

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ اور عطا کردہ رحمت اللہ علیہ نے فرمایا کہ جب دو شریکوں کے جانور الگ الگ ہوں، اپنے اپنے جانوروں کو پچھلتے ہوں تو ان کو اکٹھا کریں اور سفیان ثوری رحمت اللہ علیہ نے فرمایا کہ رزق کو اس وقت تک واجب نہیں ہو سکتی کہ دونوں شریکوں کے پاس چائیس چائیس بکر یاں نہ ہو جائیں۔ (کنز الخیر، صفحہ نمبر 1451)
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Political stability & social harmony essentials of nation-building

Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal here on Thursday stressed the need to adopt one-point agenda of nation-building by promoting equality and ensuring just distribution of national resources. Addressing an event organized by the IUI, the minister highlighted that Pakistan is a democratic country and could be led and developed with the continuation of the democratic process.



NA speaker to invite PTI MNAs for verification of resignations

NA Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf shall again invite to PTI MNAs in his chamber one by one for verification of their resignations in pursuance of Paragraph (h) of Sub-Rule (2) of Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in NA, 2007. The NA Secretariat in that regard had written a letter to PTI Vice Chairman Mahkdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi in response to his letter on December 15, a news release said. (Report on Page 8)

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Christmas celebrations

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif cutting cake during a ceremony organised in view of Christmas celebrations on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Inter-Ministerial meeting discusses plan for upcoming donor conference



ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Ministerial meeting on Donors Conference here on Thursday discussed the proposed plan for the upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan to be held on January 9, 2023 in Geneva.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

The conference co-hosted by the government of Pakistan and the United Nations aims to garner international support for the people and government to build back climate resilient Pakistan after the devastating floods of 2022.

It will also secure international humanitarian support for reconstruction and rehabilitation arrangements for the post-flood recovery.

On the occasion Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(MoFA) gave a detailed presentation on draft agenda of the proposed conference with modalities, invitees, potential donors, and schedule of the conference.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Climate Change, Ms. Sherry Rehman; Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal; Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq; Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Ms. Maryam Aurangzeb; Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar; Minister of State for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik; SAPM on Finance, Tariq Bajwa; SAPM on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Secretaries Finance, MoFA, Climate Change, Planning Division, Economic Affairs Division, Information & Broadcasting and other senior officers from concerned ministries. APP/PID

Writ of state to be established at all cost: Prime Minister

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government would establish writ of the state at any cost and no one would be allowed to derail the hard-earned gains of war on terrorism.

"Writ of the state will be established at all cost and no one will be allowed to derail the hard-earned gains of war on terror achieved through unparalleled sacrifices of the nation and valiant armed forces," the prime minister said talking to the officers and soldiers at CMH Rawalpindi who got injured during CTD complex Bannu Operation.

The prime minister met the injured officer and soldiers and paid tribute to the courage and valour of the troops who cleared CTD complex Bannu.



He said that the martyrs and their families had rendered supreme sacrifices for ensuring the safety and security of the people of Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz said, "We are determined to fight out terrorism in its all forms and

manifestations and break nexus between terrorists, their supporters and sympathisers till achieving a peaceful and stable environment."

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday assured that the government of Pakistan would protect rights of people from all religious minorities including Christians, Sikhs, Hindus and Parsis and would ensure a secure environment for them.

Speaking at a ceremony organized here to celebrate Christmas, he said, "We want that Pakistan should move forward according to the thinking and teachings of Quaid e Azam and Allama Muhammad Iqbal who called for peace and brotherhood among all religions."

He reminded that Quaid e

Azam in a speech on August 11, 1947, gave a clear message about the equality of rights of minorities.

Under the constitution of Pakistan, people of all religions in the country had equal constitutional and political rights and they were allowed to take part in all fields of life, he added.

Minister for Religious Affairs Mufti Abdul Shakoore while speaking on the occasion, said Islam taught that followers of all religions should be treated equally. He felicitated the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas.

The Prime Minister along with bishops and leaders of the Christian community and other minorities also cut a Christmas cake on the occasion. Agencies

PM Shehbaz stops Punjab Governor from denotifying CM Elahi

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reportedly stopped Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman from denotifying Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi.

The development comes after the legal team of PML-N advised the party to refrain from denotifying CM Elahi as the matter can be challenged in court.

The legal team presented a suggestion during a meeting held at the Governor House. The meeting was attended by the senior leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

On the legal team's recommendation, the prime minister has stopped Punjab governor from denotifying CM Elahi for now and ordered more consultation on the matter.

Country will slip out of control in case of election's delay: Imran Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Thursday once again underscored the need for snap polls, saying any delay in the process would result in country slipping out of control.

Addressing his supporters, who gathered outside the Governor House, via video link, Mr Khan said he never saw such a turmoil in the country in his 70-year life. Sharing his thoughts on his ouster, Mr Khan said, "It was merely the decision of one person who wanted me out and ban on the party. 'One person was responsible for the country's economic woes,' he said.

Mr Khan slammed Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, saying the country gained nothing from his [Bilawal's] visits to the US and that he



did not travel to Afghanistan.

Speaking about the torture inflicted on his party stalwart Azam Swati, Mr Khan said he (Mr Swati) was targeted for simply tweeting, and that he was stripped off clothes in front of children.

Concerned about the rise of terrorism in the Malakand and Bannu divisions, Mr Khan slammed Pakistan's foreign policy, alleging that Foreign Minister Bilawal spent nearly Rs 2 billion on foreign trips.

Taking a swipe at the

rights, terrorism will likely resurface.

On the other side, the PTI supporters congregated outside the Governor House ahead of former prime minister Imran Khan's address which is expected at 7pm. The PTI workers chanted slogan against Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman and also displayed the party flags to lend support to Mr Khan.

Earlier on Thursday, PTI chief Imran Khan said Governor Balighur Rehman's actions were unlawful and stressed that all institutions should work within their constitutional limits. Speaking to a delegation of lawyers at his Zaman Park residence, the former prime minister said the country could not progress until the rule of law was established. "It is imperative to cease bowing to the United States in order to preserve the rule of law," he added.

Rangers deployed to protect Governor House

News Desk

LAHORE: The Ministry of Interior in the wee hours of Thursday sought deployment of Rangers to protect the Governor House, Lahore, after the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced to hold a protest demonstration in front of the official residence of the Punjab governor.

The interior ministry has written a letter to Director General Rangers Punjab for deployment of sufficient strength of Pakistan Rangers for protection of Governor's House, Lahore, under section 7 (b) and 10 of the Pakistan Rangers Ordinance, 1959, and section 4 (3) (i) of Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah also issued directives to the provincial chief secretary and inspector general (IG) to maintain law and order.

Pakistan to work with US on region's peace: FM



News Desk

WASHINGTON: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Pakistan would continue working with the United States to promote peace and stability in the region.

The foreign minister expressed these views in a meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman.

In a tweet, Bilawal mentioned that he had a productive meeting with Wendy Sherman, where he appreciated the role of the U.S.

for flood relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

"Pakistan and the United States will continue to work together to further enhance and diversify bilateral relations, promote peace and stability in the region," he said.

In a meeting with Senator Chris Van Hollen, the foreign minister thanked him for his steadfast support for Pakistan.

The two sides discussed US Congress' important role in strengthening Pak-US cooperation in flood relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Punjab Assembly cannot be dissolved tomorrow: Speaker

News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibtain Khan has said that the provincial assembly cannot be dissolved tomorrow due to the tabling of no-trust motion by the opposition.

While talking to journalists outside the PA building today, Speaker Sibtain Khan said that the Punjab Assembly cannot be dissolved tomorrow due to the no-trust motion.

He was answering a question regarding the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly on December 23 as per the announcement of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

chief Imran Khan.

He said that the no-trust motion has recently been tabled and notices were due to be issued. "We also wish to leave the assembly to be with the nation but the governor is stopping us."

"Citing the legal affairs, I am telling you that the no-trust vote would be deferred to the first week of January 2023," said Khan.

Regarding the vote of confidence issue, Sibtain Khan said that the governor could summon a special PA session for the vote of confidence for the chief minister, however, he could not denotify the CM.

Educational visit

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the cadets of the Cadet College, Kohlu, Balochistan, who were on an educational visit to Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.



Photo: PID

President urges political leadership for enhanced engagements with Balochistan people

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for enhancing engagement with the people of Balochistan at the grassroots level and prioritise investment in human resource development for prosperity of the people.

The president, talking to the cadets of the Cadet College, Kohlu, Balochistan, who came to Aiwan-e-Sadr, on an educational visit, called for fully developing and benefiting from the marine and land-based natural resources of the province to deliver economic growth.

He said that the national and provincial leadership

had a responsibility to develop strong political relationships with the people of the province through increased interactions and confidence building.

He especially emphasized engaging the youth of the province to motivate and enable them to play their role in provincial and national development.

President Alvi said that Balochistan was a mineral-rich province and that Reko Diq and other such projects in future could make Balochistan prosper in a short period of time.

He said that Balochistan's natural resources could be fully developed by bench-

marking best global practices, discouraging corruption and corrupt practices, and utilizing our human resources optimally with definite goals, KPIs and timelines.

He termed eliminating nepotism, uprooting corruption in all of its forms, promoting merit, and transparency as essential for building a strong and prosperous nation.

The president said that political stability, curbing corruption, strengthening institutional framework and focusing on skill development could lead the province towards rapid progress and development.

He regretted that due to various reasons Pakistan could

not achieve its rightful place in the comity of nations.

While replying to a question, the president said that political stability and continuation of policies were keys for achieving financial and socio-economic stability, and promoting trade and investment in the country.

He said that all stakeholders should set aside their enmity, ego and extreme behaviours, keep the greater national interest supreme and develop consensus through democratic means for holding free, fair and impartial elections to let people choose their representatives.

Answering a question, the president said the students

should continue the pursuit of knowledge throughout their lives, hone their skills continuously, and set the right priorities for themselves while keeping their moral, ethical and family values intact.

He advised them to maintain humane behaviour and observe humility in their conduct as they would not only advance in their careers but would also get happiness and satisfaction in life.

The president appreciated the Cadet Colleges of Pakistan for producing quality graduates, who after graduating were serving the Pakistan Armed Forces and in other fields as physicians, engineers and businessmen.

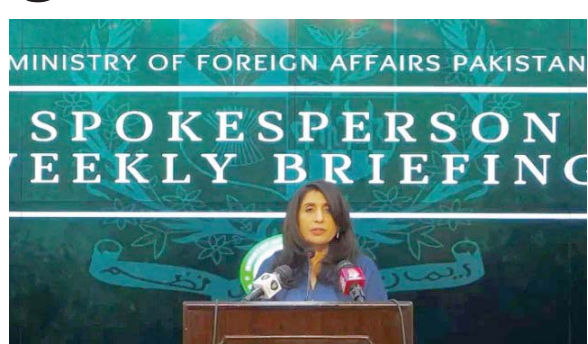
Pakistan in constant touch with Afghanistan over resurgence in terrorism: FO spokesperson

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is in constant touch with the interim government of Afghanistan regarding the resurgence of terrorist incidents and cross-border violence, the Foreign Office said Thursday.

"We have agreed to continue established institutional mechanism with Afghanistan to prevent such incidents," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at a weekly press briefing, in response to a question on the clashes between the security forces of Pakistan and Afghanistan in Chaman-Spin Boldak area.

The spokesperson said Pakistan had reiterated to the Afghan authorities that the protection of civilians was the



responsibility of both sides.

"Pakistan remains committed to maintaining its fraternal relations with Afghanistan and ensuring that peace is maintained," she said.

She mentioned that Pakistan continued to engage with international players including the neighbouring Afghanistan to ensure that the terrorism emanating from Afghan

soil could not affect it.

She hoped that the Afghan authorities would work towards fulfilling the commitments made to Pakistan to not allow their territory to be used against its neighbour.

Asked if Pakistan was using China's leverage to counter Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in the backdrop of the country's engagement

with Afghanistan, Baloch said Pakistan and China were close strategic partners and "We consult each other on all matters of interest including counter-terrorism and on the situation in Afghanistan."

To a question about the number of foreign visits by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto after assuming office, she shared a list of the countries as — Saudi Arabia (twice), United Arab Emirates (twice), United States (thrice), China (twice), Switzerland, Iran, Uzbekistan (twice), Cambodia, Uzbekistan, Germany, Egypt, Indonesia and Singapore.

In response to the delay in disbursement of salaries to Pakistan's missions abroad, the spokesperson said the process had been restored that

faced suspension due to a "very complicated" issue pertaining to the Ministry of Finance, the State Bank, and the international channels. "Soon all the missions will have their requisite funds," she said.

Asked about the update on the status of Indian serving Navy Commander Kulbhusan Jadhav who is serving a death sentence in Pakistan, she said, "There is no change in the status."

This week, the spokesperson said, Pakistan would host Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Serik Zhumanarin, who will lead a high-level delegation for the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Joint Commission (IJC) — an important mechanism to promote mutually beneficial cooperation.

Pakistan clinches 2nd position in 'Huawei ICT Competition 2022'

Spokesman Report

MUSCAT: Pakistan has clinched second position in the Huawei Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Competition 2022 held in Muscat, Oman on Thursday.

According to the statistics, 12,000 students from 135 universities attempted the nationwide test in which two teams comprising six students qualified for the Middle East Regional Finals from Pakistan.

Pakistan Team One including Team Lead Faez and Asad Anwar Arain from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Jamshoro and Maryam Fareed from Lahore College for Women University (LCWU) under the Team Instructor Faheem Yar Khan Khuhawar secured the second position in the Middle East contest.

While Pakistan Team Two consisting of Team Lead Umar Raza from FAST National University, Eman Yaqoob



from LCWU, and Fatima Shafique from MUET, Jamshoro under the Team Instructor Zeeshan Iqbal could not bag any position in the finals.

The instructors, talking to APP, said the students had high spirits as they burnt the midnight oil to prove their mettle in the comity of nations and add one more feather to the national cap.

Expressing gratitude to Huawei Pakistan, Team Lead Muhammad Faez said he had no idea that he would be given such a massive platform to demonstrate

his abilities and further necessary training to polish his skills in the ICT sector.

It is worth mentioning here that the Jordan Team comprising students Hamzah Al-Zubaidi and Aws Al-Rayya from Princess Sumaya University for Technology and Yazan Al Shannik from Yarmouk University won the first prize of \$20,000.

Besides Pakistan, Iraq Team One comprising Sadeem Moolood from Ninevah University, Mohammed Shakr from Salahaddin University, and

Mohammed Hussein from the University of Anbar got the second position.

The third prize went to the United Arab Emirates Team comprising Eyasu Araya and Smon Ftwi from Higher Colleges of Technology and Meriem Aoudia from the University of Sharjah, the Bahrain Team comprising Dana Kamal, Husain Hasan, and Joud Ebrahim from Bahrain Polytechnic, and the Kazakhstan Team comprising Nikolay Zhilaykov from Almaty University of Power Engineering and Telecommunications, Aida Begalardova from al-Farabi Kazakh National University, and Algerim Turarbekova from International Information Technology University.

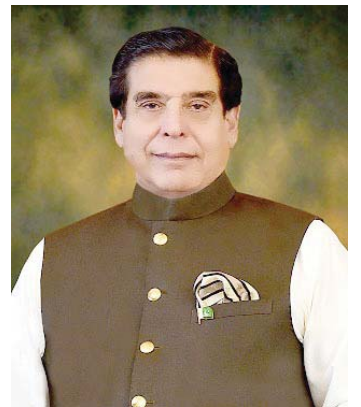
In addition, there were 15 teams of the brightest young tech talents from 11 countries across the Middle East and Central Asia including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iraq, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, and Kazakhstan.

NA speaker to invite PTI MNAs for verification of resignations

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf shall again invite to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNAs in his chamber one by one for verification of their resignations in pursuance of Paragraph (b) of Sub-Rule (2) of Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in NA, 2007.

The NA Secretariat in that regard had written a letter to PTI Vice Chairman Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi in response to his letter on December 15, a news release said.

The PTI members of the National Assembly (MNAs) were earlier invited by the speaker from June 6 to 10



for verification of their resignations, but none of them had turned up. APP

'ICT, LG Amendment Bill 2022' sails through NA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly (NA) on Thursday approved the passage of the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2022, aimed at increasing the number of Union Councils from 101 to 125 and seeking direct election for the post of mayor and deputy mayor.

The bill was moved by State Minister for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan. According to the amendments, the number of Union Councils (UCs) would be enhanced from 101 to 125 within the Islamabad Capital Territory to cater for the existing population of the federal capital.

The mayor and deputy mayor shall be directly elected as joint candidates by the voters.

Under the amendment, the federal government has been authorised to increase or decrease the number

of union councils from time to time.

"If the office of the mayor of local government falls vacant during the term of the council for any reason, the Election Commission shall hold a fresh election to the office of the head of the local government."

According to the statement of Objects and Reasons, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Local Government Act was promulgated in 2015 to establish an elected Local Government System to devolve political, administrative, and financial authority in order to promote good governance and effective service delivery through the institutionalized participation and involvement of people in day to day governance.

Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) is a municipal body established under the ICT Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2022.

'Pervaiz Elahi no longer Punjab CM'

News Desk

LAHORE: The political crisis in Punjab has intensified as Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Thursday that Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman is likely to issue the notification to denotify Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi today.

Talking to media outside Punjab Governor House, Rana Sanaullah said that Pervaiz Elahi was no more the executive of the province as he

did not take vote of confidence as asked by Governor.

"Elahi constitutionally no more holds the CM office," said Sanaullah, adding that the federal government will issue the notification as soon as it receives the governor's order.

Replying to a question about PDM candidate for CM post, he said that the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) has not finalized any name for the CM ship.

Govt committed to encourage indigenous manufacturing in health sector: Naveed Qamar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar said on Thursday that the incumbent government was committed to encourage indigenous products in the health sector to fulfill local needs.

He was addressing an inaugural ceremony of Pakistan's first locally manufactured In Vitro Diagnostics (IVD) solutions and some of their newest products, said a press release issued here.

The Minister said manufacturing diagnostic equipment locally was a matter of pride. "We are capable to do anything but need to take initiatives and motivation", he added.

He expressed the hope that the locally manufactured products would fulfill the country's needs and help exploring markets like Central Asian states, Afghanistan, Middle East and beyond



the Africa.

The minister said that all public sector hospitals must give priority to procuring locally manufactured products after Quality Control (QC) / DRAP (Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan) approvals. Qamar said that the Prime Minister has allowed opening of letters of Credits (LCs) for the import of life-saving drugs and raw materials.

UN slams Taliban decision to bar women from universities, calls for 'immediate' revocation

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations and several countries on Wednesday condemned the Taliban's decision to close universities to women and called for the de facto authorities to "immediately revoke the decision".

In a statement, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also urged the de facto authorities to "reopen girls' schools beyond the sixth grade and end all measures preventing women and girls from participating fully in daily public life".

UN Human Rights High Commissioner Volker Turk described the ban as "another appalling and cruel blow to the rights of Afghan women and girls and a deeply regrettable setback for the entire country".

Reminding that their systemat-

ic exclusion from virtually all aspects of life is "unparalleled in the world", he upheld that banning women from tertiary education is "all the more heart-breaking" when considering their vital contributions over the years.

"Coming on top of girls being barred from attending secondary school, just think of all the female doctors, lawyers and teachers who have been, and who will be, lost to the development of the country", said the senior UN official.

He stated that suspending women from tertiary and higher education is in "clear violation" of Afghanistan's obligations under international law, adding that their rights to access all levels of education without discrimination is "fundamental and unquestionable".

Govt Promoting Renewable Energy Sources to make Pakistan Self-sufficient in Electricity: Khurram Dastagir

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Engineer Khurram Dastagir Khan here Thursday said the government was promoting renewable energy sources including wind, hydropower, coal, solar and bioenergy in order to make Pakistan self-sufficient in electricity for speedy economic growth and development.

He was addressing after inspection of ongoing construction work on high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station at tehsil Azakhel Bala in Nowshera district. The Minister also laid the foundation stone of a 500kV HVAC grid station at Nowshera.

The Nowshera converter station was being constructed under CASA-1000 Project for transmission of 1300 megawatt inexpensive, clean and environment friendly electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan.

CASA-1000 Project is a great example of mutual cooperation of governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan aimed at harnessing clean energy and building



a shared regional electricity market, fighting climate change and increasing standard of living for their populations.

The Federal Minister said that works on different renewable energy projects were underway in the country that after completion would address the energy's shortfall and promote industrialization.

He said energy infrastructure, generation and transmission projects in Gawadar, Thar, Faisalabad, Quaid e Azam park and other areas of Pakistan

would change the destiny of people.

Khurram Dastagir said that about 100MW inexpensive and affordable electricity would be provided to all coastal areas of Balochistan after its purchase from the neighbouring country.

He said work on the Thar coal project having capacity of 1320MW has been started and that a strong foundation of making Pakistan energy surplus was laid.

Kurram Dastagir said that electric-

ity in flood hit areas in all provinces including KP, Sindh and Balochistan were quickly restored for which NTDC and other relevant organizations deserved appreciation.

The Minister was accompanied by Managing Director National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC), Engr Dr Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, senior officers of NTDC and Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) besides other authorities associated with the mega project. Earlier, the Minister was informed that construction work on the converter station at Nowshera was underway and is expected to be completed by June 2023. HVDC converter station Nowshera would be linked by an HVDC transmission line to efficiently transmit electricity from hydropower-rich Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan. The station would then link power into Pakistan's existing high voltage alternating current (HVAC) transmission network by delivering substantial benefits to the country's power grids besides benefiting a large number of electricity users in the region.

'Junagadh is Pakistan' A seminar organized by Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A seminar titled "Junagadh is Pakistan" was organized at Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad. On this occasion, the youth were informed about the historical background of Junagadh state. Nawab of Junagadh His Excellency Nawab Jahangir Khanji and Dewan of Junagadh and Chairman Muslim Institute Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali were invited for a special lecture on Junagadh. The speakers said that Junagadh's accession to Pakistan was signed by Nawab Mahabat Khanji and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Nawab of Junagadh Nawab Muhammad Mahabat Khanji acceded to Pakistan under the idea of Pakistan. Even at

that time, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, had made it clear that a referendum cannot be held under illegal Indian military occupation and that Junagadh is a part of Pakistan under international law. Junagadh is our historical and legal right and living nations do not give up their legitimate right, so we will continue fighting for our rights. During the lecture, Nawab Jahangir Khanji and Dewan Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali clarified that the Junagadh issue and the Kashmir issue are proof of India's duplicitous policy. Both these conflicts show Indian expansionist ambitions. We should fight the cases of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Occupied Junagadh at the global level. India's aggressiveness and expansionist ambitions should be exposed for disregarding international laws.

On this occasion, Pakistan's legal position regarding Junagadh was highlighted. The speakers said that Junagadh is another unfinished agenda of partition of the subcontinent. During the partition of India, injustice was done by India to Pakistan. A policy of forcible occupation of territory is never permanent. The Junagadh issue has several political, diplomatic, and legal aspects. Hyderabad, Kashmir, and Junagadh were separate issues but all were illegally occupied by India through its army. At the diplomatic level, we have to make more decisions for Junagadh. Such seminars should be held to make people aware. We should speak globally for Junagadh in every

forum. It is the national duty of every Pakistani to play his/her part in a peaceful solution to the Junagadh issue. Nawab of Junagadh Nawab Jahangir Khanji demanded from the government that a Junagadh Desk should be established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create awareness on the issue of Junagadh in various international circles. Similarly, Junagadh House should be established in the federal capital. Dewan of Junagadh Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali said that research activities should be promoted in different universities on the issue of Junagadh so that Pakistan's position can be presented to the world in a better way according to the new emerging global perspectives.

AJK PM approves imposition of 200% additional tax on import, export of cigarettes

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has approved the imposition of 200% additional tax on all cigarettes imported and exported within the borders of Azad Kashmir. This policy would be instrumental in increasing the tax revenue worth crores of rupees in the state treasury. In this regard, the Prime Minister's Secretariat has formally written a letter to the Secretary Services and General Administration and the Secretary Inland Revenue Department seeking immediate action and implementation of the directives. In order to review the implementation of the policy guidelines and directives given to various departments, a review meeting of all departments has been summoned in the next week. The review meeting would be attended by the ministers, officers and community representatives of the relevant departments. It may be recalled here that smoking at public places has been completely banned in Azad Kashmir. The imposition of additional taxes on imported cigarettes would not only reduce the use of cigarettes but also help to develop a healthy society. The Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has already issued strict orders to the concerned departments to take action against those who violate the law.

Asad Qaiser inaugurates Community Center

Correspondent

SWABI: Former National Assembly Asad Qaiser inaugurates community center at his native village Marghuz in Swabi. While addressing inauguration ceremony Ex Speaker National Assembly said that uplifting Swabi is his utmost priority. He said that work is in progress on Grade Station after which completion problems of low voltage and tripping will be eliminated.

He said that in future he will focus to bring reforms in health and education sectors and building sports ground at Swabi. He said that Swabi gas project has been approved by former government and if federal government lift ban on gas remaining work will be completed.

He further said that present federal government ruined the good work done by previous PTI government. He also said that the economy is in miserable condition and only way to revive economy is earlier general election.

AIOU organizes Christmas event to promote religious harmony in the country



City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A magnificent event was arranged here at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) to show solidarity with the University's Christian employees which was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood.

The event was largely attended by Christian employees and their family members. Principal Officers were also present on the occasion. In the ceremony, Christmas cake was cut. On this occasion, the Christian community expressed good wishes for the development and prosperity of the country.

Pastor Obaid Sadiq of Rawalpindi read selected verses from the Bible, in his speech, he emphasized interfaith harmony, national security, as well as human well-being on a global scale.

Speaking at the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood emphasized the need of making collective efforts to promote and strengthen religious tolerance, peace, and harmony in the country. He added that all prophets have taught love, tolerance, forgiveness, and justice. Furthermore, the Constitution of Pakistan grants religious freedom to all minorities, and they are free to follow and practice their religious beliefs and teachings as citizens of Pakistan.

PM Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan is ready to serve the people of the state: Chaudhry Rafiq

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Information, Environment and Small Industries Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayer has said that the People's Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan is ready to serve the people of the state. Prime Minister provided relief to the people despite all the adverse conditions and financial crisis.

The President of Muslim League-N Shah Ghulam Qadir is afraid of the popularity of Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, so he continues to make contradictory statements. The Assistant Special Information said in his special statement that the Rahmatul Ulamain Authority was established for the first time in Azad Kashmir, while the entire Azad Kashmir Free electricity was provided to the mosques, 496 teachers of the Quran were permanently and upgraded, orders were issued to establish a separate directorate for the teachers of the Quran, whose DG will be Jaid Alam Din. He said that in all public and private events. Blessings after the Holy Word It was made compulsory to read YF, a historic subsidy of more than 7 billion was given on flour for the common man, while a historic decision was taken not to increase the electricity bill for one year across the state, by making

6 thousand women from across Azad Kashmir.

Work was started to make them self-sufficient, to empower women, it was decided to establish a vocational training center by ensuring the representation of women at the district level. Assistant Special Information said that for the first time in the history of Azad Kashmir, the Saudi Development Fund Different projects worth 30 billion rupees were approved, which will increase employment, tourism and economy. Taken, a record tax was collected in the 75-year history of Azad Kashmir, the number of return filers has increased from 7 thousand to 33 thousand in just five months, to provide employment to youth and women in the state.

A substantial amount has been allocated while deserving families will be given three thousand zakat per year. The provision of 3 thousand rupees per month has been started, the amount of dowry fund for deserving families has been increased from 11 thousand to 60 thousand rupees and the monthly living allowance of the freed refugees who sacrificed in the great movement is 15 hundred rupees per person. He said that the Prime Minister wants to make the state a welfare state in the true sense, for which he is trying untiring less efforts in day and night.

PAC organizes Cultural Musical Program at Women University



City Reporter

RAWALPINDI: In the light of the instructions of Provincial Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Taimur Masood Akbar, a cultural musical program was organized at Rawalpindi Women's University by Punjab Arts Council.

Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women's University Prof. Dr. Anila Kamal was the chief guest of the musical program. Speaking at the cultural musical program, Dr. Professor Anila Kamal said that Punjabi culture is one of the oldest cultures in the history of the world. Culturally, historically, religiously and geographically, Punjab has all

the attractions that attract a tourist.

Punjab has historical forts, rivers, desert ranges, and beautiful gardens. There are mountain ranges and Punjab is famous all over the world for its healthy and delicious food. The term culture is used to cover all the activities of human life, when viewed psychologically.

There is a mutual relationship between social values and culture and civilization, she added. Assistant Director Muhammad Sulaiman, representing the Arts Council, said that Punjab is a rich province in terms of culture, in which the colors of Punjabi, Saraiki, Pothohari culture are prominent.

PUBLIC NOTICE

"Islamabad Marina" Private Housing Scheme Mouza Mohri Situated in Fateh Jang Road Tehsil & District Rawalpindi. Public is hereby informed that Mr. Usman Sarwar son of Ghulam Sarwar Director/ Sponsor (CNIC#17301-1440206-1) Resident of House No.FC-418, FC Colony Civil Quarter Peshawar Office #312, Zara Heights, Sector H-13 Islamabad has applied to Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency for the sanctioning of a Private Housing Scheme located in Mouza Mohri situated in Fateh Jang Rad Tehsil & District Rawalpindi under Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency (PHATA) Affordable Private Housing Scheme Rules 2020. The detail of area is as under:-

Khwat No.	Khatuni No.	Area		
		Kanal	Marla	Sft
151/134(min)	284 to 289	01	08	-
152/134(min)	290	01	02	4
115/103	215	-	-	151
111	208 to 209	-	13	-
109/96	204	04	01	-
94/83	175	01	01	-
110	205 to 207	-	03	-
117/105	216	-	05	-
89/78	165	47	08	182
104/91(min)	194 to 195	-	01	48
271/233	495 to 497	06	03	-
101/89	191	03	01	-
20/18	49	03	10	-
215	428 to 430	79	11	-
112/99	210 to 212	-	-	211
98/86	187	03	05	-
116/104	216	04	01	-
103/91	193	-	-	32
113/101	213	01	03	-
TOTAL		156	18	84

ANY PERSON having objection against sanction of "Islamabad Marina" Private Housing Scheme Mouza Mohri Situated in Fateh Jang Road Tehsil & District Rawalpindi or ownership title documents of land mentioned above may, within FIFTEEN DAYS of publication of this notice, submit the same in writing to undersigned. Any objection filed after due date shall not be entertained.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
PUNJAB HOUSING & TOWN PLANNING AGENCY,
AIRPORT LINE ROAD NEAR WATER TANK,
GULZAR-E-QUAID, RAWALPINDI. PHONE NO.051-5191753

Maldives & Pakistan diplomatic ties are based on mutual interest and respect

An Exclusive Interview of H.E Farzana Zahir High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan



Exclusive Interview By Naveed Ahmad Khan
Photos By Raja Ghulam Farid



Maldives and Pakistan are enjoying cordial and storing mutual relationship. To describe the friendly relationship from a diplomatic eye and to explore the further opportunities for enhancement of relationship, Daily The Spokesman has conducted the interview of H.E. Ms. Farzana Zahir, High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan.

How would you like to describe diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Maldives?

Maldives and Pakistan have always shared close bonds of friendship that is based on shared interest and mutual respect. Our relations are cordial at all levels and maintaining that friendship is important for the Maldives and Pakistan. Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid has met with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari twice this year in New York. We also had high level representations from the Maldives in Pakistan to attend the 48th Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Pakistan from 22-23 March this year and the 17th extraordinary session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in December 2021.

As neighbours, countries of the South Asia will remain as one of the key priorities for the Maldives. We also share many commonalities with the

people of Pakistan that forms a special bond between our peoples.

What measures would you like to suggest for further enhancement of bilateral ties between both the countries?

Both countries cooperate on a wide range of areas, especially in the multilateral forums. We support each other on issues of mutual importance to developing countries such as promoting sustainable development, addressing climate change, advancing multilateralism and countering terrorism. Regular and focused dialogue is what is required to facilitate better cooperation.

To foster closer engagement, I think we also need to work on enhancing trade and investment between Maldives and Pakistan. Currently the level of trade between us remains low. Maldives does not export to Pakistan. Imports to Maldives from Pakistan, while it has increased over the years, is around 9 million dollars. The potential is far greater.

How can both the countries enhance existing trade and economic cooperation?

The biggest challenge for us remains the connectivity issue. However, that aside, there is a lot of potential to increase trade. We can focus on specific industries where Pakistan is doing

well. For that we need exchange of trade delegations and have targeted talks between industries and Chambers of commerce. Although we are a small population, our vibrant tourism industry offers much room for export of food items, textiles and construction materials including steel from Pakistan to the Maldives. Additionally, there is also potential to export halal meat, pharmaceuticals, as well as sports goods and equipment from Pakistan to the Maldives.

How can Pakistan and Maldives play an important role on diplomatic fronts at the regional level?

Maldives and Pakistan are deeply affected by the current climate crisis. Both of us are developing countries and battling the impacts of the crisis at the front line. In Maldives, our islands are on average about 1.5m above sea level and therefore the projected sea level rise will be disastrous for the Maldives. Monsoon rain and glacier melts in Pakistan this year alone have caused so much destruction to critical infrastructure and destroyed lives and livelihoods of millions of people forcing them out of their homes. This is unacceptable and a huge injustice for our people when global emissions are driven high by some industrialized countries.

We are highly dependent on global carbon emissions being reduced enough to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degree (centigrade). We also need significant funds to pursue our adaptation goals. The climate adaptation needs of both our countries continues to force funding away from much needed finance for socio economic development of our people. These are areas where both our countries can work together at the international front.

I welcome the efforts of Pakistan this year as the Chair of the Group of 77 and China to have led the efforts to establish a dedicated 'Fund for Loss and Damage' in COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheikh.

"Maldives & Pakistan are affected from climate crisis being low carbon emission countries"

What role can Pakistani experts play in uplifting industrial and manufacturing sectors in Maldives?

Maldives does not have a huge manufacturing sector. Our biggest industries are fisheries and tourism.



However, Maldives offers attractive opportunities and incentives for foreign investors. We are trying to diversify our economy by facilitating investment in targeted sectors such as construction, agribusiness, transport, energy and the financial sectors.

We do welcome Pakistani investors to the Maldives. As we expand our tourism sector there are many opportunities there as well. This year, we held an online session for Pakistani investors to brief on the investment opportunities for development of Tourist Resorts in the Maldives. We hope to hold more of such sessions in the future.

How both nations can get further close ties through people to people exchanges or somewhat other measures?

People to people exchanges are important. It is the best way to foster closer ties between our peoples. Even now, Maldivians have a special bond with the people of Pakistan. This emerges from the historical bond and cultural similarities. More recently, this was evident from the sentiments of the Maldivian community towards the people affected by floods in Pakistan. It is the way in which the Maldivian community and civil society got together to raise much needed funds to help our brothers and sisters in Pakistan.

I am also happy to share that the number of tourists from Pakistan to Maldives has more than doubled in the past few years.

What measures would you like to suggest for Pakistan to enhance cooperation in educational sector with Maldives?

The best way is for institutions to form collaborative partnerships. Like Pakistan, Maldives also have a vibrant young population. Many seeking opportunities for good education. With collaborative partnerships, we can encourage more student and faculty exchanges. This way both countries can share their expertise. This is already happening. This year also we have seen some collaborations between the Maldives National University and well-respected institutions in Pakistan.

Likewise, sports is also another area where we can help our young people to train and facilitate exchange for development.

"Pakistani people can collaborate with Maldives in education, tourism & construction industry"



In what sectors can Maldivian experts assist Pakistan?

Maldives is very well known for our tourism sector. We have a lot of expertise in managing the tourism industry. We are very proud to have won World's leading Destination Award again this year at the World Travel Awards. This is the third consecutive year that we got this title. This year we also won the World's Leading Tourist Board award. When we began our tourism journey 50 years ago, it was very exclusive to high-end tourism. The resorts in the Maldives are renowned for their luxury facilities and secluded surroundings. But now we have expanded our tourism into many other areas like guesthouses, hotels and liveboards that offer equally memorable experiences at reason-

able prices.

There is also a growing interest for adventure tourism worldwide. Maldives offers unique experiences such as underwater spas, restaurants, bubble tents on the beach. Adventures such as sea plane trips, sunset fishing and even snorkeling and diving experiences that can bring you closer to the underwater beauty and nature.

Maldives is also positioning itself as a leading destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE). We are re-inventing this concept to merge business with leisure, and to conduct gatherings in a less traditional environment. There is a lot that we are experiencing in the tourism sector, from which Pakistan can also learn.

Profile of H.E Farzana Zahir

High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan

High Commissioner Farzana joined the Department of External Resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996 as a Secretary. Since then she has served in different functions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

She served as a Counsellor at the Maldives High Commission in Malaysia from 2009 to 2012. She was also a member of the Maldives delegation to the main sessions of the United Nations General Assembly from 2015 - 2019.

Before she was appointed as the High Commissioner, she served as the Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of the Maldives to the UN in New York from 2017 till 2020. During this time, Ms. Farzana led the work of the Maldives Chairmanship of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in 2017 and 2018, advocating for the special circumstances of Small Island States at the UN. This included leading negotiation efforts on behalf of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), for the recognition of their specific challenges, more specifically in the areas of sustainable development, climate change and oceans issues. She also took special interest in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction, including coordinating the Disaster Risk Reduction Resolution for the Group of 77 and engaging closely in other efforts in this area.

High Commissioner Farzana graduated from Australian National University with a Bachelor of Arts (Development Studies) and with Master of Development Studies from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She is married with two children.



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Multipronged strategy seems working to avert severe gas crisis

Muhammad Aslam

Global economic recession and regional conflicts landed many of the world's nations in serious trouble to meet the energy needs of their people during chilly winters. Unlike many previous years, the post-COVID and Russia-Ukraine war era had rung alarm bells even across Europe and in many Asian countries.

The situation was also not different for Pakistan, a country facing energy shortage over the years due to rising population and growing energy demands by domestic, commercial, and industrial sectors.

Failure of the previous regime in making prudent decisions and embarking on exploration plans was another reason behind this phenomenon. Although all is not well yet the multi-faceted strategy of the present government seems like bearing fruit to tackle the situation.

There is no denial about consumers' complaints regarding commodity shortages in a number of areas across the country. But sensible regulation of gas supply to domestic consumers had allayed the fears of acute shortage although there are still supply and demand variations due to depleting domestic resources and infrastructure issues.

"Keeping in view all these challenges, we have arranged extra gas for November, December and January as compared to same period last year. Additional LNG cargoes for January and February have

also been secured from Qatar," informed Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik.

He said local gas production was experiencing around a 10 percent decline annually, therefore the government is approaching friendly countries and the international markets to secure the required amount of gas. "A Gas Framework Agreement with Azerbaijan trading firm SOCAR was near completion for the availability of 'distressed' LNG cargoes from international market at the cheapest rates."

Musadik Malik said the Sui companies had been directed to ensure gas supply, especially during 'breakfast, lunch and dinner preparation timings i.e. 6-9 a.m., 12-2 p.m., and 6-9 p.m.

"An effective monitoring system of commodity's demand and supply was in place as we are encountering infrastructure issues resulting in low gas pressure in remote areas. We are also rectifying this problem," the minister said.

He said the gas companies were providing more than 20,000 tons of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) per month in shortage or low pressure areas. "For the first time, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has opened LPG cylinder outlets in such areas."

Commenting on industrial sector's energy demand, Musadik Malik said, the government is aware of this sector's importance for economic stability, exports and employment generation. "Therefore, we are utilizing all available options including reaching out to Central Asian States for the purchase of gas either through pipelines

or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) cargoes from potential countries."

He also mentioned to two new policies related to tight gas and the revival of old hydrocarbon wells to exploit the country's indigenous oil and gas potential.

He said that Russia had agreed in principle to provide crude oil, petrol, and diesel to Pakistan at a discounted rate. "This can play an important role in bettering supply and bringing down energy prices."

Pakistan is already in negotiations with Russian private and public sector companies for procurement of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). The early establishment of the Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline, commonly known North-South (Lahore-Karachi) Gas Pipeline, and another 'big gas pipeline' to get the commodity from Russian hydrocarbon deposits was also part of the plan.

Next month, an inter-governmental delegation of Russia, led by its Energy Minister, would visit Pakistan to make progress on oil and gas sale-purchase agreements between the two countries.

The federal government also discussed a number of measures at Tuesday's cabinet meeting to conserve energy to mitigate the masses suffering as well as save a handsome amount for the national kitty.

The country's domestic gas extraction varies around 3.5-7 Billion Cubic Feet per Day (BCFD) against the demand of 8 BCFD and it is difficult for any government to meet domestic, commercial, and industrial sectors' needs in the prevailing scenario.

The demand-supply gap is being bridged with the increased import of

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and accelerating hydrocarbon exploration activities in the country. The government is in process of granting exploration blocks to successful companies after a fair bidding process.

Accordingly, a plan is also being worked out to provide incentives to local and foreign exploration and production (E&P) companies to step up drilling activities in potential areas.

"An effective package of incentives will be offered to the companies making discoveries and extracting oil and gas enabling us to meet our needs," said a senior official privy to the energy development sector.

Pinning high hopes in nature's bounties bestowed to Pakistan, he said, "by utilizing our natural resources to the optimum, we can achieve complete autarky in the energy sector paving the way to national prosperity."

"There is light at the end of the tunnel. We just need to move in the right direction steadfastly by making right decisions at the right time," he observed.

The energy crisis is lingering on the challenge faced by recent past governments as ever increasing population was resulting in mounting gas demand, especially during the winter season.

Therefore, cognizant of the situation, the coalition government is making all-out efforts to exploit indigenous hydrocarbon resources for achieving self-reliance in this sector as well as exploring avenues to secure inexpensive deals with international exporters.

Amrullah Saleh acts as Indian puppet to malign Pakistan, destabilise region

Former head of Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS) Amrullah Saleh continues to spit venom at Pakistan by maligning state, army and intelligence agency through social media, just to appease India, showing indifference to the miseries of the Afghan people.

Through his social media handle, Saleh is fanning baseless anti-Pakistan propaganda blaming the country for recent tension with Afghanistan.

After 2001, Amrullah Saleh proved himself as a valuable asset for foreign hostile agencies against its own government and people as he was considered responsible for bloodshed and destruction in Afghanistan during the last 20 years.

For his services to betray the Afghan people, Saleh is being paid \$200 a day, which was previously \$400 a month, besides lots of high-level contacts, foreign citizenship and political ambition. His flight from just an interpreter for an NGO in 2001 to high-profile state portfolios was a reward for putting Afghanistan's national interest on the back burner, said a senior security analyst.

He said Saleh received his intelligence training from India even before joining NDS. While heading the NDS, he facilitated India to set up its hostile networks across Afghanistan for conducting espionage, sabotage and terrorist activities against Pakistan while destabilizing the region. He also supported Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in the form of cash, ammunition and training.

During his tenure, Human Rights Watch also documented numerous torture incidents of detainees between 2004 and 2010.

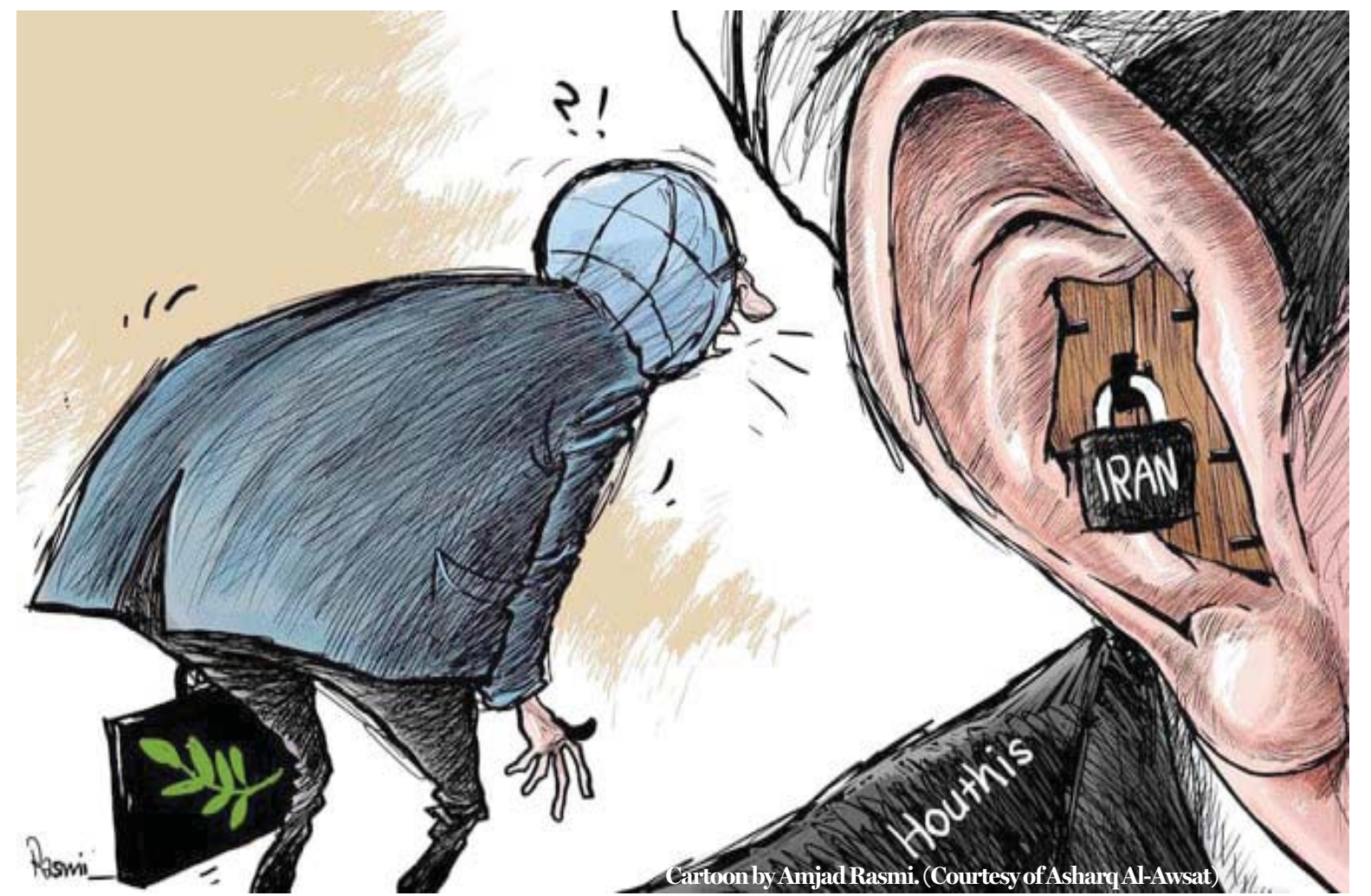
The analyst said, that out of personal vendetta, Saleh opposed President Hamid Karzai for entering into talks with the Taliban and looking for Pakistan's help in this regard notwithstanding the significance of those talks for future of Afghanistan. It was he who propelled propaganda during Ashraf Ghani government to sabotage the intra-Afghan peace process.

He said Amrullah Saleh was notorious for orchestrating attacks on himself to establish his credentials in Afghanistan and to his foreign masters. He also organized attack on the Afghan Presidential Palace during the Eid-ul-Azha prayers in July 2021.

"Amrullah Saleh is a greater threat to regional stability as his machinations are not restricted to Pakistan and Afghanistan alone. He keeps peddling his propaganda against Iran as well. After taking advantage of West's patronage, now Amrullah Saleh is dancing to the tunes of his mentor India's RAW," the analyst added.

For instance, he said it was only Indian officials' meeting with the Taliban leadership that Saleh did not criticise. Otherwise, he often maligns the US for Doha deal while alleging Washington for bringing in the Taliban to Afghanistan.

Similarly, to serve the agenda of his Indian masters, Saleh, and his likeminded individuals such as Hamdullah Mohib and Hanif Atmar support Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) in Pakistan as its propaganda and leaders always received generous support and welcome from Saleh and his masters.



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

Journalist suspensions widen rift between Twitter and media

Spokesman Research

Elon Musk's abrupt suspension of several journalists who cover Twitter widens a growing rift between the social media site and media organizations that have used the platform to build their audiences.

Individual reporters with The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, Voice of America and other news agencies saw their accounts go dark Thursday.

Musk tweeted late Friday that the company would lift the suspensions following the results of a public poll on the site. The poll showed 58.7% of respondents favored a move to immediately unsuspend accounts over 41.3% who said the suspensions should be lifted in seven days.

The company has not explained why the accounts were taken down. But Musk took to Twitter on Thursday night to accuse journalists of sharing private information about his whereabouts, which he described as "basically assassination coordinates." He provided no evidence for that claim.

Many advertisers abandoned Twitter over content moderation questions after Musk acquired it in October, and he now risks a rupture with media organizations, which are among the most active on the platform.

Most of the accounts were back early Saturday. One exception was Business Insider's Linette Lopez, who was suspended after the other journalists, also with no explanation, she told The Associated Press.

Lopez published a series of articles between 2018 and 2021 highlighting what she called dangerous Tesla manufacturing

shortcomings.

Shortly before being suspended, she said she had posted court-related documents to Twitter that included a 2018 Musk email address. That address is not current, Lopez said, because "he changes his email every few weeks."

On Tuesday, she posted a 2019 story about Tesla troubles, commenting, "Now, just like then, most of @elonmusk's wounds are self-inflicted."

The same day, she cited reports that Musk was renegeing on severance for laid-off Twitter employees, threatening workers who talk to the media and refusing to make rent payments. Lopez described his actions as "classic Elon-going-for-broke behavior."

Alarm over the suspensions extended beyond media circles to the United Nations, which was reconsidering its involvement in Twitter.

The move sets "a dangerous precedent at a time when journalists all over the world are facing censorship, physical threats and even worse," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

The reporters' suspensions followed Musk's decision Wednesday to permanently ban an account that automatically tracked the flights of his private jet using publicly available data. That also led Twitter to change its rules for all users to prohibit the sharing of another person's current location without their consent.

Several of the reporters suspended Thursday night had been writing about the new policy and Musk's rationale for imposing it, which involved his allegations about a stalking incident he said affected his family Tuesday night in Los Angeles.

The official Twitter account for Mast-

odon, a decentralized alternative social network where many Twitter users are fleeing, was also banned. The reason was unclear, though it had tweeted about the jet-tracking account. Twitter also began preventing users from posting links to Mastodon accounts, in some cases flagging them as potential malware.

"This is of course a bald-faced lie," cybersecurity journalist Brian Krebs posted.

Explaining the reporter bans, Musk tweeted, "Same doxxing rules apply to journalists' as to everyone else."

He later added: "Criticizing me all day long is totally fine, but doxxing my real-time location and endangering my family is not."

Doxxing "refers to disclosing someone's identity, address, phone number or other personal details that violate their privacy and could bring harm."

The Washington Post's executive editor, Sally Buzbee, said technology reporter Drew Harwell "was banished without warning, process or explanation" following the publication of accurate reporting about Musk.

CNN said in a statement that "the impulsive and unjustified suspension of a number of reporters, including CNN's Donie O'Sullivan, is concerning but not surprising."

"Twitter's increasing instability and volatility should be of incredible concern for everyone who uses Twitter," the statement added.

Another suspended journalist, Matt Binder of the technology news outlet Mashable, said he was banned Thursday night immediately after sharing a screenshot that O'Sullivan had posted before his own suspension.

To be concluded

Crypto currencies at crossroads after annus horribilis

Reuters Features

To borrow from Britain's Queen Elizabeth, 2022 is not a year on which the cryptocurrency world shall look back with undiluted pleasure.

Crashes, contagion, collapses came in such quick succession that investors were, towards the end of the year, asking serious existential questions.

After all, the largest cryptocurrency, bitcoin, has not kept its head above water for more than a week at a time, and is down about three-quarters from last November's \$69,000 peak.

The market value of the 22,000-odd tokens and coins is now at less than a third of the peak \$3 trillion in November 2021, and many of them are comatose, if not outright dead.

That's been a brutal reality check for an industry that kicked 2022 off with dreams of widespread mainstream institutional adoption, of bitcoin supplanting even gold as the world's inflation hedge, and as well as endorsements from the likes of Tesla Inc chief Elon Musk and the wild celebration of billion-dollar non-fungible tokens. Not only did cryptocurrencies get slammed by the Fed's uber hawkishness, their slide also triggered the crash of a stablecoin called TerraUSD, that then wrought a 'Lehman moment' as funds and brokers such as Celsius and Voyager went bankrupt.

What some saw as the final nail in the crypto coffin was the collapse of Sam Bankman-Fried's FTX exchange last month.

Unlike in 2017, when bitcoin crashed just as spectacularly, there are far fewer diehard crypto buffs predicting a bounce this time.

Rather, 2022 has become the "I-told-you-so" case for regulators, who've largely maintained an arm's length from the crypto world or even banned trading in cryptocurrencies.

The European Central Bank reckons bitcoin's

modest bounce this month is an "artificially induced last gasp before the road to irrelevance."

Indeed, the one extenuating factor this year has been how mainstream finance has mostly escaped contagion. The excesses, the uncontrolled lending and fudging of billions of dollars have happened overwhelmingly within the crypto ecosystem.

At the same time, the idea that decentralised finance and private crypto coins can operate in the shadows of the traditional banking system, and thrive, now appears delusional.

As retail and institutional investors lose trust in crypto operators, a host of policymaker voices and even crypto barons are joining U.S. SEC Chair Gary Gensler in calling for regulation.

UBS strategist James Malcolm points to the increasing correlation between cryptocurrencies and micro-cap U.S. stocks as testament to how bitcoin and other tokens could survive on the fringes, as a niche, diverse asset in investment portfolios.

"It's wrong to say this thing is going to curl up and die completely because there are elements of it which can be useful in other areas, and there is probably a modest cryptocurrency market which will continue to thrive on the margin of financial markets," he says.

Yet, the sort of regulation that investors need to feel safe dealing with crypto brokers and exchanges, be it transparency or capital adequacy, could take months, if not years to implement.

"Some asset managers are looking at this as a 10-15 year journey to digital assets becoming fully mainstream," Morgan Stanley said in a note summarising the bank's discussions with the crypto industry.

Next year could meanwhile see traditional financial world use the crypto malaise to up its game: snap up platforms and assets in the blockchain world, issue tokenised bonds and stocks or maybe even roll out more central bank digital currencies.

As UBS's Malcolm means, it might just go to show that crypto was meant to be more "an evolutionary than a revolutionary development in financial markets."

Belgium's Ambassador expresses solidarity with flood-affected people of Pakistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of Belgium Mr. Charles Delogne called on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf at Parliament House today. Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf said that enhancing parliamentary interactions and economic cooperation is vital for the prosperity of people and their well-being. He said that the official visit of the 7 members Belgium's Parliamentary delegation in Pakistan from 16th to 20th January 2023 would enhance parliamentary cooperation between both nations.

The Speaker said that Pakistan has been facing severe impacts of global climate change as there has been severe destruction of properties and loss of lives of common people. He also said that the Pakistani economy is agriculture-based and flash floods have destroyed the agriculture sector. He said that the world is facing global climate challenges and only collective



effort can transform these challenges into opportunities.

The Speaker also appreciated the

support of the Belgium people and government for being 1st country to support Pakistan in flood rehabilita-

tion initiatives.

The Speaker stressed on the need to further develop contact between the

business communities of both countries to tap the massive economic potential in Pakistan. He said, "Pakistan attaches

great importance to its relations with Belgium as these relations are based on close people-to-people contacts" Con- venger Pakistan-Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group MNA Ms. Asia Azeem was also present in the meeting.

It is pertinent to mention that Seven members of the Belgium Parliamentary delegation would visit Pakistan from 16th January 2023 to 21st January. While talking about Belgium's Parliamentary delegation to Pakistan, Speaker said that this would further strengthen ties between both nations.

The Ambassador of Belgium in Pakistan appreciated Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf for his warm welcome. He also appreciated the comprehensive schedule of 7 members Belgium's Parliamentary Delegation to Pakistan. He said that both Belgium and Pakistan share the same cultural and language diversity. He also said that Belgium was the first country to support Pakistan, especially in flood relief efforts.

Pakistan's experience of constitutional development to inform Somalia state-building

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD :United Nations Development Program UNDP-Pakistan and UNDP-Somalia have organized a first-ever Somalia-Pakistan Ministerial Study Tour on Federalism, Devolution and State-Building from December 20 to 27, 2022. The team will stay in Islamabad, attend seminars and learning sessions, and visit various institutions such as NADRA, PIPS, National Assembly of Pakistan and others.

The Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) of Somalia is leading the tour of honorable ministers representing both Federal Government and Federal Member States including representatives of Banadir Regional Administration (BRA). His Excellency, Mr. Ahmed Moallim Fiqi Federal Minister, Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, Federal Republic of Somalia is the lead focal person of the study tour.

The technical sessions of the third day were Understanding Somalia's Constitutional Review Process: Issues and Options, Federalizing functional assignments: Case Study of Implementation Commission of 18th Amendment from Governance Perspective; and Constitution-Making in Post-Independence Pakistan (1947-73): A



Recount of Power Struggles over Federal Design.

Mr. Ahmed Moallim Fiqi Federal Minister, Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, Federal Republic of Somalia and Ms. Hoden Osman, advisor to the President of Somalia, spoke about the committees which are involved in the constitution review process. Ms. Hoden shed light on pathways addressing the contentious issues such as justice system, natural resources, fiscal federalism, elections, and principles of the constitution such as subsidiarity and one nation desiring equalization. Somali

delegates talked at length about problems associated with inclusive politics, and reasons why a review process of the constitution is taking place so that federal member states come together and ensure a peaceful state-building process. Mohammad Ali Farah, working with UNDP Somalia alluded to the fact that political culture in Somalia is presidential while political institutions are parliamentary, and these realities have to be addressed, too.

Pakistani delegates talked at length about making the constitution review which tries to help solve the problems the nation is facing and does in a way

that an inclusionary political outcome is possible. Former Chairman Senate, Mian Raza advised the study tour delegates to work on creating one committee instead of three or four committees simultaneously dedicated constitutional reforms process. "Ministry of Law can work more mother institution facilitating the logistics", he added. He further advised that Somalia should form two lists of powers spread across the constitution one the federal and the other concurrent, and then iron out them in a way that solves the core contentious issues.

Maryam S. Khan, Research Fellow at the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS) in Pakistan narrated the journey of Pakistan's constitutional development during the last 75 years, and how dismemberment of Pakistan took place. A strong center under military influence could not solve the problem of representation at various levels of political and administrative institutions. After 1971, and dismemberment of Pakistan, provincial autonomy comes to the forefront, and political institutions were designed to address that question. It tried to address the question of distribution of natural resources and established the Council of Common Interests along with Senate as equal representation body.

Commissioner Hyderabad reached Dadu on a one-day visit

Azad Baloch

DADU: Commissioner Hyderabad Bilal Ahmed Memon arrived in Dadu on a one-day visit, in the meeting with Deputy Commissioner Dadu Syed Murtaza Ali Shah and other district officers in the Deputy Commissioner's office, additional Deputy Commissioner 1 Abul Aala Bhatti, Additional Deputy Commissioner 2 Asad Ali Khoso, District Election Commissioner Dadu Habibullah Junejo, Assistant Commissioner Dr. Shah Nawaz Meerani and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

During the meeting DC Dadu briefed to Commissioner Hyderabad about the rehabilitation works and preparations of municipal elections in the district after the floods. After the meeting, Commissioner Hyderabad along with Deputy Commissioner Dadu Syed Murtaza Ali Shah visited Kari Mori, Village Murad Chandio Pumping Station and other flood affected areas and reviewed the relief and rehabilitation works.

Deputy Commissioner Dadu Syed Murtaza Ali Shah told them that after completing the survey of the houses affected during the flood, assistance will be provided for their reconstruction and according to the policy of the Sindh government, flood victim can resettle in their homes.

On this occasion, the Commissioner of Hyderabad directed the concerned authorities to provide full assistance to the flood victims and speed up the process of removing water from the flood affected areas so that the flood victims can cultivate their crops and facilitate their movement. He further directed the concerned authorities that the district administration should use all its resources to make the local elections clean and transparent so that transparent elections can be held.

CG of UAE & Afzaal Memorial organized Awareness of Thalassemia



Bureau Report

KARACHI:—An event organized by H.E. Bakheet Ateeq Al Remeithi, Consul General of the UAE, Karachi in collaboration with Dr. Asim Qidwai, Founder & CEO, Afzaal Memorial Thalassemia Foundation, for the Awareness of Thalassemia across the Province. CG Bakheet Al Remeithi said to provide his continuous support to AMTF for Thalassemia Free Pakistan, while Dr. Qidwai gave the message to the youth to "get yourself screened against Thalassemia before marriage". Dr. Qidwai said to add Thalassemia Awareness Campaign in the curriculum of school textbooks.

Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Officials from Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority, Sindh Ministry of Health, and Board Members & High Officials from AMTF, Mr Ateeq-ur-Rehman, Rehan Yaseen, Anis-ur-Rehman, Rashid Aziz, Abdullah Abid, Ubaid-ur-Rehman, and Zain Bashir attended the event.

Pre-fabricated BHU structure inaugurated in South Waziristan by PRCS

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: With the support of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) National Headquarter (NHQ) & Norwegian Red Cross, PRCS Merged Areas Inaugurated "Newly Constructed Pre-Fabricated Structure of Basic Health Unit (BHU) Chagmalai in District South Waziristan. The Chief Guest of the Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari & Chairman PRCS Merged Areas Asif Khan Mehsud officially inaugurated the state-of-the-art newly constructed building with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

While talking to the media persons Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari said that it is the first



visit of the PRCS chairman in the history of Pakistan and my presence insures that PRCS is helping out the conflicted areas through our movement partners.

Speaking to the inauguration ceremony, the Chairman of Pakistan Red Crescent Society,

Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari said that the BHU building was constructed in Chagmalai at a cost of 11 million, in which 8 rooms have been constructed to facilitate the local communities by the provision of free health services. Further, he said that male and female doctors,

psychologists, LHVs, child facilitators, and hygiene promoters have been appointed for the best services. Free medicines, ambulance service, and a playground for children have also been constructed, the Basic Health Unit has been built on international standards, he added.

To highlight the services at the BHU level Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari said that now more than 32,000 patients have been facilitated before the inauguration of the newly constructed building.

The Pakistan Red Crescent is the only humanitarian organization that always highlights & ensures human suffering communities through respons-

es. He also said that the people of South Waziristan always have been affected by the instability while PRCS is trying its best to provide the basic facilities at their doorstep.

On the other hand, Asif Khan Mehsud, Chairman of PRCS Merged Areas, while addressing the ceremony, said that psychologists have also been appointed in 7 other PRCS-supported Basic Health Units, including Chagmalai & Baloch Kot BHU. He also said that the provision of clean water and distribution of hygiene kits and well-chairs are being supplied, Waziristan is a backward area, and we have to serve such communities by providing basic health facilities.

Pakistan-China scholars emphasized forging close cultural & educational ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China collaboration on education and cultural cooperation and exchange has an upward trajectory Both countries have strong bilateral ties that have shaped the regional future by encouraging amicable dialogue and scholastic interactions. China has played a key role in creating regional awareness to underscore the significance of cultural and educational exchanges via its ventures like BRI and CPEC. This has resulted in substantial educational, political, economic, and trade cooperation.

These were the remarks by the speakers during the webinar titled "China-Pakistan Cultural and Education Exchanges under

BRI," organized by the Center for BRI and China of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) and the Pakistan Research Center of Honder College of Art and Sciences. The webinar aimed to discuss the long-standing, strong relationship between Pakistan and China in terms of their cooperation in culture and education. In her opening remarks, Farhat Asif, President IPDS, said that both countries enjoy a strong All Weather Strategic Partnership and Friendship with exemplary bilateral cooperation.

CPEC is the epitome of such cooperation, thriving in the length and breadth of Pakistan. The President also emphasized the strong collaboration in education and cultural

exchange between both countries. In this vein, she said that there are 7000 Pakistani students currently studying in various Universities in China." Prof. Tang Jun, Director of the Pakistan Research Center at the Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences in China, highlighted the strong partnership between Pakistan and China.

He said that academic engagement is growing with each passing day. Both sides are collaborating to promote the Research and Development culture and the human resource, ready to make it an effective part of CPEC's overall progress. Dr. Safdar Ali Shah, the Director General of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan's

CPEC Cell, shared about latest statistics about education cooperation and exchanges. Dr. Xie Xiaoqing, the Director of the China University of Geosciences' China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Research Center, emphasized building said that China offers great potential and opportunities for students to learn and build themselves for the future. Additionally, Dr. Ma Jianfu, Dean of the Pakistan Studies Centre at North Minzu University, explained his own experience of the cultural exchange and how the China-Pakistan cultural exchange will help build strong ties between the friendly countries.

Dr. Shahid Ahmad Hashmat, Former High Commissioner of

Pakistan to Sri Lanka, spoke about the long-standing ties between the two states. Liaquat Ali Shah, Executive Director and Head of the Policy Division of the Centre of Excellence for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, offered various suggestions to build cultural and educational ties by hosting various forums and joint research projects. Dr. Guo Yaling, Director of the Pakistan Research Center at Hebei Normal University, in her presentation, traced the routes of culture and heritage in earlier history. Dr. Abdul Sattar, Director of China Study Center, Baluchistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences, Pakistan, highlighted and explained the support that



China Pakistan collaboration offers students in Balochistan. He further said that such cultural and educational collaboration should continue and will help

both countries to forge strong ties. Many students, and faculty members, participated in the webinar and shared their deep interest in building strong ties.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
39,838.33	39,342.89
Day's High	Day's Low:
39,926.34	39,330.02
Index Value	Change
4,304,772,620	+495.44
Percentage	Time
+1.26%	22 Dec, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,467.73	-29.59
Percentage	Time
-0.36%	22 Dec, 4:00 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
32,914.59	-461.89
Percentage	Time
-1.38%	22 Dec, 11:00 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
26,507.87	+120.15
Percentage	Time
+0.46%	22 Dec, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	151.51	152.76
Bahrain Dinar	601.69	606.19
Canadian Dollar	166.09	167.44
China Yuan	32.4	32.65
Danish Krone	32.24	32.59
Euro	258	261
Hong Kong Dollar	29.03	29.38
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	2.28	2.32
Kuwaiti Dinar	738.35	743.35
Malaysian Ringgit	50.95	51.4
New Zealand \$	143.33	144.53
Norwegians Krone	22.43	22.73
Omani Riyal	587.63	592.13
Qatari Riyal	61.75	62.25
Saudi Riyal	65	65.6
Singapore Dollar	165.24	166.54
Swedish Korona	21.78	22.08
Swiss Franc	243.87	245.62
Thai Bhat	6.46	6.56
U.A.E Dirham	68.4	69
UK Pound Sterling	296.5	299.5
US Dollar	232.4	234.7

ICCI calls for deciding business timings in consultation with traders

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD : Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the government wants to conserve energy, which is a good initiative, however, he called upon the government to take a final decision on the business timings in consultation with traders, who are real stakeholders in the matter. He said this while presiding over a meeting of the ICCI Traders Committee.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the economy of the country is in a very bad state at the moment due to which business activities are shrinking. He said that due to the dollar crisis, the business community is facing serious difficulties in importing raw materials and goods. He demanded that the business hours should be finalized in consultation with the Chambers of Commerce, trade associations and the business community so that with a unanimous decision, energy can be saved and business activities can also be protected from further damage.

A resolution was passed in the meeting unanimously calling upon the government to



take the Chambers of Commerce and trade associations into full confidence before taking any decision on business hours.

Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik said that due to shortage of dollars, the country's imports have almost stopped due to which large industrial units are closing down. In such a situation, the government should avoid taking unilateral decisions and try

to formulate a comprehensive strategy on an emergency basis to revive the economy in consultation with all stakeholders. He suggested that a big convention of traders of the federal capital should be convened to prepare consensus proposals for presentation to the government for the revival of business activities.

Convener Traders Committee and former

Senior Vice President ICCI Khalid Chaudhry said that traders use the most expensive electricity during the evening peak hours as they have to pay around Rs.55 per unit during these hours.

He said that the government wants to save energy, which is a good initiative, but the government's revenue of electricity bills may decrease due to reduction in power consumption during peak hours. He demanded that the government should focus on finding an amicable solution of this problem by holding talks with all the stakeholders and avoid imposing unilateral decisions.

ICCI former SVP Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Restaurant Association President Khuram Khan, Jinnah Super Market President Asad Aziz, Secretary General Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, E-11 Market President Zahir Abbasi, Abpara Market Secretary General Akhtar Abbasi, I-8 Market Secretary General Zahid Qureshi, and representatives of various other markets also spoke at the occasion and demanded the government should take decision in consultation with stakeholders to serve the business and economic interests of the country, which will yield positive results.

Out of reach

KARACHI: A vendor is displaying onions for customers for selling purpose at Bahar Colony in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

CCP takes notice on google playstore offering nano/micro personal loans

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has taken notice of the various emerging concerns regarding mobile applications on Google Playstore offering nano/micro personal loans to vulnerable customers, mostly belonging to the lower to middle income class customers.

After the appearance of a news report in a leading newspaper, a preliminary probe was conducted, and it was noted that these mobile applications on Google Playstore were offering nano-loans without fulfilling the legal requirements of Non-Banking Micro Finance Companies (NBMFC's) law. The NBMFC law offers a framework to regulate nano-loans only above PKR 10,000/-, whereas most of these applications are only offering loans smaller than this. As per the initial find-

ings, these applications have well over 10 million downloads by the general public.

The preliminary findings inter alia revealed that these mobile applications had contradictions between interest rate/processing fee charged from the borrower versus the rates advertised. There are also instances of faulty claims of data privacy and security, collecting personal data on the pretext of offering loans, the discrepancy in repayments, and credit range advertised vis a vis those actually offered.

The Commission is the first regulatory body that formally initiated an enquiry into the matter in September '22, to probe possible violations by these mobile applications with regards to Section 10 of the Competition Act 2010, i.e., Deceptive Marketing Practices. Based on the preliminary findings, the enquiry committee is author-

ized to thoroughly probe and submit an enquiry report to the Commission with respect to any or all possible contraventions under the Act against all nano-loan mobile applications.

The enquiry committee has been working on the case rigorously, consulting all the concerned stakeholders and seeking relevant information for deliberating the matter objectively. In this regard, meetings were also held with the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, and the Federal Investigation Agency.

The Commission's emphasis in this investigation is to focus on the prohibition of deceptive marketing of these nano-loans to the vulnerable ordinary consumer and to ensure that there are due disclosures and truth in marketing so that an ordinary consumer has a choice of making an informed decision.

SECP constitutes new benches for expeditious disposal of appeals

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, subsequent to appointment of three Commissioners by the Federal Government, completing its quorum of Commissioners, has sanctioned its approval to constitute new Benches, to hear appeals under Section 33 of the SECP Act, 1997.

The Commission had been operating with only 2 Commissioners in the past year, which had resulted in accumulation of appeals filed before the Appellate

Bench. Following constitution of new benches, the Registrar Appellate Bench has fixed hearing of 37 Appeals on December 29, 2022, before newly appointed Commissioners Mr. Abdul Rehman Warraich and Mr. Mujtaba Ahmad Lodhi.

The SECP Chairman, Mr. Akif Saeed, emphasized that expeditious disposal of corporate disputes including appeals, are among top priority areas of the Commission and in this regard adequate resources shall be deployed at Appellate Bench Registry.

Chronic low pressure issues resolved by SNGPL on war footings

Commerce Reporter

LAHORE: On the directions of Minister of State Dr. Musadik Malik, Secretary Petroleum is spearheading resolution of gas low pressure issues of areas under the jurisdiction of SNGPL in close coordination with management of the company. Ali J. Hamdani, Managing Director SNGPL has been monitoring the supply data in real-time. The constant monitoring and feedback system in place at Gas House has resulted in resolution of years old chronic issues of low pressure. SNGPL has completed and commis-

sioned 10"dia X 9 Km gas pipeline from Ura Chowk to Chak Mandhar Sialkot & 8"dia X 3-Km pipeline from Chak Mandhar to Kharota Syedan chowk Sialkot. The cost incurred on this project is Rs. 133 Million. Resultantly, around 34,000 consumers, residing in more than 100 villages along Gondal road, Said pur, Chaprar road & Head Marala road will be facilitated through this project.

Similarly, to address the issues of consumer base along Adyala Road Rawalpindi, SNGPL has laid and commissioned 10"dia X 17.65 Km gas pipeline for system improvement.

FFC Secures Top Ranking in Best Presented Annual Report Awards by SAFA



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Keeping up with the legacy, Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has won Gold, Silver and Bronze for all 04 categories in the Best Presented Annual Report Awards (BPA) by South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA). These awards are adjudged by their Committee for Improvement in Transparency, Accountability & Governance (ITAG). FFC secured following awards for the year 2021:

- * Overall Joint Silver Runner-up in the Best Presented Annual Report Awards 2021
- * Joint Gold Winner in the Manufacturing Sector
- * Joint Gold Winner in the Integrated Reporting category
- * Joint Bronze Winner for Good Corporate Governance in SAARC Anniversary Award category

The awards were conferred in a ceremony held at Khatmandu, Nepal. Chief Financial Officer, FFC-Mr. Syed Atif Ali received these awards on behalf of the Company

IDF demands more taxes on sugary drinks to reduce diabetes

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Raising serious concern about the deteriorating diabetes situation, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has once again asked governments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including Pakistan, to increase excise duty on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) to reduce their consumption and decrease the crippling burden of obesity and type 2 diabetes on national health systems. IDF is an umbrella organization of over 240 national diabetes associations in over 160 countries and territories. It represents the interests of the growing number of people affected by diabetes and those at risk.

In a letter issued from the global organization's headquarters in Brussels and written by Andrew Boulton (President) and Akhtar Hussain (President-Elect), governments are asked to give serious consideration to formulate effective fiscal policies, particularly increased taxation on sugary drinks to tackle the situation. IDF estimates that more than 573 million people around the world are living with diabetes and every 10th person on the planet is affected. However, Pakistan tops the list of coun-

tries as the 3rd highest number of people living with diabetes accumulating to 33 million people (source: IDF Atlas 2021). To date, around 50 countries have introduced such measures, including Bahrain, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Unfortunately, FBR and Ministry of Finance in Pakistan has yet not taken any concrete measures for taxing sugary drinks in Pakistan, though Ministry



of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination has already requested this.

The letter highlights the fast-paced growth of the disease at the global level, quadrupling in 30 years, from an estimated 108 million in 1980 to 537 million adults aged 20-79 years today. Without sufficient action to bend the curve, the total number is predicted to rise to 643 million (11.3%) by 2030 and to 753 million (12.2%) by 2045. IDF estimates for 2021 suggest diabetes

was responsible for 46.7 million deaths worldwide, of which close to one-third (32.6%) were premature (occurring in people under 60 years old) and preventable through a healthy, balanced diet and regular physical activity. Around 400,000 people die each year in Pakistan due to health conditions related to diabetes.

The letter also made a reference to the World Bank Group 2020 publication "Taxes on Sugar-sweetened Beverages: International Evidence and Experiences on the Impact". The publication explains how taxing SSBs leads to increased prices that act as a deterrent to their consumption and how the policy plays an important role in helping raise public awareness of the detrimental health effects of over-consuming SSBs. It also shows how industry players, in response to taxation and downward pressure on sales, have reformulated their products, by lowering sugar content for example and taken other measures to address increased taxation. Finally, how increased tax revenues serve to provide additional revenue for investment in encouraging healthy habits by incentivizing the consumption of products that promote health and supporting action to encourage increased physical activity.

2nd Oil & gas discovery in a week in Sindh province



News Desk

ISLAMABAD :By the Grace of Almighty Allah, the Joint Venture of Singhoro Block comprising Oil & Gas Development Limited (OGDCL) AS OPERATOR (76%), Orient Petroleum (19%) and GHPL (5%) has discovered Oil and Gas hydrocarbons from an exploratory well namely Kot Nawab-1 which is located in District Sanghar, Sindh Province.

Kot Nawab-1 was spudded-in on 3rd June, 2022 as an exploratory well by using OGDCL's in-house expertise. The well was drilled down to 3000 meters. Based on the results of wireline logs interpretation, Drill Stem Test-1 in the Basal Sand has tested 125 Barrel of oil per day (BOPD) & 0.483 million Standard Cubic Feet per Day (MMSCFD) Gas through choke size 28/64" at Well Head Flowing Pressure (WHFP) of 150 Pounds per Square Inch (Psi).

OGDCL Spokesman said that the latest discoveries show the aggressive exploration strategy of OGDCL. The said discovery is the 11th discovery in Singhoro Block which shows the commitment of Singhoro JV to exploit the Hydrocarbon (HC) potential of the block and aggressive exploration strategy. It has opened a new avenue and will positively contribute to mitigating energy demand and supply gas from indigenous resources and will add to the hydrocarbon reserves base of OGDCL and the Country.

Three Pakistanis included as Wisden unveils men's T20I team of 2022

A Sports -

LONDON: Pakistan's top-ranked T20I batter Mohammad Rizwan, dynamic all-rounder Shadab Khan and speedster Haris Rauf have been named in Wisden's men's T20I team of the year 2022.

Wisden - a renowned cricket publication - picked a combined world team in the men's T20Is featuring players who enjoyed a scintillating year in the shortest format.

Consequently, Pakistan's opening batter Rizwan, alongside Shadab and Rauf was featured in the team of the year as they all had a decent year in the T20Is.

Apart from Rizwan, Shadab and Rauf, the combined XI features Jos Buttler (England), Suryakumar Yadav (India), Glenn Phillips (New Zealand), David Miller (South Africa), Sikandar Raza (Zimbabwe), Sam Curran (England), Adil Rashid (England) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (India).

The second-ranked T20I batter had another remarkable year with the bat in T20Is as he accumulated 996 runs in 25 matches at an astounding average



of 45.26 and was picked as the opener alongside England's Buttler.

The right-handed batter had five scores of more than 70 in 2022 including a crucial knock against New Zealand in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup.

"With five scores of over 70 and an important half-century against New Zealand in the World Cup semi-final, Rizwan has had another uber-consistent year in T20Is," said Wisden in a statement.

"While he strikes at a lesser rate than many of his competitors, the incredible frequency with which he contributes wins him the slot alongside Buttler," the statement added.

Young all-rounder Shadab, on the other hand, stood up for his team at crucial moments and delivered some

match-defining performances with both bat and ball.

His best batting performance was against South Africa in the T20 World Cup where he blasted a 20-ball half-century in a must-win while his best bowling display came against Hong Kong when he returned with astonishing bowling figures of 4/8 in Asia Cup 2022.

In 2022, the all-rounder scored 201 runs in 20 T20Is and took 25 wickets at 20.56 with a brilliant economy rate of just 6.79.

Meanwhile, Haris delivered several match-winning performances for the team over the year and established himself as a death bowling specialist; finishing 2022 as the leading wicket-taker for Pakistan in T20Is.

The right-arm pacer took 31 wickets in 23 matches at 20.74 and made eight scalps each in the home T20I series against England and T20 World Cup 2022.

"He [Haris] impressed against England on their tour of Pakistan, taking eight wickets in the six matches he played, before taking another eight wickets in the T20 World Cup, excelling at the death," wrote Wisden.

Najam Sethi takes charge as Chairman of PCB Management Committee

A Sports

LAHORE: Former chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Najam Sethi has been appointed as the Chairman of PCB's Management Committee following the approval of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

According to the details, the newly-constituted management committee will run the affairs of the PCB till the elections are held within the next four months.

The committee led by Sethi includes Shakil Sheikh (ex-PCB BoG), Gul Zada (ex-PCB BoG) Nauman Butt (ex-PCB BoG), ex-Test cricketers Haroon Rashid, Shahid Khan Afridi and Shafiqat Rana, Sana Mir (ex-Pakistan women team's captain), Aized Syed (ex-PCB director NHPC), Tanvir Ahmed (ex-president Larkana Region), Advocate Supreme Court Mustafa Ramday and Chaudhry Arif Saeed (CEO Service Industries)

"The federal government is pleased to constitute a management committee to manage the affairs of PCB with full executive powers with the aim of effecting the restoration of departmental cricket structure and other allied matters, including the nomination of Board of Governors and election of chairman, as stipulated in the 2014 Constitution,



within a frame of 120 days," the notification issued by Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination stated.

In another notification, the federal cabinet also approved repealing of PCB Constitution 2019 and revival of the PCB Constitution 2014 through a circulation summary. The cabinet did approval through a circulation summary.

Notably, the Ministry of Inter-provincial Coordination (IPC) the other day had moved a summary to include two new PCB BoG members - Sethi

and Shakil - in place of incumbent PCB chairman Ramiz Raja and another member Asad Ali Khan.

Meanwhile, Sethi, soon after he was appointed the chairman of the management committee, held a press conference at the PCB headquarters here and said that Peshawar will host international cricket like other cities, ARY News reported.

"Peshawar is not a red flag at all. If we can bring cricket to Karachi, so why can't we bring it to Peshawar?" he said while

responding to a question.

Meanwhile, Sethi also thanked PM Shehbaz for trusting the former and set his sights on revamping domestic cricket and the revival of departmental cricket.

"I am grateful to the Prime Minister for trusting me. It was his desire to restore the 2014 constitution," said Sethi.

"The committee has been formed and we will soon start working at the ground level in four months. The first meeting of our committee is going to be held soon and we will analyse the changes needed.

"We will restore regional and departmental cricket in the domestic cricket and it is our supreme priority to fix our domestic cricket structure."

Sethi further opined on ongoing New Zealand's historic tour of Pakistan and indicated to consider making changes in the national team's Test squad, announced on Wednesday.

"New Zealand tour of Pakistan is very important for us. We will go to Karachi and analyse the situation there. We will also consider making changes to the team announced for the series," said Sethi.

It is worth mentioning here that Ramiz Raja was appointed as PCB chairman by the former prime minister of Pakistan Imran Khan on September 13, 2021.

Archer returns as ECB names squad for South Africa ODIs

Zahid Noor

LONDON: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Thursday unveiled a strong 14-member squad for the upcoming ODI series against South Africa, scheduled to roll into action on January 27 2023.

According to the ECB, England's World Cup-winning pacer Archer is all set to make his international return for the first time since March 2021.

Middle-order batter Harry Brook, who had an impressive winter with the bat for England in Tests and T20Is, has been called up for the ODI squad for the first time while opening batter Ben Duckett has also received a call-up for the 50-over format for the first time since 2016.

Surrey seamer Reece Topley, on the other hand, who had been ruled out of the recently-held ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 is on a road to recovery and is anticipated to be ready for the three-match series against Proteas.

"Reece Topley is making [an] excellent recovery from his left ankle injury and is on track to be ready for the three-match series," said ECB in a statement.

It is pertinent to mention that the three-match ODI series will commence on January 27 and will be played at two venues across six days.

England ODI Squad:

Jos Buttler (Lancashire) Captain, Moeen Ali (Warwickshire), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Harry Brook (Yorkshire), Sam Curran (Surrey), Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire), Dawid Malan (Yorkshire), Adil Rashid (Yorkshire), Jason Roy (Surrey), Phil Salt (Lancashire), Ollie Stone (Nottinghamshire), Reece Topley (Surrey), David Willey (Northamptonshire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire)

England Men's ODI Series versus South Africa Schedule:
First ODI: Friday, January 27, Mangaung Oval, Bloemfontein
Second ODI: Sunday, January 29, Mangaung Oval Bloemfontein

Third ODI: Wednesday, February 1, The Oval, Kimberley

Sindh secures first position in All Pakistan Para Taekwondo Championship



Ali Hassan

LAHORE: A total of 30 athletes from Sindh secured gold across different categories in the recently-held All Pakistan Pioneer's OApn Para Taekwondo Championship 2022.

According to the details, the Para-Taekwondo Championship was held at Wapda Sports Complex on December 17, featured differently-abled athletes, divided across two major categories P20 - mentally challenged athletes - and K40 - physically disabled athletes. In the championship, Team Sindh, supervised by Master Mohammad Najam and led by coach Master Muhammad Siddiq shone at the championship and led the standings with as many as 30 gold medals.

In P20 Mugees Alam, Mustafa Jamali, Haseeb, Tabish, Ayesha, Yasir, Umar and some other players claimed the gold medals for Sindh, while Arslan, Muneer, Elizar and Sair Ahsan claimed a gold each in K40 category.

Saira, who claimed gold in the K40 category became the first special player from Sindh to soon represent Pakistan at the international level.

PAK vs NZ: Free Tickets announced for Karachi Students

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The ministry of education on Thursday announced to pay the ticket and transportation fee of the students for the upcoming Karachi Test between Pakistan and New Zealand, ARY News reported.

According to details, the chief advisor curriculum wrote a letter to District education officers and told them to inform the headmasters of schools in their respective districts.



The letter states that those students who want to watch the match in the national stadium must write down their name to their headmaster.

The district education officers will then provide the details of students who will watch the match in the stadium.

Moreover, the student should come in school uniform to watch the Pakistan-New Zealand test match.

Earlier, the New Zealand squad stepped foot in Pakistan to play a historic Test series in the country, which will roll into action from December 26 at National Bank Cricket Arena here.

Italy's Traore calls out team mates over 'offensive' Christmas present

News Desk

ROME: A Black Italian rugby player accused his team mates of racism on Wednesday after they gave him a "rotten banana" during a 'Secret Santa' anonymous gift exchange.

Cherif Traore wrote on Instagram that he received the unwanted present, inside a rubbish bag, during a Christmas dinner with fellow Benetton Treviso players.

"Apart from finding it an offensive gesture, what hurt me the most was to see that most of my team mates who

were present were laughing. As if it was all normal," he said.

"I haven't slept all night," the 28-year-old added.

Traore was born in Guinea but has lived in Italy since the age of seven. He plays prop for the northern Treviso club and for the Italian national team.

He said he normally does not react to "racist jokes" in order not to make enemies.

"I decided not to keep quiet this time to ensure that episodes like this do not happen again," he said, adding that such behaviour

would be "seriously condemned outside of Italy".

Benetton Rugby said in a statement they had "always condemned with the utmost firmness any expression of racism and/or form of discrimination" and the incident involving Traore "has nothing to do with sport".

It added that it will always stand for "respecting people, their culture, their ethnicity, their faith and their dignity".

Later, the club said the whole team was summoned for a meeting in which players offered their apologies to Traore, who accepted them.

Traore said in a club statement the gift was an act of "idiocy" by a single team mate.

"I appreciated and accepted his apologies and those of the entire squad."

There have been numerous incidents of Black athletes in Italy suffering racist abuse.

In soccer, Black players are routinely jeered by fans, while in October Paola Egonu, a Black volleyball player, announced she was taking a break from the Italy national team following comments questioning her nationality.

Benazir Green win Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Women Basketball Gold Cup match

Our correspondent

LAHORE: Benazir Green team defeated Benazir White team by 18-12 in Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Women Basketball Gold Cup exhibition match at Punjab University Old Campus on Thursday.

PPP Punjab President Adviser to Punjab Governor Rana Farooq Saeed was the Chief Guest on this occasion. PPP Punjab Vice-Pres-



ident Faisal Mir, PPP Lahore Women Wing President Ms Nargis Khan, Kh Abdul Rehman, Imtiazul Hassan,

Zawar Hussain, Syed Khawar Hussain, Shahnaz Kanwal, Fauzia Saeed, Arslan, Tariq were also present on this occasion.

M Akram was the Organising Secretary of the exhibition match. The trials for the selection of two teams - Benazir Green and Benazir White - were also held under the supervision of PBBF selection committee at Punjab University Old Campus at 11.00am on Dec 19, 2022.

New Zealand arrived in Karachi for two Tests and three One-Day Internationals

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The two Tests are Pakistan's final assignment in this ICC World Test Championship cycle and the ODIs are part of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League.

The two teams play the first Test in Karachi (26-30 December) and the second in Multan (3-7 Jan). The three ODIs will be played in Karachi on 10, 12 and 14 January.

Below is the schedule of the training and media interactions in the lead up to and during the first Test. Any changes in the schedule will be communicated to the media colleagues through the Pakistan Cricket Board's official WhatsApp group(s).

Ahsan Iftikhar Nagi, the



Pakistan team media manager, will be the contact person for any queries related to the Pakistan men's side and can be reached at +92 304 055 7586 (also on WhatsApp) and ahsan.nagi@pcb.com.pk

Willy Nichols is the media manager of the New Zealand's

Test side and can be reached at +64 274 889 885 (also on WhatsApp) and willy.nichols@nzcnz

Shakeel Khan will lead media operations during the series and will be available at +92 301 8440284. The media can reach out to him for the

collection of media accreditation cards and other queries.

All activities at National Bank Cricket Arena

23 Dec - New Zealand are scheduled to train from 1000-1300. Afterwards, a squad member from the touring party will hold arrival press conference.

24 Dec - Pakistan and New Zealand will train from 1000-1300.

25 Dec - Pakistan and New Zealand captains will unveil the series trophy and hold pre-series press conference around 1300. Beforehand, the two sides will train from 1000-1300. 26-30 Dec - The two teams lock horns in the first Test. The toss will take place at 0930 and each day's play will start at 1000.