resources available so that Ahmed could continue to excel and show more results on the national and international front. Honorary Secretary said "we are there for you and expect you to come up with results". He also pointed out that presently Ghulam Nabi, our legendary golfer carries the record of winning the Pakistan Open six times and hoped that Ahmed Baig will break this record.

During the final round on Sunday the run of play was controlled by the profi-



cient Ahmed Baig. His tee shots were forceful and precision oriented backed by flawless approach shots that resulted in the ball landing on greens, mostly within five to six feet of the flag stick. And that made putting uncomplicated and fetched him five birdies on holes 3, 5, 8, 16 and 18. He encountered one bogie on the 11th hole too but otherwise the touch of the champion was admirably visible and imposing. Ahmed certainly remained incessant about his pursuit of victory. His championship scores were 72, 68, 66 and 68 and a total aggregate of 274, fourteen under par. Certainly an exceptional score that fetched him the champions trophy and the winners prize money of Rs 919,000 out of the total

prize money of eight million rupees. Balance was distributed among top 50 professionals as per rule.

The second position holder Matloob Ahmed, the number two ranked golf professional of the country managed to win the runners up position with four rounds scores of 72, 75, 65 and 71 and a total aggregate of 283, five under par. A commendable effort from him.

Other contenders who ended up well are Muhammed Alam of Lahore Garrison with a score of 284, four under par. He secured the third position. Fourth position went to M. Munir (Rawalpindi Golf Club) with a score of 287, one under par followed by Khalid Khan (Peshawar) and M. Shahzad (Garrison)

son) bunched together at a score of 288. Following them are three professionals at a score of 289. They are Ansar Mehmood (Margalla Greens), Waheed Baloch (Karachi) and M. Nazir (Rawalpindi). Three more professionals ended up at score of 290. These competing professionals are M. Saqib, Abdul Zahoor, Talat Ijaz.

Senior Professional Category Results: Muhammed Akram (Gymkhana) first; M. Tariq (Islamabad) second; Muhammed Akhter (Islamabad) third; Scores of M. Akram and M. Tariq were level and they went into a sudden death playoff. Akram won on the third hole.

Best Junior Professional of this championship is Jawad Ahmed of Peshawar. M. Sahil also of Peshawar is second and Rehan Babar of Lahore Garrison is third.

The best amateur of the Championship was Saad Habib Malik of Rumanza Golf Club. Other two amateurs who survived the cut and made their mark were Ali Amin and M. Irtaza.

A superbly organized championship by the team of Pakistan Golf Federation.

At the conclusion of the 49th Pakistan Open Golf Championship, Lt Gen Qazi Muhammed Ikram, HI (M), Retd, President Pakistan Golf Federation awarded prizes to the winners in the presence of Brig Sajid Akram, Honorary Secretary, PGF, Omer Zia, Chief Referee, Maj A. Ghafoor of Lahore Garrison, Malik Kamran, Tournament Director and a large number of golfers.



KARACHI: England's Ollie Pope plays a shot during the Third Test match between England and Pakistan at Karachi National Stadium in Provincial Capital. Photo: Online

Iran Hadi Choopan wins 2022 Mr. Olympia title

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iranian famous bodybuilder Hadi Choopan, known as 'Iranian Wolf', won the 2022 Mr. Olympia contest. Choopan had earlier grabbed Mr. Olympia's bronze medal in 2019 and 2021.

Choopan's gold medal is the first gold medal for both Iran and Asia. Derek Lunsford and Nick Walker from the US received silver and bronze medals.

"Hadi Choopan has dethroned two-time Mr. Olympia Big Rany and won his first Mr. Olympia title at Joe Weider's 58th annual Olympia Fitness & Performance Weekend on Saturday evening, Dec. 18, 2022," Fitness Volt reported. It added that Choopan will receive \$400,000 as well.



FIFA World Cup Final: Messi on road to greatness with six records in sight

By A Sports -

DOHA: One of the greatest footballers of all-time Lionel Messi is just one win away from achieving the biggest reward of his whole career when his side Argentina meets the holders France in the FIFA World Cup final today at Lusail Stadium.

Argentina's captain has the last opportunity to make his final international appearance a memorable outing for him since he already announced his retirement from playing for his nation after this World Cup. As France will be aiming to become the third team after Italy and Brazil to win consecutive titles, Messi's Argentina will try to seal their first after a long gap of 36 years when iconic Diego Maradona led the way.

With all eyes fixed on the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner to complete his set of medals - as the World Cup trophy remains the only missing link in his otherwise prolific career - there are multiple other records he can register in the final in Qatar.

Messi has already won 16 games in FIFA World Cup, but if he wins today's final, he will equal legendary German striker Miroslav Klose's record of the most wins in World Cups.

Notwithstanding the outcome of the final, the mere presence on the field will take Messi to his record 26th appearance in World Cups, most by any player, surpassing Germany's Lothar Matthaus (25 appearances).

Italian legend Paolo Maldini currently holds the record for most minutes played in World Cup history with 2,217. Messi, on the other hand, has played for 2,194 minutes so far while 24 more minutes will take him to the top of this chart.

The Argentina striker has contributed nine assists in FIFA World Cup games to date. With ten assists under his belt, Brazilian superstar Pele currently holds the top spot. Messi will break this record if he can assist his teammates in scoring at least two goals in the championship game.

Argentina win the 2022 FIFA World Cup as Lionel Messi stars in dramatic final

LUSAIL CITY, QATAR: Argentina have won the 2022 FIFA World Cup after winning on penalties following a 3-3 draw against France in the final. Lionel Messi scored twice to help his nation be crowned world champions.

Angel Di Maria won a penalty after Ousmane Dembele fouled the winger in the penalty box, which Messi comfortably converted past Hugo Lloris. Di Maria then added a second after slotting the ball home from close range following a brilliant passing move from Argentina which cut Les Bleus apart.

Kylian Mbappe restored hope for France with two quick-fire goals late in the match, taking the game to extra-time before Messi popped up with a third goal for Argentina in the 109th minute after a lengthy VAR



check deemed that the goal was able to stand. Mbappe sealed his hat-trick

from the penalty spot in the 118th minute.

READ MORE: FA confirm huge Gareth Southgate England decision after World Cup quarter-final defeat

Lionel Messi scored from the spot in the shootout as France missed two penalties and saw Argentina take their crown as world champions. Emiliano Martinez was the hero once again as he pulled off a brilliant save to deny Kingsley Coman before seeing Aurelien Tchouameni put his spot kick wide of the post moments later.

Gonzalo Montiel scored the winning penalty after sending Lloris the wrong way and immediately broke down in tears. Messi has followed in the footsteps of iconic Argentina star Diego Maradona in lifting the World Cup with his nation.

Argentines wakes up dreaming of World Cup glory in Qatar

News Desk

Buenos Aires: Zeyda Cipra has been so anxious all week about Argentina's match against France in the World Cup final that she couldn't avoid talking about how she was feeling with her psychologist.

"She told me she was feeling the same way about the World Cup," laughed Cipra, a 35-year-old economics student who also runs a pet shop in Buenos Aires. "I'm really excited, and have terrible anxiety."

Argentines woke up Sunday ready to watch the national team play in Qatar for a third World Cup title, the first since 1986, amid a feeling of unity and joy that is rare for a country that has been engulfed in an economic crisis for years and

has one of the worst inflation rates in the world, at almost 100% annually, and where almost four in 10 live in poverty.

"People are feeling a very intense happiness constantly. Cars are driving around with the flag. The whole city is dressed with the flag," said Guillermo Ortiz, a 52-year-old podiatrist. "The crazy thing is that we're all united and say we want what's best, which generally doesn't happen in this country. It's as if soccer draws a circle and puts us all inside."

Argentina last reached the World Cup final in 2014, when it lost to Germany, but seemingly everyone in the country agrees the sense of anticipation and excitement for this game is far higher than it ever was for that match eight years ago

in Brazil.

"This has something special due to the situation of the country. The truth is that we're going through a really, really rough time and we're waiting for this happiness," said Martin Ferreyra, a 46-year-old plumber. "We're enjoying a break as a society."

As Argentines prepared for the country's sixth World Cup final, many were ready to follow some superstitious rituals.

Cipra, for example, will watch the game by herself just as she has done with all the other World Cup matches, surrounded by her two dogs and two others she's taking care of - all wearing the Argentina jersey.

Ortiz will be watching the game with his family and friends in his apartment, where, just like every



other game, they will hang up a 25-meter (82-foot) Argentina flag. Ortiz's goal is to later unfurl that

flag at the capital's iconic Obelisk, the traditional site of celebrations that will undoubtedly fill up after

the match regardless of whether the team led by Lionel Messi wins or loses.

"If we lose, we're still going to celebrate," Ferreyra said. "We know there were values and that this is a real team."

Few, however, were talking about losing as a real possibility.

"I think this will be ours because the guys have shown they can adapt to any system of play and they can change depending on their rival," said Guillermo Darchez, a 43-year-old photographer whose daughter plays in the youth team at Newell's Old Boys.

Newell's is Messi's old club in Rosario, Argentina's third-largest city.

"We're all very hungry for victory," agreed Pablo Jimenez, a 29-year-old waiter at a restaurant in Rosario that is owned by Messi's family. "I think we're going to eat them alive."

Australia down South Africa in first Test inside two days

News Desk

BRISBANE: Australia captain Pat Cummins spearheaded a pace barrage that tore through South Africa before his side chased down a target of 34 runs Sunday to claim a six-wicket win inside two days on a hostile Gabba pitch.

After finishing their first innings 66 runs in front midway through the first session Sunday, Australia dismissed the visitors for just 99 despite a fighting 36 not out from Khaya Zondo.

But the Australians then lost four cheap wickets in the chase as paceman Kagiso Rabada ran amok, with Usman Khawaja, David Warner, Steve Smith and Travis Head all falling to catches behind the wicket.

However, Marnus Labuschagne and Cameron Green - aided by 15 extras - guided



Australia home to give them a 1-0 lead in the three-match series on a day when 19 wickets fell.

"Tricky wicket. I thought the way Head and Smith batted (in the first innings) got us to this winning position," said Austral-

ia captain Pat Cummins.

Man of the match Head added: "Very difficult wicket, plenty for the bowlers. We saw that the whole game. Nice to be able to contribute and get a win."

Despite the victory, Australian

selectors will be concerned with Warner's form after yet another failure.

Warner is due to play his 100th Test in Melbourne on Boxing Day without scoring a century in almost three years, as calls for

him to be dropped grow louder.

The two teams went into the series both boasting high-quality bowling attacks, but Australia's batting always looked stronger.

And on a green Gabba wicket, South Africa's frailties at the top of the order were brutally exposed.

"Another 60 runs and we would have been in the game. Pretty spicy wicket, bowlers were licking their lips," said South Africa skipper Dean Elgar.

"I don't think we could prepare any better. Conditions weren't in favour for the batters."

South Africa slumped to 27-4 in the first innings and 5-3 in the second, positions from which they never recovered.

While the Australians also struggled at times, Head's superb 92 from 96 balls proved the difference between the two

teams. Australia started the day at 145-7 and South Africa did well to restrict them to 218, a lead of 66.

But the South African batsmen never looked up to the task of setting Australia a competitive total after slumping to 3-2 at lunch.

Stop the Rot

Although Temba Bavuma and Zondo tried to launch a recovery in the middle session, they continued to lose wickets in clumps to a rampant Australian bowling attack.

Cummins, who finished with 5-42, started the second innings rot when he trapped his South African counterpart Dean Elgar lbw for two in just the second over.

Mitchell Starc then took the 300th wicket of his career when he bowled Rassie van der Dussen

for a duck.

South Africa limped to lunch but Cummins struck again soon after the resumption when Sarel Erwee got a top edge to gully where the two-metre-tall Green leapt high to pull in a superb catch.

With South Africa staggering at 5-3, Bavuma and Zondo survived a torrid examination from Cummins, Starc and Scott Boland before slowly starting to chip away at the deficit.

Bavuma reached 29 before playing back to off-spinner Nathan Lyon to leave South Africa 47-4.

Boland then had first innings top-scorer Kyle Verreynne caught at second slip before bowling Maro Jansen two balls later to leave South Africa 48-6, still 18 runs from making Australia bat again.