



Sanjrani condemns BJP leader's statement against Bilawal

Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Tuesday strongly condemned Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manupul Bansal's uncalled-for statement against Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In a statement, Sanjrani urged the world to take note of such kind of "criminal statements" against a foreign minister of the country and take action in accordance to international laws. (Report on Page 8)



Govt to provide legislative cover to Special Committee's decisions: Qadir Mandokhel

Special Committee on Affected Employees Chairman Qadir Khan Mandokhel has said that the government will bring a bill in the Parliament to provide legislative cover to the committee's unprecedented decisions regarding the affected employees. During the committee's 15th meeting, he said all the directions given by the committee to the different departments in service matters would be protected through legislation. (Report on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Solarisation of govt buildings

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Cabinet Committee on Energy on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PM seeks plan to solarise govt buildings in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to formulate a plan at the earliest for solarisation of government buildings in Islamabad.

The prime minister, who chaired the meeting of the cabinet committee on energy, was given a briefing on the gas development schemes across the country.

The cabinet committee approved the completion of construction work of the gas development schemes started during 2013-18.

Federal ministers for finance,

planning, energy and parliamentary affairs, Advisor Ahad Cheema, state ministers for petroleum and finance and senior government officers attended the meeting. Agencies

Ishaq Dar lauds UAE support for Pakistan's economy, terms it major 'economic partner'



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was one of the major economic partners of Pakistan.

"Pakistan attaches great value to brotherly relations with the UAE," the minister added.

These views were expressed by the minister while meeting with a delegation of Etisalat International led by Mikhail Gerchuk, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) CEO e & International.

The delegation comprised Abdulrahim Abdulla Abdulrahim Al Nooryani, CEO Etisalat Pakistan; Hatem Bamatraf, President and CEO of PTCL and Ufone; and Kamal Shehadi, Chief Strategy e & International, said a press release issued here.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ayesha Ghous Pasha, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, the secretary Finance, the secretary IT & Telecom, and senior officers from the finance and privatization divisions attended the meeting.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar welcomed the delegation and highlighted the deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan and the UAE.

Ishaq Dar recalled his meetings with Etisalat in Abu Dhabi and Dubai during his recent visit to the UAE and underscored the significance of resolving outstanding issues between Etisalat and the privatization commission and moving ahead for a mutually beneficial solution.

He also highlighted prospects of foreign investment in Pakistan, especially in IT and Telecom sector, which was growing rapidly, and said that the government was providing conducive environment and facilitation to attract foreign investment.

Mikhail Gerchuk, CEO e & International briefed the meeting on company's profile and its future investments in Pakistan and expressed readiness to further invest in IT and Telecom sector of the country.

Both sides agreed to proceed ahead for the resolution of all outstanding issues between Etisalat and the privatization commission in a spirit of goodwill.

President for an integrated national mental health helpline

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday emphasised the need to set up an integrated, effective and standardized national-level mental health helpline to provide mental health services and counseling at the grass-roots level.

The president, chairing a follow-up meeting on mental health here, said a coordinated, sound, and singular approach at the federal and provincial levels, with the participation of the public and private sectors, should be adopted to address the issues of mental health and well-being in Pakistan.

Country Director of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala, representatives of the National Commission for Human Rights, Pakistan Psychological Association, Pakistan Psychiat-

ric Society, other organizations, and officials of the federal and provincial governments attended the meeting.

The president emphasised that all resources and initiatives taken at the federal and provincial level and in the private sector related to mental health and well-being should be enlisted and incorporated into a single national helpline for providing speedy and prompt mental health services to the people of Pakistan.

He called for enlisting mental health institutions, teaching hospitals, and other mental health facilities, besides creating a database of mental health providers, which should be integrated into the helpline for providing efficient and effective referrals to the patients.

The president said that avenues in the public and private sectors should be explored to meet the financial need

of Rs 45 million for the establishment and launching of the first-ever national mental health helpline.

He added that after the establishment and activation of the mental health helpline, there should be a fully coordinated awareness campaign through conventional and social media and other means of communication to sensitize the masses to seek counseling and help through the helpline.

President Alvi called for creating a curriculum on mental health and well-being in coordination with relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors and teaching it at an appropriate level in educational institutions to sensitize students on stress and tension management during their studies and handling emotional and social issues.

He said that such students would also be able to educate their family

members regarding the importance of mental health and well-being.

He underlined that a separate initiative may be taken to educate parents and family members to remain engaged with their family members and provide mental health counseling and help.

The president said that the HEC, universities and teaching hospitals should create additional seats to encourage enrolment in mental health education to create a critical mass of psychologists and psychiatrists to cater to the need of growing mental health issues in society.

He also said that the management of the national helpline may also consider engaging final-year students in the psychological and psychiatric disciplines for six-month internships to respond to the queries and provide counseling to the patients using the helpline.

Press release of today Federal Cabinet's meeting not issued: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said no press release of the today's federal Cabinet meeting was issued.

"The news circulating in the media regarding the Cabinet's press release is not correct," she said in a news statement.

The federal minister said the federal ministers had held a press conference about the federal cabinet meeting earlier in the day and shared details with media in this regard.

Pak-US ties moving ahead positively with consistent engagement: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD, DEC 20 (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday said that with consistent engagement, bilateral exchanges and high-level visits, the relations between Pakistan and the United States were moving ahead positively.

The foreign minister, in an interview with a US-based television channel MSNBC, said in the past, 90% of the conversation between the two countries used to be on terrorism. However, currently, 90% of the discussion takes place on economic cooperation and other areas

including terrorism.

"This is a positive sign for Pakistan-US relations. We can't change what happened in the past. We can learn from the past and engage with each other with realistic expectations," the foreign minister remarked.

He said both countries should talk to each other instead of talking at each other.

To a question, the foreign minister said Pakistan needed huge funding to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure which should be resilient to cope with any natural calamity in the future.

Next elections to be held in Oct 2023, reiterates Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal has reiterated the next general elections in the country will be held in October 2023 based on the 7th Digital Population Housing Census 2022.

Addressing the digital media influencers on Tuesday, the Minister said that due to recent floods which badly affected two provinces the elections are not possible before October 2023.

"What message will go to the flood-affected people if elections are announced before the completion of the incumbent government's term," said the Minister, while referring to the demand of ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan who has been demanding early elections.

Former premier Imran Khan has been demanding immediate elections since his government was

removed through a vote of no-confidence in March this year.

The Minister further added that the last general elections were held on the basis of an old census and Sindh province had conditionally agreed to hold the next election of 2023 based on a fresh Digital Census. Therefore, he said that the government will not take any step which makes the whole election controversial.

In April 2023, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) formally handover the Digital Census to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and subsequently ECP will take four months for the delimitation, remarked the Minister, while reiterating that former Prime Minister Imran Khan had endorsed Council of Common Interest CII's decision to hold next elections will be based on the fresh Digital Census.

While referring to a fabricated

story of Daily Mail against Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif, the Minister said the premier immediately took action against the newspaper as a result they tendered an apology.

Furthermore, the Minister said that since the government came into power, several projects have been started which were stopped by the previous government as during the last four years no progress was made in CPEC projects.

The incumbent government has restarted the dredging of Gwadar International Airport, which was stopped by the previous government. Similarly, two transmission lines for Gwadar have been resumed and it will be functional in January 2023.

While referring to the Islamabad Metro Bus Project, the Minister said that the previous government deliberately delayed the project despite it was close to completion.

Parliament joint session passes PIMS Bill, 2022 to repeal MTI act

ISLAMABAD: The Joint Session of the parliament (Majlis-e-Shoora) on Tuesday passed the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Bill, 2022 to repeal the Federal Medical Teaching Institutes Act, 2021 commonly known as the MTI act.

The bill, which was moved by Dr. Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto and passed by the parliament's joint sitting, restored the federal status of PIMS employees, as under this act hospital means a teaching hospital as notified by the federal government.

Through this act, the executive director will be appointed by the government in accordance with the provisions contained in the Civil Servants Act, 1973, and rules.

The MTI ordinance was promulgated in November 2020, under which the hospital was to be run through a board of governors (BoG).

The BoG members were appointed and notified by the Ministry of National Health Services on the recommendation of a search and nomination council.

سولنی ناردرن گیس سٹی
Sui Northern Gas
Helpline: 1199

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میں نے گیس کی بچت کیلئے گیزر میں سیور کولن لگوائی ہے

میں نے گیزر ٹائمرز کو پوائس لگوائی ہے اور اب میں اپنے مارتھ بیلن سے گیزران آف کر سکتا ہوں

آئیے ہمیں چیلنج کریں 1199 پر بلاک کریں

بل کیے ذریعے آسان اقساط میں ادائیگی

National mental health helpline

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a follow-up meeting on mental health and well-being at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Envoys of Canada, Austria, others present credentials to President

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed envoys of Canada, Austria, Syria, Serbia, and the Slovak Republic on Tuesday presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi in the Presentation of Credentials Ceremony here.

Later, High Commissioner of Canada Leslie Scanlon, Ambassador of Austria Andrea Wicke, Ambassador of Syria, Dr Ramez Alraee, non-Resident Ambassador Serbia Dragan Todorovic, and non-Resident Ambassador of Slovak Republic Ladislav Ballek also separately called on the president.

Talking to the Canadian ambassador, the president highlighted that there was great economic potential in Pakistan, a market of 220 million people, and investment opportunities.

He said that Canadian businesses should be encouraged to explore the opportunities available in Pakistan.

He said that the resolution of the Reko-Diq project was a positive development, and expressed the hope that it would encourage further Canadian investment in Pakistan.

The president stated that Pakistan and Canada enjoyed cordial and friendly relations and that Pakistan looked forward to greater bilateral cooperation in the areas of the economy, commerce, and investment.

Welcoming the Austrian ambassador, the president said that Pakistan attached high importance to its relations with Austria, both bilaterally and in the context of the European Union.

He informed that Pakistan's investment regime was very liberal, and the Austrian companies should benefit from it and consider making invest-



ments in the Special Economic Zones being set up all over the country.

He said that Pakistan offered significant opportunities for investment in the fields of hydropower, railways, communication, renewable energy, and waste management technologies.

President Alvi said that there were ample opportunities for cooperation in start-ups and information technology sectors, and expressed hope that the two countries work towards enhancing cooperation in these fields.

He also urged the need to further enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation, adding that the true potential of bilateral trade was still unrealized.

He noted that Austria had remained supportive of Pakistan's GSP+ status and that the country looked forward to Austria's continued support towards the successful completion of the ongoing 4th biennial review and for the new GSP Plus Scheme post-2023.

The president underscored that Pakistan would like to work together with its international partners, including Austria, to address the global issue of climate change.

He expressed gratitude to

the government and the people of Austria for providing Euro 2 million in humanitarian assistance for the flood victims in Pakistan.

Talking to the Syrian ambassador to Pakistan, the president urged the need for regular contact between the two countries at different tiers of leadership in order to further cement cordial relations.

He said that Pakistan's relations with Syria were multi-faceted and deep-rooted and that cultural, religious, and historical ties bound the people of the two countries.

He appreciated the friendly gesture by the Syrian government to open group visas for Pakistani pilgrims and commended the decision taken by the airlines of both countries to operate direct flights between Karachi and Damascus.

While talking to the non-resident ambassador of Serbia, the president said that both countries need to work diligently to strengthen their bilateral economic and trade relations in order to bring them to par with the actual trade potential.

He further highlighted that Pakistan offered tremendous opportunities for investment and cooperation in the fields of

hydropower, communication, higher and technical education, industrial and commercial interaction, renewable energy, information technology, circular economy and waste management technologies.

President Alvi further said that Pakistan, having a population of over 220 million, was an ideal market to hire skilled and semi-skilled workers, which the Serbian corporate sector could utilize.

"Skilled youth from Pakistan can help the construction sector which is presently booming in Serbia", he added.

The president thanked the Serbian side for agreeing to support Pakistan's candidature for the Council of International Maritime Organization and Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS).

Talking to the non-resident ambassador of the Slovak Republic, the president expressed the hope that the envoy would be able to contribute towards expanding bilateral ties between the two countries.

He noted with satisfaction that the ministries of foreign affairs of both countries had set up a mechanism for Bilateral Political Consultations, which would provide a good opportunity to review the over-

all relationship and take new initiatives.

The president further said that the investment policies of Pakistan were very liberal, and urged the ambassador to persuade the Government of Slovakia and businesses to take advantage of them.

He suggested that bilateral cooperation and investment in a variety of sectors, including the automobile industry, machinery, energy, construction, infrastructure, agriculture, electric industry, tourism and food processing.

President Alvi also highlighted that Pakistan's start-up and information technology sector was expanding very fast, and urged the ambassador to meet the concerned people in this regard.

He also informed that Pakistan had also established Special Economic Zones and that Slovak investors were welcome to invest in them.

He also noted that GSP Plus had played an important role in the growth of trade between Pakistan and the EU countries and that Pakistan looked forward to Slovakia's continued support towards the successful completion of the ongoing 4th biennial review and for the new GSP Plus Scheme post-2023.

Govt to provide legislative cover to Special Committee's decisions: Qadir Mandokhel



ISLAMABAD: Special Committee on Affected Employees Chairman Qadir Khan Mandokhel has said that the government will bring a bill in the Parliament to provide legislative cover to the committee's unprecedented decisions regarding the affected employees.

Responding to the concerns of the committee member Aliya Kamran during the committee's 15th meeting, he said all the directions given by the committee to the different departments in service matters would be protected through legislation.

A similar committee, known as the Khursheed Shah Committee, was constituted in 2012 by the Federal Cabinet, but the current special committee was a constitutional one as it was formed by the National Assembly speaker and had more powers than the previous one, Mandokhel added.

He suggested that such a commit-

tee should be a permanent feature of the parliament to address the issues faced by the employees of different departments.

Meanwhile, the 16th and 17th meetings of the committee, which were scheduled in Karachi, will now be held in Islamabad on December 21 and 22, and notices in this regard have been issued to different ministries and departments.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Aoun Chuadhry has also been requested to attend the meeting in person to resolve the issues being faced by the employees of Pakistan Tourism Department Corporation (PTDC).

The secretaries of different federal ministries have also been issued notices to appear before the committee to settle the issue of regularization of contractual and daily wages employees working for years in different ministries and departments.

Those issued notices for the two consecutive meetings include ministries of Petroleum and Natural Resources, Maritime Affairs, Defence, Energy (Power Division), Railways, Industries and Production, Poverty Alleviation, Education, Civil Aviation, Overseas Pakistanis, Health, Cabinet Division, Defence Production, Science and Technology, Finance, Establishment Division, and Law and Justice, besides Intelligence Bureau and Accountant General of Pakistan Revenue (AGPR).

Sanjrani condemns BJP leader's statement against Bilawal



ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Tuesday strongly condemned Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manupul Bansal's uncalculated statement against Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

In a statement, Sanjrani urged the world to take note of such kind of "criminal statements" against a foreign minister of the country and take action in accordance to international laws.

Sanjrani said the BJP leader's statement was a reflection of the Modi government's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideology, making clear that their leader "is a butcher from Gujarat".

"There is no room for such thoughts and ideas in a civilized society," he said, adding that Modi's hands were still stained with the blood of

innocent people.

He said the occupied valley had become the greatest prison in the world. Children, elderly women, and unmarried Kashmiris were being subjected to oppression and oppression in Kashmir.

"Such statements by India clearly show that the Indian leadership can do anything to put the peace of the region at stake," Sanjrani added.

He said that India was looking to assume the role of a policeman in the region and moving forward with subservient thinking.

"Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has tried to show the real face of Indian leadership to the world. This is the reason why the Indian leadership is using words that fall from diplomatic etiquette about the Pakistani foreign minister," he asserted.

German Environmental Group terms Pakistan one of the hardest hit countries by climate change

KARACHI: Pakistan is among the top 10 most vulnerable countries even though its contribution to global warming is less than one percent. The country suffered huge weather-related losses and damages over the last two decades in the form of severe floods, heat waves, and storms.

These views were expressed by an environmental expert Dr Zafar Iqbal Shams while addressing the Muhammad Ajmal Khan Memorial Lecture series, organized by the Dr Muhammad Ajmal Khan Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilization of the University of Karachi here on Tuesday.

During the one-day event held at the KU MAK-ISHU seminar hall, he cited the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, prepared by the German watch group with the query "Who suffers most from extreme weather events?"

He mentioned that among 180 countries studied by the group, Pakistan is the eighth most affected country, scoring 29 CRI (Climate Risk Index), Puerto Rico, the worst affected, scored 7.17,

while Qatar, the least affected, scored 173.67 CRI.

According to him, the Index was calculated based on the human deaths and losses in GDP of the countries due to extreme weather events caused by climate change. According to the index, extreme weather events kill 502.45 inhabitants and cost US\$ 3771.91 million in losses in GDP every year in Pakistan.

"According to World Bank estimates, the recent flood cost US\$ 10 billion in losses and damages, washed away two million homes, and affected 33 million inhabitants of the country."

Dr Shams, while delivering his lecture on "Global warming, its causes, implications, and control", said that the greenhouse gases, viz., carbon dioxide, methane, dinitrogen oxide, and some halogens, emitted by human activities, are raising the global temperature that disturbed entire hydrological cycle of the earth.

He said that this triggers early and rapid melting of snow on the mountains



that spill over the rivers, inundates the human settlements and the croplands and costs human lives, properties, livestock, and agriculture.

He added that global warming also causes the water expansion of oceans and seas, rise in sea levels, increase in humidity and human diseases and loss of biodiversity. Many semi-deserts are converted into deserts due to water losses

from their surface because of the rising temperatures.

Dr Shams informed the audience that for the first time, 154 countries signed an international treaty in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce greenhouse gases to prevent climate change. Later, a few other countries also signed

the treaty.

It was ratified in March 1994. Under the framework, member states meet every year in different cities to assess the progress to reduce greenhouse gases, which is generally called a conference of the parties (COP).

He recalled that the conference of the parties in its third session (COP3), held in December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, pledged to establish legal binding for developed countries to reduce six greenhouse gas emissions, namely, carbon dioxide, methane, dinitrogen oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Due to the legal binding, many developed countries reduced their emissions over the last three decades.

He narrated that nonetheless, the global reduction of greenhouse gases is not very promising since many developing countries including China and India, which are exempted from the agreement, are emitting the gases in greater quantity.

Dr. Shams mentioned that COP27

which was recently held in the historic city of Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt from November 6 to 18, 2022, pledged to cut 45 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to stay below 1.5 degrees celsius rise in global temperature. It pledged the global transformation to a low-carbon economy.

For the first time, COP27 pledged to provide 'losses and damages funding' for vulnerable developing countries hard hit by climate disasters.

He also mentioned that G7 and V20 (Vulnerable Twenty) launched a global shield against climate risks, with commitments of US\$200 million for initial funding. Pakistan may benefit from the fund since it is one of the most vulnerable countries hit hard by climate-related disasters.

Moreover, the country has a low coping capacity to rebuild and recover from catastrophes.

On this occasion, the Director, KU MAK-ISHU Dr Salmaan Gulzar, said that this series of lectures highlighted many issues that the country is currently facing.

Need stressed for capitalizing on US market for exports

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: US market offers many openings for exports to Pakistan and the entrepreneurs should accelerate efforts to capitalize on these opportunities to increase exports and earn more foreign exchange for the country. This was said by Asim Ali Khan, Pakistan's Consul General-designate to Los Angeles, USA while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

Asim Ali Khan said that the business community should identify specific products that may have good potential to penetrate the US market and assured that he would extend all possible facilitation to them for improving exports to the USA. He said that the business community should share problems and issues being faced by them in doing business with the USA



and he would try to take up them with the relevant authorities for redress. He said that ICCI should arrange his meeting with local IT companies to discuss ways and means to further improve exports of the IT sector with the USA. He assured that he would share business related information with ICCI so that its members would

be able to take advantage of the available business prospects in the US market.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the annual turnover of USA in 2021 was over US\$ 4600 billion, but Pak-US bilateral trade was

reportedly up to US\$ 12 billion, which was not reflective of the actual potential of both countries. He said that Pakistan has good potential to improve exports of IT products and services to the USA and Pakistan's foreign mission in the USA should cooperate with the private sector in improving exports with this huge market. He said that many other products of Pakistan including pharmaceuticals, cutlery, women-made products and others can find good markets in the USA. He assured that ICCI would like to work closely with Pakistan's Consul General in Los Angeles to explore new avenues of promoting trade and economic relations with the USA.

Sheikh Muhammad Ijaz, Akhtar Hussain, Khalid Chaudhry and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for further increasing business and investment relations with USA.

Miscreants attacked the city police station

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In the tribal district of Lower Waziristan, miscreants attacked the city police station Wana around midnight last night one policeman was injured.

According to sources, the number of armed miscreants is said to be more than 50, who immediately attacked the police station. Sources say that the miscreants first attacked the gate with rocket launchers, after which the miscreants entered through the gate.

The SHO and in-charge including the police force surrendered before the miscreants.

The miscreants also took weapons and mobile phones of the police officers from the city police station Wana, meanwhile police constable Ilyas was injured.

City Police Station Wana was later deputed by FC officials.

However, on the other hand, the sources say that All night FC officials have fired on the miscreants every where.

As a result, a dead body of a miscreant was found in the area of Baghicha check post, who is also said to have weapons.

Meanwhile, fear and panic has spread among the people and the situation is gradually becoming more and more alarming.

In this regard, no statement has come out from the side of the police till now.

District Press Club Wana cabinet dissolved



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: The important meeting of the cabinet chaired by President Zafar Wazir decided to dissolve the cabinet.

While the Election Committee has been formed for the annual elections of District Press Club Wana for the year 2023, polling will continue on 31 December 2023 from 10 am to 4 pm.

For the annual elections of the District Press Club for the year 2023, Chairman Election Committee Adam Khan Wazir has been appointed, along with two more members Shahzadin Wazir and Ala Khan Wazir.

2-day Pak Pharma & Healthcare Expo to open today

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD : The 14th Pak Pharma & Healthcare Expo will be opened today (Wednesday) here at Pak-China Friendship Centre. International conference will also be held as part of this event with the theme "Pharma Export Way Forward—Opportunities and Challenges."

Two days Pak Pharma & Healthcare Exhibition and Conference is being organized from December 21-22, 2022 by the Prime Event Management.

Mr. Asim Rauf, Chief Executive Officer, Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) will inaugurate the exhibition as chief guest.

Organizer Mr. Kamran Abbasi, Director Prime Event told that other guests of inaugural ceremony would include Syed Farooq Bukhari—Chairman Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) & Chief Executive Mediflow Pharmaceuticals, Mr. Arshad Mahmood—Chairman PPMA North and Dr. Sh. Kaiser Waheed—President Medisure Lab Pakistan & former Chairman PPMA.

Panelists of discussion session will include Mr. Hamid Raza—CEO Neutro Pharma & former Chairman PPMA, Mr. Arshad Mahmood, Mr. Usman Shaikat—Director Bio Labs, Mr. Aman Allah Sheikh—CEO Davis Pharmaceuticals, Dr. Faisal Q. Khokhar—Executive Director Remington Pharmaceuticals Industries and Dr Uzair Nagra—CEO Medi Search Pharma.

Kamran Abbasi further told that this exhibition would be focused on pharmaceutical equipment manufacturers, chemicals, laboratory equipment, packaging material, analytical equipment, environmental control, pharmaceutical consultants, hospital & health equipment manufacturers, ambulance and rescue vehicles manufacturers, surgical equipment, fire alarm & equipment, hospital consumables and accessories.

There are 50 exhibitors participating in this exhibition including foreign companies from China, Taiwan, Turkey, Germany.

Palm oil worth \$1.334bn, soybean 144.094m imported in 5 months

News Desk

ISLAMABAD : Edible oil including palm and soybean imports into the country during the five months of the current financial year (2022-23) grew by 12.93 percent and 234.36 percent respectively as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-November, 2022 over 1.269 million metric tons of palm oil valued at \$1.334 billion was imported to tackle the domestic requirements as against the import of 1.334 million metric tons costing \$1.527 billion in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, over 97,945 metric tons of soybean oil costing \$144.094 million were also imported for producing edible oil and manufacturing vegetable ghee to fulfill local consumptions as compared to the imports of 34,672 metric tons worth \$43.095 million in the same period last year.

Subsidies

FAISALABAD: People stand in a queue and buying flour bags at subsidy price at Fuwara Chowk area in the city.



Photo: Online

FCCI has expressed concern over the suspension of import consignments

Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry SID Committee has expressed concern over the suspension of import consignments of vegetables and warned that if they are not released immediately, besides the shortage of vegetables in the country, their prices will also increase. There will be an extraordinary increase while the import of vegetables in the coming season and many times more foreign exchange will have to be spent. Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive member Haji Gulzar Ahmed, Adeem Shahzad, Sheikh Rizwan Ahmed, Khurram Abbas, Syed Imran, Rana Kaleem, Muham-

mad Asif Mushtaq, Mian Bilal Zafar and other members also participated in the meeting about seeds.

Haji Gulzar Ahmad said that due to the recent flood, the vegetables cultivated in large areas of the country were destroyed, while in order to control their shortage and inflation, they had to spend valuable foreign exchange and order vegetables from the neighboring countries, while the prices of imported vegetables have gone up. A huge increase was also recorded.

He said that to avoid this situation, the seed companies should import various vegetable seeds for the country's needs. These seeds have reached Karachi port but they are not being cleared on the pretext of non-availabil-

ity of dollars. He said that this is the season of vegetable cultivation and if vegetables are not cultivated in time, not only their production will decrease but also the capital spent on seeds will be wasted.

Moreover, in order to control the shortage of vegetables in the country, the government will once again have to spend a lot of foreign exchange and import vegetables from neighboring countries. He has demanded the government of Pakistan to direct the banks to clear seed LCs immediately so that the farmers in the country may not face shortage of seeds. He has also requested Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Dr. Khurram Tariq to intervene in this matter immediately.

Children's Library established in Bagh Jinnah, Faisalabad

Mian Rashid Asghar.

FAISALABAD: The Deputy Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh has announced to organize mega programs to provide recreational facilities including book reading to the children of public and private schools in the Children's Library established in Bagh Jinnah on every Sunday from January 1, 2023. The Deputy Commissioner visited Children's Library and reviewed the recreational facilities available for little children and said that the best facilities should be available in the library for the children who come to the garden with their parents for a walk and fun, while the working hours of the library should also be extended.

He saw the books, toys and other facilities for the children in the library and said that steps will be taken to expand them. He said that in the two hours competition the children would be watched documentary besides book reading and took part in paintings.

PHA officers were also assigned the task of formulating a plan by contacting the management of government and private schools. There should also be proper arrangements for sitting for parents and attendants of children. He told the library management that steps are necessary to increase the turnout of children.

Malala and distinguished panel address challenges facing higher education

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Nobel's youngest peace prize winner, Malala Yousafzai, was part of a distinguished panel discussion on Building Higher Education Institutions for the 21st Century. Organised by the Oxford Pakistan Programme (OPP) and the Syed Ahsan and Syed Maratib Ali School of Education (SOE) at LUMS, the panel engaged a packed audience in discussing both challenges and opportunities.

Dr. Talha Jamal Pirzada introduced the panel and said, "One of the core aims of the OPP is to increase Pakistani representation at Oxford, and also bring Oxford to Pakistan, and this discussion is a humble effort to do just that." Much of the discus-

sion focused on access to quality education. Ms. Yousafzai strongly advocated for greater access, particularly for female students. "The future for girls in Pakistan relies on the quality of education they receive. The biggest inspiration for girls is seeing women progressing in their professional careers. Their success stories inspire them."

Joining Ms. Yousafzai was LUMS Founding Pro Chancellor and visionary, Syed Babar Ali; Professor's Stephen Blyth, Principal, Lady Margaret Hall and Dr. Nick Brown, Principal, Linacre College from the University of Oxford; and Dr. Faisal Bari, Dean, SOE. The panel discussion was moderated by Professor Dr. Adeel Malik, University of Oxford, and co-founder of OPP. Dr. Arshad Ahmad, Vice

Chancellor, LUMS, emphasised the role of exceptional learning in addressing grand challenges facing Pakistan and shared how the University's Learning Without Borders perspective has led to a number of national high-impact interventions. "At the heart of Learning Without Borders are systems designed to put learning first in not only governance and decision making, but also in LUMS shared ethos." He added, "Three indicators of exceptional learning and its impact can be seen in addressing issues about access, relevance and collaboration, all of which are grounded in LUMS values".

Sharing his experiences from Oxford, Professor Blyth said, "Oxford and Lady Margaret Hall have done tremendous work to reduce barriers so that education

is accessible to the most talented scholars regardless of their background." Dr. Brown shared that Pakistani students are the least well-represented at Oxford, and OPP created by Pakistani academics aims to try and solve this problem.

He added, "At Oxford, the debate has two pillars—access to quality education which is a basic human right, and access to talent." Dr. Bari shared his views on the importance of infusing quality in education.

"The challenge is not only to improve access to higher education in terms of statistics but by providing good quality education to yield the intended results."

The discussion paved the way for a question-and-answer session during which the audience expressed their concerns



about the higher education system in Pakistan and made suggestions for its improvement. The event concluded

with remarks from Syed Babar Ali, "My hope is that universities including LUMS will produce future leaders, who are tolerant,

liberal, open-minded and respect merit, and will think about Pakistan first and provide educational opportunities for all."



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr5:38 am
Zohr12:05 pm
Asr3:25 pm
Maghrib5:03 pm
Isha6:32 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
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Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

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Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation 9209224

AIOU holds RDs conference

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD :An online meeting of regional directors was held at Allama Iqbal Open University. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood presided over the meeting. Dr. Nasir said that the admissions for the spring semester 2023 are starting from January 15, there is a need to adopt a marketing strategy in a professional manner to increase the number of admissions. He further said that the regional directors need to be more active to convey the message of AIOU to the backward areas of the country to include maximum number of students in the educational network. The conference was attended online by the regional directors of Sindh and Balochistan. Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan hosted the meeting.

Focus of this meeting was to improve the regional offices' efficiency, increase the facilities provided to the students, and integrate the students from the remote areas of Sindh and Balochistan into the regional centers closest to their village. Facilitation and establishment of model study centers in some areas were also discussed. Dr. Nasir Mehmood said that all major decisions for increasing student facilities and overall development of the university will be taken on the advice and suggestions of regional directors.

Energy conservation plan

Markets, restaurants to close at 8pm across the country

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Tuesday announced an energy conservation plan, according to which all commercial centers and restaurants will shut at 8pm, ARY News reported.

"All markets and shopping malls will be closed by 8pm across the country, said Defence Minister Khawaja Asif while addressing a press conference along with other federal ministers to brief media about the decisions taken in cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair.

He, however, said the timings of the restaurants may be extended by an hour.

The federal minister went on to say wedding halls will be closed at 10pm across Pakistan, adding that the decision would help Pakistan to save 8,000 to 9,000 megawatts of electricity and Rs62 billion in a year.

"Markets in other parts of the world are shut down by 6pm but they remain open beyond midnight in Pakistan," said Khawaja



ja Asif.

The federal minister further said that the government would take all four provinces on board regarding energy decisions and the final plan would be launched by Thursday with consensus.

Asif also said the government was

mulling over introducing e-bikes. "The govt is also introducing e-bikes which will phase out the bikes that use petrol."

Ministry of Information will be running a media campaign to spread awareness regarding these new measures among the public, he added.

Christmas Tree

ISLAMABAD: A vendor is displaying Christmas Tree outside his shop in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Zong 4G & HANDS partner to Develop an urban forest in Lahore's Safari Wildlife Park

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: To combat climate change, Zong 4G, the country's leading telecommunication and digital company, has initiated a tree plantation drive in collaboration with Hands to develop an urban forest in Lahore.

The plantation drive was attended by Rana Shahid Tabasum, Divisional Forest Officer, Lahore, Amir Naseem, Executive Manager, Central Punjab, HANDS, Zong 4G volunteers; and other representatives of government departments.

Zong's volunteers have stepped up to plant more than 700 evergreen and fruit trees in the Wildlife Park as part of the company's commitment to creating a greener and safer environment for future generations of the country. The plantation campaign aims to develop the urban forests to fight the on-going environmental



concern of smog and climate changes that have impacted Lahore.

Pakistan has been hit hard by the worst effects of climate change, including rapidly rising temperatures and, most recently, widespread flooding. One of the first lines of defence against the climate crisis is the planting of trees, especially native trees. Zong 4G is working towards improving

the environmental sustainability of the country, one tree at a time,

Emphasizing the need to protect and conserve the environment, the official spokesperson of Zong4G said, "As a responsible corporate citizen of Pakistan, Zong 4G is committed to helping advance the country's Sustainability Development Goals. The tree plantation drive is one facet of our

mission to help bring about an environmentally sustainable Pakistan and a better-shaped future that makes a difference in people's lives, communities, and on our planet."

Commenting on the partnership, Amir Naseem, Executive Manager, Central Punjab, HANDS said, "Pakistan is in dire need of environmental sustainability efforts. We thank Pakistan's leading telecom company, Zong 4G, for sharing our vision to help protect and save the environment. Through consistent and sustained efforts, we can help fight climate change"

Other than leading the digital transformation in the country, Zong 4G is also leading on the sustainability front in the telecom industry. The brand stays committed to social empowerment and the preservation of the environment, creating a better tomorrow for younger generations.

Kundi pledges to increase BISP payment centres in Hazara Division

News Desk

ISLAMABAD : Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said that more payment centers of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will be opened in various districts of Hazara division, particularly those Tehsils where such centre do not exist. He stated this in a meeting with a delegation of notables of Hazara which was led by Shuja Khan, former minister and PPP Provincial General Secretary at his Islamabad on Tuesday.



Kundi said that Benazir Income Support Programs is operating nationwide to provide financial assistance to the underprivileged and marginalized segments of the society and to expand BISP's outreach to to last mile is the priority of the present coalition government.

He further said that there is a need to open more offices in various districts of Hazara division so that beneficiaries doesn't have to travel too far away from their houses to receive their cash payments.

MOS also apprised the visiting delegation about details of the registration process that is mandatory for the eligible beneficiaries to be able to receive the BISP cash assistance. The process includes household survey, poverty score card, biometric verification mechanism, payment methods and the partner banks, he explained.

Furthermore, Kundi urged all district presidents to be aware of various initiatives being implemented under BISP so that they can mobilize local population of Hazara Division and help them in getting themselves registered with BISP to receive case assistance under Kafalat Programme.

Kundi informed the delegates that FIRs are registered and stringent action is taken against those culprits who are involved in fraudulent deduction of money from the cash of the beneficiaries which is Rs.7000/- quarterly. The members of the PPP delegation vowed to fully support BISP initiatives under the leadership of their party's Provincial President Mr Shuja Khan.

Christian community to plant one mln trees: Dr Joseph

News Desk

RAWALPINDI: Archbishop Rawalpindi/ Islamabad Dr Joseph Arshad on Tuesday announced that the Christian community would start a campaign to plant one million saplings on the occasion of Christmas to make Pakistan greener and greener.

Addressing the Interfaith harmony conference at a local hotel, he said that the Christian community was "striving for the development and prosperity of the beloved country" and the role of religious leaders was important for promoting inter-faith harmony.

On the occasion, the business community expressed solidarity with the Christian community and their determination to participate in the joys of Christmas.

In his address, President of Anjuman Tajran Rawalpindi Cantt Sheikh Hafeez extended Christmas greetings and said that the Christian community played a vital role in promoting religious tolerance and unity.

Speaking at the event, focal person of the district peace committee, Maulana Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal Rizvi lauded the role of the district administration in devising the best security arrangements at Christian worship places.

He said the promotion of inter-faith harmony was the "need of the hour", and religious leaders must play their role in promoting religious tolerance.

Ali Hussain Arif, Pandit Rakesh Chand, Anoop Singh, Inspector Muhammad Iqbal in charge of Rawalpindi Police religious wing, Dr. Farhad, Akmal Shehzad Ghuman, Director Admin Press Information Department Saghir Wattoo, Pir Azmatullah, Shaukat Jafri, Malik Babar, and others also spoke while a cake was also cut on the occasion.

13 Pakistanis included in world's top 2000 scientists

News Desk

BAHAWALPUR : As many as 13 scientists of Islamia University Bahawalpur have been included in the world's top 2% of scientists in the Stanford University ranking. Top scientists, doctors, engineers, and mathematicians from around the world are included in the ranking.

The 13 Pakistani scientists from the Islamia University Bahawalpur include Prof Dr. Rubina Bhatti, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr. Saeed Ahmed, Chairman Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Akhtar, Chairman of the Department of Medical Laboratory Technology, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Altaf, Chairman of Green Healthcare System, Department of Pharmacy Practice, Prof. Dr. Zaheer Abbas, Department of Mathematics, Dr. Ismat Bibi, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Dr. Muhammad Nadeem Akhtar, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Dr. Muhammad Azhar Khan, Associate Professor, Institute of Physics, Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Department of Mathematics, Dr. Mohammad Adil, Department of Chemistry, Dr. Abdul Rehman, Department of Agronomy, Dr. Mohammad Farooq Warsi, Department of Chemistry and Faisal Zulfiqar, Department of Horticulture Sciences.

Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Deans, and Director ORIC have congratulated him on this honor. It is worth mentioning that every year Stanford University releases a list of the top 2000 scientists in different fields in the world. In recent years, a large number of scientists and researchers from the Islamia University of Bahawalpur have been included in this list, which is a clear manifestation of the Islamia University Bahawalpur's global standards in research.

Pakistan needs to ban Novel Tobacco Products and must stop their online sale and advertisement

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Society for the Protection of the Rights of Child (SPARC) organized an interactive session with social media influencers to address the need to ban the online sale and advertisement of emerging tobacco products. The speakers emphasized that tobacco industry has been manipulating our children and youth into buying novel tobacco products such as e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches and heated tobacco products, through various marketing tactics on social media.

Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), shared his concerns that tobacco industry is using advanced strategies to introduce markets with emerging nicotine and tobacco products. By presenting concepts of healthier alter-

natives to smoking, tobacco industry has entered local markets alongside online sale and promotion. The tobacco industry is misleading everyone by claiming that novel tobacco products are less harmful and only for smokers who want to quit. However these products are openly promoted online and sold to young and new consumers. This shows that these products are not a healthier alternative but a tool to bring in new consumers without any regards for the damage they can cause to the health of children and adolescents.

Dr. Ziauddin Islam, Country Lead Vital Strategies; Former Technical Head, Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of NHSR&C; Former Technical focal Person of Govt. of Pakistan for WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC); said that tobacco industry is polluting the country

with the online sale and advertisement of emerging products, which shows that we need to ban the online sale and advertisement of emerging tobacco products in the Pakistan. He mentioned that around 31 million Pakistanis consume tobacco and introducing new products will further increase this number. Social media is also being used to increase the number of tobacco users as online platform is open for tobacco industry to promote sale and advertisement of harmful emerging products.

Khalil Ahmed Dogar, Program Manager, SPARC, said that novel tobacco products such as nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products are all readily available for online purchase due to weaker policies regarding online advertisement and sale. Khalil requested government



recognize this situation as a child rights emergency as it will directly hurt their health, education and future development. It is responsibility of policymakers

to ensure that no anti-child policy is implemented in the country. Government must ban all kinds of advertisements and sale of such harmful prod-

ucts especially online presence of these products because social media is a huge platform of influence for younger Pakistanis.

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The Mountain Athlete; Ammad Parkour

Syed Adeel Zaman

One thing that both life and sports have in common is that they both teach us discipline, focus and balance.

Life is not a game to be played aimlessly and for no reason, sports is also not something to be played easily; it requires your core purpose, sacrifice, hard work and focus. Athletes who pay attention to these basic but pivotal things succeed in both life and sports.

The newer and more unique the game is, the more dangerous it is. In this article, I will share with you the story of a dangerous game and a player who dedicated his life to this game and was called the son of the mountains.

Ammad Parkour was born on June 17, 1998 in Quetta, City of Pakistan. Ammad started school at the age of 5 at Universal Public High School in Quetta. At the age of 13 Ammad started playing sports. The first sport he joined was Wushu which he trained for 1 year and won a gold medal in the nationals of Wushu, soon after he was introduced to Parkour. Ammad proved to be extremely talented in Parkour and showed a high interest in the sport.

He joined a Parkour team that consisted of 12 other boys. Ammad finished his matric in 2016 and FSc in 2018.

Ammad has worked as stuntman for movies and ads such as Teefa in trouble

(2018), Umru Ayaar (2021) Jazz (2019), Samsung (2021), Nestle (2018) and has performed parkour with his team in different ceremonies such as Army Wushu Championship (2015 – 2019 consecutively), Opening ceremony of all Pakistan T-20 Cricket cup Quetta 2014, Opening ceremony of Jiu Jitsu nationally games Lahore 2015, Opening ceremony of Wushu national games (2015 – 2021 consecutively), Opening ceremony of Football national games 2014,2015, 2018, 2019, 2021.

Ammad has won Gold Medal in Wushu National Games 2014 and Silver Medal 2x in Jiu Jitsu National Games Lahore 2015.

Ammad's journey was not as easy as it seems. Ammad said that he has faced numerous difficulties. The journey starts with self-conviction followed by family concerns and non supportive attitudes. For a dangerous sport like Parkour, there is a lack of basic facilities, education, training and health facilities, due to which the athlete himself and his family suffer from various problems.

Ammad said, "But to achieve your goal in life, you have to consistently perform at your best with hard work, sacrifice and focus. Mindset is the most important thing for a player. If they only look at their problems, they will not be able to improve their professional skills."

Ammad has become an inspiration to many new players who don't let their limited resources and problems

stop them from achieving their goals, but instead hone their skills through hard work and dedication and make a unique place in society.

A lot of work needs to be done regarding sports in Pakistan. In this regard, the government as well as the social society and the corporate sector need to work together.

We, as the nation, need to remember that an athlete is the ambassador of the nation, so he/she represent not only his/her sport, but the whole country, so throughout his/her journey, the whole nation needs to support them.

Pakistan is a very fortunate country in the sense that there are players of every sport who can improve the image of Pakistan at the global level through sports and give a message of peace to the world by providing proper guidance and facilities. They can show the world a positive face of Pakistan. Ammad is an example that if we support our youth, they can achieve success at every level and make their country famous.

It's very true for athletes, you cannot achieve success easily, and you have to pay the price of it. They have to go through many obstacles and barriers to break. They can only win if they have a winning attitude and right mindset.



Hardships of life and timely hurdles won't be able to force you to lose, you have to have the spirit of never giving up, it seems very simple but athletes like Ammad can make it, you too can make your family and country proud.

Ammad parkour said that Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They're made of sweat, determination, and a hard-to-find alloy called guts."

Ammad parkour said that credit of all his achievements goes to his amicable wife Binafsha Didar.

UN chief announces climate action summit

Amid continuing deadlock in the talks to reform the UN Security Council, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that the possibility of expanding the 15-member body was now seriously on the table.

"I think that the possibility of enlarging the Security Council is now seriously on the table. I'm still not optimistic about [re-forming] the right of veto," the UN chief said in response to a question about making the Council more effective to deal with crises, such as the Ukraine war, at his year-end press conference at UN Headquarters in New York on Monday.

Full-scale negotiations to reform the Security Council began in the General Assembly in February 2009 on five key areas — the categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Security Council, and working methods of the council and its relationship with the General Assembly.

Progress towards restructuring the Council remains blocked as G-4 countries continue pushing for permanent seats on the Council, while the Italy/Pakistan-led Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group firmly opposes any additional permanent members.

As a compromise, UfC has proposed a new category of members — not permanent members — with longer duration in terms and a possibility to get re-elected.

The Security Council is currently composed of five permanent members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — and 10 non-permanent members elected to two-year terms

On Monday, the secretary-general said the central questions about reforms are related to the composition of the Security Council and to the right of veto. Now this is a matter for member states, the UN Secretariat has no influence in these negotiations, he said.

"I think that during our General Assembly session in September, for the first time I heard from the United States and from Russia clearly the indication that they were in favour of an enlargement of the number of permanent members of the Security Council, the UN chief said.

In this regard, Guterres said that there was a proposal from France and UK some time ago for some restrictions in the use of the right of veto. "But I remain pessimistic about the possibility of the right of veto to be seriously put into question," he said.

The UN chief added that reform of the Security Council needs two-thirds of the votes of the General Assembly plus the five positive votes of the permanent members of the Security Council.

"So I think that there is now space for a much more serious discussion in relation to the Security Council reform," he added.

He said the international community was now "fighting back to restore trust between North and South", with a deal over the long-stalled issue of Loss and Damage, at COP27.

Another positive step was taken during 2022 with the launch of an action plan to cover every person in the world with early warning systems, within the next five years.

"Going forward, I will keep pushing for a Climate Solidarity Pact, in which all big emitters make an extra effort to reduce emissions this decade in line with the 1.5-degree goal and ensure support for those who need it.

Without it, he warned, "the 1.5 degree goal will soon disappear. I have pulled no punches on the imperative for all of us to confront this existential threat. And I will not relent."

The Prodigal Ibn Batuta-I

Zoya Ansari

Some people are born to travel and the Moroccan prodigy Ibn Batuta is an outstanding example in this context.

Ibn Batuta experienced tremendous rigours while traveling but as a committed traveler he never shirked from venturing on this dangerous experience. He risked dangers on land and sea, travelling in groups, large or small but rarely alone.

The travel was undertaken for a variety of reasons: sometimes he moved with merchants who transported goods while he also traveled to meet kings, sultans who valued him and he, in turn, gained deep insights into their working arrangements.

Crucially, support for travel of Ibn Batuta came from the skills and labour of travel guides and transport experts who manned the varied types of craft that traversed the rivers and seaways, or the caravans, themselves veritable societies in motion, that crossed landscapes linking one realm or continent to the next.

Though Ibn Batuta was a medieval traveler but he was extremely prominent amongst both the rich and the restless. Ibn Batuta was unique for his keen observation and deep sense of curiosity along with his intention to leave the written account of his travels for posterity.

In this context, Ibn Batuta's unique contribution is compared with the multitude that travelled but few individuals left accounts of their experiences.

Indeed, travel itself did not have a literary or intellectual purpose and only those literate, educated persons with a desire or inducement to record their journeys did so. Throughout Muslim domains travel did mould the lives of many a scholar, literate

merchant or scholar/merchant.

One aim of their journeys, if not the sole objective, was the acquisition of knowledge, whether religious or mundane.

In this respect, history frequently mentions two greatest travelers of the entire medieval period who produced their renowned works. Marco Polo, the Venetian, was 17 when, in 1272, he embarked on his adventures among the Mongols in China and was absent from Italy with his father and uncle for 23 years.

Marco Polo died aged 69 in January 1324, at the very moment when a younger Muslim contemporary, Shams al-Din Abu Abdallah

and acted in the capacity of qadi or religious judge on several occasions. He wrote in Arabic, the majority language of educated Muslims throughout the Middle East, and beyond; later, while in India, he claimed knowledge of spoken Persian as well.

Ibn Batuta left family behind in his birthplace, Tangier, in June 1325, aged 22. He returned home for good after nearly 30 years abroad. The length of time he spent outside Morocco was about 28 years of near continuous absence, or 44 per cent of his life's span. The geographical extent of Ibn Batuta's travels took him well beyond the Arab world and he encountered two major Muslim language



Muhammad b. Abdallah b. Ibrahim al-Luwati al-Tanji, better known as Ibn Batuta, was preparing to set out on his own travels, initially on pilgrimage to Makkah and Medina. Ibn Batuta was born in 1304 and was a native of Tangier in modern-day Morocco.

He was, therefore, a Maghribi, or Westerner, as persons from that region of North Africa were known. He was a subject, too, of the ruler of the Marinid dynasty with its capital in Fez. Further, he was ethnically a Berber, a Sunni Muslim, trained in the Maliki tradition of Islamic legal practice

barriers, Turkish and Persian, during his travels, in the latter of which he acquired some competence.

After completing his first pilgrimage, Ibn Batuta began his venture to the fringes of the Muslim Ummah, first southwards to the East African coast and then on his journey through Anatolia, the Crimea and Afghanistan to India, where he remained for several years. After India, and an interlude in the Maldives Islands, he voyaged to Sumatra on the very eastern fringe of the Ummah.

To be concluded

An Important Concept for Pak Real Estate Developers

Waqas Asmat

Pakistan's real estate market is filled with opportunities for real estate developers. The real estate sector basically received a lot of funding in the past year. But now it seems to be facing a low compared to the boom we witnessed before. However, it does not mean that all hope is gone for real estate developers. There are a few simple strategies in the real estate business that can help you survive and even sustain for a longer period. Understanding some concepts will enable you to continue with the progress in your business. One of those concepts is the real estate gap funding, which has been a topic of exploration by real estate developers such as AAA Associates.

Real estate gap funding is the temporary funding that an investor provides until a permanent solution is available for the company. It is up to the company to use this funding as capital expenditure for operations or marketing. Or to use it for advertisement, sales, or PR. Another investment that is received is usually in the form of hard cash or loans which are meant to meet project costs.

But the question is what incentive it provides for the investor? As compared to other loans the gap funding costs are higher. Therefore, the return on investment in gap funding is higher than the project. This makes it a profitable option for investors as well. There are many investors out there who are willing to fund a viable project.

As we know that despite the inflation and low trend in the market, real estate still stands out as the most profitable business in Pakistan. The incentive of higher returns in gap funding will enable more funding. Hence real estate companies should come up with offers of gap funding and seek opportunities as well. It is a great method to sustain their business in these times of financial constraint.

One of the upsides of gap funding is that it can

mitigate risks for the project. It can ensure the continuity of company operations even when there is a market crash or failure, even when the project activities have stopped. The gap funding can also be used to pay off the investors that initially made their investments. It can also be converted to a bridge loan in the longer term. This would require a new agreement on terms of returns.

The core operations of a real estate company are crucial. Gap funding gives the opportunity to your business to keep on functioning when the market is down. You will be able to pay costs for operations, and your investor will also go home happy. But, before you decide to jump in and acquire this type of funding, you should make a basic assessment of your project as well.

To see whether your project will have the dividends to go around as sizeable returns, make a fair assessment. Making such an assessment will highlight the value of your project. Another reason to acquire gap funding is the delay in deals of your project. When you see that there is time in getting project deals done, then you should get hold of gap funding. This way, the interest loans will also not affect the profits.

In summary, the real estate gap funding is temporary, and not meant to cover the project costs. They can be used to cover the core operational costs and sustain the business. There is a huge incentive for investors due to the higher returns on this funding. However, the company should make a fair assessment of its project to see that there are sizeable dividends for all stakeholders. Real estate gap funding is a great option for you to mitigate risks to your project in case of a market crash.

Pakistan's economic conditions at least in the business sector might get better due to the exit from FATF gray list. Therefore, international investors might also be encouraged to invest. Therefore, it is up to the real estate companies to get as many possible options for funding. Real estate businesses are expanding on the globe and the sky is the limit.

Yalda Night: Celebrating the longest night of the year

Spokesman Report

Yalda is an ancient celebration whereby the brilliance of the sun along with the warmth of life are cherished. This event coincides with an increase in day-length in the region. The winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere corresponds to Dey 1st (December 22nd) in the Iranian calendar. All people from Iran celebrate this ritual festivity. However, those Iranians who, due to a variety of reasons have to live far away from their homelands, also uphold "Yaldā/Chelle" based on their homeland calendars, exactly as it is practiced by their own family members and indigenous individuals back home. In public belief, the night of the last day of the Persian calendar month of Azar – this year it falls on December 21st – harbors the eventual victory of light over darkness. After Yaldā, the days will grow longer and the nights will fall shorter. As per tradition, Iranian families get together in the houses of their elderly relatives, most often grandfathers and grandmothers, and spend the better part of the night socializing and feasting on the occasion's special delicacies.

Origins: Where Does Yalda Come

"Yaldā Night or Shab-e-Chella", practiced in Iran and Afghanistan, and the musical instrument "Oud" have been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Yaldā Night or Shab-e-Chella refers to a traditional

celebration of the sun and the warmth of life. The event takes place on the last night of autumn when families gather at the houses of elders and sit around a table adorned with a series of symbolic objects and foods: a lamp to symbolize light, water to represent cleanliness, and red fruits such as pomegranates, watermelons, beetroots, jujube, and grapes to symbolize warmth. Broth, sweets, dried fruits, and nuts that are used specifically for the occasion are also set on the table and consumed during the gathering. Activities range from reciting poetry and storytelling to playing games and music and giving gifts to new in-laws, brides, and children.

The event celebrates cultural identity, nature, respect for women, friendship, hospitality, cultural diversity, and peaceful coexistence. It is transmitted informally within families, although radio and television programs, publications, social media, and educational materials have also played an important role in transmitting the practice in recent years. Events, conferences, training, workshops, and awareness-raising activities carried out by research centers, NGOs, cultural organizations and educational institutes have also had a significant impact on the proper transmission of the element to future generations.

What happens on Yaldā?

On the occasion of the last night of autumn, families get together. This family reunion often takes place at the houses of elders where people meet around a table called "Yaldā/Chelle



Night Sofre".

"Yaldā/Chelle Night Sofre" consists of a lamp that symbolizes light, water that represents cleanliness, red fruits such as pomegranates, watermelons, beetroots, jujube and red and green grapes that demonstrate warmth along with serving broth (Ash), sweets, dried fruits and nuts special to this occasion, all set on "Yaldā/Chelle Night Sofre" and consumed during the nightly gathering. The Sofre usually comes in red and is traditionally spread on the floor or on Korsi/chairs. The red color used in various components of the Sofre refers to the reddish sky after the dusk and before the dawn. The type of activities in this celebration rang-

es from reciting poems, storytelling, reciting Hafiz's poems or referring to them for pleasure omens, reciting verses from the epic poetic masterpiece of Shahnameh, listening to or playing music, singing and giving gifts to new in-laws/brides and children, indoor games and enjoying "Yaldā/Chelle Night Sofre" goodies and items. Women play a key role in this ceremony. Children are also considered as the future bearers/practitioners of the element. The elders are valued as its bearers. While observing "Yaldā/Chelle" items such as cultural identity, attention to nature, and respect for women, friendship, hospitality, cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence are

manifested and respected.

Historical backgrounds and resources

"Yaldā/Chelle" is regarded as one of the deeply-rooted and festive rituals amongst its bearers and practitioners in Iran, which depict many concepts, historical backgrounds and resources in view of its bearers and practitioners, most noticeable of which could be the following:

- Due to its nature-based characteristics, human creativity has been formed and diversified through centuries among generations.
- Respecting the diversity of expressions among communities, groups and individuals within its territory.
- Dominance of light over darkness symbolized by the rising of Sun on the day following Yaldā/Chelle, to defeat the devil (darkness).
- Yaldā/Chelle further reshapes the mindset of local communities/groups and individuals in appreciating the beauty (positive aspect: Sun, light and warmth) hidden in a seemingly unpleasant condition (negative aspect: coldness of winter and darkness).
- Promoting a culture of peace, friendship, kindness and tolerance, fulfillment of promises and commitments are all celebrated in "Yaldā/Chelle" celebration.
- Solidarity in public participation in this celebration irrespective of gender, age, religion and ethnic differences.
- Promoting a culture of reading literary works and storytelling as well as listening to traditional music among the youth as executed by the elders.

- Paying more attention to shared rituals as ICH elements of the region, such as "Nowrouz" and Yaldā/Chelle would result in the establishment of mutual respect and peace amongst different ethnic groups, communities and individuals in the region.

- Paying attention to the spirit of the element, which enjoys abundance, light and warmth of life leads to more hope and increasing life expectancy amongst the bearers and practitioners.

- "Yaldā/Chelle" emphasizes on light, life expectancy and importance of fulfillment of commitments. These values are precisely in line with the Human Rights Declaration.

- "Yaldā/Chelle" accentuates mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, which will result in social justice, solidarity, equality.

- By strengthening the cultural foundations and solidarity among communities, groups and individuals, "Yaldā/Chelle" facilitates sustainable development.

- The significant participation by women and the children alongside with their grandparents at Yaldā/Chelle ceremonies would create a safe and healthy learning setting between generations to learn about their sustainable future.

- Thanks to creating cultural and ethnic solidarity, each with its own language, beliefs and customs, "Yaldā/Chelle" acts as a powerful tool to ensure respect for nature, cultural diversity, human rights, peace and sustainable development in Iran.

International agricultural training kicks off in east China

HEFEI :An international agricultural training course on green prevention and control technology and new agricultural varieties kicked off Monday in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province.

Co-hosted by the Rice Research Institute of Anhui Academy of Agricultural Sciences (AAAS) and Anhui Hua'an Seed Industry Co., Ltd., the course attracts over 200 agricultural scholars, experts and students from more than 15 countries including China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Kenya, Rwanda and more. The course is organized both online and offline.

The training aims to enhance grain production and technological advancement in countries along the Belt and Road, and strengthen China's scientific and technical cooperation with them. Reports on various



topics such as crop breeding, rice seed production and green production technology will be presented by agricultural experts from different countries during the two-day event.

"Pakistan and China face the same challenges such as droughts and floods due to global climate change. We can cooperate with each other to develop new rice varieties that are resist-

ant to extreme weathers. And I hope to become a bridge of that cooperation," said Muhammad Ahmad Hassan, who is currently doing postdoctoral research at the Rice Research Institute of AAAS.

About 100 participants of the course are from Pakistan, among which many are studying agriculture in different universities across China.

Rice is vital in ensuring global food security. China is one of the world's leading rice producers and its rice seed sector is at the forefront of research and technology. For many years, China's rice production remains above 200 million tonnes, ranking first in the world and contributing significantly to reducing global hunger, according to the organizing committee. Xinhua

S.M Naveed, Chairman SEZs met Zhao Shiren Consul General, China

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: S.M Naveed, Chairman Special Economic Zones Authority (SEZA) stated during a meeting with Zhao Shiren, Consul General China, on Monday that Pakistan "genuinely and sincerely" wants to work with the Chinese business fraternity to promote bilateral ties and emphasized the need to tap into the enormous potential between the two countries.

S.M Naveed, Chairman SEZA said that both countries had opportunities for cooperation in the textile, automobile, halal food, and agriculture industry and that a joint strategy would further boost the industry. He also premier invited the Chinese business community to invest in Pakistan, vowing that the government would provide all facilities. He exchanged his views with Zhao Shiren, Consul General



China by saying that "Today, we are here to seriously engage ourselves with you because you are very serious-minded and enthusiastic person, and your achievements are outstanding and a shining example for all of us."

Zhao Shiren, Consul General China said that China will continue its support and cooperation with Pakistan for joint research and will definitely facilitate the Pakistani businessmen in China. He also added that Pakistan and China are set to enhance collaboration for rapid industrialisation in Punjab, especially for encouraging B2B engagement between Chinese investors and their local counterparts. He stressed that he would make every possible effort to strengthen the unique China-Pakistan iron-clad friendship and work with Pakistani side to bring the tangible benefits of CPEC to both countries and two peoples.

S.M Naveed, Chairman SEZA added that Pakistan and China enjoy historic, unique and special bilateral relations. It is a timeless and time-tested friendship nurtured by successive generations of the leadership and the peoples of the two countries. Regardless of change in regional and international political landscape, our two countries have always stood together and have always extended solidarity and support to each other.

British Pakistani Christian Community organized Christmas festival



Sohail Anjum Malik

ROCHDALE : The British Pakistani Christian Community of Great Britain Kamran Sohail Chowdhury and his team organized a function in the local hall of Rochdale in connection with the Christmas festival. The interfaith and cultural community participated. Awarded for encouragement. Father Fulk Sher, Irfan Zia Chaudhry, Karan-Atif Chaudhry-Ilyas Masih Sohotra-Shahzad Naseem-Daryl Edwin-Paul Johnson, Shazia, Mrs. Pervez, Maha and a large number of youths participated. The colorful ceremony was masterfully hosted by Karan and Christopher in Char Chand.

To make the atmosphere more colorful, Christmas songs were played and the guests were treated to special food at the end of the event. On this occasion, Father Fulk Sher said that the Pakistani Christian community living all over the UK participated and celebrated the joy of the festival. Irfan Zia Chaudhry said that the Christian community brought together people of different schools of thought and culture. The Christian community living in the UK should identify itself with other communities. Chaudhry Kamran Sohail, the host of the event, said that today we tried to invite people from all religions except Pakistanis to the event.

It was further said that the award was given to the Pakistani Christian community living in Britain and others who have shown outstanding performance in various fields-Najovan Karan said that the Pakistani nurses enjoyed the event together with the interfaith community-Paul Johnson He said it is a good initiative for the community to give an award to those who have shown outstanding performance in the service of the community.

We have encouraged the young generation because they are our future. Maha said that such events should be organized which gives an opportunity for mutual discussion with each other. Shazia and Mrs. Parvez said that we should fulfill each other's needs. Organizing the event was a good effort.

Taliban-led Afghan admin suspends female students from universities

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban-run higher education ministry on Tuesday suspended access to universities by female students until further notice, drawing strong condemnation from the United States, Britain and the United Nations.

A letter, confirmed by a spokesperson for the higher education ministry, instructed Afghan public and private universities to suspend access to female students immediately, in accordance with a Cabinet decision.

The announcement by the Taliban administration, which has not been internationally recognised, came as the United Nations Security Council met in New York on Afghanistan.

Foreign governments, including the United States, have said that a change in policies on women's education is needed before it can consider formally recognising the Taliban-run administration, which is also subject to heavy sanctions.

"The Taliban cannot expect to be a legitimate member of the international community until they respect the rights of all Afghans, especially the human rights and fundamental freedom of women and girls," US Deputy UN Ambassador Robert Wood told the council, describing the move as "absolutely indefensible."

Britain's UN Ambassador Barbara Woodward said the suspension was "another egregious curtailment of women's rights and a deep and profound disappointment for every single female student."

"It is also another step by the Taliban away from a self-reliant and prosperous Afghanistan," she told the council.

In March, the Taliban drew criticism from many foreign governments and some Afghans for making a u-turn on signals all girls' high schools would be opened.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the move on Tuesday was "clearly another broken promise from the Taliban."

"It's another very troubling move and it's difficult to imagine how the country can develop, deal with all of the challenges that it has, without active participation of women and the education of women," he told reporters in New York. Shortly before the announcement on universities, UN special envoy for Afghanistan Roza Otunbayeva said the closure of high schools had "undetermined" the Taliban administration's relationship with the international community and was "extremely unpopular among Afghans and even within the Taliban leadership."

Terra Solis is bringing beach club vibes to the Dubai desert this winter season

News Desk

DUBAI :This winter season, Terra Solis Dubai, the newly launched desert destination and the latest addition to the iconic Tomorrowland family, is offering a range of winter experiences within its energising glamping accommodation and chilled vibes at one of the region's largest desert-located pool.

The oriental-chic desert oasis is spread over 371,000 square metres and boasts three stunning glamping accommodation options, including the Polaris bell tents, the Perseid lodges and the Orion pool lodges, a vibrant pool scene and a fun party atmosphere with outstanding music and entertainment.

Open to both overnight guests and day visitors, the super-sized swimming pool, one of the largest in the region, takes centre stage at

the heart of the destination. Visitors can enjoy a vibrant yet relaxing setting under the Dubai winter sun with some of the finest music by carefully selected Tomorrowland resident DJs and local heroes.

The pool features cabanas and sun loungers, an eye-catching bar with a wide selection of drinks and cocktails and the Sala shisha lounge.

Price: Starting from AED200 for weekday access with 50% redeemable for F&B. Weekends start from AED300 with 50% redeemable for F&B. Cabana and VIP cabins are also available with prices on request.

Each of the 48 spacious, luxurious and beautifully decorated Polaris bell tents includes a comfortable double bed, soft bed sheets and a small hand wash basin. Each tent has air conditioning, a mini

fridge, towels and a safe deposit locker. Shower and bathroom facilities are also available on the Terra Solis site.

Guests will also have access to all property facilities, including sun loungers, activities and entertainment, and breakfast.

Prices: Starting from AED1,000 plus VAT per night for two, including breakfast.

The superb Perseid lodges are designed for the ultimate comfort while creating a magical experience for all guests. The unique lodges are fully air-conditioned with a king-size bed and ensuite bathroom and shower facilities and include a mini fridge, towels and a safe deposit locker.

Guest can while away the hours at the pool before enjoying a winter's night under the stars in the ultimate comfort.

Price: Starting from AED2,000 plus VAT per night for two, including breakfast.

Offering guests the utmost in luxury, the spectacular Orion pool lodges located near the pool have been designed with attention to detail in mind and provide a truly unique experience.

In addition to a private pool, the centrally located Orion pool lodges also feature a large terrace providing the perfect space to relax and indulge in desert luxury, overlooking the entire resort. The private outdoor cabana and terrace are fitted with high-quality furniture and a dining setting, providing a unique area for friends and family.

The Orion can host two guests to spend the night and accommodates up to 10 friends during the day.

In addition to a king-size bed and ensuite bathroom in the fully air-conditioned lodge, guests can also enjoy the private pool, terrace and dining area.

Price: Starting from AED3,000 plus VAT per night for two, including breakfast.

Located in Dubai Heritage Vision, Exit 29, Jebel Ali - Lehab Road, Dubai and - 30 minutes from Dubai Airport (DXB), 25 minutes from The Palm Jumeirah.

To book accommodation and to learn more about Terra Solis Dubai, visit <https://terrasolisdu-bai.com/en/book-your-stay>.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
39,832.45	40,970.82
Day's High	Day's Low:
41,037.14	39,533.03
Index Value	Change
5,342,090,008	-1138.37
Percentage	Time
-2.78%	20 Dec, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,377.14	+15.83
Percentage	Time
+0.22%	20 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
32,898.17	+140.63
Percentage	Time
+0.43%	20 Dec, 10:22 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
26,568.03	-669.61
Percentage	Time
-2.46%	20 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	151.01	152.26
Bahrain Dinar	598.47	602.97
Canadian Dollar	164.99	166.34
China Yuan	32.24	32.49
Danish Krone	32.14	32.49
Euro	256.5	259
Hong Kong Dollar	28.91	29.26
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	2.17	2.21
Kuwaiti Dinar	734.17	739.17
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
New Zealand \$	143.33	144.53
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	584.8	588.98
Qatari Riyal	61.75	62.25
Saudi Riyal	64.2	64.8
Singapore Dollar	165.24	166.54
Swedish Korona	21.78	22.08
Swiss Franc	241.85	243.6
Thai Bhat	6.46	6.56
U.A.E Dirham	67.4	68
UK Pound Sterling	294.5	297.5
US Dollar	231.8	234.1

Pakistan's blue economy has potential of over \$100bn: Ahsan Iqbal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that there was a potential of over \$100 billion in Pakistan's blue economy.

He said to tap the potential; the government is launching new projects for the development of coastal areas.

Addressing the opening session of the international symposium on "Geo Economic & Maritime dimensions of CPEC", the minister highlighted that after taking charge, the alliance government has expedited work on the projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He said during the four years of the previous government, no work was done on the projects in the port city of Gwadar.

He said that under the leadership of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the



mega project of CPEC was launched by the PML-N government that would prove to be a game changer for Pakistan.

The minister said every Pakistani citizen would have to work really hard to play role in the country's development and to increase the per capita income in the country.

He pointed out that during the tenure of PML-N government; investment was made on a large scale. It added 11,000 MW of electricity to the national grid besides constructing a network of highways and motorways across the country.

He said in 2018, more people were willing to invest in Pakistan; however, Imran Khan's wrong policies wasted away all the hard work done during the PML-N government.

Ahsan Iqbal said the government is also focusing on launching new development projects in collaboration with the private sector to minimize the burden on the government exchequer.

State Life celebrating 50 years

This year State Life Corporation of Pakistan is celebrating 50 years of service and trust. State Life offices were lit up all across the country along with a cake-cutting ceremony that was graced by the presence of State Life's Chairman, Shoab Javed Hussain. By adopting innovation and digitalization, State Life is continuously growing and currently serves over 150 million Pakistani.



State Life Building Hyderabad

Crypto assets can generate over \$100 billion in Pakistan by the next 20 years



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The potential of crypto assets in Pakistan can generate over \$100 billion in total income for technology talent over the next twenty years, contributing significantly to the national economy.

The last few months have exponentially increased societal, investor, and policy interest in crypto, blockchain, and Web 3.0 technologies because Pakistan ranks third in terms of crypto adoption in the Chainalysis 2021 Global Crypto Adoption Index.

These observations were expressed by speakers at Pakistan's largest Web 3.0 and blockchain event titled "W3B Summit" held at the National Incubation Center (NIC) in Islamabad. It was attended by leading entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, technology professionals, and students. The summit was organized by Teamup and National Incubation Center in partnership with S&P Global and Fasset. The event aimed to lay down the foundation for emerging technologies in Pakistan.

Zouhair Khaliq, former CEO of Jazz, a veteran corporate executive, and Founding Partner, Teamup & National Incubation Center Pakistan, welcomed the guests and delegates at the summit. He highlighted the role of the National Incubation Center; "I am glad to see NIC catalyzing innovation in Pakistan and this event is part of our attempts to turn Pakistan into a tech destination. There is tremendous potential in this field, and we must ensure Pakistan's place in this rapidly developing landscape."

Mujeeb Zahur, Managing Director S&P Global shared his firm belief in understanding and supporting the development of technology as the best way forward, "Technology is the only field that gives your economy and social progress an instant boost irrespective of your geo-political situation. It is a world without divisions and works on pure merit and talent. Pakistan has no dearth of either. I hope to see such events regularly and look forward to S&P Global partnering with them in the future."

Monis Rahman, a leading entrepreneur, and Founder, Rozee.pk & Dukan.pk, spoke on the future of fintech and Web 3.0 in Pakistan. "I have complete faith in the overwhelmingly young and tech-savvy population of Pakistan to take technology and innovation to new levels and enable a strong position for Pakistan as an emerging technology."

Noshad Minhas, Country Head Pakistan Fasset, was very optimistic, "Pakistan is amongst the top 3 Web 3 adopting nations in the world. It is home to some of the world's best and brightest developers, researchers, and scientists in tokenization, digital assets, and blockchain technology. In tandem with National Incubation Center, Fasset hopes to build awareness and educate the next generation of Web3 adopters on safe, responsible, and innovative development as well as the adoption of the future of this game-changing space. We believe that with the right building blocks, the talented youth of Pakistan can unlock \$100bn of potential economic growth."

Naveed Qamar inaugurates first ever Dante Genomics Lab in Islamabad

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar, inaugurated first ever collection center of Dante Lab Genomics, a leading International company in the field of genomic analysis, here on Tuesday.

The event was attended by prominent members of the national and international business community including Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Zamurd Khan, Mr. Carlo Loggi, Chief Global Affairs Officer, Dante Genomics, and Yasir Mushtaq Bajwa, the CEO of Dante Labs in Pakistan.

The minister congratulated the team behind the establishment of collection center, and lauded their efforts to bring business from Italy.



Minister Qamar noted that the establishment of collection center of Dante Lab Genomics in Pakistan would enable the country to take advantage of the latest in genomic technologies and research.

He expressed hope that the lab would become an important part of the country's

growing scientific and medical community, providing valuable resources and services to the country's medical practitioners and researchers.

Mr. Yasir Mushtaq Bajwa, the CEO of Dante Labs in Pakistan, on occasion of inauguration of the Dante Genomics collection point said that Dante Genomics is a leading International company in the field of genomic analysis.

It makes the analysis of the genetic heritage accessible to all with Whole Genome Sequencing and Whole Exome Sequencing through the latest Next Generation Sequencing technology.

Globe Residency REIT raises PKR 388 million

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Javedan Corporation Limited has received a subscription of PKR 387,945,000 from the general public through a two-day offer for sale process. The offer for sale was over-subscribed by 2.77 times.

GRR is a closed ended, Developmental REIT Scheme with a limited life of 48 months offering investors the opportunity to become an investor in the Globe Residency apartments project at Naya Nazimabad. 14 million units, which make up 10% of the total units of the REIT Scheme were offered by Javedan Corporation Limited to the General Public at a price of PKR 10 per unit.

The REIT fund size is PKR 2.8 billion; PKR 1.4 billion each of Debt and Equity and the project cost is estimated at PKR 20 billion.

WB approves \$1.69 bn to support flood affected people in Sindh

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved \$1.692 billion in financing, for five projects to support people living in flood-affected areas of Sindh Province in Pakistan.

Three projects support rehabilitation and housing reconstruction and the restoration of crop production for vulnerable communities, while another two projects support health services for mothers and children, a press release issued by the World Bank on Tuesday said.

"Sindh was the province worst-affected by the 2022 floods. There were huge damages to the housing, health, and agriculture sectors and people lost their livelihoods. Beyond the rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged houses and infrastructure, our engagement in the flood response effort is an opportunity to strengthen resilience, and reform institutions and governance structures", said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan.

The Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (\$500 million) will help rehabili-

itate damaged infrastructure, provide short-term livelihood opportunities, and strengthen government capacity to respond to disasters. The project will help restore and improve critical irrigation and flood protection infrastructure, water supply schemes, roads, and related infrastructure.

At least 2 million people—approximately 50 percent of whom are women—in the most flood-affected districts will benefit from the restoration and the resilient reconstruction of critical infrastructure. A community-level cash-for-work program will provide short-term income support to approximately 100,000 households. This will include semi-skilled and unskilled labor and will support livestock restocking for affected smallholder livestock farmers.

The Sindh Floods Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project (\$500 million) will support owner-driven and multi-hazard resilient reconstruction of core housing units. A housing subsidy will provide reconstruction and restoration grants for 350,000 housing units (almost 20 percent of the total housing rehabi-



litation needs for Sindh). Cash grants will be provided for houses with structural damage to partially finance reconstruction or restoration. In addition, basic rainwater harvesting systems and twin pit latrines will be provided to improve access to water and sanitation.

The Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation Project (\$292 million) will increase agricultural water productivity, improve integrated water resources management, and restore crop production by flood-affected farmers. More than 885,000 households (approximately 4.4 million people) are expected to benefit from the project.

project will provide cash transfers to 800,000 flood-affected farming households to help restore crop production through the purchase of seeds, fertilizer, and other critical inputs. On the medium term around 70,000 households will benefit from improved irrigation services and agricultural support that will help boost farming income.

An estimated 14,000 households will receive direct financial benefits from the pilot smart subsidy schemes targeting small- and medium-sized farmers.

The Sindh Strengthening Social Protection Delivery System Project (\$200 million) will strengthen the provincial social protection delivery system and enhance access to and utilization of mother and child health services.

The project supports alignment and connectivity with the Federal National Database Registration Authority and will provide conditional cash transfers (CCTs) to 1.3 million mothers and their children to support improved maternal and child health outcomes, particularly in the wake of service disruption after the floods.

The CCTs will be available to bottom 15

districts of Sindh, selected on the basis of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), and cover 65 percent of the total flood-affected areas in the province to help mitigate flood impacts, particularly food insecurity, and enable continued use of maternal and children health services.

The Sindh Integrated Health and Population Project (\$200 million) will help improve both the quality and utilization of basic reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition services. It will also help in rehabilitation and reconstruction of health infrastructure that was damaged in the floods, disrupting the delivery of these services.

The project will improve access to quality healthcare services for the population of the selected Government Dispensaries in remote and peri-urban areas especially women, girls, and children, and in the flood-affected settlements in Sindh.

The World Bank said it would continue to support the Government and people of Pakistan to recover from the recent flood emergency and strengthen long term resilience to such climate-related shocks.

World Cup winners Argentina return ahead of welcome home party

Monitoring Desk

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's World Cup winners led by Captain Lionel Messi returned home from Qatar in the early hours of Tuesday morning ahead of a welcome home party in the nation's capital.

Having beaten France in Sunday's thrilling final, the players will now spend the night at the Argentine Football Association (AFA) training complex near the Ezeiza airport where they arrived in Buenos Aires and where thousands of supporters were waiting to greet them.

They will then head to the iconic Obelisk monument for a tour of the Buenos Aires city center from midday on Tuesday with millions expected out in the streets on what is a public holiday.

"We will be here all night and tomorrow as well," student Ayrton Kerdocas,



25, told AFP outside the airport. "Tomorrow we are not working, we won't do anything and we'll go directly to the Obelisk with Argentina."

Argentina won the final in Qatar 4-2 on penalties after a rollercoaster 3-3 draw over 120 minutes of unparalleled drama for their first world title in 36 years.

Messi, who scored twice in the final, was the first player to emerge from the plane, holding the World Cup aloft, with coach Lionel Scaloni right behind him.

Forward Julian Alvarez, a revelation in Qatar with his four goals, was one of the next players out of the Aerolíneas Argentinas Airbus A330.

A picture of Messi was emblazoned on the plane's tail with the words: "one team, one country, one dream" on its side.

The players made their way from the plane along a red carpet straight to a white open-top bus with the words "world champions" and three stars on its side as their World Cup theme song "Muchachos" by ska band La Mosca blared out.

HEC Zone M Inter University Football Championship starts today

Sports Reporter

KARACHI: HEC Zone M Inter-University Football Championship 2022-23 is starting today at Sixteen Star Football Ground under the collaboration of HEC and Sir Syed University of Engineering & Technology in which leading universities of Karachi will participate.

In this regard, Director Sports SSUET, Mubasher Mukhtar said that the HECZ One M Inter University Football Championship 2022-23 is being hosted by Sir Syed University and it is starting from Wednesday. Vice-Chancellor SSUET, Prof. Dr. Wali Uddin will inaugurate the football championship by kicking the ball at 11 am today. Among the universities participating in this event are the host Sir Syed University, NED University, IBA University, IoBM University, Indus University, DHA Suffa University, Habib University and PAF KLET. Former FIFA referee



Iqbal Jr. has been appointed as the match commissioner while Habibullah Muhammad Imran, Wali Khan, Khurram Shalzad, Jalal Khan and Abdul Karim will be the officials. In addition, Managers'

Meeting regarding the event was held at Sir Syed University that was presided over by the Dean, Faculty of Electrical & Computer Engineering, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Aamir. Prof. Dr. Aamir welcomed

all the participants on behalf of Sir Syed University and said that the championship will be organized in a grand manner and all teams will be provided with the best facilities. He assured of his full support and cooperation.

Pakistan Basketball Federation gets PSB affiliation

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has become an active affiliated unit of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) after the approval of PSB Board meeting, the PBBF announced on Tuesday.

"This affiliation is in line with the PSB Rules 2022," a PBBF spokesman said in a statement.

According to the spokesman, the decision to grant affiliation was taken in the 26th PSB Board meeting, held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari, who is also the President of PSB.

Under the leadership of its President, Brigadier (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor and Secretary General, Khalid Bashir, PBBF is playing an active role for the promotion of basketball in the country. The PBBF is also recognized by Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and FIBA Asia.

The federation in the recent past organized men and women events and is planning to hold a series of tournaments next year.

"After the approval and formally notified by PSB, the federation is the only representative organization at the national and international levels that can take all kinds of measures for the development of basketball," the spokesman said.

IEEE Lahore section annual general meeting

Sports Reporter

LAHORE: The Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2022 of the IEEE Lahore Section was held on December 17, 2022 at the Shalimar Hall, Faletti's Hotel, Lahore. IEEE is the world largest not-for-profit professional technical organization, with the motto of advancing technology for humanity. The Lahore Section of IEEE is the oldest representation of IEEE in Pakistan.

This year's AGM was attended by 43 participants. Dr. Adnan Siddique, the current General Secretary of the Section, formally conducted the proceedings. The annual report of the various volunteering activities and services provided by the Section was presented by the Section Chair Prof. Dr. Amjad Hussain.

Several notable members holding key positions in various organization units (OUs) of the Section also shared the performance of their OUs. The Vice Chair of the Section, Mr. Kashif Bashir, applauded the efforts of the volunteers from among the student bodies of various public and private universities in Lahore region. These volunteers have played a pivotal role in making IEEE events in Lahore a success!

Among other speakers at the event, Prof. Dr. Waqar Mahmood, Shahid Zulfiqar, Tanweer Shah Bukhari, Hamza Ihtisham, Dr. Ali Qureshi, Syed Rizwan Naqvi, Safoora Saleem, and Engr. Shahzaib Rathore, who are all IEEE members, expressed their profound interest in advancing IEEE's mission of advancing technology for



humanity further in Pakistan. Later on awards were given to the outstanding volunteers and shield were distributed among the outgoing executive members of IEEE Lahore Section.

Tayyab Ikram sixth Pakistani to lead an int'l sports body

GM Ghalbi

LAHORE: Pakistan has been blessed with amazing potential in all fields and our passionate individuals, whether they are players in sports, officials or administrators, have proved their mettle at key global posts on a number of occasions in the past.

Lahore-born former hockey player and currently top administrator Tayyab Ikram, who now resides in Macau, is the fresh addition to a list of highly talented Pakistani individuals, who earned unparalleled respect for the beloved motherland by leading an international sports organisation.

Tayyab, who played multiple seasons of Belgium Hockey League, National and Departmental Championships in Pakistan for Police and Wapda, made

the entire Pakistani nation proud when he defeated Belgium's Marc Coudron in the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Presidential election by 79-47 votes in a virtual FIH Congress in early November and secured a two-year term as head of the FIH.

Elevation to top FIH position is definitely a great honour and a befitting reward for Tayyab's decades-long untiring endeavours for the promotion of hockey at global level and a true recognition of his exceptional qualities, excellence and administrative skills.

Tayyab, who is proficient in seven international languages including English, Urdu, Punjabi, Chinese Cantonese, Chinese Mandarin, Portuguese and Arabic, did not reach this pinnacle overnight. He spent a

long 40-year journey in multiple executive roles in the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIH and Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) during his illustrious career. Before assuming his office as FIH President, Tayyab was serving as CEO in AHF since 2002.

Tayyab, who is also a member of the Olympic Solidarity Commission and IOC Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration Steering Committee, has become the second Pakistani official to lead an Olympic sports federation after Prof Anwar Chowdhry, who led International Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) in the past.

Overall, Tayyab became the sixth Pakistani official to head an international sports federation. Before him, late Prof Anwar Chowdhry (IABA President from

1986 to 2006), Jahangir Khan (World Squash Federation President from 2002 to 2008), Ehsan Mani and Zaheer Abbas (both International Cricket Council Presidents in 2003 and 2015) and Syed Sultan Shah (World Blind Cricket Council President since 2014 to date) have the honour to head a world sports organisation.

Having been blessed with a kind nature and true love for hockey, Tayyab has shown a soft corner for smaller hockey nations on a number of occasions in his career. He emerged as probably the biggest advocate and well-wisher for hockey nations with limited resources.

He made effective efforts throughout his career to empower hockey minnows and bridging their gap with top tier countries. He also took several measures



for capacity building of smaller nations by preparing Regional Hockey Centers to ensure infrastructure development in these countries.

Tayyab, who is also an FIH Master Coach—a unique distinction very few hockey experts have achieved—has been massively passionate to provide underprivileged children every kind of

Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) marred in vested interests



News Desk

KARACHI: In an interview, Mr. Adnan Khan, a qualified football referee, has criticized the internal politics of Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) for the wastage of energies in vested interests, due to which the game of football is suffering and, for the past 7 years, football lovers have been pointing out these issues but to no avail.

Mr. Adnan Khan added that the young of Karachi already have very few opportunities for healthy sports activities and football is one of the very few. He was also given various awards by PFF for the promotion of football in Pakistan. He has called for merit, hard work and elimination of politics from PFF.

Mr. Adnan Khan started his illustrious career with Khyber Sports and became one of the most popular football referees in Pakistan in no time. Then, he successfully refereed Karachi Leisure League, 360 League, KASB League, Karachi Youth Initiative (KYI) League, DG Rangers League and Gas Pharma League as well.

A delegation of Pakistan Desi Kushti Federation called on Vice-Chairman Sports Board



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: A delegation of Pakistan Desi Kushti Federation (PDKF) under the leadership of Nadeem Pehlwan called on Vice-Chairman Sports Board Punjab Malik Nadeem Abbas Bara and Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi at National Hockey Stadium on Tuesday.

Nadeem Pehlwan also presented a souvenir of Sher-e-Lahore Dangal to Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi on this occasion. The promotion of desi kushti among younger generation across the province was discussed at length during the meeting.

Tayyab Raza Pehlwan, who recently won Sher-e-Lahore Dangal, Sajid Hussain Awan Pehlwan, Haji Khalid Pappu Pehlwan, Bilal Awan Pehlwan, Naveed Pehlwan and Latif Pehlwan were also present on this occasion.

Talking on this occasion, Vice-Chairman Sports Board Punjab Malik Nadeem Abbas Bara said that desi kushti is quite popular in Pakistan especially in Punjab province. "Keeping this factor in view Sports Board Punjab is organizing competitions of desi kushti regularly to provide sufficient playing opportunities to emerging wrestlers of the province," he added.

Wedding bells: Shaheen Shah Afridi to 'tie the knot on Feb 3'

KARACHI: Pakistan's left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi is all set to tie the knot on February 3, according to family sources.

The 6-foot-6-inch pacer is engaged to the daughter of former national cricket team captain Shahid Afridi.

The rukhsati ceremony for Ansha Afridi, daughter of Shahid Afridi, is expected to take place later.

Both families have started preparations for the wedding ceremony. The pacer got engaged to Ansha two years ago.

Shaheen will get busy with the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Speaking on Geo News show "Aik Din Geo Kai Sath", the 21-year-old revealed that it was his wish to marry Afridi's daughter, Ansha.

"It was my wish and Alhamdulillah it is fulfilled now," he shared. "I met her and will meet her soon," a blushing Shaheen told the interviewer, Sohail Warraich.

ment. He also trained hundreds of athletes who participated in Seoul 1988, Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

After his playing career, Tayyab also scaled new heights in different key roles including sport administrator, high-performance educator, presenter, sport development leader and a visionary hockey coach. He also has the honour of coaching and delivering Coach Education Models in over 40 countries since 1994.

Tayyab was also instrumental in the development of hockey particularly the reforming of Women's Hockey in China since 1982. Moreover, he was awarded a prestigious title of 'Dato' (equivalent of 'Sir') from Malaysia in 2010, President's Award (FIH) in 2002 and FIH Master Coach in 2003.